

College in Prison: A Georgia Success Story

Policy Brief | Spring 2022



The single most effective factor in reducing the chances that people will return to prison is access to a college education while incarcerated.

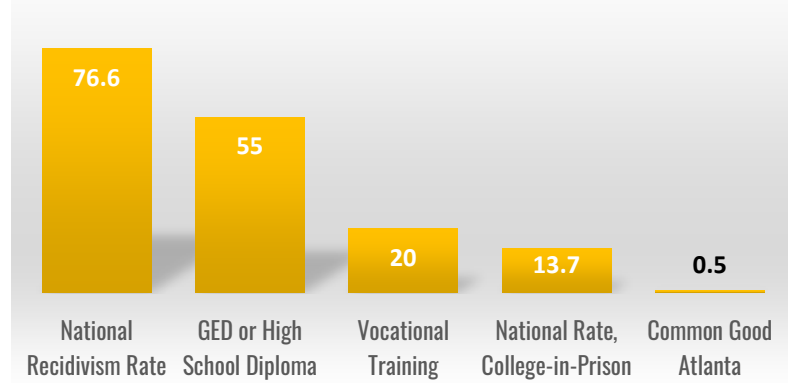
College in prison “works.”

For the last fourteen years, Georgia-based non-profit Common Good Atlanta has been offering **free, accredited college courses inside 4 state prisons, 5 days a week**—including throughout the pandemic.

Over **60 volunteer faculty from 9 colleges and universities** teach inside Georgia’s prisons for 21 hours a week. When

CGA students go to Transition Centers or are released, they can **continue to take free college classes, receive a free laptop and learn digital literacy, work with faculty and tutors on resumes, and join a strong alumni network for wraparound support.**

Recidivism Rates: Returning to Prison



Georgia Prison Education Statistics

- In 2021, **46,855** people were incarcerated in Georgia
- **Fewer than 1%** have a college degree when sentenced to prison
- **Fewer than 5%** of people in prison have access to a college program
- **15,413** people were released from Georgia prisons in 2021: college in prison equips them to be productive citizens and good neighbors

See: Georgia Department of Corrections, Average Daily Population Report by Facility Type, Inmate Statistical Profile (2021), Recidivism Rates Report; Georgia Department of Community Supervision, Annual Population Dashboard; Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2021 Jail Reports

Common Good Atlanta not only benefits people in prison, but it also **bridges the immense talent and resources of Georgia’s colleges and universities into communities.** Hundreds of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students gain proximity with people who will become their neighbors, changing the stigma of a divide between college and people who have served time in prison.

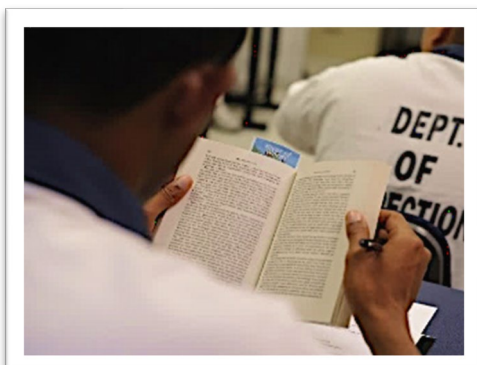
OTHER ADVANTAGES

Prison administrators report that participating in college **impacts prison culture in a positive way:** incarcerated college students are more likely to **mentor** others inside

prison, **teach in GED programs, avoid violence, have closer relationships with their families on the outside,** and be more motivated for parole.

CGA alumni have been released and continued their education at Georgia State University, Gwinnett College, and Kennesaw State University.

CGA alumni are small business owners, motivated employees, taxpayers, community volunteers, and engaged parents.





“ The students and teachers I worked with inspired creativity, intelligence, and a **renewed sense of my humanity** in a way that I could not have hoped to achieve in any other way during my incarceration. ”

—Janine Solorsh

Recommendation 1: Recognize the value of college in prison.

The return on investment for college in prison is exceptionally high: for every \$1 spent on college in prison, taxpayers save \$5 on prison costs because of reduced recidivism and increased employment stability.

Recommendation 2: Invest in productive programs.

In 2022, Georgia Corrections is poised to spend \$600 million on new prisons. Consider investing \$100,000 in Common Good Atlanta—committing to making more prisons places where people can return to Georgia communities equipped to be productive citizens.

Recommendation 3: Engage in a college class inside a facility.

Common Good Atlanta invites you to visit a college-in-prison class in one of the prisons where we teach: just one class will demonstrate the academic rigor, the commitment, the optimism, and the prosocial spirit that our program embodies.



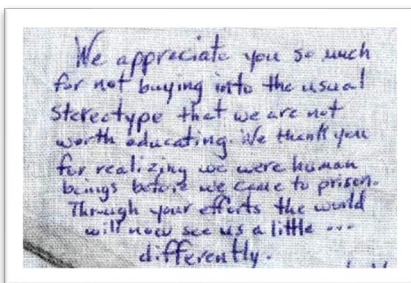
125
INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS
REACHED ANNUALLY



\$24,000
PER PERSON INCARCERATED
ANNUALLY



\$3,000,000
ANNUAL COST SAVINGS



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