



received the grant to expand the program. In fact, the DOC received several extensions to the grant in the years that followed.

## Setting up the pilot program

If you are interested in setting up a pilot for a technology education program in an incarceration facility, here are some of the details around how the Massachusetts DOC went about it.

Requirements	Approach
<b>Curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brian chose the Cisco Networking Academy's IT Essentials (ITE) curriculum (which covers computer installation, maintenance, networking, and security), because he felt that it provides a strong foundation for entry-level IT jobs.</li></ul>
<b>Physical space and tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The design of the classrooms was based on Brian's experience in the manufacturing sector (he suggests that others interested in starting a program look at classrooms and labs in vocational schools).</li><li>• In one room, students move from classroom-style learning to workbenches, applying principles to projects immediately and reinforcing what they have just learned.</li><li>• Special security cabinets hold the physical tools that students work with to rebuild computers and set up physical networks.</li></ul>
<b>Instructor training and textbooks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brian had previously earned his CompTIA A+ certification. To prepare for the new prison training program, he received his instructor training and credentials from Bunker Hill Community College (which was providing support to new local academies) to teach the ITE curriculum. The college also donated textbooks for the pilot program, and set up articulation with the Massachusetts DOC to provide credit for the ITE course if prison students matriculated.</li><li>• Part of the grant proposal was hiring and training 5 instructors to extend the program to other DOC facilities.</li></ul>
<b>A secure network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Because of security requirements inside prisons, students cannot have Internet access, so they have to access course material and tests on a closed server.</li><li>• Brian worked with nearby Networking Academy instructors to import all of the necessary course content for the pilot to a closed server.</li><li>• Tom Romaniecki, one of the instructors hired under the grant, replicated the Cisco exam for an internal server using Exam View.</li></ul>
<b>Certification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students who prepare sufficiently can take an exam to earn an industry-recognized certification, such as CompTIA A+ or Cisco CCENT. Certifications validate the skills and knowledge for potential employers.</li></ul>

## How the secure network continues to support reentry after release

Once inmates complete their coursework and are released from prison, they can use their same academy student accounts to review what they learned, and to enroll in more advanced courses. They have the same access to the resources available to all academy students, including other certification prep and job listings.

## Partnerships for job experience and references

Brian knew that prospective employees would be looking for job experience and references—but the DOC is not allowed to provide either of these due to CORI restrictions. He set out to find “bridge” partners who can help with that essential next step in moving from training to employment. Partners can find ways to offer hands-on experience on a volunteer basis, or encourage employers to take a chance on newly released individuals. Following are tips for finding bridge partners:

- Ask community and business leaders to come to the prison as guest speakers. Students appreciate learning about technology jobs, and speakers often become advocates for helping find employment after release.
- Engage and involve prison counselors, who usually have extensive connections in the community.
- Reach out to community-based organizations that may already offer support programs for inner city families, or for families of inmates. Their goals of restoring lives and reuniting families are a perfect fit for reentry program goals.

## More Information

Learn how Cisco Networking Academy’s flexible learning program can support your training goals:

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