



ANNUAL REPORT CY 2021

Nebraska Board of Parole
Division of Parole Supervision



NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Communities.



From Our Chair, Rosalyn Cotton

Throughout 2021, the Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision have remained committed and dedicated to protecting public safety and to further building upon the successes we've had over the last five years as an independent agency. We've worked hard to weather the challenges of the last several years and I can't thank our staff enough for their efforts to support effective reentry of parole clients all across Nebraska.

This last year, we've expanded our working partnerships with a variety of entities, most notably with our work as part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative coordinated by the Crime and Justice Institute. We've also continued our ongoing partnerships with the Department of Correctional Services, Metropolitan Community College—Fort Omaha campus and the University of Nebraska School of Criminology and Criminal Justice among others. We look forward to the continued analysis in our field on critical concerns as a means to further support community safety in the most effective and efficient ways possible that best serve Nebraskans.

We've also continued our process improvement initiatives in collaboration with the State of Nebraska Center of Operational Excellence. This year, Board members Layne Gissler and Mark Langan obtained their Green Belt certifications. Thanks to these Board members for carrying forward the commitment to always finding ways to improve our processes for all!

As always, I want to thank our dedicated personnel for their resolve and work to maintain continuity of operations in the area of parole even with the challenges we've encountered. This year, we launched a new initiative known as the Chair's Challenge—a special recognition for parole staff who've acted as outstanding examples and ambassadors within our communities. Kudos to Jeff Beran, Marnie Lorenz, and Clayton Wells recognized this year for all their great work in the field of community supervision! I look forward to all that 2022 brings our way and to the many ways we will innovate and succeed as a team!

Members:
Layne Gissler
Mark Langan
Habib Olomi
Bob Twiss



From Our Director, Julie Micek

What a difference a year makes. After working diligently through the pandemic to support our clients and staff, 2021 offered the Division of Parole Supervision opportunities that may not have been realized had we not been faced with the challenges of 2020.

Our commitment to staff development and self-care continue to remain in the forefront of our vision for our agency. When we are the best versions of ourselves we can rise to the occasion to help others change their behavior and strive to be the best versions of themselves as they return to our communities.

Evidence Based Principles continue to drive our daily practice and the important work we do. By continuing to look at each principle individually and how they work in concert we improve our supervision strategies and outcomes. The data drives the work and the research that we focus on helps us understand what needs to be adjusted. By continuing to be willing to look at data and the criminal justice system, we can ensure that what we are doing matters and promotes change.

We, as an agency, have always believed that with change comes endless possibilities. How we approach each day, each client, and each member of our team makes a strong agency that is committed to endless possibilities for all.

DPS Executive Team Members



Ken Quinn
Assistant Director



Jennifer Miller
Assistant Director



Nicole Miller
Legal Counsel



Sue Olson
Operations Manager

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

The Parole Process: From Facility to Community

1

Once an inmate is at or less than 3 years from their parole eligibility date, at least 2 members of the Board of Parole will review their behavior, programming status, and assessments once a year and will provide feedback to the inmate on their progress toward obtaining parole.



2

At 2 years from their parole eligibility date, at least 2 members of the Board of Parole will hold another review to determine if the inmate is ready to be set for a parole hearing. If the inmate is determined to be ready, a hearing will be set up to 2 years in the future. If not, another review will be set in 12 months unless the Board determines that the inmate will not be paroled and will serve their full sentence in prison.



3

At a parole hearing, at least 3 members of the Board will determine whether the inmate is ready for release to the community. The Board may vote to parole an individual, may set another parole hearing in the future, may determine that the inmate is not ready for parole and set them for another review (see above), or may determine that parole is not possible and determine the inmate will serve their full sentence in prison.



4

After an inmate is released into the community and they become a parole client, they contact their officer within 24 hours of release and meet with the officer in person within 1-2 days. Officers complete the ORAS risk assessment and use the EPICS (Effective Practices in Community Supervision) model to supervise clients.



5

Clients are supported in the community by parole officers in several ways: supervision is based on risk, evidence-based practices are used, and community treatment and providers are engaged when appropriate. Officers utilize incentives and sanctions to support positive change and the development of pro-social behaviors and skills.



Our Objectives

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



Service For and Protection of the Public: In CY 2021, a total of 391 unique clients were returned to prison. Since 2017, the number of clients sent back to prison has **declined by 6.7%** (391 unique clients in CY 2021 versus 419 unique clients in CY 2017). We have launched a comprehensive study of recidivism to identify additional means to improve our public safety initiatives; results for this research will drive the work we do in 2022 and 2023.



Successful Reentry and Integration of Clients: **63%** of the discharges during CY 2021 were successful. From 2017 to 2021, discharges from parole had a yearly average success rate of **64.5%, approximately 10% higher than the known successful discharge rate in the US.**



Continue Our Research and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices: During CY 2021, we began **data analysis and evaluation of all client related programming** to determine which programs work best and when. We also restarted our **open cognitive behavior intervention group, CBI4NE1**, in Hastings, Lincoln, and Omaha following a brief hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, we have launched **a new initiative to offer victim supports through a victim specialist position** as part of our most recent JRI federal grant!



Foster the Successful Reentry and Integration of Our Clients: Parole officers through Nebraska continue to provide 1-on-1 supports to our clients through the use of the **Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) model**. Our network of providers has now expanded to include clinical programming for **batterer's intervention, pretreatment and relapse substance use programming, residential substance use programming, sex offender aftercare programming, and trauma groups for both men and women** in Lincoln and Omaha.



Acting as Agents of Change: The work in our field is never done and we remain committed to further changing what we do to best serve as supporters for change with our clients. In 2021, the discussion of **Justice Reinvestment with the Crime and Justice Institute** provided the opportunity to reexamine parole processes with a lens toward innovation in the future. We also continued **evaluations of our grant-based programs with our partners at the Nebraska Center for Justice and the Council of State Governments** to further advance the way we engage with clients and victims.




Dedication to Our Work: The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly challenged a great many community corrections agencies across the country—in light of those challenges we have rededicated ourselves to building on our capacity and strengths through **continued coaching on resilience from Dr. Brent Khan** and with a new internal **leadership coaching initiative with Marianne Chance**. As we move into 2022, we will continue these initiatives and look to our first internal leadership cohort to provide new pathways toward improvements for parole staff and clients!

Our Objectives


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**, including the following new developments in 2021:


1 In CY 2021, we developed our first internal **SharePoint** site to serve as a central hub for information for all staff within the Board of Parole. This site provides information regarding any and all programming and client services available as well as tools and resources specific to staff in terms of human resources materials, sharing of schedules and timelines for projects or activities like training, and allows for 24/7 access to directories, forms and protocols, and process guides.



2 One of the primary goals for DPS has been to clearly identify what programs work best for specific groups of clients. In 2021, we built our first **programming tracking screen** in the Parole Information Management System (PIMS) to provide the chance to evaluate and assess programs throughout the state. In 2022, we look forward to expanding PIMS access to providers so that all program information is centrally located and easy to share with providers and NBOP/DPS staff!



3 2021 was a great year for evaluations! We continued our work with the Nebraska Center for Justice Research in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the **CBI4NE1** program. For our second federal grant award, in 2021 we started and conducted an extensive evaluation of our practices related to **victim engagement and information-sharing** with the Council for State Governments. We look forward to continuing this work in 2022!



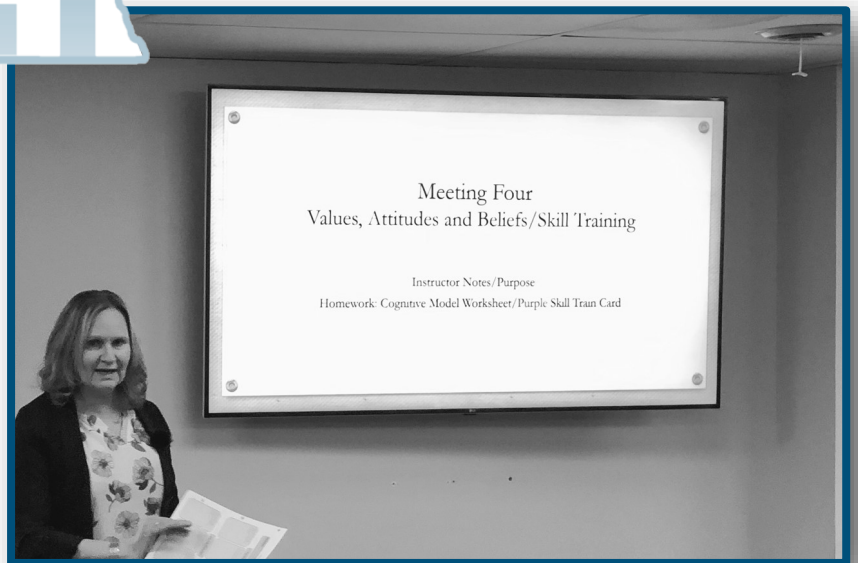
Our Objectives

Secure and Expand An Effective Network for Parole Clients

The Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision has continued to work with clinicians across the state, ranging from Omaha to Scottsbluff, to increase capacity for programming for all clients. For this year's report, we want to highlight the innovative work that we have generated as part of our **Bureau of Justice Assistance Innovations in Supervision** and **Justice Reinvestment grants**. We've pioneered the **Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Anyone (CBI4NE1) program**, an open structure 12-week group that allows for individuals to join the group at the earliest possible time after their release to the community.



CBI4NE1 is a pilot program created and first delivered by Director Julie Micek, LIMHP. Director Micek trained over 20 parole staff in January 2022 to become facilitators for this program (pictured left). Adding these facilitators will make it possible to provide this programming to several hundred additional parole clients.



Additional Parole Programming Services

- ◆ Batterer's Intervention (Domestic Violence)
- ◆ Continuing Care for Sex Offenders
- ◆ Living with Success
- ◆ Mental Health/Therapy
- ◆ Trauma Groups for Men and Women
- ◆ Substance Use Programming:
 - ◇ Pretreatment Groups
 - ◇ Relapse Groups
 - ◇ Residential Treatment (Valley Hope)
 - ◇ Clinical Evaluation Services

Our Objectives

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

2021 extended the challenges of the 2020 pandemic but with that in mind we spent the year continuing our focus on **the development of supports for staff with an emphasis on self-care**. We also expanded our team and tackled two new initiatives: first, **a new internal leadership cohort** and second, **a revision of our defensive tactics training**.



Executive Coaching

Throughout 2021, supervisory staff at DPS met with Dr. Brent Khan who has provided those staff members with individualized executive coaching. Dr. Khan also provided resilience coaching and HeartMath training for DPS staff.



Leadership Cohort

This last year we kicked off our first internal leadership development cohort! Fifteen officers and supervisors are working with Marianne Chance of Work Warrior to build skills and complete projects geared toward the long-term growth of our agency!



Defensive Tactics

One of the major undertakings this last year has been the reworking of our defensive tactics training. Plans for 2022 include more hands-on practice and application and the addition of Verbal Judo (verbal deescalation) training.

As a part of our 2020 BJA grant, DPS was able in 2021 to create and hire a full-time victim specialist position. Our team is happy to welcome Kelsey Hansen into this role along with several other new staff who've joined our team this year: Michael Borman, Caitlin Cassidy, Sarah Krohn, Alan "AJ" Trook, Riley Clark, Jon Osborn, Cory Comstock, Enes Rucker, and Hannah Hansen!

**WELCOME
TO THE TEAM!**

Our Objectives

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

Throughout 2021, the Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision actively worked to broaden familiarity with the concepts of parole supervision through various **public engagement and information efforts, training, and as part of our ongoing grants**. We highlight a few of these efforts below:

01



INSPECTOR GENERAL ENGAGEMENT

During 2021, our leadership team had multiple meetings with the Inspector General for Corrections to better educate about our processes and to share information regarding parole.

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT PARTNERS

The Board and Division of Parole Supervision worked with the Criminal Justice Institute to not only share data but also to provide guidance regarding parole best practices and the way we use those practices to work with our parole clients.

NCJI
CRIME AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE

02

03



WEBSITE UPDATES

For the website updates completed in the last year, we emphasized making information for various audiences more accessible: our new pages include specific information for inmates, parole clients, friends and family members and victims.

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

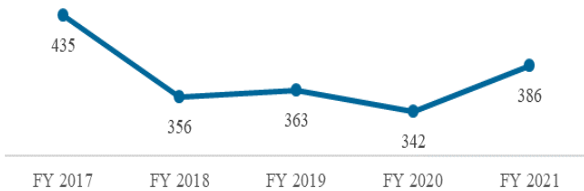
Our social media presence has grown considerably this last year; our agency was recognized for our "Cool, Calm, and Collected" video submission to the American Parole and Probation Association's 2021 Week of Appreciation for community supervision!



04

Deep Dive: Parole and Prison Overcrowding

On July 1, 2020, an overcrowding emergency was declared. In the years before and following that declaration, many studies have been conducted to evaluate the relationship between parole and prison overcrowding. For this year's annual report, we're providing our first "deep dive" analysis with data highlights on various parole-related factors that illustrate the relationship between parole and the NDCS population.



Between FY 2017 and FY 2021, the number of individuals returned to prison dropped by a total of 11%, or approximately 50 fewer people sent back to prison each year.

Of the people who are still in prison past their parole eligibility date, 4 out of 10 have already been on parole and had their parole revoked in the past.



An independent analysis conducted by CJI in the fall of 2021 showed that only 15% of all prison admissions are due to revocations of parole, while 85% are due to new sentences.



Due to legislative changes after 2016, the proportion of individuals who are parole eligible has decreased by half—from 99% in 2011 to only 48% in 2020.

The Relationship between Parole and Overcrowding

The Board of Parole has reduced returns to prison: numbers from FY 2018-FY 2021 show between 50 and 90 fewer individuals sent back in comparison with FY 2017. The Board also re-paroles those who have not successfully completed parole in the past—but with fewer inmates eligible for parole and longer time served prior to parole eligibility, the capacity to use parole to reduce overcrowding is limited.

2021 felt in so many ways like what we as a society and world had endured in 2020—but even in light of the challenges and wear we’ve all experienced from the pandemic, we continue to see our staff working to excel and support each other and our clients in ways that deserve great recognition. Here we’d like to recognize all of those who’ve been highlighted by our team or the State of Nebraska as Making a Difference in community supervision!



Making A Difference

Each month, we recognize the work and contributions of members of our team who have done great work and performed exceptionally—here we’d like to share with everyone those who received this recognition in 2021:

- January:** Amy Bethards, Jason Finch, and Michelle Ternus
- February:** Alexandra Adams and Tracy Felker
- March:** Mikki Kirkpatrick, Julie Micek, and Clayton Wells
- April:** Cayla Tritle
- May:** Heather Schultze and the Child Abuse Awareness Team
- June:** Paola Aguilar Pozos, Blair Hofeldt, TylerAnn Zoubek
- July:** Leadership Team
- August:** Caitlin Cassidy and Alyssa Hanks
- September:** Tom Verplank
- October:** All-Staff Committee
- November:** Heather Roberson and Russell Schultze
- December:** Amy Bethards

Shining Star

Every 6 months, all parole staff are asked to recognize the outstanding efforts of other staff members who has gone above and beyond in the work they’ve done either within the agency or within their community. This year, we’re proud to recognize **Denny Campbell, Riley Clark, Cory Comstock, and Deanna Schmidt** as the recipients of our “Shining Star” award. Denny was recognized for the great work he provides as our training supervisor. Riley and Cory were recognized for the supportive ways they have worked to assist parole officers within the Lincoln region and across the state on a range of duties. Deanna was recognized for the work she has done with training others to back up her position which encompasses a large range of duties and tasks. Kudos to all of our Shining Stars!

Special Recognition

Two NBOP/DPS staff members who received recognition from Governor Ricketts and the State of Nebraska as providing Excellence in Leadership in 2021. Congratulations to Mikki Kirkpatrick and Ken Quinn for their work and recognition!



1 Our 2020 Justice Reinvestment grant allowed us to hire our very first victim specialist in 2021—we look forward to the new opportunities to engage with and inform victims regarding parole as well as the ways this new position is able to train our staff on important topics like trauma-informed care!

2 We are extremely proud of the work our staff have done within the community—our team raised funds for National Child Abuse Awareness week in April 2021, participated in “Trunk or Treat” with Saratoga Elementary in October 2021, and continued our annual holiday gift drive in December 2021 as a member of the Community Action Group.

3 CBI4NE1, our innovative cognitive-behavioral program, has expanded to include over 20 new parole officer facilitators. We can't wait to see them work with our client groups in 2022 and to serve hundreds more individuals as we continue to build and support this program!

4 We've continued our great work with grants—our BJA awards and CESF grant brought in \$337,000 in 2021 and built up programs for both clients and victims this year!

5 Our Chair Rosalyn Cotton received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Nebraska-Omaha in May 2021; congratulations to Ms. Cotton on this great honor!

7 In partnership with Marianne Chance of Work Warrior, we launched our first ever leadership cohort initiative in 2021! The first cohort for this program is 15 parole officers and supervisors. Each cohort member receives monthly individualized coaching sessions along with quarterly cohort group meetings. We look forward to the 2022 launch of their projects geared toward improving parole for staff and clients!

6 We're getting the word out about what we do! 2021 was a year of sharing and outreach to the community. Our staff presented at schools and colleges (Peru State College, Southeast Community College, and the University of Nebraska), participated in speaker series and panels on community corrections, and participated in meetings around the state and country that have a focus on community corrections (the American Probation and Parole Association, the Justice Behavioral Health Committee, and the Reentry Alliance Network among others). In 2022, we look forward to more outreach and to building our agency with an expanded paid internship program and participation in several national conferences and panels. Check our website for announcements, presentations, and more on the many activities of our agency!