

# AMC2012

I think one of the most pressing issues that the network should focus on is education and/or furthering education for the incarcerated beyond high school, G.E.D./HSED, and/or institutional vocational trades. The incarcerated should be able to obtain and enroll into college while incarcerated. However, funding education beyond high school for the incarcerated is challenging, if not unobtainable and really is unrealistic.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "Federal student aid is limited for incarcerated students: They are ineligible to receive federal student loans, and students incarcerated in federal or state penal institutions are ineligible to receive Federal Pell Grants. Nevertheless, formerly incarcerated students may apply for and receive all types of federal student aid. (There are no federal programs specifically for formerly incarcerated students, however.)"

The incarcerated is at a disadvantage with funding education beyond high school. The incarcerated does not have or is <sup>not</sup> allowed access to the internet to search for grants, scholarships, awards, and prizes. The incarcerated does not have or is not allowed to solicit or enterprize money. An institutional wage for the incarceration can barely support an inmates' prison needs, let alone a college education. The incarcerated may not have family, friends, and or financial assistance to help fund a college education.

If you took me for an example; I have always thought of education as important and I am willing and able to commit myself to a higher education. I would like to pursue a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology or English. I have no financial means or support to even begin thinking of college. I have written numerous letters to family, friends, churches, faith-based groups, and other organizations who may have the resources

available for me to pursue a higher education and they either never responded or couldn't help me out financially. I have been sentenced to 57 years in prison but I still haven't given up on myself or trying to go to college. It's just maybe others have given up on me.

I believe in change, I believe anything is possible, and I believe in getting an education. The prisons offer and provide opportunities for inmates to pursue academic, vocational and college programming, but it is limited. If an inmate wants to go beyond that limit, usually the inmate must pay for that course because financial aid is not available.

How does the incarcerated fund a college education worth \$23,000 or \$30,000? Without financial aid or some kind of grant, scholarship, or loan, the incarcerated is doomed. I mean, the incarcerated used to be able to get degrees while incarcerated until the government stopped that. Why can't the incarcerated go back to that system? Why did the government stop letting the incarcerated get degrees in prison?

Education is fundamental and should be free and accessible to everyone, I think, regardless of being incarcerated. I should be able to pursue a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology if I want to regardless if I'm in prison and I shouldn't have to worry about funding the education like so many other people in the free world.

No child left behind, huh? Unless you go to prison, I guess! Let's get back into school!

by: Michael Ray Charles Green  
Inmate # 410237  
Waupun Correctional Institution  
P.O. Box 351  
Waupun, WI 53963