



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2020

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Communities.

Nebraska Board of Parole
Division of Parole Supervision





From Our Chair, Rosalyn Cotton

The Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision will forever be committed and dedicated to protecting public safety. The Board of Parole continues to parole candidates who do not pose a threat to the community, while the Division of Parole Supervision is dedicated to providing and serving clients.

Our agency continues to collaborate, communicate and partner with the Department of Correctional Services and other community partners such as Metropolitan Community College– Fort Omaha Campus and the University of Nebraska School of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

In addition, our agency continues to work on improving the daily operations by working closely with the State of Nebraska Center of Operational Excellence. Teammates continue to utilize WebEx huddles and work on projects to assist us with the continuous growth of our agency. Process Improvement and the Center for Operational for Excellence has certainly had an impact on the efficiency of our agency.

Along with the entire State of Nebraska, the Board of Parole rose to the challenge of confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the use of technology and teamwork, the Board maintained its routine of conducting daily reviews and parole hearings nearly uninterrupted while observing the mandated and recommended public health guidelines to ensure the safety of Board Members, staff, incarcerated individuals, and the public. We thank our dedicated personnel for their efforts to maintain continuity of operations in the area of parole.

This year, I am proud of the accomplishments this agency has made. We continue to make progress. We still have work to do. Congratulations Team for another successful year!

Members:
Layne Gissler
Virgil Patlan
Bob Twiss
Mark Langan



From Our Director, Julie Micek

This year has been full of unexpected challenges but also unexpected successes for the Division of Parole Supervision. Throughout the first part of the year, our division continued to build on our successes of the past, including working on expanding our services and programing offerings, ongoing preparations for the declaration of the overcrowding emergency, refining data and continuous quality assurance, and receiving federal grants to develop new programming. And then March 2020 came in like a lion...

Our agency just like others has been faced with the challenge of adapting to our life during coronavirus. We are doing more of our administrative work remotely than we've ever done before, while using virtual options to expand services beyond the normal territorial boundaries that generally limited those services before. And what we've learned more than anything else this year is the value of our relationships, particularly those that were very much based in face-to-face conversations and interactions. We believe that now more than ever we need to rally together, to continue building those relationships we've had in our everyday face-to-face lives, and to support one another as we all face the next year and its uncertainties. We remain very much committed to the work of helping our clients effectively reenter society but as we head into 2021 we are also very much focused on building capacity for adaptation and self-care for our clients and staff. Because those foundations make truly great relationships possible.

Even in moments of crisis there are possibilities—and we work in a field that consistently grapples with challenges that seem insurmountable. Together, we've done more than many thought we could in this time and we continue to find that, when we look out for each other and ourselves, we can be successful in the work we do, no matter what is on the horizon.



Ken Quinn
Assistant Director



Jennifer Miller
Assistant Director



Nicole Miller
Legal Counsel

From Our Executive Team

We join Ms. Cotton and Ms. Micek in celebrating the accomplishments of our agency in FY2020. Certainly, there were unforeseen challenges, but there were also stronger relationships and renewed creativity that resulted from those challenges. What we most appreciate about this agency is that we constantly strive to confront challenges and re-examine our practices to better fulfill the mission and vision statements of this agency, which place a premium on informed decision-making and public safety through the use of evidence-based practices in all facets of our work.

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

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



Service For and Protection of the Public: In FY 2020, we reduced the number of clients returning to prison by 9.5% (342 unique clients versus 378 unique clients in FY 2019). We also saw a 20% reduction in laws violations charges for all clients who had a review of parole hearing in FY 2020. In 2021, our Continuous Quality Improvement team will launch a comprehensive study of client recidivism to identify additional means to improve our public safety initiatives!



Successful Reentry and Integration of Clients: 64% 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 2020, we began examining the utilization of custodial sanctions and how such are best used to address parole client compliance and success, investigated recidivism rates in comparison to programming received while on parole, and continued our collaboration with our contracted community providers to assess and evaluate and research into specific provider outcomes.



Foster the Successful Reentry and Integration of Our Clients: Director Micek developed, commenced and facilitated an open cognitive behavior intervention group for Omaha-area parole clients that will serve as a model for such groups state-wide in FY 2021, we continued our work toward a community based violence reduction program on par with and to complement what parole clients receive during their time in NDCS institutions, and we continue to pilot new and innovative programs in order to better serve our parole clients statewide.



Acting as Agents of Change: Our agency has continued our evolution in developing more and better ways to measure parole outcomes, which will, in turn, serve as a springboard for parole officers to become better equipped to tailor their supervision strategies with each of their clients. By reflecting internally, as well, we role model the utilization of evidence-based strategies that foster better outcomes. We continuously evaluate our supervision standards and strategies. The agency also places a premium on self-care and resiliency in our dedicated DPS staff so that we are better able from a personal standpoint to meet the challenges of parole supervision that occur in the community.



Dedication to Our Work: The agency contracted with prominent parole consultant Mr. William Burrell to provide a progress analysis of the Division of Parole Supervision and we are pleased that so many of our initial objectives at the time parole administration transitioned in 2016 have been met or exceeded! Of particular significance, Mr. Burrell noted that the Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision have succeeded on many levels with implementation of our evidence-based practices in 4 years which is a marked accomplishment within the realm of community corrections!

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 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 and to share information beyond our agency and with our partners:

Coronavirus grant funds were received to **obtain tablets and other equipment** so as to enhance **mobile capabilities and real-time data exchange** for officers during remote operations and beyond.

We've continued our **collaboration and data exchange with service providers** in tracking client outcomes so that the Board and DPS staff are able to tailor supervision to clients' risks and needs.

The Board of Parole worked with Nebraska Interactive to **refresh, update, and streamline its website** to create a more user-friendly and intuitive experience for clients and families. We've also created **an internal site** to better share information across the state 24/7 with parole staff.



Our **collaboration with NDCS** personnel continues, particularly in the areas of **developing effective parole plans** for reentry and for **development of effective supervision plans** for special groups of clients to address responsibility issues and needs.



Our **data management system, PIMS**, has been continuously updated to **increase efficiency and consistency** in locating relevant information needed for decision-making and supervision.



Data sharing with providers and the **Department of Labor** facilitates a continuous feedback loop to be analyzed by our Data and IT teams to further refine our supervision strategies.

Our Objectives

Secure and Expand An Effective Network for Parole Clients

The Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision were awarded multiple federal grants during the FY 2020 year, including a **Bureau of Justice Assistance Innovations in Supervision grant** as well as funding under the **Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding** through the Nebraska Crime Commission. A total of approximately \$739,000 under these grants was used to purchase equipment for staff and providers, to develop new programming, and to expand existing programming offerings to make groups available to clients across Nebraska using web-based meeting systems. Below we detail what we consider to be our most innovative and exciting developments as a result of these grants!

Violence Reduction Community-Based Programming



In October 2020, DPS partnered with the creators of the Violence Reduction Program to develop a new community-based version of this program for those on supervision.

Director Julie Micek successfully developed and piloted a new open cognitive behavior intervention group called CBI4NE1 (CBI for anyone) with plans to launch the program statewide in FY2021.



Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Anyone (CBI4NE1)

Web-Based Programming for All Clients During Covid-19



As part of our response to Covid-19, DPS has worked to expand programming options and pioneered several web-based groups to support continued treatment for clients.

Our Objectives

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

Throughout FY2020, we have focused on **training and development for all staff** and in particular on **the development of supports for staff with an emphasis on self-care**. Below, we highlight some of the efforts and work of our staff as it relates to the building of our safety, well-being, and professional development:

1 We've continued our collaboration with the **Center for Operational Excellence (COE)** and continue to implement changes to support our team. Our project ideas this year revolved around optimizing time by reducing travel time and improving our outreach, both externally and internally. We're proud to note that our Intranet site for staff is available for information sharing and project updates/idea submission as a part of our work with COE. We look forward to our 2021 projects focused on rural supervision practices!



2 Our agency is committed to supporting development of our future leaders. For the last several years, NBOP/DPS have selected staff members for training with the **State of Nebraska's Leadership Cohort**. Our work this year has also taken us in the direction of creating our own leadership development program which is planned for launch in 2021. We would like to recognize and thank our staff for their commitment to the Leadership Cohort program!



3 Starting in 2019, DPS staff began working with **Dr. Brent Khan** using **HeartMath** to support building of personal resilience and provide a foundation for our self-care staff programs. We have maintained this focus in 2020 and have several initiatives launching in 2020 and 2021 to continue this effort at building self-care for our staff: Mental Health/First Aid training for staff, Peer Support team development, and Individualized Coaching for supervisory staff.



Our Objectives

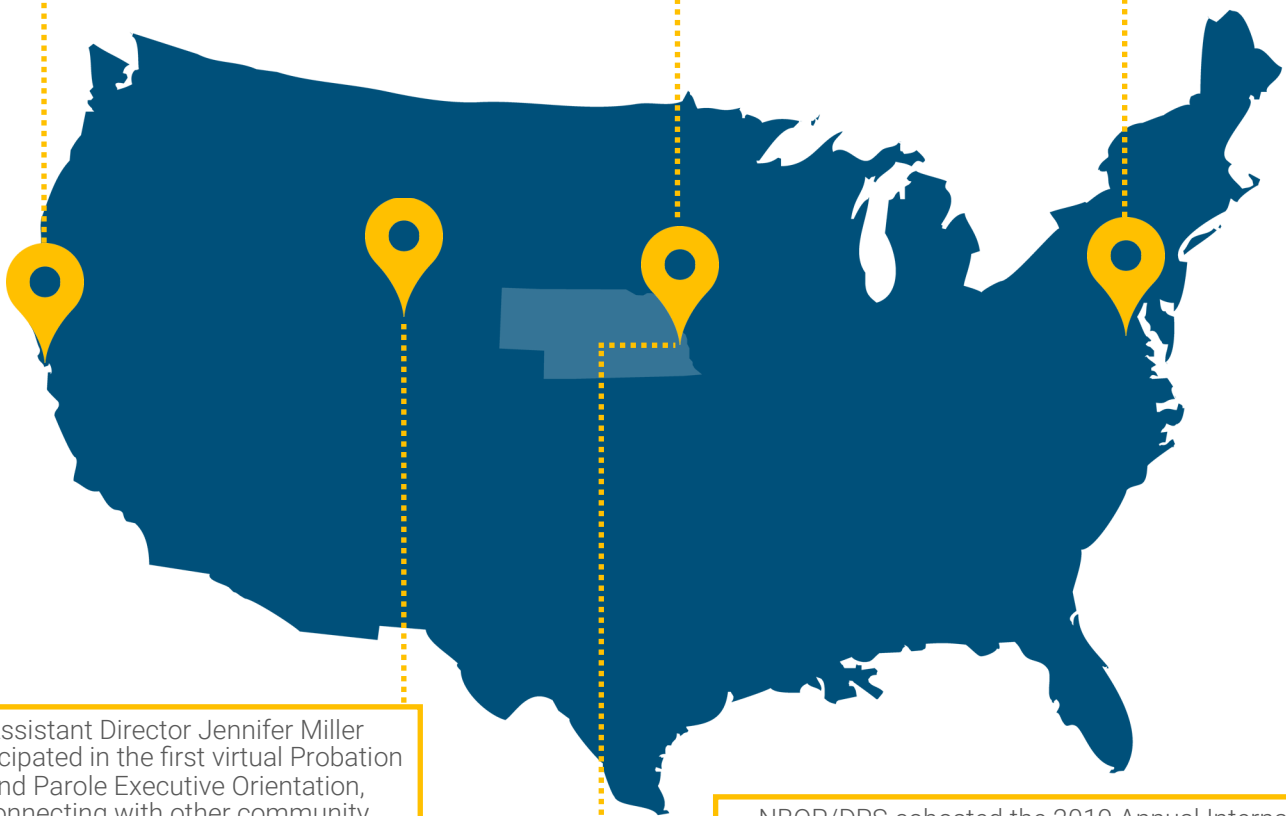
Promote a More Comprehensive and Thorough Understanding of Parole through Ongoing Education with Other Criminal Justice Stakeholders

During the 2020 fiscal year, the Nebraska Board of Parole and Division of Parole Supervision actively worked to broaden familiarity with the concepts of parole supervision through various **public appearances, panel discussions, and training meetings and conferences** across the United States. We highlight several of these visits and appearances below!

Our leadership team, in partnership with the Council of State Governments, presented at the APPA conference in San Francisco in August 2019 on implementation of EBPs in Nebraska

Chair Rosalyn Cotton served as a guest lecturer at the University of Nebraska Omaha and was highlighted for her career work in corrections by UNO in September 2020

Director Julie Micek was invited to speak with the National Governor's Association of New Governors on the topic of community supervision and evidence-based practices



Assistant Director Jennifer Miller participated in the first virtual Probation and Parole Executive Orientation, connecting with other community supervision executives in Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada, Ohio, Utah, Virginia, and Washington

NBOP/DPS cohosted the 2019 Annual International Association Of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP) National Training and Performance Conference in Omaha with our partners, the Nebraska Department of Correctional services and Nebraska Probation Administration. A big thanks to Denny Campbell, who served as one of the primary coordinators of this event!



The last months of FY 2020 have been challenging for many—and yet we’ve found so many of our staff have gone above and beyond even during these times. 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 FY 2020:

- July: Tammy Daniel
- August: Mikki Kirkpatrick
- September: CQI Team
- October: Cindy Fabian
- November: Brenda Stuefer
- December: Leadership Team
- January: Rochelle Kothe
- February: Marnie Lorenz
- March: Paul Hoffman
- April: Denny Campbell, Brittney Christensen
- May: Tracy Felker, Teletype Team
- June: Cindy Fabian, Parole Field Supervisors

Shining Star

Every year, all parole staff are asked to recognize the outstanding efforts of one staff member 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 **Alex Moreno** as the recipient of our “Shining Star” award. Alex was recognized for his work with Bristol Station, a transitional living facility located in Hastings. A big congrats and thanks to Alex for his great collaboration and engagement with Bristol staff and clients!



Special Recognition

Two NBOP/DPS staff members who received special awards for their work and leadership—congrats Tom and Nicole!

Tom Verplank received the Governor’s Excellence in Leadership Award in 2019 for the work he does to go above and beyond and how he “defines what a good leader is.”

Nicole Miller received the Governor’s Excellence in Leadership Award in 2020 for her inspirational leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic and her commitment to accountability, integrity, and dependability.



Parole By the Numbers: FY 2020



5,457

Decisions by the Board at Reviews and Hearings



1,118

Individuals paroled by the Board



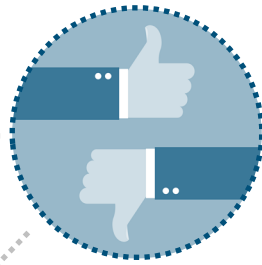
2,387

Individuals supervised by DPS



342

Clients Revoked



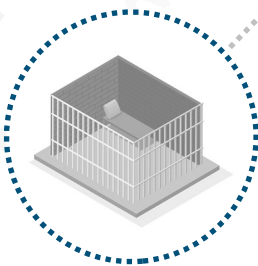
3,307

Incentives and Sanctions Issued for Client Behavior



2,571

ORAS Assessments Completed



97

Clients Placed on a Short-Term Custodial Sanction



1,301

Clients Still on Parole as of July 1, 2020



752

Successful Discharges

1 We took a deep-dive, in partnership with the Council of State Governments, to evaluate what works and what could use refinement and revisiting in our evidence-based practices that form the foundation of our community supervision strategies. This collaborative examination was extremely beneficial and shed light on what we do well and what we can improve upon as we move forward.

3 The agency executive team has renewed its commitment to and engagement with its staff in tangible ways such as improved communication in the form of weekly email updates and 1-on-1 meetings with supervisors, along with dedicated resources to support personal resiliency through technology, time, space, and coaching opportunities.

5 We continued our progress in the area of technology by expanding our access to real-time data by implementing dashboard-based work queues and expanding the capabilities of our tools that allow for mobile and field-based work. We also installed an automated check-in system to protect staff and the public during Covid.

7 While great emphasis was placed on building up our staff in FY 2020, we know the work continues. We continued to encourage staff to participate in training and education. We have examined and have made plans to develop and expand the field-training-officer role. We also look forward to future partnerships with educational institutions across the state to hopefully create a concrete roadmap to career opportunities in parole, including the expansion of internship opportunities.

2 Along with a renewed emphasis on expanding our social media outreach, we performed a comprehensive overhaul of our website. Visitors to our website will find along with an ADA compliant site, a welcoming experience that is easily navigable and fully informative regarding what the Board does and how it makes parole decisions, what supervision looks like for a parole client, and what friends and families of parole clients need to know!

4 FY 2020 realized the fruits of some heavy lifting by our grant-writer, Dr. Jennifer Miller. We received CESF and UDF grants, along with our first BJA/OJP parole-specific grant—totaling over \$840,000 in funding!

6 While our agency operates with constant betterment and improvement — for our clients, communities, and ourselves— in mind, COVID-19 presented an unexpected opportunity for us to put into place systems that will result in huge gains in terms of improved community supervision into the future. We exercised the flexibility that was needed during the initial stages of the pandemic and rose to the challenge of continuing to supervise parole clients with fidelity to best practices. We also adapted our office procedures to accommodate the business needs of our agency and clients, with the personal needs of our staff and families. Our comprehensive response plan to the COVID-19 emergency was conceptualized by Director Julie Micek, refined by our Executive Team with input from our supervisors, and put into action by all members of the parole team. We are proud of our resiliency and response!