

Commission on Race & Access to Opportunity Meeting

Simmons College of Kentucky

Prison Education Program (PEP)

**Dr. Frank M. Smith, Jr.
Senior Executive Vice President &
Chief Operating Officer**

Program Evolution & Key Milestones

2022

Initial Planning Phase

Selected to participate in the federal Second Chance Pell Grant experiment; built operational frameworks and curriculum models.

Jan 2023

Official Launch

Classes officially began at two state facilities with an inaugural cohort of 39 incarcerated students.

Fall 2023

Women's Prison Expansion

Governor Andy Beshear announced critical partnership extension, expanding academic programming to a third facility.

Feb 16, 2026

Federal PEP Designation

Formally awarded official Prison Education Program (PEP) designation by the U.S. Dept of Education, establishing a permanent federal framework.

What is PEP? & Academic Pathways

First & Only Accredited In-Prison Degree Tracks in KY

- Current Enrollment: 175 active students across state facilities.
- Growth Profile: Projected to reach 200+ students annually by 2026.
- Proven Track Record: 43 graduates to date (40 AA degrees, 3 Bachelor's degrees).
- Comprehensive Reentry Continuum: Transitional Specialists provide structured workshops covering job readiness, housing placement, financial literacy, health, and tech skills.

Available Degree Programs

- Associate Degree in General Studies
- Associate Degree in Religious Studies
- Bachelor's Degree in Sociology
- Bachelor's Degree in Business Entrepreneurship

Participating State Facilities

Luther Lockett Correctional Complex (LLCC)

*Address: 1612 Dawkins Rd, La Grange, KY
40031*

Inaugural launch facility housing the initial January 2023 student cohort.

Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW)

*Address: 3000 Ash Ave, Pewee Valley, KY
40056*

Established during the Fall 2023 expansion to support female scholars.

Northpoint Training Center (NTC)

*Address: 710 Walter Reed Rd, Danville, KY
40422*

Inaugural launch facility hosting academic tracks for male students.

Why It Matters: The ROI of Prison Education

- Kentucky Recidivism Baseline: The KY Justice & Public Safety Cabinet reported (Feb 13, 2025) a 24-month re-incarceration baseline of 30.81%.
- Education Reduces Reoffending: Vera Institute research proves that incarcerated individuals participating in college tracks reduce reoffending by up to 48%.
- Incarceration Fiscal Savings: RAND Corporation independent data states that every \$1 invested in prison education structural models yields \$4–\$5 in back-end incarceration cost-savings.

Kentucky Financial Impact Impact Projections

- Current Savings: PEP's current 43 graduates with associate degrees are projected to save the State of Kentucky almost \$1,000,000 in avoided prison expenditures.
- **Future Horizon: Graduating 200 students over the next two school years could reduce participant recidivism down to 5.6%, leading to \$4,600,000 in net savings (\$23,000 baseline cost per prisoner).**
- Workforce Strengths: Returning graduates transition directly into skilled employment tracks, becoming net taxpayers and contributors.

Goals & Strategic Funding Deployment

Strategic Milestones with State Support

- Enroll 200 incarcerated students annually.
- Expand degree completion pathways beyond initial baselines.
- Reduce program participant recidivism by 28% within 3 years.
- Build direct pipelines to employment and entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen post-release reentry tracking frameworks.

Biennial Budget Allocation Summary

- Faculty Expansion: Broaden instructional capacity across sites.
- Educational Materials: Tuition, books, and classroom technology.
- Reentry Frameworks: Strengthen transition services via specialists.
- Sustainability: Build data tracking systems for program evaluation.

Leveraged Sustainability & Impact

Simmons College of Kentucky matches state funding requests with federal Second Chance Pell Grant allocations and active community partnerships, securing long-term economic scalability.

Conclusion:

By investing in PEP, Kentucky embraces a proven, cost-effective strategy that saves taxpayer money, builds safer communities, expands workforce readiness, transforms lives, and strengthens families.