

POLICY RELEASE

Security Universities

Turning America's prisons from a national liability into an engine of safety, learning, workforce development, and reconciliation

Purpose Invite federal, state, Tribal, educational, labor, employer, behavioral-health, victims' services, and community partners to develop and test a secure university model for corrections.

Prepared for consultation with

Federal and state correctional leaders • Congress and state legislatures • colleges and universities • workforce and labor organizations • employers • behavioral-health and trauma-recovery providers • victims' advocates • Tribal Nations • foundations and community partners

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Core proposition

Accountability and public safety remain non-negotiable. The proposed shift is from custody as an endpoint to custody as a structured period of stabilization, education, responsibility, and preparation for lawful participation in society.

Status

Independent proposal for discussion. "Security University" is a working policy term, not a legal classification, accreditation, or claim of endorsement by any agency, educational institution, labor organization, or other body.

Release

FOR DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

OFP Chartered proposes ‘Security Universities’ to connect correctional safety with education, workforce preparation, and community stability

MINNEAPOLIS, 27 August 2026 —

Out Finding Phoenix Chartered today released a policy concept proposing that selected correctional institutions be developed and evaluated as Security Universities: secure, accountable environments organized around stabilization, education, skilled-workforce preparation, restorative practices, and successful reentry.

The proposal does not eliminate sentences, custody, supervision, victims’ rights, or institutional security. It asks a different operational question: while a person is in public custody, are systems using that time to reduce future harm and build the capabilities needed for a lawful and productive return to society?

Under the concept, accredited education, literacy, behavioral-health services, trauma-informed care, substance-use recovery, skilled trades, civic responsibility, family connection, and reentry planning would be coordinated within one individualized development plan. Participation would carry clear expectations, verified progress, and consequences for misconduct.

Why this is timely

- The First Step Act already directs the federal system to assess risk and needs and assign evidence-based recidivism-reduction programs and productive activities.
- Eligible prison education programs can provide access to Pell Grants for confined or incarcerated students, creating an existing pathway for accredited postsecondary learning.
- Recent federal oversight continues to identify implementation and measurement gaps, reinforcing the need for disciplined pilots, transparent data, and independent evaluation.

A national invitation

OFP Chartered invites correctional agencies, educational institutions, employers, organized labor, victims’ advocates, Tribal Nations, researchers, behavioral-health providers, and people with lived experience to help define appropriate safeguards, pilot criteria, curriculum pathways, outcome measures, and community accountability.

Guiding principle Public safety is strengthened when accountability produces measurable human development, credible employment pathways, and safer reintegration.

Media and consultation contact

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Policy proposal sheet

A demonstration pathway for Security Universities

Recommendation: establish an independently evaluated demonstration across a small, diverse group of federal, state, and Tribal correctional settings selected for leadership readiness, workforce demand, educational partners, and community reentry capacity.

Model pillars

Pillar	Operational commitment
Safety & accountability	Maintain secure custody, proportionate discipline, due process, victims' rights, and individualized risk management.
Stabilization & health	Provide behavioral-health assessment, trauma-informed services, recovery supports, and continuity of care.
Education	Deliver literacy, secondary completion, accredited college pathways, digital competence, and financial capability.
Workforce	Connect instruction to recognized credentials, apprenticeships, real labor demand, fair work standards, and employer commitments.
Restoration	Use supervised projects—where appropriate—to restore public assets, historic places, housing, infrastructure, and environmental resources.
Reentry & belonging	Begin release planning at intake and coordinate identification, housing, health care, employment, family connection, and community mentorship.

Pilot safeguards

- No involuntary research; no reduction of legal protections; accessible grievance and appeal processes.
- Education and work assignments must not become coerced labor or displace regular workers.
- Programs must be culturally responsive, disability-accessible, and evaluated for disparate impact.
- Independent oversight should include victims' representatives, educators, labor, community partners, and formerly incarcerated people.

Measures that matter

Publish a common scorecard covering institutional safety; program access and completion; credentials; health-care continuity; post-release housing, employment, and wages; family connection; victim and community confidence; recidivism at defined intervals; cost per successful outcome; and disparities across protected groups.

Immediate federal and state actions

- Convene a 120-day design group and issue model pilot standards.
- Select demonstration sites through a transparent readiness process.
- Align existing First Step Act, Second Chance, workforce, apprenticeship, behavioral-health, and eligible prison-education resources before requesting major new appropriations.
- Fund an independent evaluator and publish baseline, annual, and post-release results.

Selected public sources

Federal Bureau of Prisons, First Step Act overview and program resources (bop.gov/inmates/fsa/); U.S. Department of Education, Prison Education Programs (ed.gov; fsapartners.ed.gov); U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-26-107268 (2026); National Institute of Justice and Office of Justice Programs correctional-education and reentry research (nij.ojp.gov; ojp.gov).