



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Jared Hoy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2024

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Grants give 95 new grads second chance

Persons in our care at 18 facilities celebrate graduation Friday

Madison, Wis. – Across Wisconsin, communities and families are celebrating the achievements of high school and college graduates. That’s true at Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities as well.

On Friday, 95 persons in our care at 18 institutions celebrated earning their associate degrees with the help of Second Chance Pell Grants, a federal program that awards incarcerated individuals grants to help cover tuition for degrees leading to in-demand career opportunities.

“Coming from my background, lifestyle and mindset, it never occurred to me that I would ever enroll in college and actually complete it,” said graduate and class speaker Daishawn Allen-Hobbs. “Madison Area Technical College helped me do just that. I must say that I’m very proud of myself and I am a very firm believer of never doubting yourself no matter the circumstances.”

Allen-Hobbs is one of 69 students who obtained a Small Business Entrepreneurship associate degree on Friday. He’s currently incarcerated at Drug Abuse Correctional Center and is scheduled for release in March 2026.

The students who graduated Friday completed an associate degree in one of three programs: Associate of Arts (25), Small Business Entrepreneurship (69) and Business Management (1). This ceremony was streamed live for friends and family members and included the participation of 18 sites within the Division of Adult Institutions.

“The vast majority of persons in our – nearly 95% – will one day be released back into the community,” DOC Secretary Jared Hoy said. “Our job is to ensure that they leave our care with the skills and support they need to succeed. Education is one of the best tools we have to prevent individuals from returning to prison. In addition to celebrating these new graduates, we need to recognize the DOC teachers, youth counselors, correctional officers, other staff and higher education partners whose work makes this all possible.”

DOC offers a wide variety of educational opportunities and programming for persons in our care including: General Educational Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Degree

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(HSED) testing, Higher Education in Prison programs for those pursuing associate degrees through Second Chance Pell grants, Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Mobile Lab programs.

Here are some of the other graduates DOC is celebrating this year:

- More than 115 persons in our care have completed their GED/HSED within the Division of Adult Institutions.
- Six youth within the Division of Juvenile Corrections completed their HSED.
- 37 persons in our care completed computer numerical control (CNC) training through Moraine Park Technical College and Gateway Technical College
- Nine persons in our care completed mechatronics training with Gateway Technical College
- 29 completed welding training through Gateway Technical College and Moraine Park Technical College
- Eight persons in our care completed electro-mechanical training through Madison College

In mid-June, six students at Fox Lake Correctional Institution (FLCI) who will graduate from Trinity International University with a bachelor's degree in Biblical studies and a minor in psychology.

The four-year college baccalaureate program is offered through a partnership between the DOC, Trinity International University and the Wisconsin Inmate Education Association (WIEA). Starting in 2017, DOC offered a small space at Waupun Correctional Institution where Trinity established an accredited branch campus.

The program has since been moved to Fox Lake Correctional Institution due to demand. The WIEA pays 100% of the tuition, leaving no costs for the students or the state.