

CHAPTER 22: REENTRY ASSISTANCE

A. INTRODUCTION

The state of Louisiana treats people with criminal records different than people without criminal records in many ways. This Chapter deals with Louisiana laws that may affect your life after you are released from prison. It also talks about the resources available to you before and after your reentry. Part B lists educational, skills training, and other things available to you while you are in prison. Part C is about the process of finding or keeping employment with a criminal record. Part D describes your right to financial assistance, public housing, and restrictions that may be placed on your reentry. The Appendix at the end of the chapter lists educational and skills training offerings at each state prison.

To understand how this Chapter applies to you, you should know all the offenses on your criminal record. You should also read Chapter 1 of the *Louisiana State Supplement*, “Your Right to Information,” to learn how to get a copy of your criminal record and how to expunge convictions. You should also refer to Chapter 7 of the main *Jailhouse Lawyer’s Manual (JLM)*, “Freedom of Information” for general information on the topic.

Unlike other chapters of the *Louisiana State Supplement*, this Chapter is not in the main *JLM*. This means that you will not need to consult the main *JLM* to understand most of the information in this Chapter.

B. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS

The Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections (“Department”) offers a range of voluntary and mandatory programs for prisoners. These programs are supposed to help you with your reentry. This Part describes the programs that are available to you. Section 1 discusses the comprehensive and mandatory pre-release program that applies to all prisoners. Section 2 provides information on academic and vocational offerings. An Appendix at the end of the Chapter lists specific educational and vocational offerings for each prison. Section 3 describes the non-educational programs offered in prison, such as substance abuse and values programs.

1. **Mandatory Reentry Assistance**

In 2002, the Louisiana Department of Corrections started a reentry assistance program known as Corrections Organized for Reentry, or “CORe.” The program is designed to reduce recidivism—which is when someone who has been convicted of a crime later commits another crime—by giving all state prisoners with the resources to succeed on their own after release. In 2009, Governor Jindal announced the expansion of the program to include prisoners in parish and local jails, whose residents comprise about half of Louisiana’s prisoner population.¹

CORe is a two-step program that begins immediately upon incarceration. CORe begins when each prisoner gets assessed and gets an individual reentry plan.² You are then given the opportunity to take academic or vocational classes during your sentence.³ Vocational classes teach you skills necessary for working in a specific job. You can also do faith-based and substance abuse programs.⁴ For more information about these classes, refer to Sections 2 and 3 of this Part.

¹ Governor Jindal Announces New Re-Entry Program for State Inmates in Parish Prisons to Reduce Recidivism Rate and Make Communities Safer, *available at* <https://votesmart.org/public-statement/414021/governor-jindal-announces-new-re-entry-program-for-state-inmates-in-parish-prisons-to-reduce-recidivism-rate-and-make-communities-safer#.WdGe6UyZO-U> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

² James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORe 2, *available at* <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³ James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORe 2, *available at* <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴ James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORe 2, *available at* <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

The second phase of CORE is release preparation. Release preparation happens about a year before your release. For 100 hours, you will be given a lot of training on money management, communication, parenting, and community resources.⁵ The Department will help you get identification cards, Social Security benefits (if you are eligible based on your age and work history), and housing.⁶ The Department will also help you apply for jobs.⁷ The Department can help get short-term housing in a shelter, or transitional housing.⁸ Transitional housing is a more long-term facility that may also provide some employment and educational services.

CORE is mandatory for all prisoners. Since all prisoners have to do CORE, you should not have to do anything special to do CORE programs. If you have any questions about the Department's reentry plan for you, you should speak to your transition specialist.⁹

2. Education and Skills Programs

Louisiana offers prisoners many ways to take educational classes and skills training programs. Participating in these programs may help you in your reentry. These programs can help you get more interesting, stable, or higher-paying jobs in the future. Also, the Parole Board may see you doing these programs as a positive factor when it decides whether you are eligible for parole.¹⁰

The Department is required to have educational and vocational training programs in each state prison.¹¹ Academic programs include literacy training, Adult Basic Education ("ABE"), GED ("General Equivalency Diploma") preparation, and special education. Course offerings are different at each state prison.

Unlike CORE, you have to ask to be in an education program.¹² Your prison will have rules about who can be in education programs.¹³ Read the Appendix at the end of this Chapter for the rules at each prison. To take an education course, you usually have to show that you have above satisfactory (ok) behavior.¹⁴ Above satisfactory behavior typically means a good disciplinary record.¹⁵ You will be screened to determine which program is most appropriate for you.¹⁶ If the program has a waiting list, prisoners who are closest to release will be put in the class first.¹⁷ You should have had an orientation program when you

⁵ James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORE 4, *available at* <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁶ James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORE 4-5, *available at* <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁷ James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORE 5, *available at* <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁸ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

⁹ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

¹⁰ LA. ADMIN. CODE tit. 22, § 701(C)(4)(a) (2017) lists a prisoner's "attitude while incarcerated, including [his] participation in available programs" as a factor in the Parole Board's determination. Further, Louisiana requires that many parolees who do not already have a GED participate in adult educational programs while on parole, with costs paid by the parolee. Although this condition of parole may be suspended in some cases, there are many benefits to taking advantage of the educational programs offered while you are incarcerated. LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 15:574.4 (2017) (effective November 1, 2017). For more information about parole in Louisiana, please refer to Chapter 21 of the *Louisiana State Supplement*.

¹¹ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 15:828(A)(1) (2017).

¹² Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹³ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹⁴ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹⁵ Telephone interview with Kim Barnett, Director of Educational Programs at the Department (Jan. 23, 2011).

¹⁶ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹⁷ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

first entered the prison.¹⁸ That program listed all of that prison's educational offerings.¹⁹ You should have been tested to decide which courses you can take.²⁰ Talk to your transition specialist if you would like to take a course or learn about available programs.²¹

Even if you can't take an educational program because of your behavior record, you might be able to do an independent study.²² In addition, death row residents who may not be eligible to take courses at the prison may ask for academic information through a program.²³ They may also view educational broadcasts on TV.²⁴

Residents of the Louisiana State Penitentiary, or Angola, may be able to assist with prison management at Angola or other facilities.²⁵ Prisoners who have completed a four-year degree in Theology may be able to be an assistant to a chaplain. Others may be able to be GED and literacy tutors for other prisoners. Prisoners may be able to transfer to another facility to be a chaplain's assistant or a tutor there.²⁶ If you have completed any four-year degree and you have earned a trade certification from the National Center for Construction Education and Research, you may be able to teach trade skills in prison. You may be able to transfer to another facility in the future to do this as well.²⁷

Also, you may be able to earn "good-time" credit based on your work in educational programs, subject to the specific rules of each prison.²⁸ You usually can earn up to ten days of good-time credit for every month that you are a full-time student in the program, up to 180 days.²⁹

Read the Appendix at the end of this Chapter for the list of the offerings at each state prison.

3. Non-educational Department offerings

a. Faith-Based Programs

Faith-based programs and educational opportunities are available to prisoners throughout Louisiana. All twelve state prisons broadcast religious TV 24 hours a day on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.³⁰ Several prisons, like Dixon Correctional Institute, Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women, and Rayburn Correctional Center, offer faith- and character-based dormitories (housing units). In these dormitories, prisoners of the same faith may be housed together.³¹ Finally, prisoners in Angola can earn a two-year associate degree in Pastoral Ministries or a four-year bachelor's degree in Theology through the

¹⁸ Telephone interview with Kim Barnett, Director of Educational Programs at the Department (Jan. 23, 2011).

¹⁹ Telephone interview with Kim Barnett, Director of Educational Programs at the Department (Jan. 23, 2011).

²⁰ Telephone interview with Kim Barnett, Director of Educational Programs at the Department (Jan. 23, 2011).

²¹ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

²² Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

²³ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

²⁴ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

²⁵ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

²⁶ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

²⁷ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

²⁸ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

²⁹ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/education/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³⁰ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Values Development, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/values-development/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³¹ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Values Development, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/values-development/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.³² The Department of Corrections hopes that Angola residents serving life sentences will take advantage of this opportunity so they can be transferred to other prisons to help with religious programming.³³

b. Substance Abuse Treatment

The Department of Corrections has many options for prisoners with a history of substance abuse. First, all state prisons offer programs, like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Dynamics of Addiction, Quitting Cocaine, and Relapse Prevention.³⁴ These programs are not mandatory. Still, they can help you with your reentry. The programs also are a positive factor when the Parole Board decides if you are eligible for parole.³⁵ Substance abuse education is also one part of the mandatory 100-hour CORE program.³⁶

There are also two specialized substance abuse programs. The first is the Steven Hoyle Rehabilitation program, a three-month or longer program that focuses on the therapy and changing your behaviors.³⁷ This program used to be located at the Forcht-Wade Correctional Center. However, that center was closed in July 2012, and the program is now located at the Bossier Parish Correctional Center.³⁸ The second is the Blue Walter Substance Abuse Treatment Program, located at the East Louisiana State Hospital in Jackson.³⁹ The program provides treatment to prisoners nearing release to help them get back into society.⁴⁰ Placement into these programs is limited. Placement is decided based on your substance abuse assessment. Prisoners with less time left in their sentences may be placed first.⁴¹ You should speak to your transition specialist to request placement into a substance abuse program.⁴²

C. EMPLOYMENT

After you are released from prison, your criminal record may make it hard to get a job. This Part describes the problems that you may face and ways to solve those problems. Section 1 discusses Louisiana and federal laws that say whether public and private employers can deny you a job because of your criminal record. Section 2 gives information about how pardons and expungements affect your record, and if you have to give information about your prior arrests and convictions on a job application.

1. Your Right to Employment

Louisiana treats people employed by the state (“public employees”) differently than people who are not employed by the state (“private employees”).⁴³ Usually, employers are allowed to consider your

³² Louisiana Department of Corrections: Values Development, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/values-development/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³³ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Values Development, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/values-development/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³⁴ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Substance Abuse Treatment, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/substance-abuse-treatment/> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

³⁵ LA. ADMIN. CODE tit. 22, § 701(C)(4)(a) (2017) states that one factor in a parole determination will be “information concerning the offender’s attitude while incarcerated, including the offender’s participation in available programs and his overall compliance with institutional regulations.”

³⁶ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

³⁷ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Substance Abuse Treatment, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/substance-abuse-treatment/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³⁸ Reentry Programming, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/reentry-programming/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

³⁹ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Substance Abuse Treatment, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/substance-abuse-treatment/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴⁰ Louisiana Department of Corrections: Substance Abuse Treatment, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/pages/reentry-initiatives/substance-abuse-treatment/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴¹ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

⁴² Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

⁴³ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 42:1414 (2017).

criminal records—including arrests not leading to conviction—when reviewing an application.⁴⁴ Private employers can make hiring decisions based on your criminal record. Public employers can use convictions in fewer ways.⁴⁵ Section C(1)(a) below discusses private employers. Section C(1)(b) discusses public employers.

a. Private Employers

Louisiana has laws about how state or local government agencies can use convictions when deciding to hire someone. Private employers do not have to follow the same rules.⁴⁶ Private employers can ask you about your criminal record, including convictions and even arrests not leading to a conviction. They may use this information to decide whether to hire you.⁴⁷ Louisiana doesn't have rules against employment discrimination by private employers because of a criminal record.⁴⁸

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”), a federal agency, has found that employers’ blanket bans against hiring people with criminal records, both arrests and convictions, may violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on criminal records if the discrimination has a bad impact on a minority group.⁴⁹ Employers who wish to ban employment based on criminal records must show a “business necessity.” Employers can show business necessity by thinking about three factors:

- 1) The nature and gravity of the offense(s);
- 2) The amount of time since the conviction and/or completion of the sentence; and
- 3) The nature of the job held or sought.⁵⁰

Title VII is limited to racial, gender, and religious minorities.⁵¹ If you are a racial minority and believe that you were not hired for a position on the basis of your criminal record, you must file a Charge of Discrimination through the EEOC before you can file a lawsuit.⁵² For information on how to file a charge, please visit <http://www.eeoc.gov/employees/howtofile.cfm> (last visited Feb. 9, 2018).

Private employers can use your convictions to decide whether to hire you. But both federal and state law prevents employers from discriminating because of your race, color, religion, sex, national origin,

⁴⁴ State Profiles: Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/main.php?view=profile&subaction1=LA> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴⁵ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 42:1414 (2017).

⁴⁶ State Profiles: Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/main.php?view=profile&subaction1=LA> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴⁷ State Profiles: Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/main.php?view=profile&subaction1=LA> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴⁸ State Profiles: Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/main.php?view=profile&subaction1=LA> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

⁴⁹ Pre-Employment Inquiries and Arrest and Conviction, *available at* http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/inquiries_arrest_conviction.cfm (last visited Oct. 1, 2017); *see also* Green v. Missouri Pacific Railroad Co., 523 F.2d 1290, 1295 (8th Cir. 1975) (finding that a bar on hiring applicants with any criminal convictions except for minor traffic offenses had a disparate impact on black applicants, who were more likely to have a criminal record, must be justified by establishing a business necessity). Federal courts in the Fifth Circuit have also followed the EEOC’s application of Title VII to discrimination based on a criminal record. *See, e.g.*, Richardson v. Hotel Corp. of Am., 332 F. Supp. 519, 521 (E.D. La. 1971) (finding no Title VII violation where a business need existed for denying employment in a hotel to someone who had been convicted of theft).

⁵⁰ Policy Statement on Conviction Records (Feb. 4, 1987), *available at* http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/convict1.html#N_3_ (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). For example, in Richardson v. Hotel Corp. of Am., 332 F. Supp. 519, 521 (E.D. La. 1971), affirmed by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1972, a federal district court held that a valid business need existed for a hotel to deny employment as a bellman—a “security sensitive” position—to applicants with “serious” criminal records. Therefore, the employer had not violated Title VII by firing the plaintiff upon discovery of his conviction for theft.

⁵¹ 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a) (2012) (“It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer . . . to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual . . . because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin . . .”).

⁵² Employees & Job Applicants, *available at* <http://www.eeoc.gov/employees/index.cfm> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

age, disability, etc.⁵³ Therefore, you may still be able to file a Charge of Discrimination against an employer if he or she refuses to hire you based on any of these factors.

b. Public Employees

State law says that a public employee must be fired immediately upon being convicted of a felony.⁵⁴ The Louisiana Supreme Court later said that this law applies only to “unclassified” government employees, like elected officials, members of the military, members of government boards, commissions, and authorities, and teachers and educational staff.⁵⁵ If your conviction is later reversed, your firing will be considered illegal.⁵⁶

State employees who are “classified” are not covered by this law.⁵⁷ Instead, classified employees can only be terminated (fired) for “cause.” The Civil Service Commission decides what counts as “for cause.”⁵⁸ If your employer started disciplinary action following your arrest or conviction, the employer must show that you did “conduct which impair[ed] the efficient or orderly operation of the public service”⁵⁹ in order to terminate (fire) you.⁶⁰

When you are applying for a job, public employers can still deny your application. They can deny your application because of your criminal record. This is true even if you are qualified for the job, as long as your felony conviction “directly relates” to the job you applied for.⁶¹ This is also true when you are applying for an occupational license, which may be denied for the same reason.⁶² A “direct relationship” may include, for example, employment as a firefighter after a conviction for drunk driving, or a teacher of business ethics who was convicted of stealing money from a client.⁶³ Courts may choose to decide the “direct relationship” standard broadly. Still, there must be some connection between the employment you are seeking and the offenses on your criminal record before your criminal record can be the reason for not getting a job.⁶⁴ Talk to a lawyer if you were not hired at a state agency because of your criminal record and you think there is no relationship between your record and the job you applied for.

⁵³ Employment Discrimination Act, LA. REV. STAT. ANN. §§ 23:301–23:369 (2017); Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2 (2012); the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, 29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.* (2012); *and* the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12111–12117 (2012).

⁵⁴ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 42:1414 (2017); LA. CONST. art. X, § 25.1.

⁵⁵ AFSCME, Council # 17 v. State, 01-0422, p. 1 (La. 06/29/01); 789 So. 2d 1263, 1265 (holding that a broad rule requiring classified employees, who are regulated by the executive branch, to be fired upon a felony conviction violated the constitutionally-mandated separation of powers between the different branches of the state government). *See* LA. CONST. Art. X, § 2 for a complete list of unclassified positions.

⁵⁶ *Caldwell v. Caddo Levee Dist.*, 554 So. 2d 1245, 1248 (La. App. 1 Cir. 1989) (holding that a failure to consider the eventual result of the charges made the termination illegal).

⁵⁷ AFSCME, Council # 17 v. State, 01-0422, pp. 9–10 (La. 06/29/01); 789 So. 2d 1263, 1270 (finding LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 42:1414 unenforceable when applied to classified employees).

⁵⁸ AFSCME, Council # 17 v. State, 01-0422, p. 9 (La. 06/29/01); 789 So. 2d 1263, 1269–1270.

⁵⁹ Louisiana Civil Service Rule 1.5.2.01.

⁶⁰ AFSCME, Council # 17 v. State, 01-0422, pp. 6–7 (La. 06/29/01); 789 So. 2d 1263, 1268 (discussing classified employees’ protections through the Civil Service Commission).

⁶¹ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 37:2950 (2017).

⁶² LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 37:2950 (2017).

⁶³ Louisiana cases interpreting LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 37:2950 are sparse. However, the state of New York employs a similar “direct relationship” standard in N.Y. Correction Law § 752, from which the above examples were taken; *Grafer v. New York City Civil Service Com.*, 581 N.Y.S.2d 337, 337 (N.Y. App. Div. 1992) and *Rosa v. City Univ. of New York*, 789 N.Y.S.2d 4, 5–6 (N.Y. App. Div. 2004).

⁶⁴ New York courts, for example, have tended to interpret the “direct relationship” standard broadly, permitting only a tenuous connection to exist between an applicant’s criminal record and the position for which he applied. *See, e.g.*, *Arrocha v. Bd. of Ed. of the City of New York*, 712 N.E.2d 669, 671, 672–673; 93 N.Y.2d 361, 364, 366–367; 690 N.Y.S.2d 503, 504–505, 506 (N.Y. 1999) (finding a direct relationship between a conviction for selling cocaine and a job as a high school teacher), and *Matter of the Assoc. of Surrogates & Supreme Court Reporters v. State of N.Y. Unified Court System*, 851 N.Y.S.2d 170 (App. Div. 2008) (upholding the denial of a job as a court reporter for a woman who had been convicted of identity theft).

Some state laws can prevent a person with a criminal record from getting certain jobs, like law enforcement positions, medical fields, teaching, and gaming.⁶⁵ Before you start training for a specialized field, you should make sure that your criminal history will not prevent you from getting a job in that field.

2. Clearing Your Criminal Record

Employers may ask you for information about your criminal record and may access your record. So it is really important to know what's on your criminal record. It is also useful to know how to clear your record so that future employers cannot access information about your previous offenses. Chapter 2 of this Supplement explains how to obtain your criminal record and how certain offenses may be expunged, which means removed from your record. Louisiana provides two other options for preventing employers from accessing your criminal record.

In addition to expungement, you might be able to receive a pardon. Pardons demonstrate rehabilitation (that you've changed for the better) since the commission of your offense. A pardon is not the same as an expungement: pardons do not clear the offense from your criminal record, but they do restore certain rights and benefits. Pardons make you eligible for more jobs, occupational licenses, or other benefits.⁶⁶ Pardons are automatically available to first-time offenders who were not previously convicted of a felony.⁶⁷ If you have more than one conviction, you may obtain a pardon *only* with permission from the Board of Pardons.⁶⁸ Only a full Governor's pardon, rather than the automatic pardon just described, can restore all of your rights, including those to occupational licenses.⁶⁹ To apply to the Board of Pardons, you must write down information about your conviction, when you were imprisoned, give information about yourself, the reason you are asking for the pardon, and what kind of relief you are requesting (what you want to happen).⁷⁰

Finally, agencies and employers who are not in law enforcement cannot access information about your criminal record if: (1) you are at least sixty-one years old; (2) you were released from prison more than fifteen years ago; and (3) you have not been arrested since your release.⁷¹ This means that potential employers will not be able to access your record if all three of these apply to you.

Even if your criminal record has been expunged or you have been pardoned, you may still have to talk about prior arrests or convictions on a job application. The federal government doesn't let employers ask about arrests that did not lead to conviction. But Louisiana state law does not stop the practice.⁷² If you do not disclose the arrests and your employer learns of them during a background check, you may lose your job for lying on the application.⁷³ It's hard to know what to disclose on a job application, so you

⁶⁵ See, e.g., La. Atty. Gen. Op. No. 1995-259 (July 14, 1995) (finding LA. REV. STAT. § 37:2950 overcome by a more recent regulation prohibiting the employment of any teacher with a criminal conviction or nolo contendere plea); Eicher v. La. State Police, Riverboat Gaming Enforcement Div. 97-0121, p. 10 (La. App. 1 Cir. 02/20/98); 710 So. 2d 799, 806 (finding that the Riverboat Gaming Enforcement Division did not abuse its discretion when it based the denial of a work permit to a gaming employee on her criminal history).

⁶⁶ Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lawhelp.org/la/> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017) (Follow "Employment" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Records" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana" hyperlink.).

⁶⁷ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. §15:572 (2017).

⁶⁸ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. §15:572 (2017).

⁶⁹ Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lawhelp.org/la/> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017) (Follow "Employment" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Records" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana" hyperlink.).

⁷⁰ For specific information on what your clemency application should include, and to receive an application, call the Board of Pardons at 225-342-5421.

⁷¹ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 15:586 (2017).

⁷² Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lawhelp.org/la/> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017) (Follow "Employment" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Records" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana" hyperlink.).

⁷³ Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lawhelp.org/la/> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017) (Follow "Employment" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Records" hyperlink; then follow "Criminal Record Expungement in Louisiana" hyperlink.).

should talk to a lawyer if you got a pardon or expungement and you don't know if you should tell an employer about your conviction on a job application.

D. YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER BENEFITS

Your criminal record may affect whether you can get public housing or other types of financial assistance. This Part discusses how your criminal record may affect your right to these benefits. Section 1 covers public housing programs. Section 2 talks about unemployment benefits if you lost your job because of your criminal conviction. Section 3 is about whether you can get financial assistance, including cash assistance, Food Stamps, medical coverage, and Social Security.

1. Public Housing

Public housing programs are regulated by the federal government and run by local agencies. Your criminal record may affect whether you can get reduced-cost housing. The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8), requires residents to cover a small part of rent and gives residents vouchers to cover the rest of the rent. The federal government bans admission to Section 8 housing for any applicant who is subject to a lifetime sex-offender registration requirement.⁷⁴ You also can't get Section 8 housing for three years if you were evicted, or a household member was evicted, from public housing for drug-related criminal activity.⁷⁵

The local housing authority can (but isn't required to) deny applicants on the basis of drug-related, violent, or other criminal activity that may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment by other people living in the area.⁷⁶ The agency can decide if it wants to deny applicants with recent criminal records.⁷⁷ The Housing Authority of New Orleans, for example, does not allow people convicted of crimes that threaten the public health, safety, or welfare to apply for housing for three years after the conviction.⁷⁸ Contact your local housing authority to see if your criminal record will stop you from taking advantage of public housing. If the agency denies your admission to public housing because of your criminal record and you believe this was wrong because: 1) the criminal record the agency reviewed was inaccurate, or 2) the offense(s) on your record aren't enough to deny you housing according to the agency's own rules, you can challenge this decision in an informal review procedure.⁷⁹

For information on how to apply for public housing and income eligibility requirements, contact your local housing authority.⁸⁰

2. Unemployment Benefits

If you were fired from your job because of your criminal conviction, you may not be able to get unemployment benefits.⁸¹ Louisiana law stops a person from getting benefits if he was fired from his job

⁷⁴ 24 C.F.R. § 982.553(a)(2)(i) (2018).

⁷⁵ 24 C.F.R. § 982.553(a)(1)(i) (2018).

⁷⁶ 24 C.F.R. § 982.553(a)(2)(ii)(A) (2018).

⁷⁷ 24 C.F.R. § 982.553(a)(2)(ii)(B) (2018). The Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) allows each local housing agency to decide how recent an applicant's criminal record must be in order to be the basis of an admission denial, within a "reasonable time." The Housing Authority of New Orleans has interpreted this standard as within three years of your application for public housing.

⁷⁸ State Profiles: Louisiana, *available at* <http://www.lac.org/roadblocks-to-reentry/main.php?view=profile&subaction1=LA> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

⁷⁹ 24 C.F.R. § 982.553(d)(1) (2018). *See* 24 C.F.R. § 982.554 (2018) for more information on the informal review process. The specific procedure will vary according to each agency, so you should contact your local housing authority to find out how to request review of the denial. There are often deadlines for requesting review of an agency decision, so it is important to do this as soon as possible upon finding out that your application has been denied.

⁸⁰ For a list of local housing agencies in Louisiana, *see* PHA Contact Info, *available at* https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/la (last visited Oct. 11, 2017).

⁸¹ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 23:1601(2)(a) (2017).

for “misconduct connected with his employment.”⁸² Your employer, however, has to prove that there was misconduct (that you did something wrong).⁸³ Louisiana courts, on the other hand, have found that any felony conviction is enough misconduct to stop you from getting unemployment benefits.⁸⁴ If that misconduct was “connected with [your] employment,” it will disqualify you from receiving unemployment benefits.⁸⁵

Conduct leading to a felony conviction that occurred during work hours or related to your work will likely be treated as “connected with your employment.”⁸⁶ The courts have held that off-the-job activities will also disqualify you if they “render [you] . . . unable to report for work and perform the duties of [your] employment for any unseasonable length of time by reason of [your] confinement in jail.”⁸⁷ In other words, anything you do outside of work may also count against you. If you lost your job for not being able to physically perform your duties because you were locked up, you might not be able to get unemployment benefits. However, the unemployment agency must conduct a case-by-case analysis to decide if a person gets unemployment benefits.⁸⁸ The agency will also look at whether you violated one of your employer’s policies by the conduct associated with your conviction.⁸⁹

For former employees of the state or city, the rules are simpler. Under state law, public employees who were fired because of their felony conviction will be automatically disqualified from receiving unemployment compensation.⁹⁰

If you believe that you should be getting unemployment benefits, you can apply for benefits by calling 1-866-783-5567 or by visiting the Louisiana Workforce Commission website. The website contains information about how to estimate how much you will receive in benefits, what information you will need to file a claim, how to do so, and how to check on the status of your application.⁹¹

⁸² LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 23:1601(2)(a) (2017). Misconduct is defined as “mismanagement of a position of employment by action or inaction, neglect that places in jeopardy the lives or property of others, dishonesty, wrongdoing, violation of a law, or violation of a policy or rule adopted to insure orderly work or the safety of others.”

⁸³ See *Daniel v. Wal-Mart Assoc.*, 2003-0441, p. 6 (La. App. 1 Cir. 12/31/03); 868 So. 2d 137, 141 (finding that the lower court erred in placing the burden on the plaintiff to prove that he had not been fired for misconduct).

⁸⁴ *Grimble v. Brown*, 247 La. 376, 382, 171 So. 2d 653, 655 (La. 1965) (stating “it can hardly be gainsaid that the commission of an act constituting a criminal offense . . . is misconduct.”).

⁸⁵ *Morris v. Gerace*, 353 So. 2d 986, 988 (La. 1977) (establishing that misconduct must be employment related).

⁸⁶ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 23:1601 (2017).

⁸⁷ *Grimble v. Brown*, 247 La. 376, 383 (La. 1965).

⁸⁸ *Moore v. Louisiana State Univ.*, 517 So. 2d 993, 994 (La. App. 3 Cir. 1987) (holding that although not every criminal action committed while off-duty would warrant the denial of unemployment benefits, the circumstances of the case at hand did).

⁸⁹ See *Sensley v. Administrator, Office of Employment Sec.*, 552 So. 2d 787, 790 (La. App. 1 Cir. 1989) (finding that plaintiff was not qualified for benefits after being terminated from a management position at McDonald’s following an arrest for drug possession and intent to distribute at his home, because he had violated the employer’s policy that managers must set a positive example for the family-style environment); *South Central Bell Telephone Co. v. Sumrall*, 414 So. 2d 876, 878 (La. 1982) (upholding denial of employment benefits when plaintiff had been terminated for violating the company’s policy against drug use while on or off duty following arrest on drug charges); *Johnson v. Bd. of Com’rs of Port of New Orleans*, 348 So. 2d 1289, 1292 (La. App. 4 Cir. 1977) (finding plaintiff disqualified from unemployment compensation after his conviction for disturbing the peace violated three explicit employer policies). *But see* *Marine Drilling Co. v. Whitfield*, 535 So. 2d 1253, 1257 (La. App. 3 Cir. 1988) (allowing unemployment compensation due to the lack of connection between the plaintiff’s positive drug test while off-duty and his employment on a drilling rig).

⁹⁰ *Moore v. Louisiana State Univ.*, 517 So. 2d 993, 994 (La. App. 3 Cir. 1987) (finding that the state properly denied benefits to plaintiff, who had been fired from his job in maintenance at a state university due to a felony conviction that he had received while on unpaid leave during the summer, which the court described as “a felony done in complete disregard of the standards of behavior of the employer”). The court in *Moore* relied on LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 42:1414, which provides for complete termination of the employer-employee relationship, including for purposes of benefits, when a state employee receives a felony conviction.

⁹¹ Unemployment Insurance: Claimants’ Menu, *available at* http://www.laworks.net/UnemploymentInsurance/UI_Claimants.asp (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

3. Public Assistance

a. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamps (SNAP)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) is a federal welfare program that gives cash assistance to certain families for a short period of time.⁹² In Louisiana, this program is the main form of welfare, and is known as the Family Independent Temporary Assistance Program (“FITAP”).⁹³ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP,” more commonly known as Food Stamps) gives extra money to pay for food.⁹⁴

The federal government recently limited who can get TANF and SNAP. The federal government created a lifetime ban on these benefits for anyone convicted of a drug offense.⁹⁵ However, Louisiana has chosen to “opt out” of the lifetime ban.⁹⁶ Instead, individuals convicted of a drug offense in Louisiana cannot receive FITAP and SNAP benefits for one year.⁹⁷

You can apply or reapply for FITAP or SNAP benefits by filling out an online form.⁹⁸ You can also download the form, fill it out by hand, and return it to your local Office of Family Support (“OFS”).⁹⁹ OFS will then interview you, either in person or over the phone, and make a decision about your eligibility.¹⁰⁰

b. Medicaid

Medicaid is a state program that provides medical insurance and services for low-income individuals.¹⁰¹ Louisiana residents who receive FITAP or Supplemental Security Insurance (*see* Section 3(c) below for more information about SSI) are automatically able to get Medicaid.¹⁰² You also might be able to get Medicaid if you are blind, disabled, or a parent of a child under age 19.¹⁰³

Your criminal record will not affect whether you can get Medicaid. If you got Medicaid benefits before prison, you will have to reapply when you are released to get back into the program.¹⁰⁴ If you want to apply or reapply for Medicaid, contact the Louisiana Medicaid hotline at 1-888-342-6207 to begin the process over the phone.

⁹² Policy Basics: An Introduction to TANF, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *available at* <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=936> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

⁹³ Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, *available at* <http://www.dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&nid=109&pnid=7&pid=139&catid=0> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

⁹⁴ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, U.S. Dep’t. of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, *available at* <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

⁹⁵ Summary of State Laws Modifying the Federal Ban on TANF and Food Stamps, *available at* http://www.lac.org/toolkits/TANF/TANF_summary.htm (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

⁹⁶ Summary of State Laws Modifying the Federal Ban on TANF and Food Stamps, *available at* http://www.lac.org/toolkits/TANF/TANF_summary.htm (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

⁹⁷ Summary of State Laws Modifying the Federal Ban on TANF and Food Stamps, *available at* http://www.lac.org/toolkits/TANF/TANF_summary.htm (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

⁹⁸ The form is available at the following website: <https://cafe-cp.dcfs.la.gov/selfservice/> (last visited Jan. 23, 2018).

⁹⁹ Louisiana CAFÉ Customer Portal, *available at* <https://cafe-cp.dcfs.la.gov/selfservice/> (last visited October 5, 2017).

¹⁰⁰ Frequently Asked Questions, *available at* https://cafe-cp.dcfs.la.gov/en_robohelp/CafeCustomerPortal.htm#ACFAQ.htm/ (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

¹⁰¹ Common Questions—Medicaid, *available at* <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/faq/category/72> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

¹⁰² Common Questions—Medicaid, *available at* <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/faq/category/72> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

¹⁰³ Common Questions—Medicaid, *available at* <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/faq/category/72> (last visited Oct. 5, 2017).

¹⁰⁴ Telephone interview with a representative from the Louisiana Medicaid Hotline (Jan. 23, 2011).

c. Federal benefits

The Social Security Administration (“SSA”) offers several benefits programs that you may be able to take advantage of. If you are disabled and have never worked, you may qualify for Supplemental Security Income, or “SSI.”¹⁰⁵ If you are disabled and have a significant work history, you may be able to get benefits through Social Security Disability.¹⁰⁶ If you are over 62 and have a significant (big) work history, you should be able to get Social Security Retirement benefits.¹⁰⁷ The SSA also gives Medicare, a medical insurance program for people with disabilities or people who are age 65 or older.¹⁰⁸

The Social Security Administration does not deny benefits to applicants with criminal records.¹⁰⁹ If you got Social Security Disability or Retirement benefits before prison, they can be reinstated (you get the benefits again) the month after your release if you contact Social Security and provide a copy of your release documents.¹¹⁰ If you got SSI benefits and were in prison for longer than 12 months, however, your benefits will be terminated (end) and you must reapply when you are released.¹¹¹ Your institution may have a pre-release agreement with the SSA. If so, you can apply for benefits before you are released.¹¹² If not, contact the SSA to apply when you know your release date.¹¹³

Your Medicare coverage also may have been terminated (ended) while you were in prison. Medicare Part B (medical insurance) requires you to pay a monthly premium that you may not have paid during your sentence. If that is the case, you must reapply during the general enrollment period of January through March of each year.¹¹⁴

Prior to 2009, the SSA suspended (stopped) Social Security benefits for anyone who got Social Security benefits and had a felony warrant for his arrest.¹¹⁵ Now, however, the SSA may only suspend your benefits if you have an open bench warrant for a probation or parole violation,¹¹⁶ or if you are currently in prison. Once you are released, you should be careful not to violate your probation or parole because your Social Security benefits may be terminated.

4. Other Restrictions to Reentry

a. Voting

The Louisiana State Constitution provides that individuals with criminal records can vote unless they are currently in prison for a felony.¹¹⁷ Once you are released, your right to vote will be automatically restored (you’ll be able to vote again).

¹⁰⁵ See Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits, *available at* <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). Please visit www.ssa.gov for more information about this program.

¹⁰⁶ See Disability Benefits, *available at* <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/disability.htm> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). Please visit www.ssa.gov for more information about this program.

¹⁰⁷ See Retirement Planner, *available at* <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/retirement.htm> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). Please visit www.ssa.gov for more information about this program.

¹⁰⁸ See Medicare Benefits, *available at* <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/medicare.htm> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). Please visit www.ssa.gov for more information about this program.

¹⁰⁹ See What Prisoners Need to Know, *available at* <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html#3> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹¹⁰ See What Prisoners Need to Know, *available at* <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html#3> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹¹¹ See What Prisoners Need to Know, *available at* <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html#3> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹¹² See What Prisoners Need to Know, *available at* <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html#3> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹¹³ See What Prisoners Need to Know, *available at* <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html#3> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). You can reach the SSA to apply for benefits by phone at 1-800-772-1213 or online at www.ssa.gov.

¹¹⁴ See What Prisoners Need to Know, *available at* <http://ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html#3> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017). You can apply for Medicare online at <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib>, or contact the SSA over the phone at 1-800-772-1213.

¹¹⁵ See Notice of Final Settlement in Martinez Court Case, *available at* <http://www.ssa.gov/martinezsettlement/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹¹⁶ See Notice of Final Settlement in Martinez Court Case, *available at* <http://www.ssa.gov/martinezsettlement/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹¹⁷ LA. CONST. art. I, §§10, 20

b. Drivers Licenses and State Identification Cards

If you were convicted of a crime or another type of offense involving narcotics, your drivers license will have been automatically revoked for at least ninety days, but no more than one year.¹¹⁸ If you are in prison for less than a year because of a drug offense, you should still check with the Office of Motor Vehicles to make sure that your license is still valid.¹¹⁹

In some cases, the Department may grant you a restricted (limited) license if you can show that the suspension of your license will result in a hardship.¹²⁰ Hardship means that not having a license would prevent you from earning a livelihood (working).¹²¹ If you don't get the result you want from the Department, you may file a petition to have the district court in your parish review the decision.¹²² Generally, the Department or the court grants restricted licenses for education or employment purposes.¹²³ In one case, for example, the court allowed a restricted license after the plaintiff showed that driving a vehicle was "absolutely necessary . . . to perform his job assignments" and that without the job he would be unable to support his family.¹²⁴

If you need a state identification card, the Department can help you obtain one as part of the Corrections Organized for Reentry program.¹²⁵ Working with the Office of Motor Vehicles, the Department headquarters in Baton Rouge can print state IDs for prisoners preparing for release.¹²⁶ If you think you may need a new state identification card, you should talk to your transition specialist. If you do not have enough money in your account to pay for the card, the Department will pay for it.¹²⁷

E. CONCLUSION

The Louisiana Department of Corrections offers many pre-release programs to help you transition back into society. This includes academic and vocational classes, substance abuse treatment, and job preparation. Louisiana law regarding employment for applicants with criminal records is not very good for you. You should be careful about your career choices to make sure that your criminal record will not stop you from getting a job. Finally, your criminal record should not stop you from getting most types of public benefits, including Social Security and Medicaid.

¹¹⁸ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 32:430(A)(1) (2017).

¹¹⁹ Information about license suspension or disqualification can be obtained over the phone by calling (225) 925-6146; select option 1 and have your Louisiana driver's license number available.

¹²⁰ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 32:668(B)(1)(a) (2017).

¹²¹ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 32:668 (2017).

¹²² LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 32:668(C) (2017); LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 32:415.1(A)(1) (2017).

¹²³ LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 32:668 (2017).

¹²⁴ *Noustens v. State of Louisiana*, 524 So. 2d 235, 237 (La. App. 5 Cir. 1988). Note that although the court issued a restricted license to the plaintiff immediately because suspension of his license would result in the loss of his job, some courts have declined to follow *Noustens* and instead require a waiting period of 30 to 90 days before issuing a hardship license. See *Schott v. State of Louisiana*, 556 So. 2d 999, 1001 (La. App. 3 Cir. 1990) (finding that the plaintiff must wait 90 out of the 180 days of his sentence before receiving a restricted license).

¹²⁵ See James LeBlanc, 2004 Innovation Awards Program Application: CORE, available at <http://www.csg.org/knowledgecenter/docs/innov/PSJFinalist2004-LA.pdf> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹²⁶ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

¹²⁷ Telephone interview with Whalen Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Louisiana Department of Corrections (Mar. 16, 2011).

APPENDIX A

EDUCATIONAL AND SKILLS TRAINING OFFERINGS AT EACH PRISON

*Louisiana State Penitentiary*¹²⁸

The State Penitentiary offers academic classes in Literacy, Adult Basic Education (“ABE”), GED Preparation, and Special Education. Depending on your score on the Test for Adult Basic Education (“TABE”), you may take the following vocational courses through Louisiana Technical College: Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Collision Repair, Culinary Arts, Electrical, Horticulture, and Welding. You may also enroll at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to obtain an Associate’s or a Bachelor’s degree in Christian Ministry, or a Faith-based Certificate. The State Penitentiary also offers Pre-Release Exit Programs and Reentry Programs that train prisoners in employment and other skills to help with your daily life upon release.

*Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women*¹²⁹

In addition to Literacy, ABE, and GED classes, prisoners can also take courses in Culinary Arts, Horticulture, Business Office Technology, and Upholstery. The reentry programs offered include anger management, sexual trauma and domestic violence support groups, parenting, and organizations such as Toastmasters and the Jaycees, a leadership and civic awareness group.

*Allen Correctional Center*¹³⁰

Allen Correctional Center offers GED, ABE, Literacy, and special education classes, as well as peer tutoring through the Correctional Learning Network. Vocational offerings include Culinary Arts, Upholstery, Cabinet Making, and Computerized Office Practice. The Correctional Center has a wide range of substance abuse programming, values development, and theological courses and groups. Finally, the pre-release programming includes a Life Plan seminar and a wilderness program.

*Avoyelles Correctional Center*¹³¹

Vocational offerings at Avoyelles include Auto Collision Repair, Engine Technology, Barbering, Culinary Arts, Building Technology, Diesel Engine Repair, and Masonry. Certain first-time offenders may take entry-level college courses through the Youth Offender Program. Other college level courses are available through correspondence at your own expense.

*David Wade Correctional Center*¹³²

David Wade offers vocational programs in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Automotive, Carpentry, Horticulture, and Welding. Prisoners between 16 and 25 years old who have obtained their GED or high school diploma and who are within five years of release may pursue postsecondary education through a Youth Offender Grant. Religious programs and services are available, along with the mandatory reentry programming.

¹²⁸ See Education, available at <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹²⁹ See Education, available at <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹³⁰ See Education, available at <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Oct. 1, 2017).

¹³¹ Education, available at <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

¹³² Education, available at <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

Dixon Correctional Institute¹³³

In addition to GED, ABE, and Literacy classes, Dixon offers vocational courses in Collision Repair, Carpentry, Automotive Technology, and Welding. College courses are available through correspondence, and Dixon offers the standard pre-release, religious, and substance abuse programming. You may also participate in offender organizations such as Toastmasters and Incarcerated Veterans.

Elayn Hunt Correctional Center¹³⁴

Vocational offerings at Elayn Hunt include Welding, Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, and Outdoor Power Equipment Technology. You can also earn certifications in areas such as Construction, Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning from the Environmental Protection Agency ("HVAC/EPA"), and Small Engine Technicians.

B.B. Rayburn Correctional Center¹³⁵

B.B. Rayburn offers vocational courses in welding, automotive, and building technology, as well as a six-month course in Job/Life Skills that teaches computer literacy, typing, resume formulation, and job search skills. Prisoners may also work toward an Associate Degree in General Studies with a concentration in business or religion through the River Parish Community College.

Winn Correctional Center¹³⁶

Winn offers the standard ABE, GED, and literacy courses in addition to vocational classes in Computerized Office Practice, Culinary Arts/Food Service, Data Entry, HVAC, Horticulture, Graphic Arts, Automotive Body & Maintenance Repair, and Welding.

¹³³ Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

¹³⁴ Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

¹³⁵ Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).

¹³⁶ Education, *available at* <http://doc.la.gov/education> (last visited Feb. 25, 2018).