



## **COLORADO STATE BOARD OF PAROLE STRATEGIC PLAN 2012 - 2015**

### **Vision:**

Vision of the Colorado Board of Parole is to work closely with our customer base, partners and treatment providers in the pursuit of our overall mission. The Board will encourage an open and transparent environment in an effort to foster a more thorough understanding of the purpose and process of the Colorado Board of Parole. We believe a close working relationship will provide an atmosphere of cooperation, resulting in greater public safety, increased sensitivity and concern for the needs of victims, an increase in the percentage of successful periods of parole for offenders, reduced recidivism and enhanced collaboration toward a common goal throughout the State of Colorado.

### **Mission:**

Mission of the Colorado Board of Parole is to increase assurance of public safety by the critical evaluation, through the utilization of evidence based practices, of inmate potential for re-integration to society. The Board determines parole suitability through the process of setting conditions of parole and assists the parolee by helping to create an atmosphere for a successful reintegration and return to the community.

### **Goals:**

Goal of the Colorado Board of Parole is a safer and more productive environment for ALL citizens of the State of Colorado. We endeavor to generate a cooperative and communicative atmosphere with all concerned entities including but not limited to victims, inmate population, parolees, the Department of Corrections, the Division of Parole, treatment providers and the public.

### **Objectives to be attained by the start of Fiscal Year 2015:**

- Consistent use of statutory provisions and all applicable, relevant and tested evidence-based tools, including the Colorado Actuarial Risk Assessment, which are specifically designed to measure the performance of the Colorado Board of Parole in accomplishing its overall mission and goal.
- Establish a baseline by which outcomes and the efficiency of the Colorado Board of Parole can be evaluated and enhanced.
- Educate Board Members in the most recent and innovative parole decision making practices and research methodologies.
- Employ innovative and enhanced motivational interviewing techniques.
- Engage, utilize and embrace technological advances designed to make the work of the Colorado Board of Parole more effect, efficient and productive.
- Provide training for Board Members, Hearing Officers and staff to update skill sets.

- Enhance relationships with partners who are affected by Board decisions.
- Institute a public education program that enhances transparency and promotes collaboration.

**Board Appointments and General Background Information:**

Members of the Colorado Board of Parole are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Colorado State Senate. The seven members are composed of representatives from multidisciplinary areas of expertise. Two members must have experience in law enforcement, one must have experience in offender supervision and four members are required to have experience in other relevant fields. Each member must have a minimum of five years of experience in a relevant field and must have a working knowledge of the parole system, rehabilitation, correctional administration and the functioning of the criminal justice system. Board members are required by State Statute to consider their appointment to the Colorado Board of Parole to be a full-time position.

While the Board operates independently from other state agencies, it maintains a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC), and the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ). It also works closely with DOC Victim's Service Unit, Voices of Victims, the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition and the Colorado Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE).

In the past year the Board has worked diligently to foster a more open and communicative working environment, internally and with those individuals, agencies and organizations that are directly and indirectly impacted by the decision making process of the Colorado Board of Parole. The Board conducts application and revocation hearings Monday through Friday. Fridays are currently reserved for Executive Sessions of the Board which include but are not limited to the process of Full Board Reviews and the continued education and relative training of Members.

Board members participate in the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice and individual members attend meetings of various subcommittees. Board members attend meetings of Voices and CURE on a regular basis.

**Hearings:**

The Board is charged with the responsibility of evaluating and assessing the potential for success of a discretionary release to parole for those individual inmates of the Colorado Department of Corrections who are eligible for such consideration. The Board is required to schedule and hold application hearings and set conditions of parole for all inmates prior to their being released on parole either discretionarily or mandatorily.

Individual members normally conduct and make decisions in regard to application hearings but all hearings are subject to a review process. Application hearings that

involve inmates that have been sentenced to a minimum and maximum life term are required to be heard by two Board members.

The Board conducts rescission hearings for inmates whose parole has been granted and subsequently suspended for cause prior release.

The Board has the responsibility to conduct revocation hearings for those inmates that are on parole and have had a complaint filed with the Board of Parole by the Division of Parole alleging a violation(s) of their parole agreement. The Board also reviews, approves and signs warrants for the arrest of parolees alleged to be in violation of their parole agreement.

Any discretionary release of an inmate that has been convicted of a violent or sexual crime as described by statute or by the policy and procedures of the Colorado Board of Parole is required to be reviewed by the full Board.

During Fiscal Year 2012 the Board conducted approximately 30,000 hearings. Overall, the Board conducts approximately 2,400 hearings per month.

**Innovations and Advances, 2011-2012:**

The Colorado Parole Board has worked diligently since the start of fiscal year 2011 in an effort to increase Board productivity, efficiency and transparency.

**Technology**

Board functionality, productivity and efficiency have increased with the utilization of available technology. Through the employment of computerized and electronic innovations, the Board has embraced a paperless hearing process for all application hearings. This has enabled real-time transmission of Board decisions to DOC Time/Release operations, facility case managers, Pre-Parole staff and other DOC stakeholders. Additionally, with the utilization of video and telephone conferencing there has been a significant reduction of Board Member travel.

**Training**

In order to maintain proficiency and to remain current on changes in Parole laws and developments an aggressive and innovative training program was initiated July 1, 2011, in accordance with SB11-241. This initiative is to assure that Parole Board Members, Administrative Hearing Officers and Release Hearing Officers meet or exceed the 20 hours of mandatory training required. To date, Parole Board members have received over 60 hours of training to enhance proficiency and efficiency. Training has also enhanced the Board's internal mandate to be more responsive and transparent to our customers and partners.

### **Working Location and Environment**

In the past the Colorado Board of Parole did not have access to easily available office space in which the Board could come together, hold meetings and conduct multiple simultaneous video hearings. Realizing that this was a major barrier to efficiency the Board was granted temporary accommodations through the Department of Corrections, Division of Adult Parole at the location of 940 Broadway in Denver, Colorado. This space has permitted the Board to function much more efficiently. However, the current situation is neither permanent nor ideal. A more desirable situation would include a centrally located environment (within the Denver metro area) a permanent locale which could house not only Board Members but also all Board staff personnel which would be more conducive to accommodating victims of crimes who desire to attend parole hearings.

### **Collaboration and Cooperation**

The Colorado Board of Parole has taken great strides to be more inclusive, cooperative and collaborative with those individuals and organizations that are directly impacted by Board decisions. While maintaining its independence and staying true to its mission statement, the Board has fostered a closer working relationship with the Department of Corrections, Community Corrections and the various treatment programs that directly affect the inmate population of the State of Colorado. Members are working diligently to better educate the public, members of the Colorado State Legislature and others regarding the mission and the operation of the Board.

### **Decision-making Tools**

In accordance with the Colorado Revised Statutes, the Colorado State Board of Parole utilizes myriad of factors in its decision-making process. These factors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Input from victim(s).
- The Colorado Actuarial Risk Assessment Scale (CARAS)
- The offender's assessed criminogenic need level
- The offender's program or treatment participation and progress
- The offender's conduct while incarcerated
- Whether an offender has an approved place to parole
- Family and other support to include statements from a prospective parole sponsors, employers, or any other person or organizational representative who would be able to assist the offender if released on parole.
- Opportunities for work
- Prior or potential for future transgressions toward victims.
- Aggravating or mitigating circumstances.
- Instances of escapes or absconds while under supervision.
- Educational background
- Educational/vocational accomplishments during incarceration.

**Performance Measures - Parolee Success Rates**

The Board recognizes that the following criteria help to measure the success and/or failure of the overall decision making process. Recidivism rates of inmates released on discretionary release is one performance measure of the Board. This data will be compared to data of the recidivism rates of inmates released on their mandatory release dates (MRD).

**Itemization of Current Challenges:**

Many challenges are faced by the Colorado Board of Parole. Challenges faced by any organization can be a fluid proposition, ever changing and evolving. As some challenges are overcome it is imperative that others will surface. The following is a list of some of the more pertinent challenges faced by the Board at this time:

- Budget autonomy.
- Timely analysis of required data needed by the Board in order to measure performance.

**A.** Performance Measurements:

Percent of discretionary releases revoked

- As a whole
- By CARAS
- By technical violations
- With new convictions

Percent of mandatory releases (MRDs) revoked

- As a whole
- By CARAS
- By technical violations
- With new convictions

Percent of discretionary releases in relation to all releases

Percent of mandatory releases in relation to all releases

Percent of discretionary releases who receive early discharge

- As a whole
- By CARAS

Percent of mandatory releases who receive early discharge

- As a whole
- By CARAS

**B.** Additional Evidence Based Measurements

1. How many offenders/parolees got their GEDs inside versus outside the system?
2. What are the numbers of Sex Offenders paroled, with treatment, without treatment?
3. How many individuals are seen for repeat revocations?
4. What is the percent of mental health offenders with P codes of 3 or higher?
5. What is the percent of drug and alcohol offenders with P codes of 3 or higher?

6. What is the number of offenders who have gone through TC successfully that we grant parole?
7. What is the number of offenders who have gone through community and ISP and then revoked?
8. What is the number of offenders paroled homeless?

**Future Challenges and Proposed Solutions:**

Many challenges are faced by the Colorado State Board of Parole. Challenges faced by any organization can be a fluid proposition, ever changing and evolving. As some challenges are overcome it is imperative that others will surface. The following is a list of some of the more pertinent challenges faced by the Board at this time:

**Challenge 1:**

We now have a year of data which can be explored. Preliminary recidivism data by parole release type provided by the DOC research division shows that 3 month numbers shows a 3.56% rate of revocation for discretionary parole versus a 6.88% for mandatory parole. At 6 months the discretionary recidivism goes to 9.50% versus a 16.43% for mandatory parole. At 9 months, the rates are 14.06% for discretionary versus 31.31% for mandatory.

This analysis is only the beginning of what we need to have available. There are still the questions above which need to be answered.

**Solutions:**

1. DOC needs to identify a person in their research department who can help collect data and provide it to the Board and or its designate. Mr. Clements, as a result of meeting with Board leadership, has made such a written request.
2. DOC needs to provide the current data requested by the Department of Criminal Justice, as also indicated in Mr. Clements memo.
3. DCJ and DOC needs to pull together all of the existing data related to the questions above, as it is now available so that the Board can report to the Governor and Legislature in January.
4. A formal proposal for ongoing data, complete with a format needs to be submitted to the DOC no later than December 2012.

**Challenge 2:**

Relevant and timely training.

1. To identify the training modules which will enhance the skills needed to better determine parole eligibility (Parole Board Members and Hearing Officers).
2. To identify the training modules which will enhance the skills needed to efficiently conduct the administrative function of the Parole Board (Administrative staff).
3. To schedule the time necessary to complete the relative training.

**Solution:**

1. Use the recidivism data from the previous year to help pinpoint deficiencies in decision making.
2. Attempt to identify specific skills that need enhancement to meet our goal of lower recidivism rates.
3. Due to new procedures which allow file reviews for some cases, hearings should be reduced by 25% allowing more time to schedule training.

**Challenge 3:**

The Colorado Board of Parole has traditionally utilized a system of operation that was greatly dependent upon hand written hard copies. The Board was directed, with the assistance of the Department of Corrections, to transform as many operational activities as possible from this paper based platform to a paperless, electronic procedure.

**Solutions:**

Through the utilization of current available technology the Colorado Board of Parole has made great strides within the past two years toward this goal. The following list highlights the achieved accomplishments in this area as well as the few remaining challenges.

1. As of August, 2011, the Board initiated the utilization of digital recording technology for the recording of all hearings, thus eliminating the long used antiquated method of tape recording hearings.
2. As of September, 2011, the Board conducts all Application Hearings through an electronic, paperless computerized platform.
3. As of November, 2011, the Board conducts the majority of Application Hearings with the utilization of video technology, eliminating the costly need to travel to each facility.
4. The Board will soon have the ability and technology to sign and issue all warrants through an electronic, paperless procedure.
5. With the utilization of computerized technology, the Board is working diligently toward the goal of paperless Revocation Hearings. While numerous challenges still exist in this area, we are confident that this goal can be achieved.
6. Continued technological innovations that will allow the Board to be more efficient and productive. i.e. electronic hearings for revocations, etc.
7. Permanent centrally located office space which will promote a positive working environment for all Board Members, staff and contract employees.

**Challenge 4:**

Institute a public education program that enhances transparency and promotes collaboration

Some of the potential problems identified with this objective are as follows:

1. The public at large is generally ill-informed or misinformed as to the purpose, process, and the mission of the Colorado Board of Parole. This leads to a general confusion, misunderstanding, and overall mistrust of the Board which, in turn, fosters a divisive, non-inclusive relationship between the Board and various stakeholders.
2. Advocacy groups and the Colorado State Legislators are important partners of the Board. Their understanding of the Board's purpose, process and mission is imperative in the legislative process which ultimately impacts the Board and how it functions.
3. Victims often have an unrealistic expectation as to what the Board can and cannot accomplish and have many questions as to the function and purpose of the Board.

**Solutions:**

1. Develop a public education outreach program to include a Power Point presentation, a brochure, and a website to promote transparency and accurate information regarding the purpose, process and mission of the Colorado Board of Parole.
2. Attend stakeholder/advocacy group meetings such as VOICES and CURE.
3. Attend stakeholder/advocacy group conferences such as COVA and make presentations at said conferences.
4. Educate and promote a collaborative relationship with legislators through formal and informal processes
5. Devise a brochure specifically for victims of crime and include information on the website for victims regarding what they can expect at a Parole Board Hearing, how to prepare for a hearing, etc.

**Challenge 5:**

The recent changes in the appointed Parole Board's make-up and the fluidity of personnel endemic in governmental agencies have at times allowed unexpected de-linking of the collaborative effort among those agencies necessary in meeting our respective missions and purposes as regards Parole matters. Our challenge is to more meaningfully engage all stakeholders in our respective tasks in parole matters by engendering transparency and cooperation.

**Solution:**

1. Develop and ensure direct and clear dialogue among agencies concerning their respective functions, processes and expectations that affect and are affected by the Parole Board.
2. Arrange meetings among all interested parties at the facilities involved in Parole Board functions so that all have a keener appreciation of how each can more effectively contribute to efficiencies and effectiveness.



3. Formulate and share innovative ideas and technology to ensure teamwork and mutual focus of effort.

**Challenges 6:**

Management of staff work load is one of the pertinent challenges facing the Board at this time. In a paperless system identifying each staff member's current job assignment and responsibility to the board is imperative. An economic number of staff required to support the Parole Board in a paperless system is also imperative. This will include the Parole Board office duties and staff moving the office into Denver from Pueblo the need.

**Solutions:**

1. The Office Manager would be the point person for identifying the needs of the Board Members and the Staff Members.
2. The Office Manager should conduct on going assessments of each staff member's assignment to match evidence practices and economic needs of the Board and its Members.
3. Input from all concerned parties (Corrections staff, Parole Staff and all Stakeholders) should be encouraged.
4. The input of Board Members' to the Office Manager is also essential for a seamless paperless system and staff work load.

<b>Major Functions</b>	<b><i>PAROLE BOARD HEARINGS</i></b>		
<b>Process Measures</b>	<b>Input Measures</b>	<b>Processes</b>	<b>Output Measures</b>
	Data Collection & Analysis	DOC to collect data and provide it to the Board.	Better able to measure performance.
	Relevant and timely training	Identify & complete relevant training modules	Enhanced decision making skills to reduce recidivism.
	Promotion of Board efficiency through the utilization of technology	Utilization of digital recordings	Eliminates antiquated tape recording
		Electronic applications and warrants	A paperless, computerized platform
		Video and telephonic hearings	Cost of travel is greatly reduced
	Management of staff workload	Staff identifies their assignments in relation to technological innovations implemented.	More productive and efficient in scheduling the Board's workload.
<b><i>STAKEHOLDERS</i></b>			
	Institute a public education program	Develop a public outreach program.	Public is better informed about the purpose, process and mission of the Board
		Attend stakeholder/advocacy group meetings	Enhancement of transparency and collaboration
		Meet formally and	Promote a

		informally with Legislators	collaborative relationship
		Develop a brochure directed at victims regarding expectations at parole hearings.	Less confusion about hearing processes and related victim rights
	Inter and Intra agency cooperation	Meaningfully engage all stakeholders by promoting transparency and cooperation	Formulate and share innovative ideas utilizing teamwork and mutual effort

Dr. Anthony P. Young, Chairman  
 Unanimously Approved by the State Board of Parole Nov. 2, 2012