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WOMEN'S PARENTHOOD AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE PRISONS

Possibilities for Programming in the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1970, the female incarcerated population has been steadily rising, implying an increased demand for more female-centric programming in the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women.¹ In this report, we examine the current programming provided by the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC) for incarcerated women. Specifically, we will be analyzing the existing parenting and educational programs. We also investigate parenting and educational programs across the nation that have been proven successful in the reduction of recidivism. We chose case studies of these programs in states that are comparable to New Hampshire based on demographic or economic factors and that could potentially be implemented in New Hampshire. These involve live-in nurseries, comprehensive parenthood preparative courses, and extensive college and technical curricula. The case studies examined have each indicated a reduction in female recidivism among participants as compared to non-participants, which in turn can save states a considerable amount of funding in the long term.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the national female incarcerated population on the rise since 1970, female programming has become a hot topic in criminal justice circles. Even in New Hampshire, where women have been incarcerated since the 1880s, growing female prison populations indicate that now is the time to enhance female-centric programming. Male and female inmates can encounter different challenges while incarcerated. For example, 80 percent of female inmates across the nation are mothers; 85 percent of these mothers had custody of their children before their incarceration.²

New Hampshire has not always prioritized its female offenders, and this track record dates back to the 1880s, when female offenders were housed in the South Wing of the Concord State Prison.³ At the time, the number of female inmates was never greater than six, making this a feasibly manageable population within the confines of a male-intended institution.⁴ In 1941, “the legislature authorized the transfer of female offenders to other states,” thus removing female offenders from their families and loved ones.⁵ In the spring of 2018, the NHDOC opened the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women (NHCFW), a 38-million-dollar project begun in 2013.⁶ The motivation for this new facility stemmed from decades-long conversations on the shortcomings of the New Hampshire women’s correctional system. Prior to the opening of the NHCFW, incarcerated women were primarily held in a women’s facility—the New Hampshire State Prison for Women (NHSP/W)—in Goffstown.⁷ This former facility was established in 1989 in response to a court order two years prior that the NHDOC needed to remedy its failure to provide female prisoners “with a facility, conditions of confinement and programs and services on parity with those provided to male New Hampshire State prisoners.”⁸ However, research and journalism in subsequent years suggested that the Goffstown facility was also failing to



satisfy the standards of gender equality in the corrections system. In 2011, the New Hampshire Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights published a report calling for the NHDOC to close the Goffstown facility and address the “inexcusable disparities” in the services available to inmates of different gender.⁹

After challenges with the budget and delays in hiring staff, the NHCFW finally opened in 2018, seven years after the report. Located in Concord, the facility can house up to 224 female offenders and claims to offer state-of-the-art programming and security.¹⁰ This facility, built specifically with women in mind, is intended to provide female inmates with directed activities and educational opportunities that prepare them for life after incarceration. With a 176-inmate population, the NHCFW offers a wide range of programs for all types of inmates.¹¹ Educational curricula provide inmates with crucial parenting and vocational training as well as established systems in the event of pregnancy and delivery.

Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York, Nevada, and Nebraska have implemented programs that reduce recidivism. These are the programs we will be examining later in this report. By providing inmates with a comprehensive skillset (either increased parental motivation or a pragmatic academic education) to utilize upon their release, these programs resulted in significant cuts in recidivism rates among participants. In this report, we will explore the possibility of reducing recidivism through similar programs.

2. PURPOSE STATEMENT

Because the NHCFW is a new facility and the express purpose for its establishment was to improve the services and treatment of incarcerated women, there is an opportunity to make much-needed reforms to the women’s correctional system of New Hampshire. As of January 2014, the NHDOC reports that the average recidivism rate for women is 41.7 percent.¹² This is below the national average of 59.3 percent (based on a study performed in 30 states in 2005).¹³ Although New Hampshire is performing better than average, there is still room for improvement; as stated previously, various parenting and educational programs implemented in other states have resulted in dramatic declines in recidivism when implemented correctly.

We have decided to limit the focus of the report by examining evidence-based programs that have reduced recidivism rates. We are using this criterion because it is generally desirable to most major stakeholders. Former offenders benefit from remaining outside of prison, where they can work toward reintegration and contribute to the community and local economy. Public safety and social cohesion are improved by reductions in crime, and lower prison populations allow governments to allocate more resources to other projects. Because reducing recidivism is a broadly recognized objective of correctional systems across the country, there is a substantial amount of existing research to build upon, including quantitative records of re-offenses and qualitative analyses of the different kinds of programming that can alleviate crime recurrence. We aim to synthesize the most salient



findings that address female recidivism and may be of interest to the New Hampshire House Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before launching into our conversation about possible improvements in the DOC, it is necessary to understand the current state of affairs and programs in New Hampshire. In order to understand the landscape of women's correctional systems, we have compiled an overview of existing programs in New Hampshire. We have focused on pregnancy, parenthood, and educational programming because of their relative prevalence across the nation and thus greater evidence for how they impact recidivism.

There is currently vast inequality in programs focusing on decreasing recidivism, specifically for female inmates. These programs have become increasingly important due to the exponential rise in the prison population for women nationwide. As of January 2014, the NHDOC reports that the average recidivism rate for women is 41.7 percent.¹⁴ This is below the national average of 59.3 percent.¹⁵ Although the recidivism rate for women is more than ten percent lower than that of their male counterparts, there exists an opportunity to improve and provide adequate correctional programs for women in New Hampshire. This may be accomplished by implementing models used in states such as Illinois and Pennsylvania (which will be discussed later). Though to properly assess, evaluate, and recommend ways to improve current prison programs in New Hampshire for women, there must be adequate transparency provided by these prisons—which is currently rarely the case. Providing researchers with this information will, for example, help independent bodies, like the legislature, pass laws to improve recidivism rates for female inmates in New Hampshire.

3.1 Pregnancy and Parenthood Programs

While the national population of incarcerated women has skyrocketed (an increase of 102,000) in the past three decades, a strong majority (80 percent) of these women are mothers, with even more (85 percent) having custody of their children prior to incarceration.¹⁶ Many of these women are in what Kristine Siefert and Sheryl Pimlott, professors of Social Work at the University of Michigan and Michigan State respectively, call the “reproductive age group,” or prime childbearing years, and almost twenty-five percent are pregnant when [they arrive] or have given birth within the prior year.¹⁷ This is precisely *why* prenatal and perinatal parenting programs are such crucial parts of the female carceral curriculum; so many incarcerated women *are* mothers, and their carceral statuses do not change the fact that they are still responsible for their children. These programs aim to reduce their chances of recidivating and teach them everyday skills that they can use upon their release.



3.1.1 Pregnancy Management and Planning

The current policy and procedure directive of the NHDOC states that facilities must “provide guidance for the delivery of health care and planning for the unborn children of female inmates,” including, but not limited to, pregnancy testing as well as prenatal and postpartum care.¹⁸ The NHDOC has assumed financial responsibility for the care of each pregnant inmate, although “all bills relating to the infant’s care are the inmate’s.”¹⁹ Additionally, the NHDOC offers “comprehensive counseling and social services assistance” for inmates throughout the pregnancy process in an effort to aid “their expressed desires for their unborn children.”²⁰ Per NHDOC policy, mother and child are separated after hospital discharge, as “newborn infants are not to be kept inside any NHDOC facility.”²¹

While New Hampshire has made strides in prenatal and postpartum care, it still fails to preserve the maternal bond formed between a mother and her infant immediately after delivery. Not only does this separation inhibit this crucial relationship, but it also has proven to negatively impact the mental health of mothers after birth. NHDOC Policy and Procedure Directive 6.19 states that children are not to reside in prisons, effectively nullifying any opportunity for a nursery program.²² On the other hand, Policy and Procedure Directive 6.19 does state that the state will provide “pregnancy testing, prenatal care, and postpartum care” to all “applicable” inmates.²³ This provision, paid for by the state, is an important step towards medical equality within the carceral system.

3.1.2 The New Hampshire Family Connections Center

The NHDOC provides both female and male inmates with opportunities to connect with their children, as well as to learn about healthy relationships and parenting, through the Family Connections Center (FCC). The FCC lists eleven programs for incarcerated parents and recognizes the extreme range of emotions associated with the nature of this particular separation.²⁴

Support: The NHDOC currently offers one program with the intention of supporting parents throughout their incarceration. Because separation from a child can be traumatic on both sides of the relationship, inmates emotionally connect and support one another in these mandatory group meetings; active participation in one weekly gathering is a baseline requirement for participation in FCC programs.²⁵

Education: In order to participate in FCC activities, inmates must first “successfully” complete “an eighteen-hour parenting class based upon the Family Focus curriculum created by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.”²⁶ This introductory course does not exclude inmates who are not parents; however inmates convicted of “certain crimes” are not permitted to attend.²⁷ After completing this initial program, parents have their choice connections. Although these offerings vary from institution to institution,



each offering of a wider range of courses covering healthy relationships, life skills, and building family connections.²⁸ While these offerings vary from institution to institution, each offering promotes the learning and application of healthier habits. Additionally, the court orders some parents to participate in child impact and child support seminars, both of which are available at *every* institution.²⁹

Interaction: While parents are prevented from spending extended periods of time with their children, the FCC eases this burden with two interactive programs. The Books-on-CD project permits inmates to record books on CDs three times a year per child; accompanying books are sent home to the children.³⁰ Especially in cases of younger children, the Books-on-CD program encourages literacy and a positive association with the absent parent. In addition, prisoners connect with their children through the video/virtual visitation program, which combats separation through Skype.³¹ The prison environment can place inappropriate pressure on children and intimidate them, hampering their conversation with a parent. These Skype calls grant intimate, genuine time with a parent and enhance the comfort level of the child, thus encouraging familial intimacy.

Table 1: FCC Programming by Facility

SFY 2016	Shea Farm	NCF	NHSP/M	NHCF/W
Parenting Class	4 Residents Completed	59 Inmates Completed	75 Inmates Completed	38 Inmates Completed
Books-on-CD	5 Residents Participated	33 Inmates Participated	31 Inmates Participated	28 Inmates Participated
Healthy Relationship Class	-----	72 Inmates Completed	81 Inmates Completed	40 Inmates Completed
Video Visits	72 Visits Conducted	526 Visits Conducted	765 Visits Conducted	198 Visits Conducted
Support Groups	42 Support Group Meetings	281 Support Group Meetings	308 Support Group Meetings	89 Support Group Meetings
Seminars	-----	57 Inmates Participated	315 Inmates Participated	115 Inmates Participated

*Source: New Hampshire Department of Corrections Annual Report (2016)*³²

Table 1 displays the Family Connections Center programming by facility in the state; the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women (NHCF/W) is depicted in the furthest right column.¹ Of the population of 176, approximately 20 percent participated in the Parenting Class, 15 percent completed Books on CD, and 20 percent completed the Health

¹ The NHCF/W is the former facility at Goffstown. There is no current published data pertaining to the FCC for the recently opened facility in Concord.



Relationships Class.³³ Almost 200 Video Visits were conducted, and 89 support group meetings held.

New Hampshire stands to improve most prominently in the recording and publication of participants in its educational and parenting programs. Although there are no published records of incarcerated mothers in New Hampshire, we applied national averages to the New Hampshire female prison population. Eighty percent of incarcerated women are mothers. Of the 176 female inmates in New Hampshire, based on the above chart, approximately twenty percent of actual mothers are receiving any sort of parental education. Due to a lack of transparency, it is unclear whether this is due to a lack of demand or a lack of capacity.

3.2 Inmate Education Services

A 1990 article in the *Journal of Correctional Education* theorized that “an alternative measure of [prison] success may be the extent to which an activity offers a positive core around which to organize life and helps the inmate cope with his [or her] life experiences;” based on this idea, prisons are proven successful based on the metric of inmate quality of experience and only when these inmates feel the positive impact of their various engagements and activities.³⁴ Education, especially a college education, “influences self-esteem, social competence, and self-efficacy,” three variables that greatly contribute to lower crime rates and recidivism.³⁵ This demonstrates the utter necessity of comprehensive educational services in prisons; by providing inmates with the social and academic tools to reenter the society, these programs can reduce recidivism rates while improving inmate and DOC employee qualities of life.

3.2.1 High-School Level Programs in New Hampshire

The NHDOC states its educational mission is “to ensure that inmates receive educational programming that includes counseling toward specific educational or career goals.”³⁶ Through an interagency agreement, the NHDOC and the NH Department of Education collaborated in order to define the criteria necessary for inmates to achieve high-school diplomas through the “Corrections Special School District” (CSSD).³⁷ Established in 1999, the CSSD is responsible for inmate education services through two channels: 1) the Granite State High School and 2) the Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC).³⁸

Granite State High School operates parallel to the NH public school calendars and offers courses towards graduation credit in areas such as “business education,” “family and consumer science,” “information and communications technology,” and “health education” alongside the core curriculum of English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.³⁹ The CTEC offers vocational-style training to inmates aimed at enhancing skills in seven distinct employment areas. Of the more than 800 CTEC certificates awarded in 2016, less than 200 were completed by female inmates; it is unclear whether the absence



in data for four of the seven programs is due to the lack of these programs at the Women’s Prison or a lack of interest (i.e., the programs are offered but were not completed by inmates at the NHSP/W). Table 2 shows the disparate percentages of certifications completed by male and female inmates at the Men’s and Women’s State Prisons, respectively, in 2016.⁴⁰

Table 2. CTEC Certificate Completions, 2016

NHDOC CTEC Program (2016) Certificate Completions	NHSP/M (male)	NHSP/W (female)	% of Female Participants of NHC FW
Automotive Mechanics Program	100 %	N/A	N/A
Building Trades Program	100 %	N/A	N/A
Business Education Program	73.4 %	26.6 %	35.7 %
Computer Education Program	71.1 %	28.9 %	41.4 %
Culinary Arts Program	100 %	N/A	N/A
Intro. To the Workforce Program	55.5 %	44.5 %	27.27 %
Power Mechanics Program	100 %	N/A	N/A
Total Certificates (combined 818)	634	184	

Source: New Hampshire Department of Corrections Annual Report (2016)

3.2.3 Higher Education Programs in Prisons

There have been some opportunities for inmates to pursue post-secondary education opportunities while incarcerated. Inmates at the now-closed Lakes Region Facility (LRF) had the opportunity to partake in the “Transformations” program, a collaboration between the NHDOC and the New Hampshire Community Technical College (now Great Bay Community College). The Transformations program “provided inmates with resources for finding employment, living skills, and counseling and career planning” and inmates were eligible for college credits transferable to any state technical college upon completion of the program.⁴¹ The status of the Transformations program since the closure of the LRF is currently unavailable to the public.

Additionally, the CSSD has facilitated a collaboration of post-secondary education opportunities between New England College and NHSP/M; however, whether the NHSP/W was included in such a program is unclear. While the NHDOC 2016 annual report



stated that “educational opportunities are offered at all facilities on a year-round basis” in its section on post-secondary education, the report failed to elaborate on what these aforementioned opportunities would entail.⁴²

New Hampshire stands to improve its opportunities for post-secondary education for incarcerated persons. Such opportunities have been linked to lower rates of recidivism as they not only aid in potential future job searches once released, but they also give inmates a sense of productive purpose. Inmates often claim that taking these classes helps them feel like a human again and less like a prisoner. By providing inmates with tools of knowledge and critical thinking, these individuals are rehabilitated, re-directed, and better prepared to rejoin society.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the report is comprised of three components. First, we evaluated the current status of New Hampshire programming in terms of gender equity and transparency, both of which have been previously cited concerns for the state. The second component lays out how we analyzed parenting programs across the nation and picked case studies. These included parenting classes and prison nurseries, both of which have demonstrated reduced recidivism among participants. The third component discusses the most effective and prominent educational programs in prisons across the nation. This section lays out the steps taken to comprehend the status of NHDOC programming and identifies viable programs that can be potentially implemented in New Hampshire.

4.1 Inadequacy of New Hampshire Programming

Although New Hampshire has made significant strides since the 2011 report to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, there are still considerable issues of gender inequity in its prison system. Moreover, the New Hampshire DOC has failed to publish prison demographics and the status of programs in recent years. This lack of transparency makes evaluating the prison system difficult, as it is challenging to suggest improvements when large knowledge gaps of the current conditions exist. Thus, one of the most significant problems the New Hampshire DOC faces is the lack of available state prison programming data. Additionally, in the instances that statistics pertain to programs, a larger explanation for the context of the data is missing. For example in Table 2, taken from the New Hampshire Department of Corrections Annual Report (2016), no explanations for the “N/A” values are provided. Does the NHSP/F provide inmates with access to the Automotive Mechanics Program? If not, for what reasons has the state ascertained not to offer this to female inmates? Is this based purely upon interest or is it due to the size of the prisons? This vacuum of reliable information is unproductive and hints at gender inequity, once more, in the prison system, with a quick fix (incorporating said programs into the NHSP/F) readily within grasp.



4.2 Category One: Parenting Programs

We identified the best maternity and parenthood practices in correctional facilities for women in the following states: Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska. After extensive examination of programs across the country we identified programs in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska due to their impressively low recidivism rates, positive media audits, and overall high-profile nature due to their efficiency and innovation in the corrections field. Before these programs were implemented, female recidivism rates were notably higher; thus, participation is correlated with decreased recidivism. Furthermore, we suggest investigating the systems of maintaining child contact, building parenthood skills, and external influences on programs.

These programs were able to reduce recidivism due to their dedication to parental self-efficacy and relationship building. The more competent and prepared the inmates felt as mothers, and the more connected they felt with their children, the less likely they were to recidivate. Investment in parenthood, among other factors beyond the programs, helped to motivate these women to not return to prison. They were implemented in states where female prison populations resemble that of New Hampshire demographically.

The evaluation of the following cases will allow us to identify the various methods that correctional facilities have utilized in order to build a sense of self-efficacy among inmates who are parents. There is no singular way in which to do so, and this evaluation will simply note the benefits and drawbacks of three prominent programs across the nation. We aim to identify common themes of parental self-efficacy, delicate education, and the construction of healthy relationships within families.

4.3 Category Two: Educational Programs

Education provides inmates with hope and purpose during incarceration, as well as an increased life stability through increased wages after release. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Granite State was struggling with an underemployment crisis, and technical education programs particularly would aid ex-inmates in building the necessary skills in order to function in the state employment crisis. As we recover from the pandemic, it is likely that the pre-existing employment conditions may return to the state. Examining programs that have increased the academic self-efficacy of incarcerated students in other states is a first step to improving current programming in New Hampshire.

The following case study analyses will identify the best educational practices in correctional facilities for women across the nation. We suggest investigating the systems that involve technical or academic skills building, as well as evidence of increased academic and personal self-efficacy. We specifically selected the Bard Prison Initiative due to its efficient, encompassing approach to education, as well as the distinct alumni community it boasts. Not unlike other collegiate institutions, the Bard Prison Initiative has



a strong alumni network that understands the unique challenges to returning home after serving a sentence. The program of the Nevada Department of Corrections was selected due to its similarity to that of New Hampshire. The Nevada DOC runs an impressive system of effective secondary education, not specific to any particular facility.

The cases we selected occur in state correctional facilities (as opposed to private prisons or jails) and provide inmates with some form of intensive academic programming. Additionally, implementation of each program showed a significant decrease in recidivism rate, denoting the actual effectiveness of the program.

5. PARENTING RESEARCH

The following case studies were derived from across the nation and represent some of the most prominent examples of progress in the realm of parenting programming for inmates. By examining the eligibility requirements, unique program components, and rates of recidivism per program, this section outlines viable parenting programs in prisons across the nation. Section 1 discusses a prison nursery program in Decatur, Illinois; Section 2 describes a comprehensive parenting curriculum from the Riverside Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania; and Section 3 depicts the Nebraska prison nursery program. Section 4 summarizes the findings and condenses them into a practical chart.

5.1 Case Study One: Moms and Babies, Illinois

In January of 2000, the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) organization, and a group of community-based partners created the Moms and Babies nursery program after recognizing the importance of mother-child emotional connection during infancy.⁴³ Based out of the Decatur Correctional Facility, the program admits up to 11 mother-child pairs at any one time, providing them with the opportunity and space to bond in those crucial early years.^{44,45} In order to be considered for the program, pregnant women must be eligible for parole or release within the next two years and have been convicted of a nonviolent offense.⁴⁶

Through in-prison and community-based services, mothers are supported throughout their carceral and reentry experiences. By facilitating support networks, parenting classes, communication training, and trauma therapy, the Moms and Babies program builds a foundation of useful parenting and life skills that participants can utilize upon reentry to society.⁴⁷ Prison nursery programs like this one have been proven to lower recidivism rates among participants in comparison with non-participants; approximately three percent of mothers returned to prison following their participation between 2007 and 2016.⁴⁸ Following their release, TASC continues to support the participants by providing them with ongoing case management, home visits, and connections to various support systems in their communities.⁴⁹



5.2 Cast Study Two: MOMobile, Pennsylvania

The Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) created the MOMobile program in November 2006 for the pregnant inmates and mothers of infants of Riverside Correctional Facility (RCF) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁵⁰ Even a decade later, in 2016, a report from the Vera Institute of Justice stated that 80 percent of incarcerated women are mothers; inspired by this staggering proportion, the MCC constructed a program that would “assist each woman... with her re-entry and connection to family and community.”^{51,52} Mothers remain connected with their children and are given the resources to improve their nutrition and physical activities, as well as participate in a unique lactation program. MOMobile also enhances maternal and prenatal health by implementing a doula program and providing expectant inmates with parenting classes. Stabilizing the lives of pregnant inmates through this program has “shown early success in reducing recidivism and has the potential to have far reach impact on not only incarcerated women, but their children and communities as well.”⁵³

Within the first three years of the program, MOMobile at Riverside saw a recidivism rate of 23 percent, a significant decrease from the general prison population.⁵⁴ In Pennsylvania, the general female rate of recidivism is approximately 46.9 percent.⁵⁵ Having served over 300 women, the program was originally funded with a four-year \$114,000 matching grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Funding Partnerships.⁵⁶ This grant ended in June 2010, and since, MOMobile has been turned down for funding by the Department of Justice under the Second Chance Act. Now, it functions out of Riverside with a fraction of the resources needed in order to make a greater impact, inhibited by said rejection.

5.3 Case Study Three: Prison Nursery Program, Nebraska

A ten-year study of Nebraska’s Prison Nursery Program (1994-2004) showed reduced recidivism rates from 50 percent for women who did not go through the program in comparison to 16.8 percent for those who did. In the first two years of the program the misconduct reports for those who joined the program decreased by 13 percent. In the last year of the study, none of the women admitted to the program received a misconduct report. This system attempts to operate as cost effective as possible, keeping the cost of care for each baby to \$12.66 per day, sharing staff where possible, and using Medicaid to pay medical costs.⁵⁷

To be admitted to the program, women must: have a tentative release date of no more than 18 months after their child’s birth, not have segregated status or extensive history of violence, not have prior convictions of serious child abuse, sign an agreement to be the child’s primary care giver upon release, and complete prenatal and Lamaze classes before the child’s birth if possible. Women additionally needed to not smoke, avoid misconduct reports, attend infant care and development classes, and follow a six-month work



requirement that could lead to full time employment. This program was a dramatic change from the three-day period women spent with their child after giving birth.⁵⁸

Comparable prison nursery programs can be found in 10 other states including: Delaware, California, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia. Recidivism rates across these programs present positive results. Recidivism for Indiana’s Wee Ones Nursery program boasts a 19 percent recidivism rate compared to 35 percent of the overall female population. New York’s Bedford Hills Nursery shows a three percent recidivism rate compared to the roughly 30 percent female recidivism rate. Texas experiences a drop to 20 percent as compared to the 30 percent female recidivism rate. Washington’s program claims a recidivism rate of three-to-five percent compared to an overall recidivism rate of 30 percent. The highly selective Keep Infant Development Successful program of West Virginia experiences less than one percent recidivism rate as compared to a 17 percent rate for women.⁵⁹ Prison nursery programs across the country seem to provide a significant drop in recidivism rates.

5.4 Comparison across Programs

Program	Eligibility	Components	Recidivism
Moms and Babies, Illinois	-Nonviolent Offense -Eligible For Release Or Parole In 2 Years	-Support Networks -Parenting Classes -Communication Training -Trauma Therapy	3% of Participants (Noncomparable Recidivism Rate)
MOMobile, Pennsylvania	-All Mothers Accepted	-Nutrition & Physical Activity Resources -Lactation Program -Doula Program -Parenting Classes	23.9% of Participants (~50% rate reduction)
Prison Nursery Program, Nebraska	-Release Date Of 18 Months Or Less - Non-Segregated Status -Lacks A Violent Or Abusive History -Signed A Primary Care Provider Agreement For After Release	-Prenatal & Lamaze classes to be completed before the birth if possible -Separate living area -Childcare Resources -Continuous Interaction	16.8% (~66.4% rate reduction)



6. EDUCATION SERVICES RESEARCH

The following chapter details effective educational programs that have demonstrated reduced rates of recidivism and are reasonable models for the future of educational programming in New Hampshire prisons. The Bard Prison Initiative described in Section 1 is a prestigious program that has gained national acclaim due to its intensive and immersive course of study. Section 2 addresses the enlightening courses offered by the Nevada DOC, which mandate literacy and focus on life skills that might be useful after a sentence. Section 3 depicts the TUPIT program offered by various TUFTS faculty members, challenging inmates to an engaging college education with professors from a premier university. Section 4 summarizes the findings and analysis of the previous three sections and compiles them into a comprehensive chart.

6.1 Case Study One: Bard Prison Initiative, New York

Several state prison networks have collaborated with the national Consortium of the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI). Originally launched in 2001 as a pilot program offering the Bard College liberal arts curriculum to inmates in six New York state prisons, the Consortium now involves 12 states and 13 universities.⁶⁰ By collaborating with top tier universities such as Yale, Wesleyan, Washington University in St. Louis, Villanova, Boston College, and the University of Vermont, the Bard Prison Initiative college-in-prison programs ultimately “have the same rigor and high standards expected of main campuses.”⁶¹

The faculty from Bard College teach small seminar-style courses, serve as academic advisors, and offer workshops and guest lectures to admitted students.⁶² These students are enrolled full-time in the same courses they would be exposed to if they were on the Bard main campus and are held to the same high standards as all Bard College students.⁶³ Incarcerated students are still students in the Bard Prison Initiative; the program classifies admission as “selective.”⁶⁴ Additionally, these students graduate with a full Bard College degree, with a curriculum consisting of at least six academic writing courses, B.A. seminars, and a senior thesis project.⁶⁵

New York currently has a recidivism rate of 40 percent within its state prison system.⁶⁶ The Bard Prison Initiative decreases this significantly; 2.5 percent of BPI graduates and 4.5 of participants are readmitted to prison within three years of their releases.⁶⁷ These are both significant differences in lives, funding, and societal contributions. Eighty-five percent of these alumni were able to find a job within 60 days of their releases, as compared with the Urban Institute’s estimate of approximately 30 percent of non-participants.^{68, 69} Finding a job post-incarceration is especially difficult for offenders and is a common cause of parole violation.



BPI charges no tuition and has no endowment.⁷⁰ Eighty-six percent of BPI is privately funded through private grants and donations, and 14 percent is supported through public funding.⁷¹ As of the latest estimate, the Bard Prison Initiative costs approximately \$9,000 annually per student.⁷² In 2019, the average tuition for students at Bard College was \$55,566.⁷³ At the end of the day, both students receive Bard College diplomas; however, one student has freedom from the stigmatization that will haunt housing and employment opportunities in the future for the other.

6.2 Case Study Two: Secondary Education Programs (NDOC), Nevada

The Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) has implemented a comprehensive educational system within carceral centers, including half-way houses. Providing Individual Incarceration grants and Youth Individual Grants, NDOC ensures that inmates, on an application basis, are able to retain some agency over their education and daily activity.⁷⁴ Although the state of Nevada “mandates literacy” within the correctional facilities, classes are voluntary for inmates over the age of 15.⁷⁵ Students are provided with the opportunity to learn useful vocational skills as well as earn academic credentials.⁷⁶

One particularly unique aspect of the NDOC educational programming, however, lies in a specific subject; “Commitment to Change” classes are “designed to address life skills issues, drugs, [and] poor relationships” in an effort to prepare inmates for the outside world.⁷⁷ These courses aim to enlighten inmates to their shared responsibility for life events, as the Counselor at Florence McClure Correctional Center (a women’s facility) notes that husbands and male significant others rarely “share culpability for the wrongdoing.”⁷⁸ Additionally, the Director of NDOC has emphasized the impact education has had on the system internally, as “it makes management and control of prison populations much easier.”⁷⁹ By providing inmates with an acceptable educational (both academic and life skills-oriented) outlet during the day, the NDOC has effectively reduced recidivism rates.⁸⁰

It costs approximately \$20,000 annually to “warehouse” (contain and maintain) an inmate.⁸¹ High school classes *are* free to inmates, as felons under the age of 15 are required to take them, but other classes may be funded by Individual Incarceration Grants and Youth Individual Grants (both of which are funded by the NDOC).⁸²

It should be noted that, in spite of the outstandingly positive reviews of this particular educational programming, the NDOC struggles to fund it. According to Warden Brian Williams (Southern Desert Correctional Center), public opinion consistently wavers over the value of funding correctional education.⁸³ Indeed, educating felons does actively “contribute to the reduction of recidivism,” but other societal roadblocks, such as the “many new and different laws today” can stand between a formerly incarcerated individual and a steady-paying job.⁸⁴



6.3 Case Study Three: The Tufts University Prison Initiative, Massachusetts

The Tufts University Prison Initiative of the Tisch College of Civic Life (TUPIT) provides a “transformative educational experience” for prisoners, ex-prisoners, and all participants involved in Massachusetts.⁸⁵ TUPIT is led by Tufts faculty and students, as well as incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, corrections staff, educators, and scholars of criminal justice in order to promote and facilitate creative and collective responses to the problems of mass incarceration.⁸⁶

The crux of TUPIT lies in the necessity of equitable access to higher education and offers learning between incarcerated people and Tufts students and faculty members through instruction directly inside correctional facilities.⁸⁷ TUPIT provides Tufts University courses taught by Tufts University faculty members inside the prison. Through a collaboration with Bunker Hill Community College, individuals admitted to TUPIT in prison have the opportunity to earn an associate degree in the liberal arts after three and a half years of successful coursework.⁸⁸

6.4 Comparison across Programs

Program	Eligibility	Components	Outcomes
Bard Prison Initiative, New York	-Selective	-College Enrollment In Respected Universities -Seminars -Guest Lectures	-College Diploma -2.5% Recidivism For Completers -4.5% Recidivism Rate For Participants
Secondary Education Programs (NDOC), Nevada	-Mandatory For Ages 14 And Younger -Voluntary For Ages 15 And Older	-Literacy Classes -Life Skills And Drug Prevention Programs	-Effectively Reduced Recidivism
The Tufts University Prison Initiative, Massachusetts	-Prisoners And Ex-Prisoners	-College Classes Taught By Tuft’s Faculty -3.5 Years Of Coursework	-Associate degree -Reduced Recidivism

7. CONCLUSION

This research aims to investigate the current status of the women’s correctional system in New Hampshire and compare it to those of other states to reveal areas where New Hampshire can improve. In doing so, the report focuses on pregnancy, parenthood, and educational programs for incarcerated women because of their high potential impact on recidivism and their relative prevalence across the nation. Reducing recidivism rates can ultimately save states money and foster a positive impact on communities and families.



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Based on the contents of this report, the current programming that New Hampshire provides is insufficient in comparison to the rest of the nation. The state may seek to adopt innovative solutions in order to improve the quality of prison life, society, and state standards of conduct. Although these programs require more funding than is currently allocated, they represent an investment in the future of New Hampshire that may ultimately save money and improve quality of life. Overall, the paper intends to provide a clear delineation of existing programs for female inmates and their effects on recidivism, in order that readers may understand evidence-based policy options that are available, and use that insight to inform the discussions and decision-making processes in the legislative body.



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