



GOVERNOR KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR ADAM GREGG

Board of Parole

RENEE SCHULTE, CHAIR

Iowa Board of Parole

Strategic Plan

FY 2025

Meet the Board of Parole Team:

Renee Schulte, Chair

Meredith Lamberti, Vice Chair

James Moses, Board Member

Jesse Rincon, Board Member

Susie Weinacht, Board Member

Steve Clarke, Administrative Law Judge

Open Position, Administrative Law Judge

Heather Artist, Victim Liaison

Trish Jay, Board Liaison

Saskia Schweitzer, Administrative Law Judge Liaison

Marilee Mitchell, Administrative Secretary

Introduction

The Board of Parole (BOP) is a team of 11 members, each bringing a unique background and perspective to this important work. The parole board is made up of five full time members after legislative changes that began on July 1, 2023. The Code of Iowa spells out the duties and responsibilities of the board, which goals and objectives in this document reflect.

Mission Statement

To enhance overall public safety by making evidence-based and informed parole decisions for the successful re-entry of offenders into the community to become productive and responsible citizens.

Vision Statement

To make evidence-based release and revocation decisions that prioritize public safety while also being conscious of managing prison population, while creating consistent board operation procedures that foster collaboration between all stakeholders.

Assessment

The whole team took part in a half-day workshop facilitated by a third party consultant. The team contributed to the content and creation of the individual goals, focus areas, and objectives.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Count in total of BOP review requests received with Department of Corrections (DOC) release recommendations per month. (This will show the volume of work requests made to the BOP)
2. Count of parole, work release, and special sentence release decisions. (This shows the outcomes of the review requests made to the BOP)
3. BOP Agreement rate. (This shows the agreeability between the DOC and BOP in their final granting decisions)

Goals Overview

1. Utilize updated and relevant evidence-based practices in the decision-making process. (Holding Government Accountable)
2. Base decisions on evidence-based practices that prioritize public safety. (Holding Government Accountable)
3. Forge collaborative relationships with stakeholders. (Supporting Health and Well-being)
4. Remain fiscally conscious of the financial impact of decisions. (Holding Government Accountable)

5. Collaborate with nationally recognized experts to improve system effectiveness. (Supporting Health and Well-being)
6. Ensure that victims' interests are considered in the deliberation process. (Supporting Health and Well-being)
7. Develop a quality assurance process that utilizes data effectively. (Holding Government Accountable)

Focus Areas: Related to the Governor's Priority of Holding Government Accountable

1. Collaborate with the Department of Corrections (DOC) in the management of prison and district populations.
2. Conduct research and formulate recommendations for tailored programs aimed at improving re-entry success.
3. Enhance existing documentation of policies and procedures to improve operational efficiency.

Goals and Objectives

1. Utilize updated and relevant evidence-based practices in the decision-making process (IAC 904A.3A).

Objective 1: Work with researcher(s) and national justice organizations to create standard operating procedures to improve organizational effectiveness.

Objective 2: Develop risk assessment tools based on Iowa specific data to certain populations (e.g., juvenile lifers, youthful offenders, domestic assault, sex offenders, etc.).

Objective 3: Update process that is more efficient for executive clemency communication.

Objective 4: Complete an environmental scan on board training and evidence-based practices.

2. Base decisions on evidence-based practices that prioritize public safety (IAC 904A. 3A).

Objective 1: Track and trend data of release outcomes.

Objective 2: Continue ongoing internal training on DOC tools and any new tools as developed.

Objective 3: Use validated tools specific to certain populations to make decisions.

Objective 4: Continue to track and trend board denial data for decision-making and DOC collaboration.

3. Forge collaborative relationships with stakeholders (IAC 906.3).

Objective 1: Work in partnership with DOC to get all prisons and districts aligned in scope and processes.

Objective 2: Communicate annually with partners including but not limited to county attorneys, sheriff departments, and districts to enhance efficient preparation for and resolution of parole violation complaints.

Objective 3: Continue to develop and maintain good relationships with corrections counselors, parole officers, treatment directors and staff.

Objective 4: Attend and support DOC victim impact events, Iowa Correctional Association, County Attorney Conference, and similar stakeholder events.

4. Remain fiscally conscious of the financial impact of decisions (IAC 904.4A.8).

Objective 1: Review financial reports monthly to ensure that we stay aligned with our projected yearly budget.

Objective 2: Use resources to create a dashboard to trend releases.

Objective 3: Maintain budget based on operational needs.

Objective 4: Monitor and assess number of FTEs needed to achieve the mission of the Board of Parole.

5. Collaborate with nationally recognized experts to improve system and process effectiveness.

Objective 1: Participate in parole authority training to share and obtain ideas to enhance parole board efficiency.

Objective 2: Engage with national organizations who reach out for research opportunities as appropriate.

Objective 3: Continue training with national partners as appropriate.

Objective 4: Attend state and nationally recognized training for board members and staff.

6. Ensure that the victim's interests are considered in the deliberation process (IAC 915).

Objective 1: Adhere to victim related statutes of engagement and keep victims informed with timely communication and empathy.

Objective 2: Educate victims on the parole process.

Objective 3: Facilitate training for victim care and management including sensitivity training and trauma victim interactions.

Objective 4: Educate county attorneys and victim coordinators on sentencing, time calculations and release.

7. Develop a quality assurance process that utilizes data effectively.

Objective 1: Review and evaluate various categories of decisions to identify patterns of decision-making.

Objective 2: Standardize data for performance reviews.

Objective 3: Continue to report monthly and annual board statistics to the General Assembly and Board as required.

Objective 4: Consider FTEs for an internal Quality Improvement position and/or an internal research data analyst.

Additional Focus Areas

1. Collaborate with DOC in the management of prison and district populations.

Task 1: Discuss legislative options to address ongoing population growth and resulting concerns.

Task 2: Educate stakeholders in the criminal process about diversion including but not limited to the Attorney General, judges, county attorneys and DOC districts.

Task 3: Track and trend DOC and BOP agreement rates to maintain a rate over 80% ongoing.

Task 4: Advocate for community resources including mental health and substance use programming to assist with diverting people from entering the criminal justice system.

2. Conduct research and formulate recommendations for tailored programs aimed at improving re-entry success.

Task 1: Acquire or compile a list of community programs and partners, including their requirements and effectiveness.

Task 2: Collaborate with DOC regarding mental health and substance use treatment during incarceration.

Task 3: Collaborate with DOC in finding additional validated programming to support incarcerated individuals.

Task 4: Educate districts on the behavioral health resources available in their district areas.

3. Enhance existing documentation of policies and procedures to improve operational efficiency.

Task 1: Create improved onboarding training for new team members using video to enhance understanding of the system details.

Task 2: Develop weekly and monthly workflows for each position.

Task 3: Expand cross training in the office by enhancing the SOPs and making contingency plans for each position when absent.

Task 4: Improve the use of DOC documents in the online system with relevant information in an easy to find manner.

FY 2025 Budget Status

The Governor requested a status quo budget. The appropriations received was less than the Governor's recommendation but adequate for the current needs of the Board.

FY 2026-2030 Projected Needs for Improvements

Additional funding may be necessary for the following enhancements.

- Funding to create one FTE each for a quality assurance position and an internal research data analyst.
- Increasing ceiling for Board and liaison positions to keep up with industry standards to increase professionalism of the Board and staff.