



NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Communities.

FY 2019

Annual Report

NEBRASKA BOARD OF PAROLE
DIVISION OF PAROLE SUPERVISION



From Our Chair, Rosalyn Cotton



Members:
Teresa Bittinger
Layne Gissler
Virgil Patlan
Bob Twiss

The Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision are committed to protecting the public. We are dedicated to serving our clients. On July 1, 2016, the Board of Parole transitioned from an agency of ten to seventy-six staff. During this time, the Board of Parole continued to work diligently in the areas of updating offender reviews, parole hearings, and supporting the executive leadership and staff of the Division of Parole Supervision.

On February 1, 2018, the Board of Parole started scheduling individuals two year hearings from their earliest parole eligibility date and initiated certificates to individuals who completed the Department of Correctional Services core programs.

Our agency has been working closely with the State of Nebraska Center of Operational Excellence. We are proud of the improvements to our daily operation. We continue to have ongoing projects to assist in making our agency more efficient. We also continue to work with the Department of Correctional Services, Adult Probation and other community partners; such as the University of Nebraska School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska-Kearney and Metropolitan College-Omaha Campus.

I applaud the Division of Parole Supervision Leadership team and all team members for the work they are doing. We are confident we will continue to keep our communities and Nebraskans safe. Our strategic plan provides a road map for our Agency's future goals, from which we will continue to grow and progress. I continue to be very proud of this agency. Congratulations to the Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Supervision for another successful year!

From Our Director, Julie Micek



Executive Team:



Ken Quinn
Assistant Director



Jennifer Miller
Assistant Director



Nicole Miller
Legal Counsel

July 1, 2019 marks the three-year anniversary of our new agency. Where does the time go? I know we say that on a daily basis, but it could not be truer when we look back on year three of our transformation.

Our commitment could not be any stronger to evidence based practices for our daily work in the Division of Parole Supervision. We continue to refine our skills with the new tools that we have put into place. We strived to write strong protocols to guide the work and trained staff in the many tools that we added and continue down the path of implementation. Year three saw a monumental addition of a piece of the puzzle to ensure that we are not just doing the work, but doing it well with fidelity to the model and an eye towards the art of supervision.

Continuous quality improvement has been the cornerstone of this year. We have used data to assist staff in their daily work. This has allowed staff to focus on the most important pieces of their work. This is true throughout the agency. Support staff, assistant parole officers, parole officers, supervisors, administrative staff and Board members have all benefited from diving deep into the daily workload and finding new ways to improve our results.

One of our major accomplishments this year, was in a report by The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. The report shows the effects of parole and probation violations on state prison populations. According to the report, corrections and community supervision leaders from all 50 states assisted in the Justice Center's analysis of the issue. The results revealed that Nebraska is among the states with the lowest proportion of the prison population due to parole violations. It also revealed that the majority of violations as a proportion of Nebraska's prison admissions are a result of non-technical violations. To view the report, go to <https://csgjusticecenter.org/confinedandcostly/>.

Through the systematic implementation of each of the eight principles, that affect supervision of parole clients in Nebraska, our agency has strived to change the face of community corrections. We continue to partner with community providers to bring the best treatment and services we can find for clients involved in the justice system. We believe that the treatment our clients receive should be the gold standard of what the community has to offer. We have joined the ranks of social media with Facebook and Twitter and are documenting our journey with our own blog (<https://dpsscienceandart.wordpress.com/>).

Our work continues to focus on public safety and assisting people in changing their behaviors to make great communities across Nebraska. We hope to continue to be on the cutting edge of what is working in the criminal justice field for our staff, our clients and all of the communities in Nebraska!

Our Mission

It is the mission of the Nebraska Board of Parole and the Division of Parole Supervision to continue its research, understanding and implementation of **evidence-based approaches** as it pertains to the release of clients who have appropriately been prepared for community supervision. The Board and the Division of Parole Supervision are dedicated to maintaining public safety, reducing recidivism and addressing the need of victims, while integrating clients into society through a balance of best practice supervision and treatment strategies.

Our Vision

The Nebraska Board of Parole and the Division of Parole Supervision are committed to serving and protecting the public. The Board will strive to make informed and appropriate parole decisions by giving due consideration to and utilizing the resources of the Division of Parole Supervision, including innovative case management for the successful re-entry of clients back into the community to become productive and responsible citizens.

Our Values

We believe that **change** provides opportunities for growth for our clients as well as our agency and that we can serve as effective catalysts for that growth through the use of collaborative, intentional, and evidence-based practices, which promote not only client success but also staff development and public safety.

We believe that **consistency** is critical for the accountability and success of our clients, staff, and agency and to achieve that consistency we must clearly communicate our expectations and utilize a systematic approach that provides individualized case management in decision-making, supervision practices, and agency operations.

We are **dedicated** to promoting behavior change with our clients to help them reintegrate successfully, to respecting our coworkers and supporting one another through teamwork, to the shared goals and mission of our agency, and foremost to ensuring the safety of the public and our communities.

EBPs

Evidence-based principles and practices for corrections and community supervision:



Assess actuarial risk and needs using assessments to guide case decisions



Enhance intrinsic motivation using rewards and sanctions



Target intervention based on risk, need, and responsivity



Skill train with directed practice



Increase positive reinforcement using cognitive-behavioral techniques



Engage ongoing support in natural communities with pro-social influences



Measure relevant processes



Provide measurement feedback and use data to guide actions

Our Objectives

1. Steer the Direction of Our Agency in Accordance and Alignment with Our Vision, Mission, and Values



Service For and Protection of the Public: The **recidivism rate** for our clients fell by **30%** this last year and there was a **33% decrease** in the number of new felony violations by those on parole



Successful Reentry and Integration of Clients: **65%** of the clients under supervision during this last fiscal year **completed parole with no significant violations of their parole terms**



Continue Our Research and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices: During FY 2019, we adopted the **Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS)**, trained our staff in **case planning**, and created a **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team** to coach officers on EBP use in addition to developing a team of trainers for the ORAS and our **Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)** case management approach. Our CQI process has incorporated evaluations of staff development with respect to EBPs, including administration of our risk assessment tool, developing of skills using the EPICS model and interventions, and the use of sanctions and incentives.



Foster the Successful Reentry and Integration of Our Clients: Our agency has worked diligently over the last year to **increase the number of service providers and resources** for clients on parole. Many clients who are released have a variety of programming needs. We have partnerships across the state of Nebraska that have allowed us to ensure clients receive the treatment that they need. Our network now includes **residential treatment, pretreatment and relapse classes, transitional housing with varied programming and treatment levels, trauma groups, classes on Living with Success, and aftercare for those requiring clinical treatment.**



Acting as Agents of Change: With our implementation of the ORAS within the first four weeks on parole and then a reassessment every six months or whenever a client has a life-changing event, **we are better able to track the reduction in risk throughout someone's parole term. We have developed the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Division to assist the evaluation of our EBP implementation and training.** The team reviews caseloads, assessments, and EPICS tapes to ensure that we have fidelity to the work we have been trained to do and then develops targeted training plans for our staff.



Dedication to Our Work: Although we know that we come to work every day committed to the work that we do, we also seek out outside input on the ways that we can further dedicate ourselves to seeing positive outcomes for our clients. **We are contracting with an outside partner to evaluate our progress over the last three years drawing upon the perspectives of both our clients and our staff.** This evaluation will be completed between the fall of 2019 and the spring of 2020.

Our Objectives

2. Establish a Seamless System for the Transmission of Data, and Evaluation Thereof, Between Parole Decision-Making and Community Supervision

The Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision work in a seamless way to ensure that information is shared between Board members and our staff who are in the field supervising clients. The passage of that information has been made substantially easier through a wide variety of information technology tools and developments in our Parole Information Management system (PIMS). Below, we provide just a few notes about the IT tools we have created to facilitate this process:

Board Members gather parole guidelines data forms from the Department of Corrections and shares that critical decision-making data with parole officers



Parole Officers and Reentry Specialists provide Board members with critical information regarding the housing placement for clients using our updated APIW online form



In 2017 and 2018, the Board of Parole has moved to using electronic files; in 2019, these e-files will be shared between the Board and DPS, making information sharing much easier



Administrative Staff assist officers with community contacts using our updated Collateral Contacts tracking screen to check in with employers and treatment providers



The Board continues to develop our system through a series of grants, such as the Uniform Data Fund, and to use those funds to build our system network and to integrate external vendors



The Data and IT team has built out a range of new dashboard pages which provide real-time information for officers, Board members, and administrative staff and is currently developing work queue screens to assist everyone in their daily work.




Our Objectives


3. Secure and Expand An Effective Network for Parole Clients


Our agency has developed a network of providers statewide and we collaborate with many partners. We have completed several request for proposals (RFP's) through the last year for services and transitional housing providers statewide. We currently contract with seven jails for custodial sanctions and are always looking to expand the network. Services provided by parole today include the following:

- Pretreatment/Relapse Groups for Substance Use Treatment
- Domestic Violence Groups
- Continuing Care for Sex Offenders
- Trauma Groups for Men and Women
- Living with Success Classes
- Funding support for those needing transitional living



 Specific Service Locations

 Custodial Sanction Jail Location

 Parole Office Location

Our Objectives

4. Foster the Safety, Well-Being, and Professional Development of Staff

Throughout 2019, we have focused on training and development for all staff—the range of programs and training in which our staff have been involved are listed below:

Our staff are all certified Yellow Belts and our Executive team has all become Executive Green Belts

Parole supervisors across the state have attained the State of Nebraska Leadership Certificate

Six officers and our training team became certified ORAS and EPICS Trainers this last year

At our All-Staff meeting, we trained on Verbal Deescalation with Harry Dolan of Dolan Consulting

University of CINCINNATI

Our leadership team attended and trained at the annual meeting of the American Probation and Parole Association

Director Julie Micek, with our partner CSG, presented at the Annual Association of Paroling Authorities International



As a result of our agency's work with the Center for Operational Excellence, parole officers and staff across the state now regularly use daily huddles to coordinate our activities and to use data to drive our processes and improve on the work we do everyday...



Our Objectives

5. Promote a More Comprehensive and Thorough Understanding of Parole through Ongoing Education with Other Criminal Justice Stakeholders

During the 2019 fiscal year, the Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision have been busy, collaborating with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and the Office of Probation Administration and expanding our internal service provider network. But in addition to that work, we've also reached out to a wide range of local, state, and national entities and organizations to expand upon our learning, our partnerships, and our opportunities. Our network includes all of the agencies and organizations below...



Bristol Station
(Western Alternatives)



Carey Group



Carla Vista Sober Living Homes



Council of State Governments



Hightower Transitional Living



Honu House (Mental Health Association)



University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute



Valley Hope



American Probation and Parole Association



Association of Paroling Authorities International



Good Life Counseling



International Association of Correctional Training Personnel



Metropolitan Community College



Nebraska Center for Justice Research



Strategic Psychological Services LLC



University of Nebraska Medical Center



What People Are Saying...

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Words cannot express my gratitude for everything that you have done for me. Because of your caring heart and sharing heart, I would have never learned about this clinic, met my counselor or be healthier. Thank you!! I am truly blessed to have you as my guardian angel for the next year. I will be successful because of your example and support. —Client, 2018

I had an inmate at NCYF who was young, angry, and very abrasive. We had a good working relationship at NCYF but he knew how to push the envelope. When he came to the parole office and saw me, he shook my hand and told me he was done with this life and wanted to get on the right track. On 3-10-19, I was attending the Metro Community College graduation ceremony and I heard his name. I looked up at the monitor displaying the ceremony and saw him getting his diploma from staff. I found him after the ceremony and he told me that he kept his promise and graduated college for his kids. He told me that the positive support at NCYF and Parole helped him to get on the right track. He thanked me for pushing him to be a better person as well... — Parole Officer, 2019

A big shout-out to the Director of Nebraska Parole Supervision and Services and the Assistant Director for the “From 0 to EBP in Under 4 Years” workshop at the 2019 Summer APPA Institute.... Some of their most important outcome data includes 15% reduction in revocation hearings, 25% reduction in technical violation hearings, and 30% reduction in recidivism. Thanks for paving the way, Nebraska Parole!—Carey Group, 2019

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Parole By the Numbers: FY 2019



5,141

Decisions by the Board at Reviews and Hearings



1,041

Individuals paroled by the Board



2,422

Individuals supervised by DPS



286

Clients Revoked



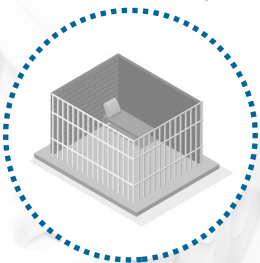
1,947

Incentives and Sanctions Issued for Client Behavior



2,508

ORAS Assessments Completed



82

Clients Placed on a Short-Term Custodial Sanction



1,210

Clients Still on Parole as of July 1 from FY 2019



981

Successful Discharges

1 We have launched several initiatives to support our evidence-based practices, including bringing a new case planning system online, developing and implementing a new Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement team, and providing individualized training and coaching to parole officers to support the assessment, case management, and case planning practices. We had the opportunity to share what we've learned in this process with others at the APPA Training Conference this last year!

2 Our social media presence has grown by leaps and bounds this year! You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, the web, and most recently we've established a blog on how we are applying and putting our EBPs into practice. Our blog is called "The Science of Community Corrections and the Art of Supervision" and we hope you check out all that we have to offer online!

3 Along with the partners that we've worked with in the past, we are now working to support initiatives in other states through our collaboration with the Council of State Governments. This past year, we've spoken with the Department of Corrections in both Missouri and Wyoming about our work on implementing assessments and what we've done with our integrations in our Parole Information Management System!

4 In September 2019, we will host the Conference for the International Association of Correctional Training Personnel in Omaha, Nebraska with Probation and the Department of Correctional Services

5 We've increased our mobility with our work as this year we deployed tablets for use by all officers in the field. Beyond this, we've gone paperless and by January of 2020 we will have fully electronic files!

7 Last, but most certainly not least... we are starting to see the effects of our work. Recidivism data from the last year has shown a 30% decrease in returns to prison either for a parole violation or for new laws violations. And we've reduced the number of revocation hearings held by a total of 15% with an even greater reduction for hearings that were for technical violations only. We look forward to seeing what else comes of our agency's work next year.

6 Among the initiatives that we've undertaken, perhaps the one we've enjoyed most as a group has been our work to continue growing parole. Our Director held 1-on-1 meetings with every staff member since our last report and we've worked hard to build up parole based on that feedback: we've created an Assistant Parole Officer position to support our Metro offices, we've reassigned those in administration to spend more time supporting our officers in the field, and we've put into place a number of process improvement ideas articulated by our team members. For our last All-Staff meeting, we brought in a motivational speaker and trainer, Harry Dolan, to provide us with a greater understanding of verbal de-escalation. Coming up this next year, we look forward to launching even more initiatives to continue supporting our staff and agency in 2020!