



PimaCountyCommunityCollegeDistrict

Office of the Chancellor

4905C East Broadway Boulevard
Tucson, Arizona 85709-1005
Telephone (520) 206-4747
Fax (520) 206-4990
www.pima.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 17, 2026

TO: Chairperson Allen, Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, and County Administrator Leshner

FROM: Dr. Jeffrey P. Nasse, Chancellor, Pima Community College

SUBJECT: Funding Request for the Continuation of Adult Basic Education Instruction and GED Testing at the Pima County Jail

For more than 35 years, Pima Community College (PCC) Adult Basic Education for College & Career (formerly Pima County Adult Education) has provided Adult Basic Education (ABE) instruction at the Pima County Jail with the goal of helping inmates prepare for and pass the GED exam and achieve their High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma. On-site, free GED Testing has been provided for 32 years, allowing inmates to complete single-subject GED tests while awaiting release or sentencing.

Following the recent termination of the contract that previously funded this programming, college leadership met personally with Sheriff Nanos to explore avenues to sustain this critical community resource. While the Sheriff confirmed that the Sheriff's Department cannot maintain funding for the program within its current operational budget constraints, he recommended that PCC approach the Board of Supervisors directly for this funding. The Sheriff expressed support for the program continuing at the Jail should alternate funding be identified.

This proposal is presented to the Board as a collaborative, multi-agency effort to sustain rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and build strong workforce pathways for justice-involved individuals in Pima County.

PCC respectfully requests \$170,000 in funding to prevent any gap in services.

The Critical Need and Proven Impact of Correctional Education

Recent data highlights a large, unmet need for educational services within the Jail:

- **Overwhelming Demand:** Since July 1, 2025, the lead Adult Education Instructor fielded roughly **2,800 educational requests** from inmates, including **1,700 specifically for GED preparation**.
- **Capacity Bottlenecks:** Capacity is **constrained by physical space and post-COVID protocols** that limit student movement between housing pods, and access to **only 24 classroom seats per day**, despite high demand from nearly 2,800 inmate requests. Policies that prohibit the use of the internet on instructional computers have also limited educational software options.
- **Exceptional Results:** Despite entering classes with an average 6th-grade literacy level, participants achieved an **80% pass rate** on single-subject GED tests, surpassing the national average.

Investing in this program yields proven societal and economic returns:

- **Drastically Reduced Recidivism:** Inmates receiving adult education services have **43% lower odds of reoffending.**
- **Improved Employment:** Program participants are **13% more likely to secure stable employment** after release.
- **High Taxpayer ROI:** Every \$1 invested in correctional education **saves \$4 to \$5 in future reincarceration costs.**
- **Strong Public Support:** 83% of Arizona voters support using funding to help adults access career and job-training programs.

Program Budget Scenarios and Expansion Options

Base Programming: Maintain current level of programming - \$170,000 annually

- Budget includes: 1 full-time instructor, 1 part-time instructor, 16 days of Official GED Testing per year, classroom and office supplies.
- Services provided: Adult Basic Education / GED preparation classes, digital literacy instruction, Official GED Testing
- Impact: 240 learners served, 150 single subject GED tests administered

Additional program options:

The following additional program options would allow the Pima Community College team to enhance and expand educational services for inmates at the Pima County Jail.

Option #1: Add Employability Skills Training - \$12,000 annually

Provides weekly workshops for all inmates on workplace communication, professionalism, career planning, resume writing, and interviewing, aligned to local workforce needs. Impact: 240 learners served.

Option #2: Add Additional GED Testing Sessions - \$10,000 annually

Adds 2 testing days per month (8 months/year). Impact: 150 additional single-subject GED tests administered.

Option #3: Add Transition Services - \$24,000 annually

Provides individualized coaching support for inmates who are being released, bridging them to on-campus educational and career pathways.

Option #4: Add Additional Adult Basic Education Classroom - \$135,000 (\$70,000 one-time cost)

Adds 3-4 part-time instructors and 9 computers to increase capacity by 400 learners served in either ABE/GED classes, employability skills workshops, or both.

NOTE: Feasibility dependent on available jail space.