



Proposition 57: Credit-Earning for Inmates Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

(Updated July 2017)

Overview of Proposition 57

On November 8, 2016, California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 57 (64% to 35%), which gives California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) inmates the ability to earn additional credits for good behavior and for approved rehabilitative or educational achievements. Under Proposition 57, the department will incentivize inmates to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation; promote public safety by encouraging inmates to pursue educational, vocational, and self-improvement activities; and reduce recidivism by increasing the likelihood that inmates will successfully transition back into our communities.

What are the credits inmates can earn under Proposition 57?

Inmates are expected to maintain good behavior, work or participate in approved rehabilitative programs and activities to give them tools and skills for their eventual return to society. Under Proposition 57, inmates who comply with the rules, avoid violence, and perform duties assigned to them, are eligible to earn Good Conduct Credits. Inmates who participate in approved rehabilitative and educational programs shall be eligible to earn Milestone Completion Credits, Rehabilitative Achievement Credits, or Educational Merit Credits. Inmates who perform a heroic act in a life threatening situation may be eligible to receive the Extraordinary Conduct Credits. All credits except for Educational Merit and Extraordinary Conduct Credits will be applied prospectively.

What will the expanded credit-earning opportunities do for inmates?

Credits earned for good conduct and rehabilitative and educational achievements can advance an inmate's release date if sentenced to a determinate term, or advance an inmate's initial parole hearing date if sentenced to an indeterminate term with the possibility of parole. *(Note: A determinate term is a sentence of specified length. An indeterminate term is a sentence of unspecified length which ends only when the inmate is granted parole by the Board of Parole Hearings.)* Inmates who violate prison rules will forfeit credits.

Who is eligible?

Credit-earning opportunities are available to all inmates other than condemned inmates and those serving sentences of life without the possibility of parole.

What are Good Conduct Credits under Proposition 57?

Most inmates currently receive some form of Good Conduct Credit. These credits are awarded to eligible inmates who comply with all the rules within a prison and perform the duties as assigned on a regular basis. Effective May 1, 2017, Good Conduct Credits have been awarded according to the following table:



Good Conduct Credits Table (GCC):

Inmates Eligible	Prior GCC Credits	GCC Credit Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violent offenders serving determinate sentences or indeterminate life sentences 	Zero to 15%	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonviolent second- and third-strikers 	Zero to 33.3%	33.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-for-day offenders 	50%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders with violent offenses serving in fire camps 	15%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-for-day minimum-custody offenders Nonviolent offenders serving in fire camps 	33.3% to 66.6%	66.6%

What are Milestone Completion Credits?

The Milestone Completion Credits are an existing type of credit awarded to eligible inmates for successful completion of approved rehabilitative or educational programs designed to better prepare them to find employment upon release and thereby reduce recidivism. Milestone Completion Credits will be awarded for achievement of a distinct objective based on instruction and classwork time. Milestone Completion Credits are currently capped at a maximum of six weeks in a 12-month consecutive period. The proposed regulations will expand the Milestone Completion Credits to 12 weeks in a 12-month consecutive period, starting on August 1, 2017.

What are Rehabilitative Achievement Credits?

Hundreds of self-help and volunteer public service activities offered in California prisons are intended to provide meaningful rehabilitative programming to our inmate population. Some examples include alcohol and substance abuse prevention, anger management, anti-gang life skills, victim awareness, and best parenting practices. Currently, there is no credit-earning attached to self-help activities. Proposition 57 changes that, and starting on August 1, 2017, subtracts up to four weeks per year from an inmate's sentence for participating in up to 208 hours of eligible self-help programs. Approved programs must be organized to achieve educational or rehabilitative goals, must be sponsored by department staff or volunteers, and must be approved by the Division of Adult Institutions.

What are Educational Merit Credits?

Starting on August 1, 2017, Educational Merit Credits will recognize the achievements of inmates who earn a high school diploma or GED, higher education degrees, such as an AA or a BA, and the offender mentor certification program that is available at several of our prisons. This once-in-a-lifetime credit may be awarded for each level of educational achievement; and the achievement must be completed during the inmate's current term of incarceration. At least fifty percent of the credit toward a college-level degree must be earned from a regionally accredited institution while an inmate is in prison on his or her



current term. Because it can take years to earn an educational degree, inmates who achieve that goal will be given three-to-six months of credit, which will be applied retroactively if the degree has been completed during the inmate's current term of incarceration.

What are Extraordinary Conduct Credits?

The Extraordinary Conduct Credit is an existing type of credit where an inmate may be granted up to twelve additional months of reduction of a sentence, under the approval of the Director of the Division of Adult Institutions, if they have performed a heroic act in a life-threatening situation, or have provided exceptional assistance in maintaining the safety and security of a prison.

Can an inmate lose credits?

CDCR can forfeit Good Conduct, Milestone Completion, and Rehabilitative Achievement Credits as a result of disciplinary infractions and rules violations. Educational Merit and Extraordinary Conduct Credits are not subject to forfeiture for disciplinary reasons.

Why are most credits not retroactive?

Because CDCR needs the appropriate time to establish uniformity in the credit-earning programs. For instance, many inmates were not eligible to participate in Milestone Completion Credits before Proposition 57. Also, while many of the programs now eligible for Milestone Completion or Rehabilitative Achievement Credits are not new, prior inmate participation in these programs may not have been uniformly applied at all state prisons. In addition, around 80,000 inmates are expected to have their expected release date recalculated based on the expansion of the Good Conduct Credits. For those to be retroactive, it would require a significant amount of time, staff and resources, resulting in delays that may thwart the overall goals of Proposition 57.

Why are the credits being implemented incrementally?

The changes proposed in the Proposition 57 regulations require CDCR to properly provide training to staff, as well as update information technology systems, and revise credit calculations systems.

When will the public comment period begin for the Proposition 57 regulations?

On Friday, July 14, 2017, CDCR issued a Public Notice, which begins the public comment period for a minimum of 45 days. CDCR invites the public to submit comments regarding Proposition 57 through a variety of ways:

- Written comments may be mailed at:
 - CDCR
Regulation and Policy Management Branch
P.O. Box 942883
Sacramento, CA 94283-0001
- Comments may be sent by FAX to:



- (916) 324-6075, Attention: Chief, Regulation and Policy Management Branch
- Comments may be e-mailed to:
 - *CDCR-Prop57-Comments@cdcr.ca.gov*