

NEW ENGLAND BOARD
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education Programs for Incarcerated People in New England

Information and statistics about the state of incarceration and college programs for justice involved individuals in New England

Findings from NEBHE's January 2021 Report

PART 1

Postsecondary Prison
Education Through Time

PART 2

A snapshot of New England
Prisons

PART 3

Recidivism & Higher
Education

PART 4

The Price of Incarceration v.
Higher Education

PART 5

Other Benefits to College in
Prison Programs

Part 1

A quick history of college
behind bars programs in
the USA

A Pell Timeline

1994

Passage of the
Violent Crime
Control and Law
Enforcement Act

2015

Second
Chance Pell
Grants under
the Obama
administration

2020

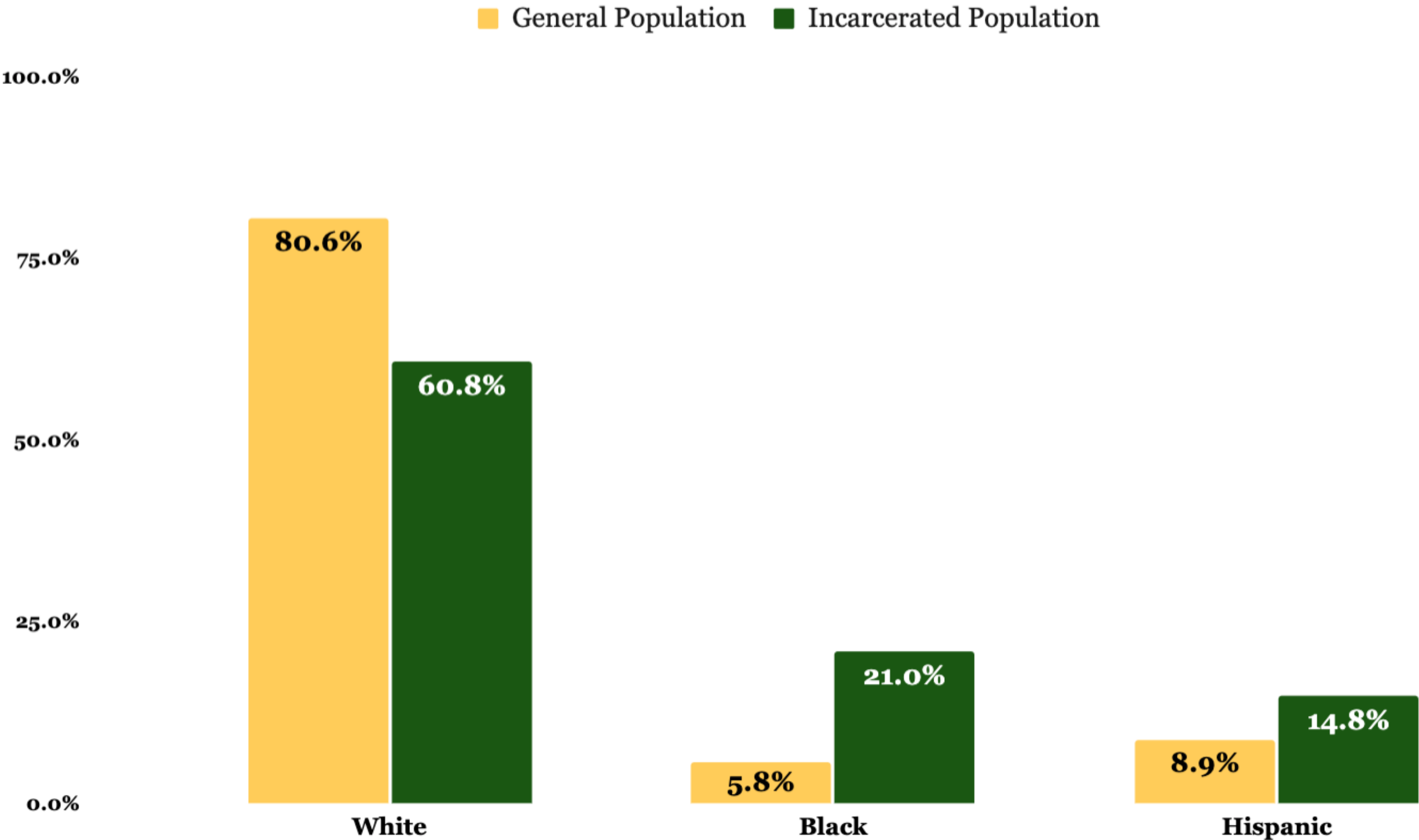
Pell grant
restrictions
lifted
federally



New England Fast Facts

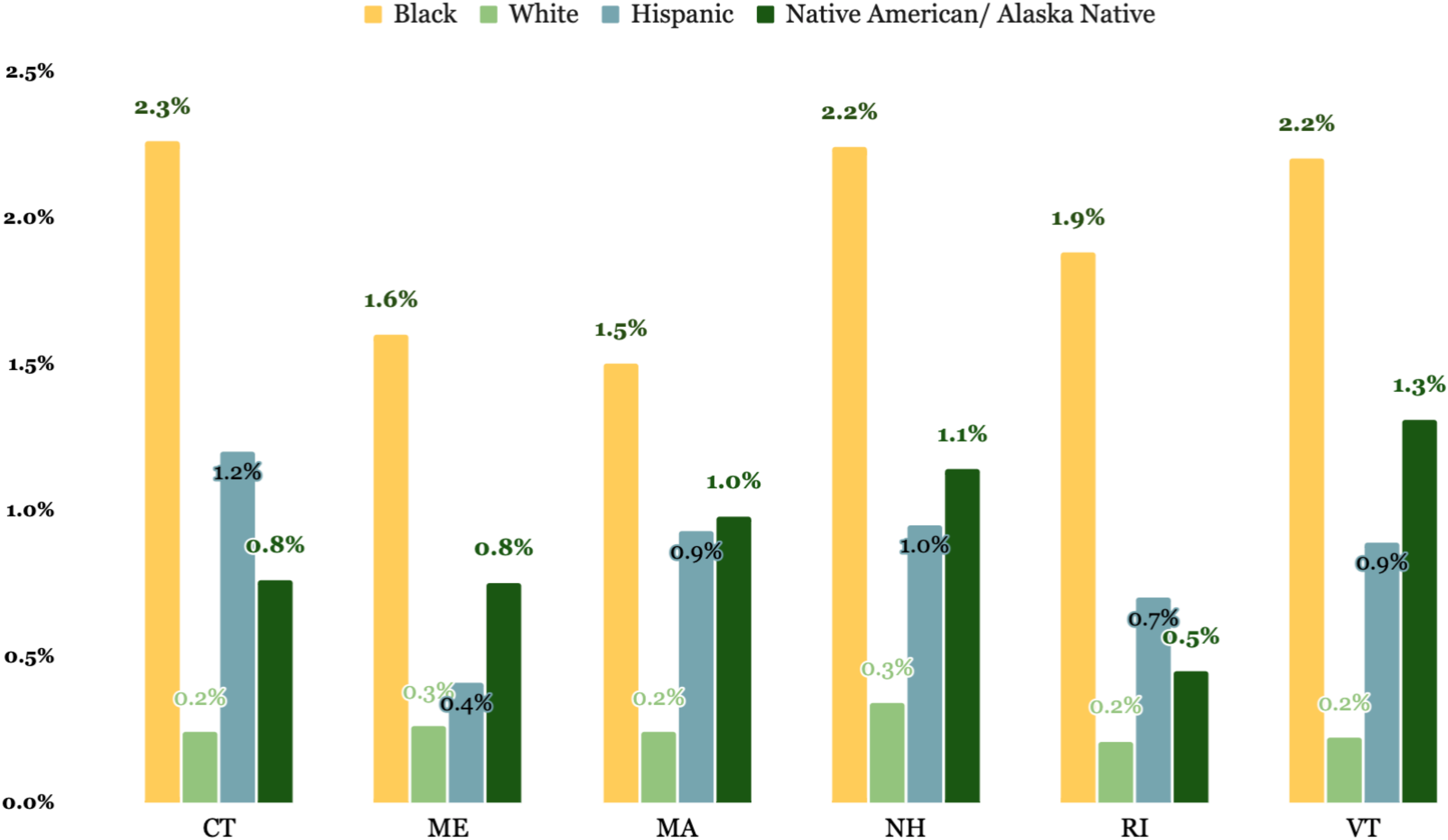
- There are 201,860 people who are incarcerated, on parole or on probation in New England. Much of this has to do with societal inequities, unequal policing and the school to prison pipeline, and inequitable education. (Jones, 2018)
- Of the 45 New England prisons that publish educational data, 40 offer GED or high school courses, 28 offer associate degree granting courses, and 8 offer bachelor's degree granting programs. (IBID)
- New England has fewer incarcerated people than other regions in the country, although our regional rates are still higher than 185 other countries.
 - Massachusetts has the lowest rate of incarceration in the country, Maine has the second lowest, New Hampshire the fifth lowest, Rhode Island, the 12th lowest, Vermont the 14th lowest and Connecticut has the 13th highest rate on incarceration in the country.

Percentage of Incarcerated Population v. General Population in New England by Race/Ethnicity



Source: NEBHE analysis of data from Jones (2018) and the U.S. Census Bureau

Percentage of Incarcerated Population by Race/Ethnicity



Source: NEBHE analysis of data from Jones (2018).

Part 3 Recidivism and Higher Education

According to the US Sentencing Commission almost half of people who are released from federal prisons were rearrested within eight years

However, providing postsecondary education programs to incarcerated people can reduce recidivism drastically.

55% of the general public in the US has some sort of experience with postsecondary education (either associate or bachelor degree) (ibid)

23% of the incarcerated population does

In New England, 58% of all formerly incarcerated people in the region do not have a high school diploma or equivalency (Couloute, 2018)

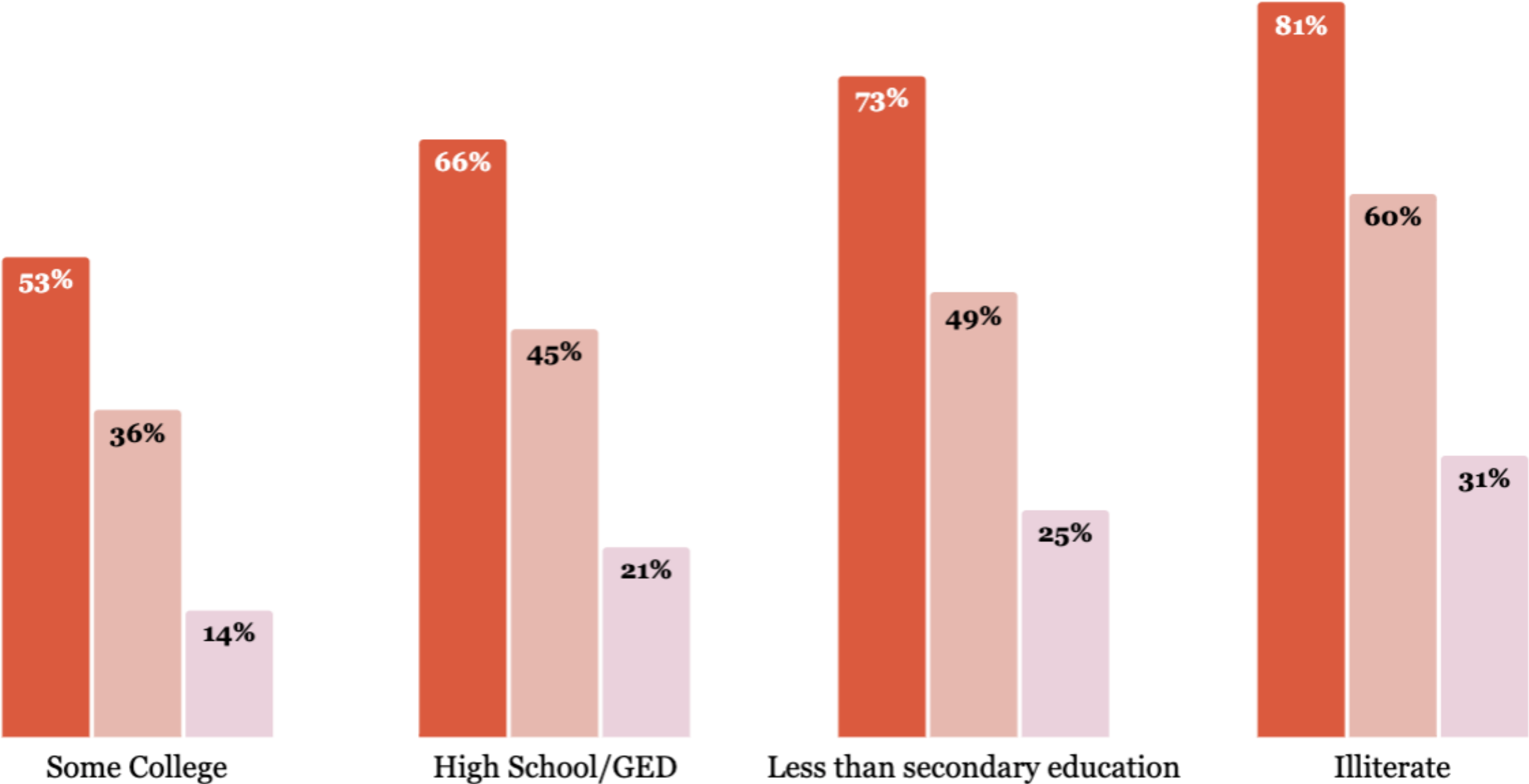
By comparison, among non-incarcerated New Englanders, only 13% do not have a high school diploma or GED

29% of the general public holds a bachelor's degree or higher,

whereas only 4% of formerly incarcerated people have earned a four-year degree or higher (ibid)

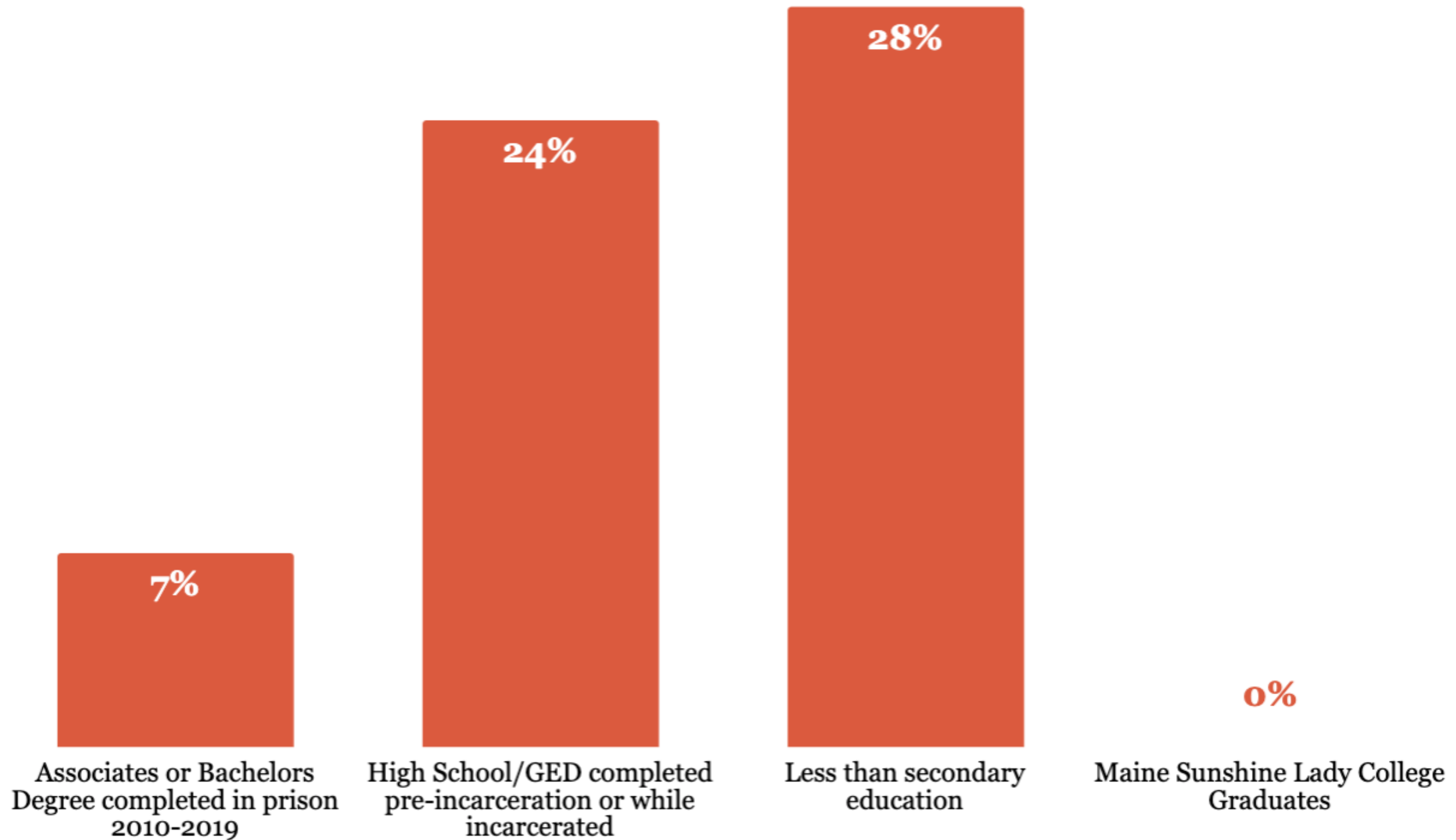
Impact of Education on Recidivism in Connecticut

■ Rearrest rate after three years of release ■ Reconviction rate ■ Reprison rate



Source: NEBHE analysis of data from the Connecticut Department of Corrections

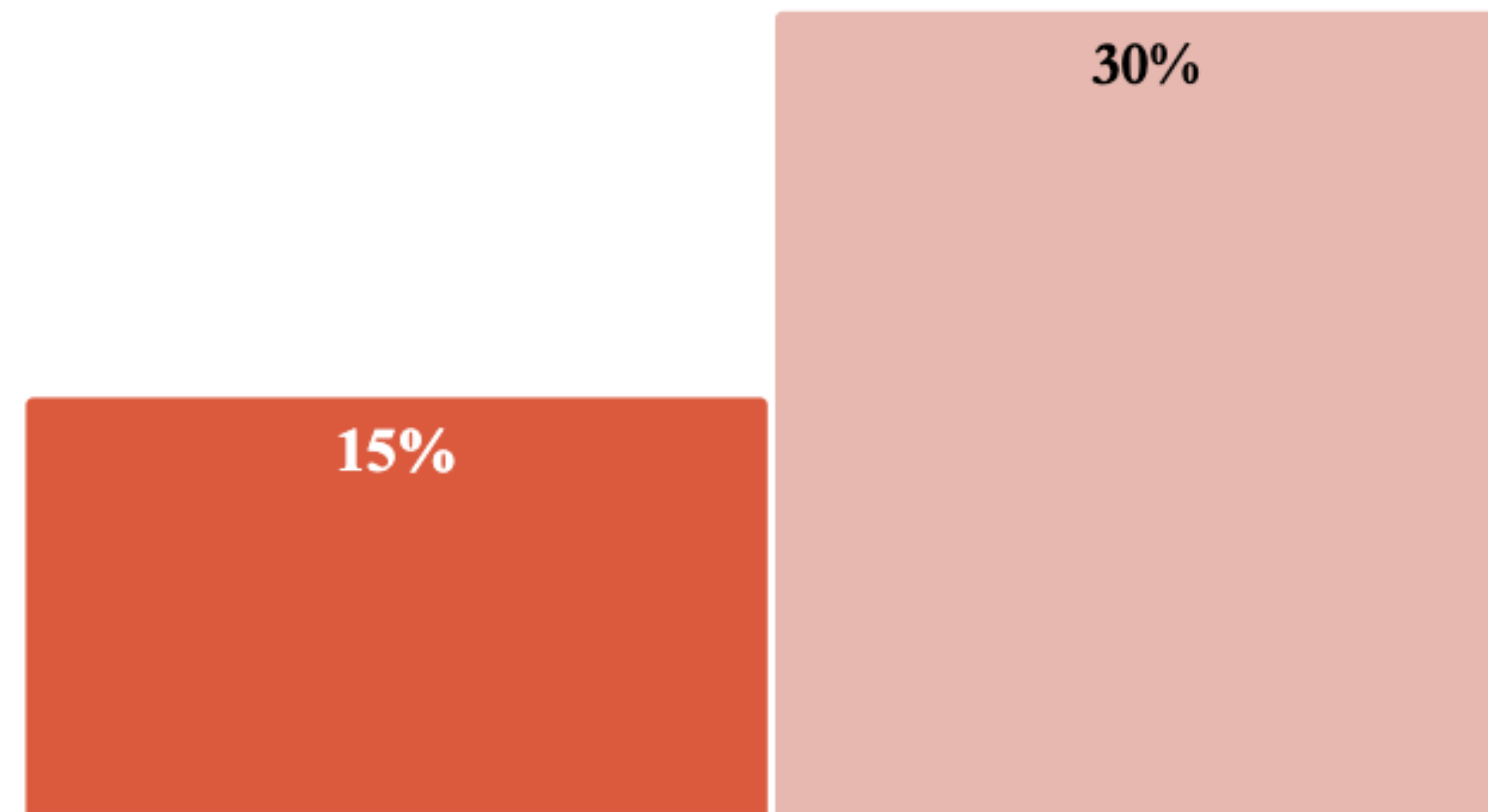
Impact of Education on 9 Year Return to Custody Rate in Maine



Sources: Maine Department of Corrections, Sunshine Lady Foundation

Impact of Post-Secondary Education on Recidivism in Massachusetts

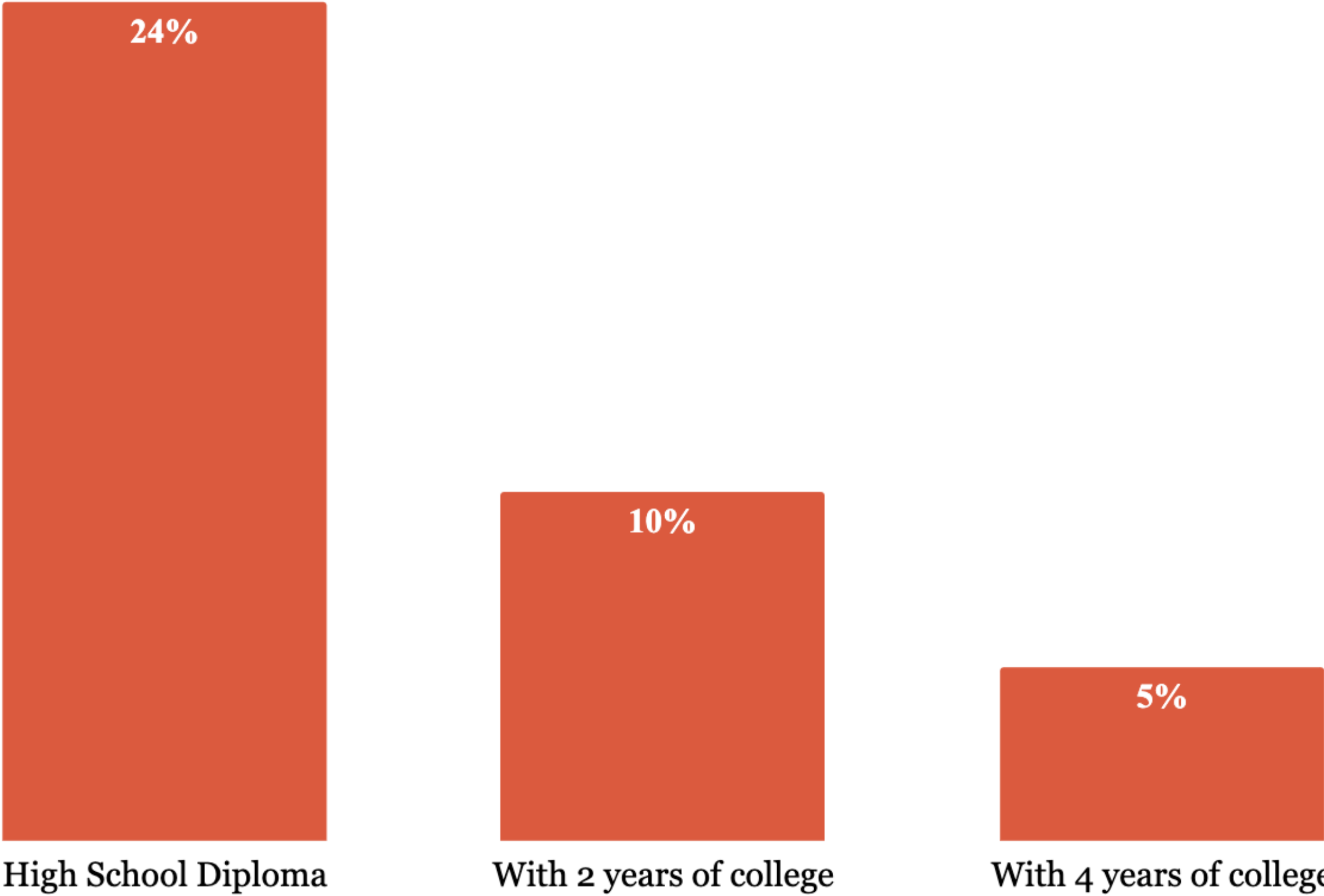
■ Some PSE in Prison ■ No PSE in Prison



One year re-arrest rate

Sources: Winterfeld et. al

Impact of Education on One Year Recidivism Rate in Rhode Island



Source: Escobar, Jordan, and Lohrasbi (2013).



Part 4

The Price of Incarceration

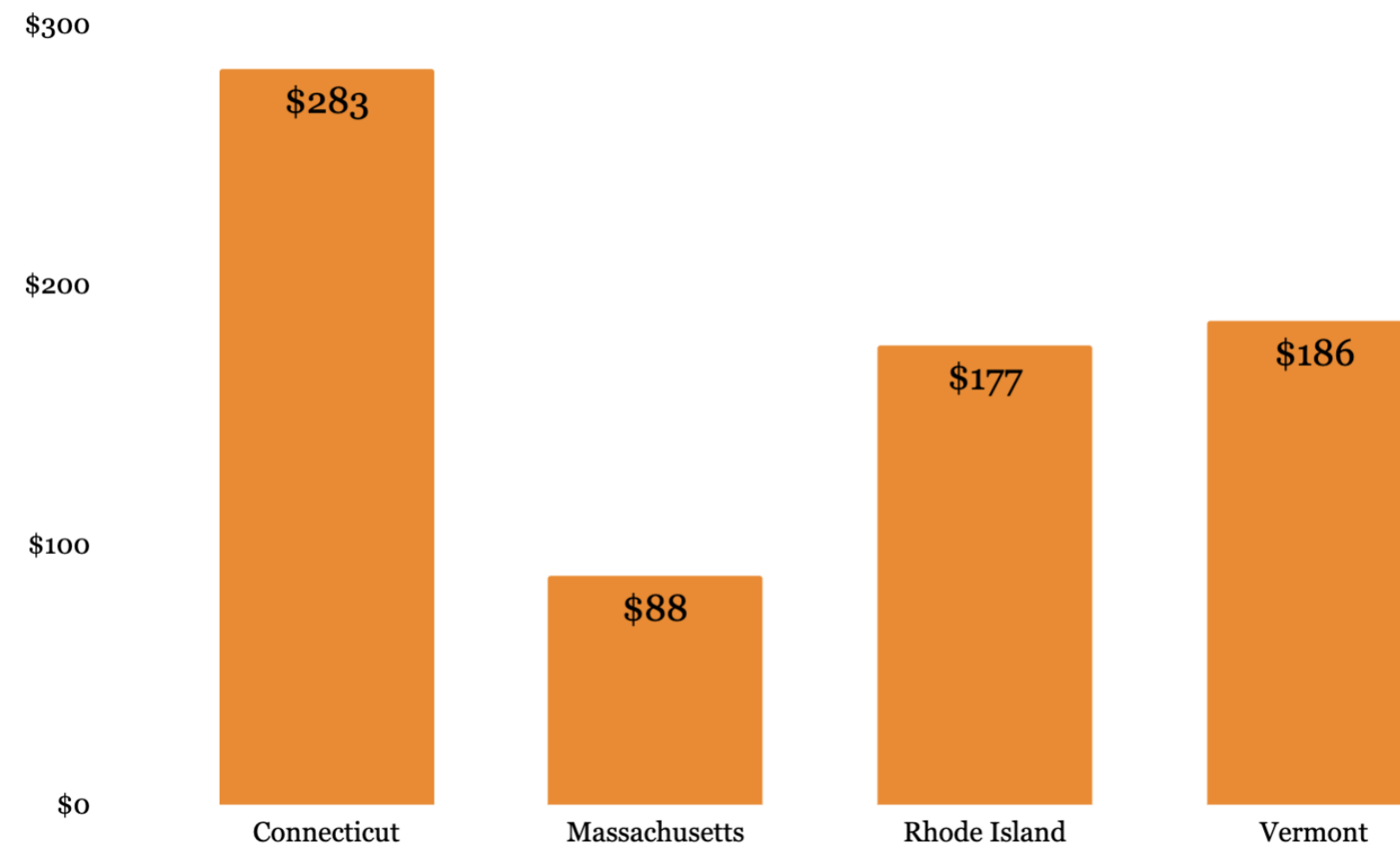
Fast Facts

- According to a Vera Institute study, expanding access to specifically postsecondary education would likely result in a decrease in incarceration costs of about \$365.8 million a year across all states.
- US taxpayers spend an average of \$15,000 to \$70,000 per incarcerated individual and an average of \$35,000 per prisoner in the federal system.
- Research has shown that reducing mass incarceration in the US could save taxpayers approximately \$1,400 to \$1,744 per inmate per year.
- FOR EVERY DOLLAR SPENT ON CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, TAX PAYERS SAVE FIVE DOLLARS.

PELL AND SAVINGS

- With the new expansion of Pell, more than 463,000 new inmates are now eligible for the grants.
- If just half of them receive such a grant, the associated reduction in recidivism would save states as much as \$366 million annually.
- If 75% of the prison population utilized the grant, savings would increase to \$549 million.

How Much Money Would Reducing the Number of Incarcerated Citizens Save States Annually?





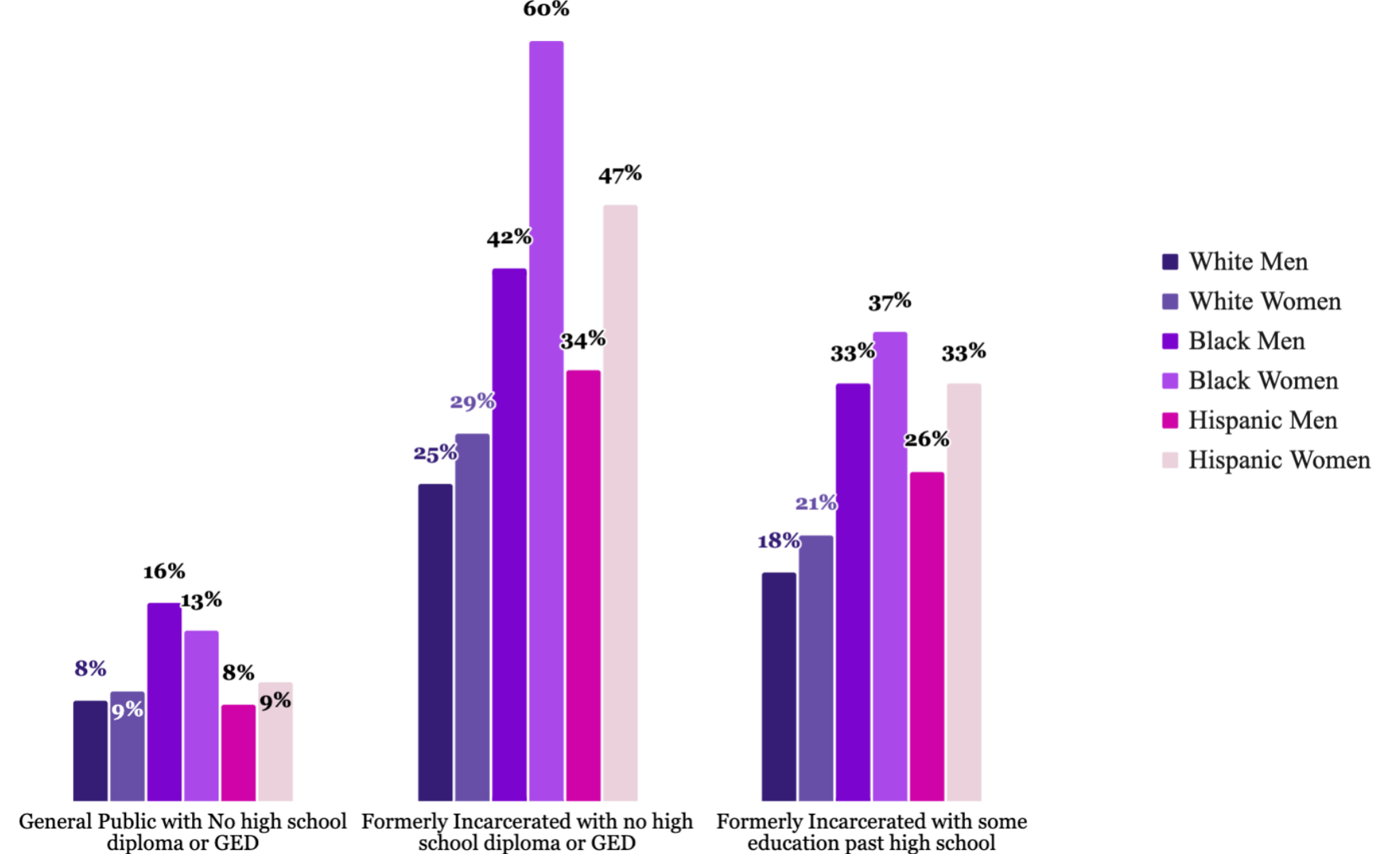
Part 5

Additional Benefits to prison education

Employment and Well-Being

- In October of 2018, the federal unemployment rate was 3.6%, however among the formerly incarcerated, that number was 27%.
- On average formerly incarcerated men earn 11% less than those with no criminal record for doing the same job.
- Participation in educational programming raises a previously incarcerated person's chance of post-release employment by 13% and employment rates raise an additional 10% for those who participated in a college program.

Federal Unemployment Rates of Previously Incarcerated People Compared to the General Public



Source: NEBHE analysis of data from Couloute and Kopf (2018)

“Proximity has taught me some basic and humbling truths, including this vital lesson: Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done. My work with the poor and the incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice. Finally, I’ve come to believe that the true measure of our commitment to justice, the character of our society, our commitment to the rule of law, fairness, and equality cannot be measured by how we treat the rich, the powerful, the privileged, and the respected among us. The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.”

Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy