



Higher Education in Prison: 2023-24 and 2024-25

This report summarizes the headcount of students enrolled in higher education programs within Illinois correctional institutions for the academic years 2023-24 and 2024-25, based on data provided by various universities.

- **Overall Enrollment Trends:** The total headcount of students enrolled in prison education programs in Illinois increased **9.7%** from **93 students in 2023-24 to 102 students in 2024-25**.
- **Enrollment by University and Correctional Institution:** Four universities offered programs across several correctional institutions:
 - **Eastern Illinois University** has the largest program, and it accounts for 49.5% of all students in 2023-24 and 48.0% in 2024-25. EIU enrolled 46 students in 2023-24, increasing to 49 in 2024-25, all at Danville Correctional Center.
 - **Lewis University** experienced an increase of 21.9%, growing from 32 students in 2023-24 to 39 in 2024-25. Their programs were at Sheridan Correctional Center (27 in 2023-24, 25 in 2024-25), Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center (2 in 2023-24, 9 in 2024-25), and "Other Correctional Institutions" (5 students in both years, with data combined to protect student privacy).
 - **Adler University** also saw an increase, from 9 students in 2023-24 to 14 (+55.6%) in 2024-25. In 2023-24, all 9 students were at Big Muddy Correctional Center. In 2024-25, Big Muddy Correctional Center had 9 students, and East Moline Correctional Center had 5 students. It is important to note that zeroes in the data may indicate unreported data or the absence of a program in a given year.
 - **Northeastern Illinois University** was the only university that saw a decrease, with 6 students in 2023-24 at Stateville Correctional Center, and 2 students in 2024-25.
- **Race and Ethnicity:** Across the participating universities, African American students consistently represented the highest headcount among the reported racial categories. In the **2023-24 academic year**, there were at least 37 African American students, 21 White students, and 18 Hispanic students enrolled across all programs.
 - **Lewis University** saw its number of African American students grow from 16 to 24 between the two academic years; in 2024-25, they comprised **61.5%** of the university's prison program students.
 - **Eastern Illinois University** had the most racially diverse reported group. In 2024-25, its students were 32.7% African American (16 students), 24.5% White (12 students), and 26.5% Hispanic (13 students), with the remainder not reported.
 - **Northeastern Illinois University** reported 5 African American students and 1 student in a combined category for 2023-24.
- **Age:** The **40-55 age group** consistently represents a large portion of the student body across the universities. For example, at Lewis University, this group accounted for 18 of 32 students (**56.3%**) in 2023-24 and 23 of 39 students (**59.0%**) in 2024-25.
 - **Eastern Illinois University**, the 40-55 age group also made up the largest share of students in both years.
 - **Adler University's** 2024-25 student body was primarily composed of students in the 31-39 and 40-55 age categories, with 5 and 6 students respectively.

Table 1. Headcount of students enrolled in prisons in Illinois
by University and Correctional Institution, 2023-24 and 2024-25

University and Corrections Institution Name	2023-24	2024-25
2023-2024	93	102
Eastern Illinois University	46	49
Danville Correctional Center	46	49
Northeastern Illinois University	6	‡
Stateville Correctional Center	6	‡
Lewis University	32	39
Sheridan Correctional Center	27	25
Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center	‡	9
Other Correctional Institutions ¹	5	5
Adler University	9	14
Big Muddy Correctional Center	9	9
East Moline Correctional Center	‡	5
Grand Total	93	102

¹ Data for some Correctional Institutions are combined to protect student privacy.

‡ Represents unreported data or no program in a particular year.

Table 2. Headcount of students enrolled in prisons in Illinois by University and race, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Race	2023-24							2024-2025						
	African American	White	Hispanic	Not Reported	Multi-Race	Combined ²	Grand Total	African American	White	Hispanic	Not Reported	Multi-Race	Combined ²	Grand Total
EIU	16	14	10	6	0	0	46	16	12	13	8	0	0	49
NEIU	5	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lewis U	16	0	8	0	0	8	32	24	5	7	0	0	3	39
Adler U	0	7	0	0	0	2	9	0	11	0	0	0	3	14

Note: Data are reported at the University level to protect student privacy.

² The combined category includes all students that had fewer than 5 students in a racial category.

Table 3. Headcount of students enrolled in prisons in Illinois
by University and age category, 2023-24 and 2024-25

Age category	2023-24						2024-2025						Age category	25-30
	25-30	31-39	40-55	Over 55	Combined ³	Grand Total	25-30	31-39	40-55	Over 55	Combined ³	Grand Total		
EIU	0	12	29	5	0	46	6	12	23	8	0	49	EIU	0
NEIU	0	0	5	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	NEIU	0
Lewis U	5	6	18	0	3	32	5	7	23	0	4	39	Lewis U	5
Adler U	0	0	0	0	9	9	0	5	6	0	3	14	Adler U	0

Note: Data are reported at the University level to protect student privacy.

³ The combined category includes all students that had fewer than 5 students in a racial category.