

# Comprehensive Framework

for

## Paroling Authorities

*in an Era of*

***Evidence-Based Practices***

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*National Institute of Corrections*

*By Nancy M. Campbell*



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Evidence-Based Practices*

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**National Institute of Corrections**

**By Nancy M. Campbell  
Campbell Consulting**

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## FOREWORD

Parole can be defined as both a procedure by which a board administratively releases inmates from prison as well as a provision for post-release supervision. *The Comprehensive Framework for Paroling Authorities in an Era of Evidence-Based Practices* focuses on procedures relative to how and when to make the release decision and why and when to revoke a release. Parole is defined in this document as the release of an offender from imprisonment to the community by a releasing authority (parole board or paroling authority) prior to the expiration of the offender's sentence subject to conditions imposed by the releasing authority. Revocation is the action of a releasing authority removing a person from parole status in response to a violation of conditions.

Since eligibility for release on parole is a matter of state law, there is considerable variation in the location, administration, and organization of paroling authorities in the United States. All states have parole boards, and these boards may be independent agencies that have responsibility for release decisions or a branch of a department of corrections or a community corrections agency. In these organizational structures, boards may also have responsibility for staff who monitor the supervision of parolees in the community. Regardless of the structure, governors/governments are usually ill-equipped to select, hire, and train the caliber of individuals needed to do this important work that has a significant impact on public safety and the economy of a state.

*The Comprehensive Framework for Paroling Authorities in an Era of Evidence-Based Practices* is the overarching visionary plan that paroling authorities need to lead them to a desired future of well-trained board members, using evidence-based practices within agencies that have sufficient staff and other resources to effectively support the release and, when necessary, revocation of offenders. The document describes what governors

## Comprehensive Framework for Paroling Authorities in an Era of Evidence-Based Practices

(appointing authorities) and paroling authorities need to do to improve the parole process while decreasing offender recidivism and increasing public safety. This document provides an outline of how NIC will lead the implementation of *The Comprehensive Framework for Paroling Authorities in an Era of Evidence-Based Practices* so that parole boards have the system components, organizational structure, and other resources to be a more vital part of the correctional system.

Morris L. Thigpen  
Director  
National Institute of Corrections

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The prime mover behind this monograph was Carla Smalls, National Institute of Corrections (NIC) program specialist. As is often the case, Carla's desire to capture what paroling authorities need to function effectively was born of frustration. Frustrated by the gap between the potential and reality of parole, Carla was motivated to garner the resources and support to begin to describe what is needed to achieve the possible. If anyone is served by this monograph, they owe a debt of gratitude to Carla.

The ideas and suggestions in this monograph are largely the result of listening to a skilled group of paroling authorities and corrections practitioners. While labeled the Advisory Group for this effort, they, in fact, are collectively the authors. My thanks and appreciation to:

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Finally, thanks to my partner in crime, Pat Andrews, an editor and colleague with the patience of Job.

Nancy Campbell  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Section I. INTRODUCTION

This monograph is designed to help paroling authorities and those who appoint them, fund their programs and services, oversee their actions, and try to support their efforts to use evidence-based practices (EBP) to improve parole decision-making. Paroling authorities have lost so much power and influence in recent decades that the requirements to make them effective are often overlooked by most elected officials and oversight bodies and agencies who appoint, fund, and regulate them. Paroling authorities are in many instances the forgotten link in the corrections system.

This guide is designed to assist paroling authorities to understand the requirements of effective evidence-based decision-making and practices with the hope that they can better understand and articulate their agency needs to funders, regulatory agencies, and other corrections system players. Parole supervision agencies are beginning to embrace evidence-based practices. Corrections agencies are beginning to understand what *evidence-based practices* means for institutions. Parole, which is the link between the two systems, can learn from supervision agencies and influence corrections agencies. If all three agencies move to evidence-based practices, the reentry prospects of offenders will improve.

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### Sections II and III. THE IMPACT OF HISTORY ON CURRENT REFORM EFFORTS and CURRENT REFORM EFFORTS

*We shall not cease from exploration,  
And the end of all our exploring,  
Will be to arrive where we started,  
And to know the place for the first time.*

—T. S. Eliot

T. S. Eliot reminds us of one of the many values of history. We must know where we have come from so, as we explore and learn, we can truly understand where we have been and where we want to go. Looking back in time informs the future. We understand why we are where we are and can use experience to help us think creatively about the future. Sections II and III overview the history of parole and past and current reform efforts.

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*We must know where we have come from so, as we explore and learn, we can truly understand where we have been and where we want to go*

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This time is similar to a past time—a time when people with very different perspectives came together to make significant change in sentencing practices. We now better understand the implications of these changes, and this information can be used to better inform the effort to reduce criminal behavior by improving reentry efforts. It is possible that people who have different perspectives about offenders and crime, but who share the same goal of safe communities, could come together if the corrections system is able to understand its interests and provide the evidence and data needed to counter the misinformation and to debunk the many myths that pervades the system.

#### **Section IV. THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PAROLE PROCESS**

Not surprisingly the parole system can be confusing because every state has a system that differs from every other. Section IV overviews the elements of parole and how they combine in different systems. It serves only to highlight the functions of parole. The key stages that are overviewed include:

- *The institutional phase,*
- *The reentry phase,*
- *The community phase, and*
- *The discharge phase.*

The roles of the different system players are identified and explained in each stage.

#### **Section V. THE FOUNDATION OF SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS**

Building on the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) model, Section V overviews what evidence-based practice really means. The term is tossed around quite loosely these days and is often

not used accurately. To be evidence-based is not to use only one's current or past experience, beliefs, or training to help make decisions. It is also not a one-time event. It is a series of actions that one practices daily. Actions include understanding the underlying assumptions upon which current practices are based. Once one understands the existing practices, the next step is to discern what *valid* research says about those practices. Finally, measuring the impact of changes in practices in both intermediate and outcome measures is essential.

#### A. EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

What constitutes valid research is often an issue of debate. For practitioners, this can be frustrating and confusing. There are areas where significant agreement exists regarding what a broad base of research says works. These areas are identified and described in the Section A on *Evidence-Based Practice*. The eight identified areas provide general guidance on what practices are believed to be most effective in identifying criminogenic behavior(s) and influencing them. Each practice is generally described. To achieve desired outcomes in any of the practices, a paroling authority must ensure fidelity to the model or practice.

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#### B. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Implementing evidence-based practices requires changing habits, beliefs, assumptions, and practices that currently exist. To do this requires an organization that can:

- Establish values, a vision, a mission, and goals that create a culture that supports the use of EBP to assist offenders to effectively transition and reenter society;
- Clarify decision-making goals and ensure they align with transition and reentry efforts; and
- Develop the leadership capacity to implement organizational changes needed for the organization to be evidence-based.

To develop a paroling authority that has the organizational capacity to engage successfully in these activities requires leaders who have the needed skills, abilities, and knowledge to influence organizational culture, to clarify and align decision-making processes, and to garner and develop the human, fiscal, and policy resources and systems needed to implement evidence-based practices that support effective offender reentry.

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## C. COLLABORATION

*More effective coordination and collaboration between state agencies and between state, local, and community services is the hallmark of the reentry movement*

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More effective coordination and collaboration between state agencies and between state, local, and community services is the hallmark of the reentry movement. It has resulted in many creative ways in which to reduce the system barriers to effective reentry. Yet, if the systems only reduce system impediments and do not create programs that are effective in addressing criminogenic factors, the reductions in recidivism will not be great. Both steps are required.

This section highlights the role paroling authorities have and can play in transition and reentry planning as well as ways in which they have led collaborative partnerships to create programs that are currently being evaluated for their ability to address criminogenic needs.

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## VI. MOVING FORWARD

Section VI overviews short- and longer-term steps that can be taken to enhance individual, team, organizational, and system effectiveness. In most paroling authorities, actions and change will occur on all of these levels simultaneously. Change in one level informs and supports change in other levels. While not exhaustive, this section is designed to provide concrete action steps that paroling authorities can take.

## INTRODUCTION

There are two reasons to care about parole:

Public safety and economics.

A well-educated paroling authority that uses current research to guide the way it operates and makes decisions can help make our communities safer and stop needless expenditures of precious public resources. The formation of such an authority requires that Governors appoint parole board members with the competencies for effecting necessary changes—individuals who can and will collaborate with system and community partners, who understand and will use current research, and who will build infrastructure and capacity within parole organizations for delivering services effectively and efficiently. However, the most skilled and capable parole board members cannot, by themselves, make those changes in parole organizations. They need resources as well. The commitment of resources today will result in measurable savings of dollars and human suffering tomorrow.

Like it or not, it is estimated that approximately 650,000 offenders return to the community each year. These offenders can transition through the correctional system and reenter society on parole in ways that reduce the chance that they commit a new crime and, consequently, protect the public; or paroling authorities can ignore the research data and evidence that can help parole increase the chances that offenders re-establish themselves as productive citizens. The once-believed claims by Martinson that “nothing works to change offender behavior” have been soundly refuted. Today we know a great deal about what works and can change our correctional systems accordingly to increase public safety.

By ignoring research that identifies what reduces recidivism of parolees, we not only increase the chance that

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the public will be placed at risk, but we also will spend even more tax dollars on the corrections system. Incarceration as a system is costly, is overcrowded, and, if the goal is successful reentry of offenders, has a poor return on investment. Simply put, for the amount of money spent on incarceration, its effectiveness as a tool to enhance public safety is limited and diminishes as the number of the incarcerated grow.

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Parole, on the other hand, is the bridge between correctional institutions and parole supervision agencies.

It can be key in protecting the community and its resources. This monograph describes what a paroling authority needs to do to enhance its ability to help offenders effectively reenter society: It describes how paroling authorities can use evidence-based decision-making and practices to decrease offender recidivism and increase public safety. The use of evidence-based practices (EBP) in corrections began in probation and parole supervision agencies, although, for the most part, paroling authorities and corrections institutions are just beginning to embrace the concepts and practices. If the community is going to receive the benefit of offender-transition efforts, parole must become an evidence-based system.

When a paroling authority creates a parole process informed and guided by evidence, it is engaging in a process of *transformational change*, as opposed to *incremental change*. Incremental change entails adding new skills or reframing, that is, it requires the reshaping of thinking patterns. Transformational change requires a shift in the way one thinks about oneself and/or the way an organization views its role. In short, therefore, for a paroling authority to be effective, it is not enough for the members of the organization to learn new skills and/or to recognize the way they *individually* frame ideas about others or about issues. Rather, they must also change the way they view themselves and their individual roles *within* the organization and redefine the organization's role and processes. To see both ourselves and our organizations clearly is the greatest challenge in undertaking transformational change.

It is also important for paroling authorities to understand “the transition and reentry movement” and its role in this process. The transition movement, as it will be referred to in this monograph, is exploring ways to increase

the likelihood that offenders succeed as they transition from one phase of correctional control to another and reenter society.<sup>1</sup> Policy-makers, corrections professionals, and community groups have developed forums and networks to explore ways in which they can work together to reduce the failure rate of offenders as they return from prison to the community.<sup>2</sup>

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This monograph assumes that effective transition occurs when policy-makers and practitioners use evidence-based practices.

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Using current research and evidence to guide program development and practices increases the likelihood that the concepts and practices of transition and reentry result in offenders reentering society successfully, thereby reduce new offenses and the risk to the public. In many jurisdictions, part of the transition/reentry process includes parole. As with other elements of the transition/reentry process, parole has its critics<sup>3</sup> and its champions.<sup>3</sup>

Each paroling authority has a unique context and culture that will influence where, when, and how evidence-based practices and other changes can and should be introduced. The jurisdiction's involvement with transition and reentry efforts, as well as other programmatic and political realities, will also influence these decisions. As such, this monograph offers a framework and a menu of strategies which paroling authorities can use to assess their respective situations and to formulate their action plans. It does not attempt to create a blueprint or model for implementing change.

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has supported research and developed working models for

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Transition from Prison to Community Initiative" at <http://nicic.org/Library/017520> for an understanding of transition, and the Urban Institute Reentry Mapping Project at [jpc.urban.org/reentry](http://jpc.urban.org/reentry) and Re-entry Roundtable.

<sup>2</sup> The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that the parole success rate for 2003 was 47%. See "Probation and Parole in the United States, 2003." U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004. Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> For champions, see "A Call to Action for Parole," Center for Effective Public Policy. For critics, see "Thoughts on the Future of Parole," remarks delivered to the Vera Institute, May 2002.

transition, played a major role in encouraging the national conversation about transition, and provided training for paroling authorities. It has also supported the understanding and use of evidence-based practices. When invited, it has assisted jurisdictions in developing the systems and infrastructure needed to ensure that the paroling authority has the expertise and resources to be the most effective and efficient agency possible.

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*NIC has created a framework of the human capital and organizational roles and requirements of an effective paroling authority*

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In this monograph, NIC presents a framework that identifies the characteristics and competencies that paroling authorities must have to be effective in implementing evidence-based practices in the context of transition programs and services. Relying on the expertise of paroling authorities, supervision agencies, corrections, and research agency experts,<sup>4</sup> NIC has created a framework of the human capital and organizational roles and requirements of an effective paroling authority for use by paroling authorities, criminal justice policy-makers, state legislators, and governors. The framework attempts to identify the type of structural, political, and human resource requirements an evidence-based paroling authority requires.

This task is greatly complicated by the very different models of parole that exist. The structure of the paroling authority and its jurisdiction and functions vary from state to state. Models range from:

- independent paroling authority agencies that have responsibility for release decisions, through
- paroling authorities that are a branch of a department of corrections or community corrections agency; and
- paroling authority agencies, whether independent or not, with limited authority for release decisions and no involvement in supervision.

Some jurisdictions provide adequate resources for paroling authorities to engage in evidenced-based decision-making, while others are so underfunded that it is impossible to receive adequate information about offenders, thus limiting the evaluation of release decisions, activities, and

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<sup>4</sup> See Acknowledgements for Monograph Advisory Board list and document reviewers.

outcomes. Parole board member appointment requirements also vary relative to knowledge and understanding of criminal justice policy and systems, knowledge and understanding of correctional research and evaluation, and experience.

The use of the term *framework* is deliberate. The advisory panel and NIC view this product as a beginning, not an end. This framework will not apply in its entirety to all jurisdictions, and it is assumed that there are many jurisdictions that can and will refine it. Just as we are learning what type of assessment, case management, and treatment programs are most effective in reducing recidivism and improving supervision outcomes, we are beginning to understand what the leadership, management, and structural requirements are that support paroling authorities and their staff to introduce and implement the evidence-based practices required for effective transition of offenders.

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II

## THE IMPACT OF HISTORY ON CURRENT REFORM EFFORTS

Parole is believed to have begun as an option for early release of English and Irish convicts based on good behavior. In this country, it was believed to be first piloted in the Elmira Reformatory for youthful offenders in New York State. By the early 1900s, it was viewed as one of the tools of the *indeterminate sentencing model* that was based on the rehabilitative ideal. By the 1970s, the indeterminate model came under harsh scrutiny for many reasons, not the least of which were that the resources needed to make the model work rarely materialized and there was little research that helped practitioners and policy-makers understand what worked to rehabilitate offenders.

Lack of empirical knowledge regarding what type of intervention worked best with what type of offender was a significant factor that resulted in elected and appointed officials losing confidence in the indeterminate sentencing model. Without this information, it was hard to posit that indeterminate sentencing was in the best interests of either the offender or the community. This lack of empirical data also resulted in decisions that appeared to be capricious and unfair. Paroling authorities' decisions varied not just across jurisdictions, but within them. Parole boards came under attack from those who wanted fairness and equity in release decisions for offenders as well as those who wanted surety of sentencing.

This history is important when thinking about today's reform efforts.<sup>1</sup> Today those who have legal, financial, and/or political influence over parole, sometimes referred to as *authorizers*, believe that, by reforming and modifying the transition processes, the cost of corrections could be reduced or slowed at the same time as public safety is enhanced.

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*By the 1970s, the indeterminate model came under harsh scrutiny for many reasons*

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent overview of interest in reentry can be found in "Successful Transition and Reentry for Safer Communities: A Call to Action for Parole," by Peggy Burke and Michael Tonry, Center for Effective Public Policy, .

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This could be a time, like the 1970s, when opposite ends of the political spectrum can agree on reform. Remembering the forces in the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in massive reform of sentencing structures and parole policies in most states is critical to developing effective strategies for the reentry reform movement.

The sentencing reforms of the 1970s and 1980s were driven more by perceived system failures than by financial concerns. While the cost of corrections was substantial in this time frame, it was not placing the level of financial strain on local, state, and federal government as it does today. Liberal and conservative reformers wanted certainty in sentencing for offenders. Liberal reformers also wanted equity in sentencing. Conservative reformers wanted longer sentences for serious offenders. Both groups believed their goals could be met through system reform. Prison overcrowding and the high cost of incarceration were concerns but not the primary drivers of reform.

Today, the focus of reform is slightly different. Conservative and liberal policy-makers and elected officials are looking for solutions to prison overcrowding. In addition, research on the impact of incarceration indicates that it is not the most effective way to increase public safety. In a review of research on this issue, Don Stemen of the Vera Institute concludes, “Analysts are nearly unanimous in their conclusion that continued growth in incarceration will prevent considerably fewer, if any, crimes and at substantially greater cost to the taxpayers.”

Investment in other areas, such as employment, education, and treatment, appear to be better crime-reduction investments.<sup>ii</sup> Both ends of the political spectrum are looking for ways to reduce the ever-growing expenditures of the corrections system and to enhance public safety. The conversation is less about equity and certainty of punishment—because sentencing guidelines do ensure certainty of punishment and ensure that offenders are treated similarly—and more about effectiveness of programs and outcomes. In many systems the discretion of the paroling authority has been dramatically reduced, thus eliminating differences in sentence lengths. Some officials, as well as the public understand that the goal of enhancing public safety is not in conflict with rehabilitating a significant percentage of offenders.<sup>iii</sup>

## III CURRENT REFORM EFFORTS

Across the country, policy-makers are trying to determine if they should build more prisons. The cumulative impact of decades of creating tougher sentencing laws has resulted in overcrowded prisons throughout the nation. Crime rates that have fallen for over a decade are starting to increase slightly.<sup>iv</sup> The high failure rate of offenders as they reenter society is resulting in their return to prison and is creating a strain on already-overcrowded institutions.<sup>1</sup> Struggling with the high cost of incarceration, high recidivism rates, and overcrowded institutions, policy-makers are searching for less expensive and more effective ways to manage offenders.

Given the impact of parole upon prison populations, both in terms of release and revocation, and the key role that parole can play in assisting in the successful reentry of offenders, paroling authorities can enhance or hinder efforts to improve and reform the transition and reentry systems. In many jurisdictions, parole is the link among the many systems that touch the life of an offender. In some parole systems, parole is the hub that connects the multiple systems, such as corrections and supervision agencies, that must work together to accomplish effective transition and reentry of offenders.

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*... paroling authorities can enhance or hinder efforts to improve and reform the transition and reentry systems*

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If transition/reentry reforms are to work, paroling authorities must be actively engaged in the development, implementation, and evaluation of system changes.

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In the past twenty years, the field of corrections has benefited from a type and quality of research that did not

<sup>1</sup> For example, in 2006, 64% of admissions to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) were parole violators. See *CDCR Expert Panel Report to the Legislature*, June 29, 2007.

exist during the period of major sentencing reform in the 1970s and 1980s. Today community corrections, particularly probation, has benefited from research that identifies proven methods of reducing offender recidivism. Recent research efforts based on meta-analyses (the syntheses of data from many research studies), cost-benefit analysis, and specific clinical trials are now providing corrections professionals with an understanding of how better to reduce recidivism.<sup>v</sup> At the same time, researchers are beginning to answer the questions:

- Has the massive expansion of incarceration in the last thirty years made communities safer? and
- Is the increase in safety worth the cost?<sup>2</sup>

Corrections professionals, guided by current research, are proving that failure on probation can be reduced, thereby increasing public safety and preventing incarceration. By introducing evidence-based practices that are grounded in proven research, recidivism rates have been significantly reduced for probationers. Corrections practitioners are now able to determine which offender characteristics are criminogenic and what type of programs are successful in addressing those characteristics. These programs have better track records in reducing recidivism.<sup>vi</sup> While there has been less research on parole populations, the same principles and practices used with probationers apply to, and are being introduced into, the transition and reentry processes.

Effective reform efforts will require paroling authorities to understand and manage the research that demonstrates what types of offenders achieve the greatest recidivism results when matched with specific programs. Parole authorities will need to use evidence-based research to guide their decision-making so they can empirically demonstrate the effectiveness of their decisions for offenders, public safety, and systems cost. Without such data, there is no way to fend off past criticism, and there is no way to help authorizers of all political persuasions to understand their shared mutual interests.

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<sup>2</sup> See “Reconsidering Incarceration: New Directions for Reducing Crime,” by Don Stemen, Vera Institute, January 2007.

Today elected officials all share the desire to reduce system costs and to enhance public safety. Paroling authorities can help corrections officials and staffs as well as appointed and elected officials understand that accomplishing these goals is possible by appointing parole board members who are committed to evidence-based decision-making and by giving them the tools needed to make evidence-based decisions.



## IV

# THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PAROLE PROCESS

This section of the monograph provides a generic model of the elements of a parole system. While most of the functions discussed will be present in any corrections system, they will be under the jurisdiction of different agencies, depending upon the structure of the system. For example, in most states, the parole field services are not part of the paroling authority; therefore, elements of release planning and processes, supervision and violation, and revocation processes represented in the generic model may not be under the authority of a paroling authority.<sup>vii</sup>

The phases used are adapted from the Transition from Prison to Community Initiative.<sup>viii</sup> This project describes four distinct phases of transition, which include:

### *The institutional phase*

The period from the beginning of incarceration to reentry, which is typically six months prior to release.

### *The reentry phase*

The period from approximately six months prior to inmate's release onto parole through the first six months of supervision.

### *The community phase*

The period from stabilization on supervision through discharge from supervision.

### *The discharge phase*

The period beginning when the parolee's sentence ends and support for success comes from community resources.

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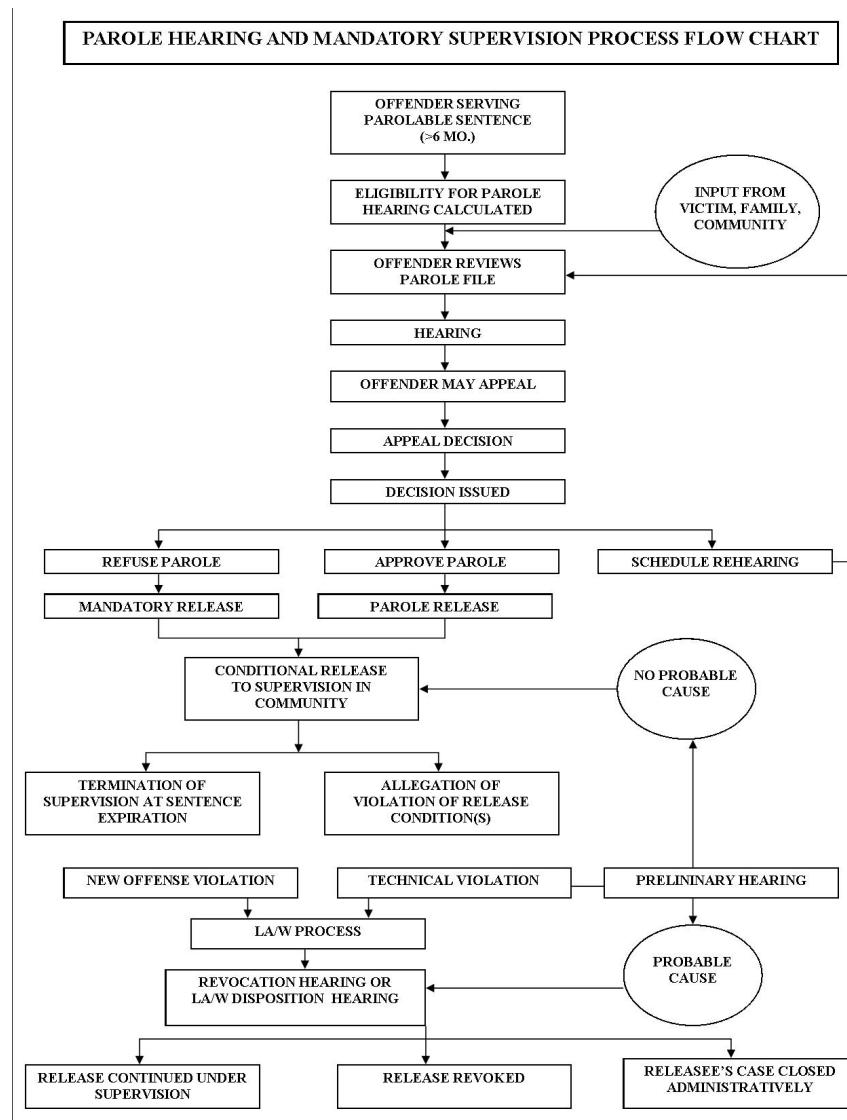
*Typically,  
a paroling  
authority's  
key responsi-  
bilities include  
release  
planning,  
release  
decision-  
making,  
supervision,  
and discharge*

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## Comprehensive Framework for Paroling Authorities in an Era of Evidence-Based Practices

Typically, a paroling authority's key responsibilities include release planning, release decision-making, supervision, and discharge responsibilities. The transition and reentry functions are discussed within the context of these phases.

**Figure 1**



*Note: This flow chart is offered as a model for a “typical,” or generic, parole system. It does not represent one particular system, nor is it a model that should, or even could, be implemented in its entirety by all jurisdictions. It can, however, serve as a set of guidelines for restructuring existing systems.*

## A. The Institutional Phase

### Release Planning

Effective release planning is challenging because to do it well requires the collaboration of several corrections agencies as well as other government and community agencies and services. It requires the corrections agency, paroling authority, and supervision agency to work as a team to manage the transition and reentry of the offender. Working across the boundaries of what can be three very different systems is difficult and requires the development of and commitment to a shared transition and reentry mission. In most corrections systems, these entities do not form a shared continuum of services and supervision but are silos that do not work very well together. The result is that offenders fail to transition and reenter the community successfully.

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The paroling authority can play a leadership role in ensuring that all the agencies see themselves as members of one team that share responsibility for an offender's success or failure.

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Effective release planning has several stages, the first of which should begin as an offender enters prison. To effectively transition an offender so he or she is prepared for the reentry phase requires thinking at the beginning of a period of incarceration about the skills, abilities, and behaviors that the offender will need to reenter society. Incarceration serves, not just as punishment, but as time to transition the offender to prepare for reentry. At this stage, the institutional corrections case management team is typically the lead agent in developing and monitoring a case plan, which is the first step in the transition plan for the offender.

The correctional reception process should create the initial assessments and case-planning process that will ultimately be the foundation of the transition plan. A model of this process is the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP),<sup>ix</sup> which sets the goals needed for successful transition, reentry, supervision, and aftercare. The most effective models are those in which corrections agencies and paroling authorities share assessment tools and case

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management and treatment plans. Rather than having duplicative systems, having a unified case model that can be shared with designated agencies in the criminal justice system and community partners saves time and money and increases the chance that the offender will progress toward stated goals and objectives.

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Effective paroling authorities view the incarceration period as a time to work with offenders to develop needed skills and abilities and therefore work with corrections agencies to develop the systems needed to effectively transition an offender through incarceration to reentry.

Since most institutions do not have programs designed to address criminogenic needs, program participation is, at best, an indicator of offender motivation. The potential impact of program participation on behavior change is likely quite limited.

One of the most critical tasks of a paroling authority is to ensure that release dates are set as early as possible. It is also important that this information is communicated to the offender and other system partners. By setting release dates early, there is enough time to create a transition plan, to ensure that the resources needed to assist the offender are available, and to review the offender's progress in achieving the goals of this plan. While all of the period of incarceration should focus on positive skill development, at least 180 days prior to release a release planning process should be underway.

Paroling authority staffs are typically responsible for creating systems that generate an eligibility date for parole. Once the date is set, information and input are often gathered from several sources that may include the victim, family, and community members as well as the offender's institutional case plan, which should include all relevant assessments, criminal history, and institutional adjustment and program information. Most systems also allow the offender to review his or her institutional file.

## B. THE REENTRY PHASE

### Release Decision-Making

In preparation for making a release decision, a parole board member's first job is to understand the paroling authority's decision-making model. The types of models are discussed in Section V, page 51. The type of decision model used will significantly impact the transition and reentry efforts. Policy-driven, evidence-based models ensure that all board members are aligned with the mission and goals of the agency and that paroling decisions are based on factors that can be evaluated to determine if they are consistent with the strategies that current research indicates support successful transition and reentry. Research has indicated that parole board decision-making relies primarily on two factors, criminal history and institutional behavior.<sup>x</sup> Evidence-based models consider these factors and other criminogenic risk and needs issues. They build on valid and reliable risk and needs assessments and limit the use of decision factors that are not known to be relevant to reducing recidivism.

In some systems, paroling authorities make release decisions based solely upon information in the offender's case file, while others also use an in-person parole hearing. Paroling authorities may also take in-person testimony from victims, family members, and community members. In either case, information is ideally kept in electronic case files that can be accessed from any location by paroling authority board members and staff. Information that has been developed from arrest through incarceration is reviewed. Many systems do not have effective ways to share information electronically with other criminal justice agencies. This can result in higher costs and time delays while stakeholders such as prosecutors, law enforcement, victims, and community groups are contacted. Just as with judicial and corrections systems, effective case management systems are required to ensure efficient case processing.

There is debate regarding the efficacy of the in-person parole board hearing, but to date there is little research on the value of an in-person parole board hearing. Many paroling authorities have eliminated or narrowed the use of in-person hearings. Hearing advocates indicate that seeing an offender is essential to decision-making and that

the hearing provides an important opportunity to enhance motivation. Given the significance of resources that are required to hold in-person hearings, research about the value of such hearings in decision-making is desperately needed.

It is clear that, if they are to have a positive effect, paroling authorities must have adequate time to review the offender's case, have time for a meaningful interaction with the offender about the risk and need factors that have the most research evidence as being criminogenic, and be trained in motivational interviewing so the hearing has the effect of supporting desired change. There is little question that the hearing is a significant event for the offender and provides an opportunity to explore both criminogenic risk and needs, not just criminal history and institutional behavior.

In a system that focuses on transition and reentry, the work done with an offender in incarceration is reviewed and used to design the reentry phase of the transition plan for the offender. This phase of the transition plan identifies the roles and responsibilities of the staff in the respective agencies and sets goals and objectives for the offender to accomplish in the months just prior to his release. Elements of an effective plan include:<sup>xi</sup>

- *Problem Selection*

Which is the problem that, if addressed, has the greatest chance of supporting a successful reentry? It is essential to listen to the offender's input because his or her motivation to change is one of the most important elements of a successful outcome.

- *Problem Definition*

While many problems may impact large groups of offenders, how does the problem uniquely impact this individual?

- *Goal and Objective Development*

Both the broad goals (which should be limited in number) and the objectives stated in behaviorally measurable language must be identified. Subjective and vague goal statements should not be used.

- *Intervention Creation and Definition*

The clinician or case planner should identify the actions or interventions designed to help achieve the objective.

- *Support for Accomplishment*

Ways to support movement toward objective attainment should be identified.

Some paroling authorities also have the benefit of field investigations that are done to understand the assets and liabilities of the community to which the offender may be released. Understanding what support systems may be available and what the possible challenges are for reentry assists in release planning. All too often the focus of traditional case management is only on the challenges the offender faces and not his or her individual or community assets. The chance of an effective reentry is enhanced when an offender's assets are fully understood and can be used to encourage pro-social behavior.

### Conditions of Release

One of the most important roles of the paroling authority is defining the conditions of release. Unfortunately, in systems without adequate resources, condition-setting has turned into a rote process in which blanket conditions are applied to all parolees, and it is the exception to add conditions that are specific to the individual parolee. Once again, research makes it clear that this approach not only does not enhance the chance of a successful reentry but, for lower-risk parolees, can actually increase the likelihood of failure.

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Conditions should be based on the dynamic risk and needs factors of the individual.

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Two offenders with identical challenges may require different conditions, depending upon their individual and community assets. Similarly, identifying the most significant goals that must be achieved even when risk and need factors are similar will vary from person to person. The ability to understand these nuances requires that paroling authorities

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... setting unrealistic conditions only increases the failure rate of parolees

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receive the level and type of information needed to make such determinations.

In the era of transition and reentry, there has been a shift from conditions imposed with little or no offender input and little dialogue between corrections, paroling authority, supervision authority, and community groups to the model of a contract between the offender and relevant parties, such as the supervision agency, community partners and the paroling authority that outlines the responsibilities and obligations of all parties. It is widely recognized that setting unrealistic conditions only increases the failure rate of parolees. For example, a common condition is to seek and maintain employment. The likelihood of this happening for a population that is poorly educated and unskilled is not great. Reentry plans define the efforts that will be made by supervision and community agencies to assist with finding and retaining employment.

Several jurisdictions have developed innovative reentry programs that assist offenders in securing Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability, veterans benefits, and drivers licenses as a part of their reentry process. Needs such as housing, drug and alcohol treatment, employment, and family reunification are often referenced in conditions, but supervision agents are typically limited to making referrals for such services.

## Supervision

Most often, the paroling authority sets the terms and conditions for release, but the supervision of these is performed by the staff of another agency. In many jurisdictions, the supervision agency and paroling authority staff have not teamed to ensure that they share a common understanding of the purpose of the conditions and expectations regarding supervision. This can result in conflicting messages for the parolee in his or her most vulnerable time, which is the first three to six months on parole supervision.

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Since the principal responsibility of the parole agent is to see that parolees live up to the conditions of their parole agreement, it is important for parolees to have as much specificity as possible and to understand the intent of the paroling authority.

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## C. THE COMMUNITY PHASE

### Supervision

During the community phase, the parole officer or agent is the lead person overseeing the parolee's community supervision plan. Typically the parole officer will assess the parolee and determine what level and type of supervision he or she should receive. Effective classification systems assist staff in determining what type and level of support is needed. The parole officer and the parolee review the conditions of release and develop a case plan using the steps identified above to clarify the actions both the parolee and the officer must take for the parolee to successfully complete his or her supervision period. In jurisdictions that are actively engaged in reentry efforts, family and community members as well as community services are actively engaged in both case plan development and delivery of services and support.

### Violation and Revocation

If a parolee's adjustment to the community is going well, he or she may be reclassified to a lower supervision level. If a violation occurs, changes may be made in supervision requirements, and/or a revocation proceeding may be initiated. Parolees are still within the custody of the corrections agency; and, because they are still in a quasi-inmate status, their rights are severely limited. In most jurisdictions a return to custody does require a hearing before the paroling authority to determine probable cause and revocation.

Historically, a return to custody has been used, not just for the commission of a new crime, but even in the case of minor technical violations of parole. Many jurisdictions are changing their revocation policies to ensure that officers use intermediate measures before returning a parolee to a custody setting.<sup>xi</sup> Paroling authorities play a key role in not just impacting how custodial resources are used but in influencing supervision staff to understand that public safety is enhanced through the use of options that support effective reintegration.

As public policy shifted in past decades from supporting offender reintegration to monitoring and surveillance, so did the behavior of supervision staff. The number of parole conditions increased over time, and this

has reduced the amount of time supervision staff have to focus on providing and brokering services. A greater percentage of time is devoted simply to monitoring compliance with the increased number of terms and conditions.<sup>xiii</sup>

The move from providing and brokering services to control and surveillance has resulted in a dramatic rise in the number of returns to prison because of technical violations.<sup>xiv</sup> The disruption caused by incarceration can substantially diminish the chance of successful reintegration. As the gatekeepers of the revocation process, paroling authorities can help supervision staff understand the research and practices that support using a graduated array of responses and/or sanctions for violations of parole.

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*Discharge provides another opportunity to enhance the intrinsic motivation of the parolee to be a productive citizen*

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Working with the supervision agency, the paroling authority can create guidelines for violation and revocation that link responses to failure to level of risk posed by the parolee and the violation behavior.

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#### D. THE DISCHARGE PHASE

In the transition and reentry model, the parole officer is preparing the parolee for this stage. He or she has linked the parolee to community resources and institutions. The individual or agency that will become the lead of the reentry process has been identified and is fully engaged with the parolee. The paroling authority and supervision agencies should have collaboratively developed discharge policies so that discharge practices are consistent and fair and can be used as an incentive for parolees. For example, lower- to moderate-risk offenders who have reduced their risk factors should be eligible for early discharge.

Discharge provides another opportunity to enhance the intrinsic motivation of the parolee to be a productive citizen. By celebrating accomplishments and setting goals to regain civil and political rights that may have been lost, the parolee is brought back into the community.

## V

# THE FOUNDATION OF SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS

The researchers and practitioners who have been attempting to implement evidence-based practices in corrections have discovered that there are some foundational requirements an organization must have in place before evidence-based decision-making and management can take hold. Much like Maslow's hierarchy for individuals, organizations must meet certain basic needs and requirements before higher-level activities and functions can take place. For example, an effective parole agency must have skilled and capable leaders and managers who can access and use information and knowledge to achieve its goals.

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The ability to access accurate information efficiently is a requirement that must be met before agency staff can begin to interpret data and use it to make decisions and to set goals.

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The National Institute of Corrections, in collaboration with the Crime and Justice Institute, has described three areas that agencies and systems must focus on to become evidence-based:

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...  
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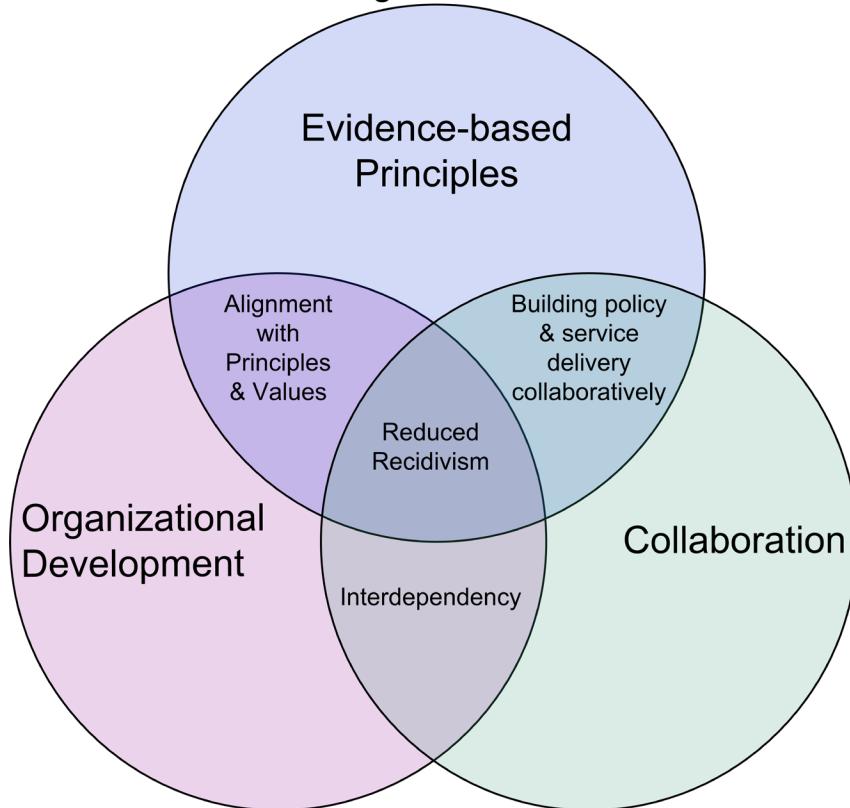
## Criteria for Evidence-Based Corrections

1. ***Evidence-based practices*** are the collective implementation of the needed technology, tools, and systems. This framework has been developed to help agencies learn about implementing evidence-based decision-making and practices in community corrections.
2. ***Organizational development*** must focus primarily on ensuring that the organizational culture and structure can effect change and support the implementation of evidence-based practices.
3. ***Collaboration*** requires that the parole function be integrated into the corrections and community systems. The organization as a whole must have the desire and ability to bring together the different disciplines and agencies within the system to work and to plan together.

One of the purposes of this monograph is to clarify for paroling authorities, their appointing authorities, and their funders what the requirements are for an agency to be an evidence-based paroling authority that effectively transitions offenders so they can successfully reenter society.

**Figure 2**

Implementing Effective Correctional Management  
of Offenders in the Community:  
*An Integrated Model*



*The paroling authorities that are successfully introducing evidence-based practices have the leadership and management, information systems, and planning and evaluation capacity needed to implement evidence-based practices. Many paroling authorities lack these resources and therefore are not able to be evidence-based and ultimately are unable to support effective transition and reentry of offenders.*

## A. EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

### What Is It Really?

The term *evidence-based* is often misunderstood and misused.

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*... the experience that helped in the past may not be useful for the problems of today or tomorrow*

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*Evidence-based principles* provide a scientific basis for developing more effective services.

*Evidence-based practice* is using evidence to make decisions.

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Most professionals believe that they use evidence to make decisions. This is true only if *evidence* includes beliefs, unproven assumptions, personal experience, and outdated information and training. All professionals in any profession rely on their historical experience and earlier training. The problem is that the experience that helped in the past may not be useful for the problems of today or tomorrow. Similarly, our past training often does not reflect the knowledge and understanding that current research brings to bear on problems. In short, the majority of professionals are not truly evidence-based decision-makers.

Evidence-based decision-making is defined as:<sup>xv</sup>

*The explicit and unbiased use of current best research results in making clinical (individual) and . . . policy . . . decisions.*

Evidence-based practices in corrections implies that:

1. There is a definable outcome;
2. It is measurable; and
3. It is defined according to practical realities (recidivism, victim satisfaction, etc.)<sup>1</sup>

In short, for each evidence-based practice, a body of research supports a desired outcome, and results of the practice can be measured.

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is taken from Brad Bogue, President of J-SAT.

Twenty-six parole boards have a significant role in determining the timing of the release of offenders, and the other remaining twenty-four parole boards have some role in the timing of release for specialized populations. Forty-two parole boards set conditions of release, and the remaining eight have some role in setting conditions of release. It appears that many parole boards have lost the ability to determine release dates but remain responsible for setting the conditions of release and supervision, and are responsible for revocation decisions.<sup>xvi</sup> The way in which these decisions are made will dramatically influence the potential for the successful transition and reentry of offenders.

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There are two key aspects to decision-making: the way in which decisions are made and the type of information that informs the decision.

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A key role of a paroling authority is to understand the current research regarding offender release and what can be done to enhance the likelihood that an offender will successfully reenter society. Understanding research is no small task. The body of research regarding what type of behaviors and programs are needed to reduce recidivism is voluminous and growing, and it is far from homogeneous in its quality and integrity. However, as with any body of research, certain principles have been established and are being tested. And new principles are being established. A parole board member does not need a research background to use evidence to make decisions but does need access to the people and services that can help him or her understand the latest research and its implications for increasing the likelihood of successful transition and reentry for an offender.

The notion of using evidence to make decisions sounds rational and simplistic. Consider this: Despite the thousands of studies available to physicians, only fifteen percent of their decisions are evidence-based. What do physicians rely on for decision-making? The answer is very similar to what paroling authorities do: They rely on “obsolete knowledge gained in school, long-standing but never-proven traditions, patterns gleaned from experience, the methods they believe in and are most skilled in applying, and information from hordes of vendors with products and services to sell.”<sup>xvii</sup>

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This is the case, not because parole board members or physicians are lazy or uninformed, but for the same understandable reasons that most managers are not evidence-based: It takes time, energy, resources, and a willingness to change to be evidence-based.

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Paroling authorities need to be evidence-based in their business management practices as well as their offender management practices.

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We would not want a doctor to suggest surgery without researching the root cause and possible alternative options first. Similarly, we don't want paroling authorities to base release and supervision decisions about offenders on their personal belief systems or what they "think" the community wants.

The key here is what kind of "evidence" is best in determining what will enhance the likelihood of a successful transition and reentry by an offender. The evidence used by some paroling authorities may not meet the test of evidence-based practice. Meeting the test requires understanding the principles of effective correctional interventions according to current research.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has published a summary of research on what programs research has shown reduce recidivism. (See chart below). Not surprisingly, some principles and practices which research now indicates are most effective contradict some of the past beliefs and practices of paroling authorities and those who appointed them. Effective paroling authorities understand the principles of evidence-based correctional interventions and encourage the development and use of such programs.<sup>xviii</sup>

### Evidence-Based Offender Management

There are known practices and programs that reduce the failure of offenders. Many paroling authorities do not have responsibility for the supervision function, so they can not directly control for many of the variables that influence offender outcomes. Whether a paroling authority controls supervision or not, all paroling authorities can enhance the likelihood of successful transition and reentry by setting conditions for offenders that are evidence-based.

**Figure 3**  
**Reducing Crime With Evidence-Based Options: What Works, and Benefits & Costs**

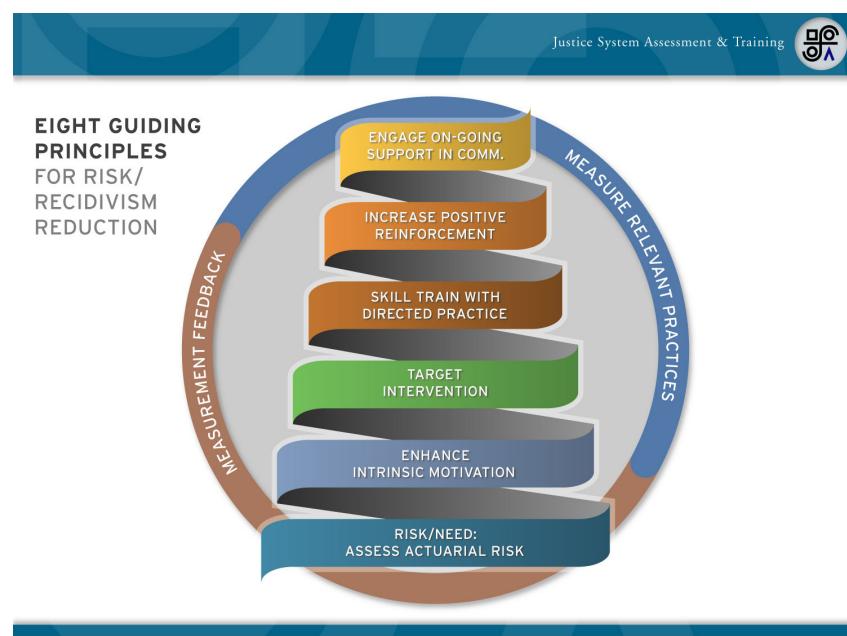
<b>Washington State Institute for Public Policy</b> Estimates as of October, 2006	<b>Effect on Crime Outcomes</b> Percent change in crime outcomes, & the number of evidence-based studies on which the estimate is based (in parentheses)	<b>Benefits and Costs</b> (Per Participant, Net Present Value, 2006 Dollars)			<b>Benefits (total) Minus Costs (per participant)</b> (5)
		<b>Benefits to Crime Victims</b> (of the reduction in crime)	<b>Benefits to Taxpayers</b> (of the reduction in crime)	<b>Costs</b> (marginal program cost, compared to the cost of alternative)	
<b>Programs for People in the Adult Offender System</b>					
Vocational education in prison	-9.0% (4)	\$8,114	\$6,806	\$1,182	\$13,738
Intensive supervision: treatment-oriented programs	-16.7% (11)	\$9,318	\$9,369	\$7,124	\$11,563
General education in prison (basic education or post-secondary)	-7.0% (17)	\$6,325	\$5,306	\$962	\$10,669
Cognitive-behavioral therapy in prison or community	-6.3% (25)	\$5,658	\$4,746	\$105	\$10,299
Drug treatment in community	-9.3% (6)	\$5,133	\$5,495	\$574	\$10,054
Correctional industries in prison	-5.9% (4)	\$5,360	\$4,496	\$417	\$9,439
Drug treatment in prison (therapeutic communities or outpatient)	-5.7% (20)	\$5,133	\$4,306	\$1,604	\$7,835
Adult drug courts	-8.0% (57)	\$4,395	\$4,705	\$4,333	\$4,767
Employment and job training in the community	-4.3% (16)	\$2,373	\$2,386	\$400	\$4,359
Electronic monitoring to offset jail time	0% (9)	\$0	\$0	-\$870	\$870
Sex offender treatment in prison with aftercare	-7.0% (6)	\$6,442	\$2,885	\$12,585	<b>-\$3,258</b>
Intensive supervision: surveillance-oriented programs	0% (23)	\$0	\$0	\$3,747	<b>-\$3,747</b>
Washington's Dangerous Mentally Ill Offender program	-15.1% (1)	\$13,645	\$11,446	\$24,274	<b>\$818</b>
Drug treatment in jail	-4.5% (9)	\$2,481	\$2,656	n/e	n/e
Adult boot camps	0% (22)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Domestic violence education/cognitive-behavioral treatment	0% (9)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Jail diversion for mentally ill offenders	0% (11)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Life Skills education programs for adults	0% (4)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
<b>Program types in need of additional research &amp; development before we can conclude they do or do not reduce crime outcomes:</b>					
<b>Programs needing more research for people in the adult offender system</b>					
Case management in the community for drug offenders	0% (13)				
COSA (Faith-based supervision of sex offenders)	-22.3% (1)				
Day fines (compared to standard probation)	0% (1)				
Domestic violence courts	0% (2)				
Faith-based programs	0% (5)				
Intensive supervision of sex offenders in the community	0% (4)				
Medical treatment of sex offenders	0% (1)				
Mixed treatment of sex offenders in the community	-21.4% (1)				
Regular parole supervision vs. no parole supervision	0% (2)				
Restorative justice programs for lower risk adult offenders	0% (1)				
Therapeutic community programs for mentally ill offenders	0% (6)				
Work release programs (from prison)	-20.8% (2)				
	-4.3% (4)				
<b>Comment</b>					
Findings are mixed for this broad grouping of programs.					
Too few evaluations to date.					
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Too few evaluations to date.					
Too few evaluations to date.					
Too few recent evaluations.					

Aos, S., M. Miller, E. Drake. (October 2006). *Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates*. Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

There are many process and intermediate measures of success in transition and reentry activities.<sup>2</sup> The completion of a substance abuse program in the institution might be an intermediate measure of success. The outcome measure of success in reentry is recidivism reduction. Meta-analyses of research have helped to share a set of principles that support interventions to reduce recidivism. They are:

*... all paroling authorities can enhance the likelihood of successful transition and reentry by setting conditions for offenders that are evidence-based*

**Figure 4**



These principles have developed largely out of the work being done to supervise offenders. The following discussion looks at each of these principles in the context of parole decision-making.

### **1. Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs**

Formal and informal assessments play a role in identifying the risk posed by an offender and his or her

<sup>2</sup> Bogue, B., L. Joplin, B. Woodward. (2006). *Evidence-Based Principles for Effective Interventions: Intermediate Measures for Monitoring Progress*. The Crime and Justice Institute. Boston, MA. Available at [http://crjusticeorg/cji/niccji\\_initiative.html](http://crjusticeorg/cji/niccji_initiative.html).

needs. Formal research-based and validated assessment tools are the foundation needed to assess risk and needs. Unlike risk and needs assessments of the past, today's assessments measure additional issues, such as criminogenic needs that are known to affect recidivism. Effective parole decisions begin with using a reliable and valid risk and needs assessment.

Effective paroling authorities must have access to the assessment data gathered during the offender's incarceration and must ensure that assessments created by the paroling authorities are valid and normed for the population about which the authorities are making release decisions. Paroling authorities and corrections assessments should complement each other. Paroling authorities then have the information needed to match offenders with the type of programs that are most likely to result in successful transition and reentry.

For paroling authorities with supervision responsibilities, offender assessment is as much an ongoing function as it is a formal event. Case information gathered informally through routine interactions and observations with offenders is just as important as formal assessment guided by instruments. Formal and informal offender assessments should reinforce one another and combine to enhance case decisions and transition and reentry plans. Reassessment should occur as conditions change.

To ensure that assessments are reliable and valid, paroling authority staff and board members must be formally trained to interpret assessment tools. The training should be skill-based and use pre- and post-test measures to ensure competence. Screening and assessment tools that focus on dynamic and static risk factors, that profile criminogenic needs, and that have been validated on similar populations are preferable. They should also be supported by sufficiently detailed and accurately written policy and procedure.

## ***2. Enhance Intrinsic Motivation***

For change to be lasting, an individual must be intrinsically motivated. Paroling authorities can support the development of intrinsic motivation in many ways. The first is to understand and employ strategies that support behavioral change; the second is to ensure that supervision agencies also use these strategies. These strategies include being responsive to issues such as temperament, learning

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style, motivation, culture, and gender when matching with programs. The nature of conditions placed on parolees can either enhance or reduce motivation. By carefully matching conditions to the real needs of parolees, rather than applying a generic list of conditions, board members can increase motivation.

The probability that change may occur is strongly influenced by interpersonal interactions with board members, supervision staff, and treatment providers.

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*The challenge  
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Research suggests that the “persuasion tactics” commonly used in the past are not as effective as motivational interviewing techniques.

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Using motivational interviewing techniques, board members and staff relate to offenders in interpersonally sensitive and constructive ways to enhance intrinsic motivation. These techniques are designed to help offenders overcome ambivalence to change.<sup>xx</sup>

For those boards engaged in face-to-face interviews, the use of motivational interviewing techniques can help offenders to build intrinsic motivation. The challenge for many board and staff members will be letting go of their beliefs about what motivates people. Most people do not have an accurate understanding of what actually motivates people in general and specifically certain types of offenders.

### **3. Target Interventions**

When paroling authorities determine what type and level of supervision and treatment are needed, they should match the offender’s criminogenic needs (characteristics that can be changed and are linked to criminal behavior) with programs that are designed to address these needs. This practice is the *needs principle*.<sup>xxi</sup> Using the *risk principle*, board members should also prioritize supervision and treatment for higher-risk offenders.<sup>3</sup> The *responsivity*

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<sup>3</sup> Studies show that targeting services to low-risk offenders can actually increase their recidivism. See “Understanding the Risk Principle: How and Why Correctional Interventions Can Harm Low-Risk Offenders” by Christopher T. Lowenkamp and Edward J. Latessa, Topics in Community Corrections, National Institute of Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, D.C. 2004.

*principle* ensures that individual characteristics are considered when matching offenders with services. Finally, *dosage*, or the amount of services and time the offender is engaged in targeted activities, must be considered. Typically, the first three to nine months are the time period when the offender's time is most highly structured with targeted interventions and activities.

### ***The Needs Principle***

Offenders have many needs. The key to ensuring effective reentry and risk reduction is to target the needs that most directly link to criminal behavior. Again, research is teaching us that some needs, when addressed, are most effective in reducing recidivism. Issues such as low self-control, anti-social attitudes, values and beliefs, criminal peers, and substance abuse are factors that affect recidivism.

### ***The Risk Principle***

Research is providing evidence that some of the beliefs of paroling authorities and supervision agencies are faulty. For example, the practice of ordering services for low-risk offenders to ensure they do not commit more crimes is flawed and can actually result in an increase in recidivism. *Research indicates that supervision and treatment services that are focused on lower-risk offenders tend to produce little, if any, net positive effect on recidivism rates.*<sup>xxii</sup> Thus, paroling authorities who order supervision and treatment services for low-risk offenders are wasting resources. To enhance public safety, paroling authorities need to target resources to higher-risk offenders. Research also tells us that the most effective interventions for higher-risk offenders are cognitive behavioral programs. Again, this information can help paroling authorities determine what services to refer to or contract with.

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*The key to ensuring effective reentry and risk reduction is to target the needs that most directly link to criminal behavior*

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### ***The Responsivity Principle***

When setting conditions, paroling authorities want to be sure to match their communication style to the offender's stage-of-change readiness and match the treatment type to each offender. This means

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*Current research is demonstrating the importance of the amount of treatment, the number of intervention programs, and the timing of both*

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paroling authorities have to consider factors such as learning style, cultural background, gender, and motivational and developmental stages. To do this well requires a willingness to engage in training to develop an understanding of one's own influence and communication style and the ability to flex or modify one's style to effectively engage others.

### ***Dosage***

Current research is demonstrating the importance of the amount of treatment, the number of intervention programs, and the timing of both. Paroling authorities should understand that higher-risk offenders need more structure and services than low-risk offenders and that for successful reentry, the amount of treatment and services should be most intensive for the first three to nine months. In addition, research is beginning to show that the actual amount of time spent in programs impacts recidivism.<sup>xxiii</sup>

#### ***4. Skill Train with Directed Practice***

Paroling authorities should encourage supervision agencies to prioritize, plan, and budget to implement programs that have been scientifically proven to reduce recidivism. Similarly, they should encourage community-based agencies that serve offenders to offer proven programs. Most programs that have proven effectiveness as measured by recidivism reduction employ cognitive-behavioral strategies delivered by well-trained staff. Staff must understand anti-social thinking, social learning, and effective communication strategies to effectively implement cognitive behavioral programs. Skills are not just taught but are practiced or role-played, and pro-social attitudes and behaviors are positively reinforced by staff.<sup>xxiv</sup>

#### ***5. Increase Positive Reinforcement***

Sustained behavioral change occurs when an individual receives more positive reinforcement than negative reinforcement. Understanding this principle and ensuring that paroling authorities and supervision staff apply it is critical to support the behavioral change needed

for successful transition and reentry. Increasing positive reinforcement should not interfere with the administration of swift, certain, and appropriate consequences for negative and unacceptable behavior.<sup>xxv</sup>

Paroling authorities have many ways in which they can provide reinforcement. While some will say that the act of getting paroled is the greatest reinforcement, there are many other ways board members can provide positive reinforcement. The climate of a hearing includes the expression of appreciation for progress, actively listening, acknowledging a parolee's challenges, and creating goals that reward progress, which are all actions that provide positive reinforcement. Similarly, a board member's response to violations can provide both consequences for failure and positive reinforcement for those areas that have gone well. A violation policy should include not just responses to negative behavior but responses to positive behavior as well. Positive compliance can be rewarded by reducing length of supervision or modifying the reporting structure to include less supervision.

### ***6. Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities***

Paroling authorities and supervision staff must actively recruit and use family members, spouses, mentors, and other supportive community members and institutions in the offender's immediate environment to positively reinforce desired behaviors. The Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA) has been found to support the development of positive behaviors in areas such as employment, substance abuse, and marital conflict. Just as community support helps with reintegration, it also can improve ties and bonds to pro-social activities which are believed to serve as protective factors against recidivism.<sup>xxvi</sup>

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*A violation policy should include not just responses to negative behavior but responses to positive behavior as well*

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### ***7. Measurement Feedback***

A critical function of any public-sector agency is to measure how well the taxpayer's dollar is being spent. To do this requires the ability to establish and measure outcomes. In corrections, this is a complex and somewhat daunting challenge that is being made easier by the body of research about evidence-based interventions and practices.

Research tells us what types of programs and interventions work best for certain types of offenders. It also tells us what program elements and components must

be in place for a program to have efficacy. Thus, it is possible to measure:

- Whether a given program maintains fidelity to the program model that is proven to work;
- Whether the offender group is appropriately matched with the program; and, if both conditions are met,
- What level of recidivism reduction is being achieved.

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*Evidence-based practice is about analyzing data and using that data to determine if change efforts are working*

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It is essential for a paroling authority to identify its goals, build a way to capture data, and then test the model by evaluating the data.

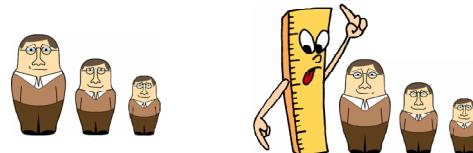
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**Figure 5<sup>xxvii</sup>**

**Step 1: Implement Evidence-Based Programming Model**

**Step 2: Build a Data Model**

**Step 3: Test the Model**



Evidence-based practice is about analyzing data and using that data to determine if change efforts are working. Using the first six principles is not enough to ensure outcomes. Paroling authorities and supervision agencies must routinely measure intermediate and long-term outcomes. Staff performance must be regularly assessed to ensure that fidelity to program design, service-delivery principles, and outcomes are being achieved. Staff

need consistent reinforcement to work together to achieve established outcomes through the use of evidence-based practices.

### **8. Measure Relevant Processes/Practices**

Data from the performance measures should be used to monitor processes and change. With individual offenders, providing feedback regarding progress creates accountability, enhances motivation, and is associated with better intermediate and long-term outcomes. The same principles apply to the parole organization. Providing performance feedback increases accountability and ensures integrity with the mission. Regular performance audits and case reviews keep all staff focused on the ultimate goal of successful transition and reentry, which ultimately translates into reduced recidivism.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Agencies must routinely assess both individual and aggregate change in the targeted offender individuals and groups. Measures such as offender's skill development, program completion, and others can serve as intermediate measures to help guide program development. Outcome measures, such as recidivism reduction, must also be measured and studied.<sup>xxix</sup> An example of one set of measures is included in Appendix I.

An excellent example of an agency using intermediate measures to refine a program to ensure desired outcomes is the Georgia MRT/Life Skills Evaluation. By engaging in process evaluation, the Georgia Department of Corrections was able to identify ways in which it needed to refine its program so it could achieve desired outcomes. A research team supported the implementation of a pilot of Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT). After two years the data from the initial pilot showed a relationship between the program and reduction in re-arrest rates, but it was not statistically significant. The evaluators were able to help the agency staff identify changes they could make to possibly improve outcomes. By assessing intermediate measures, such as enrollment rates, exit survey data, and program completion rates, the agency has been able to refine its program to achieve better outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

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*Agencies must routinely assess both individual and aggregate change in the targeted offender individuals and groups*

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<sup>4</sup> See "Executive Summary: Year Three of the Georgia MRT/Life Skills Evaluation," Applied Research Services, September 2006.

## B. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The term *organizational development* is a broad term that refers to the practice of changing people and organizations for positive growth. Typical areas of organizational development include:

- Organization development and change,
- Leadership development,
- Recruitment and retention,
- Performance management and change,
- Coaching and mentoring.

While all of these areas are important in helping an organization grow and change, several are key to building the foundation needed to transition parolees effectively and help them to reenter society successfully. To help agency staff use evidence-based practices to support the effective transition of parolees, paroling authorities must be able to:

- Establish values, a vision, a mission, and goals that create a culture that supports the use of EBP to assist offenders to effectively transition and reenter society;
- Clarify decision-making goals and ensure they align with transition and reentry efforts; and
- Develop the leadership capacity to implement organizational changes needed for the organization to be evidence-based.

### Culture Creation

*...culture creation and management are the essence of leadership...<sup>xxx</sup>*

It has been posited that the most significant difference between leaders and managers is that leaders change cultures and managers live within them.<sup>xxxii</sup> Culture assumes that there are ideas that are commonly shared by a group. We often label this as group norms, rules of the game, climate, values, shared meanings, habits of thinking, and/or mental models. For the purposes of this monograph, culture will be defined using Edgar Schien's definition, which is:

*A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.*

There are many overt behaviors or phenomena that are seen as manifestations of a group's culture. Culture provides a level of group stability. The rituals, climate, values, and behaviors combine to create an often unconscious way for group members to know how to react or respond to any given situation. Parole chairs and board members who want to protect the public by supporting the effective reentry of offenders into the community should be actively engaged in identifying their organizational culture and attempting to influence and shape it.

The culture of a paroling authority is influenced by many factors, including the perspective of the appointing authority, such as a governor, citizen groups, legislators, and their media. The parole chair and board members must choose to influence the parole agency culture, including the external groups that influence it.

Changing any organizational culture is difficult and often daunting work. It necessitates working with people to change not just policy and procedures but attitudes, values, and beliefs.

To effect such organizational change requires a willingness of paroling authorities to change their own behavior. They have to model the behaviors that they are asking others to adopt. To do this requires:

- Identifying and embedding values that support transition and reentry of offenders;
- Articulating and getting buy-in of a vision and mission that describe the desired future and the methods by which this future will be achieved; and
- Setting measurable goals by which progress can be assessed.

### ***Identifying and Embedding Values***

As citizens of a country that values liberty, Americans are ambivalent about the criminal justice system. On the one hand, they want it to go away and yet, on the other hand, want to lock people up and throw away the key.<sup>5</sup> This dilemma is further confounded by the inability of individuals and communities to hold and make sense of competing goals for the criminal justice system. They want to punish and rehabilitate, to deter and restore.

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*One of the important functions a paroling authority can play is to help articulate the goals of sanctions*

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Paroling authorities sit squarely in the middle of what appear to be the competing values and interests of citizen groups, individuals, criminal justice stakeholders, crime victims, and the media.

One of the important functions a paroling authority can play is to help articulate the goals of sanctions. To do this, the paroling authorities' values that underpin their goals must be discussed and articulated. Each paroling authority will have different values, but authorities' values should speak to the need for just and fair process, stewardship of public resources, and commitment to enhancing public safety. A paroling authority which articulates the basic values and virtues of the parole function would engage in such behaviors as:<sup>xxxii</sup>

- Defining the bedrock values and virtues that the institution needs for performance;
- Getting maximum stakeholder support for basic values and virtues;
- Working with labor unions and professional organizations to gain support for values and value-based policies;
- Building values and virtues into the mission;
- Communicating the values continuously and clearly to external and internal groups;
- Modeling the expected values, virtues, and behaviors at all times;

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<sup>5</sup> This work is derived from "Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Executives and Senior Level Leaders," U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C., Chapter 3, by Patrick Dobel.

- Demanding modeling behavior by all agency staff;
- Ensuring consistency between organizational and individual values;
- Creating symbols, rituals, and public occasions to emphasize and celebrate the expected values, virtues, and behaviors.

Perhaps the most critical task of the parole board is to help all stakeholders understand the value of the parole function. Effective leaders simply and concretely identify not just the task at hand but the why behind the task. They capture both the hearts and imaginations of employees, offenders, appointed and elected officials, and citizens. Effective parole board members help others understand the importance of the parole function and how it enhances public safety through helping offenders successfully transition and reenter society. They are adept at using current research and data to create a comprehensive picture of parole that frames policy issues. They know how to work with staff who serve a public that often rejects and condemns their clients and the clients who often reject and condemn their own circumstances.<sup>6</sup>

Parole executives must be able to articulate their values, vision, and mission and how they relate to the effective transition and reentry of parolees. To do so, leaders of parole agencies must thoroughly understand evidence-based decision-making and practices and must articulate both how those practices differ from current practices and why agency staff and stakeholders should care. It requires engaging in processes where staff and board members can articulate their values and show how they support moving to evidence-based practices.

Values that are commonly expressed as the underpinnings for effective transition and reentry of offenders include:

- Commitment to fairness;
- Belief in offender change;

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*Effective  
leaders  
simply and  
concretely  
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not just the  
task at hand  
but the why  
behind the  
task*

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<sup>6</sup> This work is derived from “Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Executives and Senior Level Leaders,” U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C., Chapter 4, by Nancy Campbell.

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An effective parole executive knows that a vision is dynamic, not static

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- Belief that research can guide the development of programs and strategies that reduce offender recidivism;
- An understanding of and support for risk reduction;
- Commitment to collaborating with system and community stakeholders;
- Treatment of staff, offenders, victims, and the public with respect and dignity;
- Responsible use of public resources;
- Use of transparent and clear decision processes and procedures;
- Engaging the community as a partner in transition and reentry;
- Belief in the importance of maintaining family and other community support throughout the transition and reentry process.

Paroling authorities who want to influence their agencies' cultures to support effective reentry of offenders articulate values that support this direction. They speak about why these values are important in the effort to make parole effective.

### ***Defining a Vision and Mission***

Similarly, parole executives need to work with board members and staff to articulate the vision and mission of the parole agency and other agency staff to create a vision that bridges agencies and systems. An effective parole executive knows that a vision is dynamic, not static. As Leslie Kossoff says:

*Executive thinking is based on a vision for the organization. It is an active vision, one that does not stand idly by as an impossible dream. It is a real and tangible direction with look and feel attached to it. It is action-oriented, strategically based, and task-supported.*<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Kossoff notes that this vision is inclusive and is accomplished daily in all actions. It provides a place for all stakeholders to participate.

In addition to defining the vision, an effective parole executive helps the organization stay focused on its core business and motivates stakeholders by defining the way to reach the vision through a clear mission. Effective missions are vivid and provide measurable, achievable outcomes. Although the vision can not always be reached, the mission can. The mission is an assessment tool at a tactical level that meets the following four objectives:

- States the core business;
- Allows room for expansion into appropriate business areas;
- Inspires stakeholders; and
- Encourages staff to work more effectively.

A mission statement that operationalizes a vision of enhancing public safety by reintegrating parolees into society must identify transition and reentry as core elements for parole. It must speak to:

- The need for collaboration between parole, corrections, and community;
- Organizing around the principles that enhance effective transition; and
- Integration of EBP in practices and interventions.

Corrections agencies tend to be more advanced than paroling authorities in their understanding and integration of transition and reentry strategies that are evidence-based. As such, some of the best examples of vision and mission statements that speak to the evidence-based transition and reentry are found in corrections agencies.

An example of a corrections agency that has vision and mission statements that clearly identify elements which encourage transition and reentry is the Washington State Department of Corrections.

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*Effective missions are vivid and provide measurable, achievable outcomes*

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The agency vision statement is:

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*We create environments in which all offenders learn to make choices that contribute to a safer society.*

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The agency mission statement is:

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*The Department of Corrections, in collaboration with its criminal justice partners, will contribute to staff and community safety and hold offenders accountable through administration of criminal sanctions and effective reentry programs.<sup>xxxiv</sup>*

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The far-reaching vision statement is uplifting and energizing at the same time that it speaks to values that are consistent with evidence-based practice and effective transition and reentry. Similarly, the mission statement does an excellent job of defining how such a vision will be achieved. The mission identifies that collaboration is a method of choice, as are “effective” reentry programs. The term *effective* speaks to the need to use evidence-based programs.

An excellent example of clearly articulated vision and mission statements and values that support reentry and transition are those of the Kansas Parole Board. An excellent addition would be the addition of evidence-based decision-making. Sound and rational decision-making may not be grounded in proven research.

## KANSAS PAROLE BOARD

### VISION

The Kansas Parole Board contributes to protecting the safety of the citizens of the state of Kansas by the exercise of sound, rational decision-making.

### MISSION

Parole privilege shall be extended to those offenders who demonstrate suitability by having served incarceration time set forth by the courts and who have demonstrated a reduction in risk to re-offend such that revictimization is minimized and rehabilitation and successful reentry are maximized; similarly, parole privileges shall be rescinded in cases where an offender demonstrates increasing risk in the community.

### PRINCIPLES

- We believe that the parole process is essential to a fair and just criminal justice system that enhances public safety.
- We believe in effective reentry planning, offender risk reduction, and an ability to minimize revictimization by the employment of demonstrated best practices.
- We believe in the human dignity of all and shall demonstrate this belief by showing respect to the community, victims, and offenders through our practices.
- We are dedicated to the professional development of parole board members.
- We believe in effective stewardship of scarce resources.

Given that parole board members in many jurisdictions are part-time and have term limits, it is important to engage staff in institutionalizing the values, vision, and mission. A highly trained and skilled staff can work with board members to institutionalize a vision, mission, and goals that are guided by evidence-based practices, and create a sustainable system that benefits from the introduction of new board members.

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*One aspect of performance management is setting measurable goals that flow from the mission*

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### ***Setting Measurable Goals***

To effectively implement the mission, a parole executive needs to:

- Develop goals that support the mission;
- Clarify roles and responsibilities;
- Align performance and reward systems with the mission.

One of the greatest challenges facing paroling authorities as they attempt to create a culture that uses evidence to develop effective transition and reentry programs is the ability to manage performance. One aspect of performance management is setting measurable goals that flow from the mission.

If the mission is effective reentry programs, an example of a goal might be matching offenders to the program that research indicates will reduce risk. To achieve this goal will require applying evidence-based principles one through three.

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Setting concrete objectives to assess risk and needs, to enhance intrinsic motivation, and to target interventions provides clear and measurable goals.

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Setting goals is followed by designing benchmarks for accomplishing the goals. Each staff member should understand what his or her role and responsibilities are in attaining the benchmarks and goals.

Perhaps most importantly, formal and informal performance assessment must be tied directly to the goals. It is not enough to implement a new assessment instrument and then allow board members not to use the assessment

data to guide condition and program decisions. Parole board members and staff must be rewarded for using the assessment. When changing systems and processes, it is important to change the performance systems to support the desired change.

### ***Clarifying and Aligning Decision Processes***

#### ***Structured Decision-Making***

Paroling authorities are a key link between the community, offenders, and the criminal justice system. They are perfectly positioned to articulate the goals of themselves and their appointing authority. Given the highly political nature of the parole function, some paroling authorities may shudder at the thought of structured, visible, and understandable decision-making. In fact, the creation of a clear decision process is one way to create shared ownership of individual decisions.

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An informed decision-making process articulates both subjective and objective factors in decision-making.

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Structured decision processes provide data needed to assess individual, program, and system decisions. This data is critical for developing effective transition and reentry programs.

There are three basic approaches to parole decision-making:<sup>xxxv</sup>

1. The first is the individual, clinical approach. In this approach, the principles for decision-making are largely implicit, and the parole board member uses his or her best judgment without regard to colleagues' views or decisions.
2. The second is the individual, evidence-based approach. In this approach board members operate as individual decision-makers but rely on research-based tools such as risk assessments. In this approach, the decision factors are typically more explicit, use some research-based data

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*Paroling authorities are a key link between the community, offenders, and the criminal justice system*

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that is often combined with individual judgment and decision principles, and factors are not shared in any formal way with other board members. This is the approach of most paroling authorities today.

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- In a policy-driven, evidence-based parole decision-making process, decision-making is structured*
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3. Now, however, some parole boards are moving to a third approach, a policy-driven, evidence-based approach. This requires that parole board members come together and reach agreement on the goals and methods to achieve their desired outcomes as a group, not as individuals. This decision-making approach will be explored in more detail because it aligns best with the goals of effective transition and reentry of offenders.

In a policy-driven, evidence-based parole decision-making process, decision-making is structured. The parole board members decide what their philosophy is and what they are trying to achieve with their decisions.<sup>7</sup> Structured decision-making translates decisions and choices into operating principles that are used to guide decisions. It is a set of rules that expresses a jurisdiction's:

- Sentencing goals,
- Normative values, and
- System goals.

The creation of any structured decision-making model should be done with input from appointing authorities, such as governors, elected officials, and other criminal justice system stakeholders and community groups. The ultimate authority resides with the paroling authority, but where there is agreement regarding overall goals, the public and concerned stakeholders will be better equipped to understand individual decisions. Paroling authorities whose board members use a structured decision-making process

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<sup>7</sup> Examples of structured decision-making include *Maryland Parole Commission Guidelines* and *The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole*.

grounded in shared values and principles have a transparent model that can be assessed for outcomes.

The most commonly used structured decision-making model in policy-driven, evidence-based systems is the matrix, or decision trees. While providing room for discretion, they structure decision-making by:

- Clearly expressing desired goals and outcomes;
- Prioritizing interests;
- Clarifying preferred responses to types of needs, risks, and violations;
- Describing desired supervision practices;
- Identifying values to be considered in decisions.

By having structured decision-making guidelines, paroling authorities:

- Ensure agency efforts and resources are targeted to a shared purpose and goals;
- Better explain decisions and use of resources;
- Organize information in a consistent manner;
- Account consistently and fairly for board interests and concerns;
- Provide data for evaluating performance and results.

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*Paroling authorities whose board members use a structured decision-making process grounded in shared values and principles have a transparent model that can be assessed for outcomes*

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## Examples of Decision-Making Tools

**Figure A**

### Maryland Parole Commission Guidelines Matrix and Risk Assessment

	Sentence In Months	Category I			Category II			Category III		
		25% - 36%	37% - 48%	49% - 60%	50% - 58%	59% - 67%	68% - 75%			
<b>Other Crimes</b>										
This table applies to inmates who are eligible for parole after serving twenty-five percent (25%) of their term of confinement.										
84-89	21-30	31-40	41-MSR	48-53	48-53	24-28	29-32	33-MSR*		
90-95	22-32	33-43	44-MSR	54-59	54-59	27-31	32-36	37-MSR		
96-101	24-35	36-46	47-MSR	60-65	60-65	30-35	36-40	41-MSR		
102-107	25-37	38-49	50-MSR	72-77	72-77	36-42	43-48	49-MSR		
108-113	27-39	40-52	53-MSR	78-83	78-83	39-45	46-52	53-MSR		
111-119	28-41	42-55	56-MSR	84-89	84-89	42-49	50-56	57-MSR		
120-125	30-43	44-58	59-MSR	90-95	90-95	45-52	53-60	61-MSR		
126-131	31-45	46-60	61-MSR	96-101	96-101	48-56	57-64	65-MSR		
(Nonviolent crimes and violent crimes committed before October 1994)				102-107	102-107	51-59	60-68	69-MSR		
132-137	33-48	49-63	64-MSR	108-113	108-113	54-63	64-72	73-MSR		
138-143	34-50	51-66	67-MSR	111-119	111-119	57-66	67-76	77-MSR		
144-149	36-52	53-69	70-MSR	120-125	120-125	60-70	71-80	81-MSR		
150-155	37-54	55-72	73-MSR	126-131	126-131	63-73	74-84	85-MSR		
156-161	39-56	57-75	76-MSR	132-137	132-137	66-77	78-88	89-MSR		
162-167	40-58	59-78	79-MSR	October 1, 1994:						
168-173	42-60	61-81	82-MSR	162-167	162-167	81-91	95-109	110-MSR		
174-179	43-63	64-84	85-MSR	168-173	168-173	84-97	98-113	114-MSR		
180-185	45-65	66-86	87-MSR	174-179	174-179	87-101	102-117	118-MSR		
186-191	46-67	68-89	90-MSR	180-185	180-185	90-104	105-121	122-MSR		
192-197	48-69	70-92	93-MSR	186-191	186-191	93-108	109-125	126-MSR		
198-203	49-71	72-95	96-MSR	192-197	192-197	96-111	112-129	130-MSR		
204-209	51-73	74-98	99-MSR	198-203	198-203	99-115	116-133	134-MSR		
210-215	52-76	77-101	102-MSR	204-209	204-209	102-118	119-137	138-MSR		
216-221	54-78	79-104	105-MSR	210-215	210-215	105-122	125-141	142-MSR		
222-227	55-80	81-107	108-MSR	216-221	216-221	108-125	126-145	146-MSR		
228-233	57-82	83-109	110-MSR	222-227	222-227	111-129	130-149	150-MSR		
234-239	58-84	85-112	113-MSR	228-233	228-233	114-132	133-153	154-MSR		
240-245	60-86	87-115	116-MSR	234-239	234-239	117-136	157-157	158-MSR		
<b>Mandatory Supervision Release</b>										
<b>Mandatory Supervision Release</b>										

## Figure B

# Maryland Parole Commission Guidelines Matrix and Risk Assessment

Parole Eligibility		Risk Assessment Instrument																			
<p>Pursuant to the <i>Correctional Services Article</i>, § 7-301 and 7-101(m), applicable for an inmate who has been sentenced to the Division of Correction after being convicted of a violent crime committed on or after October 1, 1994.</p>		<p><b>A. Prior convictions/adjudications (adult and/or juvenile)</b></p> <p>None = 3      One = 2      Two or Three = 1      Four or more = 0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>B. Prior commitment(s) of more than thirty days (adult and/or juvenile)</b></p> <p>None = 2      One or Two = 1      Three or more = 0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>C. Age at current offense/prior commitments</b></p> <p>26 or older = 2*      20 - 25 = 1*      19 or younger = 0</p> <p>* exceptions: If five or more prior commitments of more than 30 days (adult and/or juvenile), place "x" here _____ and score item = 0</p> <p><b>D. Recent commitment-free period (three years)</b></p> <p>No prior commitment of more than thirty days (adult and/or juvenile) or released to the community from last such commitment at least three years prior to the commencement of the current offense = 1 Otherwise = 0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>E. Probation/parole/confinement/escape status violator this time</b></p> <p>Neither on probation, parole, confinement, or escape status at the time of the current offense; nor committed as a probation, parole, confinement, or escape status violator this time = 1      Otherwise = 0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>F. Substance abuse</b></p> <p>No history of substance abuse = 1      Otherwise = 0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>																			
<p><b>II. The commission of, or attempt to commit, any of the following offenses :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abduction</li> <li>• Murder</li> <li>• Rape</li> <li>• Arson in the first degree</li> <li>• Robbery and robbery with a deadly weapon</li> <li>• Carjacking and armed carjacking</li> <li>• Kidnapping</li> <li>• Sexual offense in the first and second degrees</li> <li>• Manslaughter (except involuntary manslaughter)</li> <li>• Use of a handgun in the commission of a felony or other crimes of violence, or</li> <li>• Mayhem and maiming</li> </ul>		<p><b>II. The commission of :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assault in the first degree</li> <li>• Assault with intent to commit a sexual offense in the first degree</li> <li>• Assault with intent to commit a sexual offense in the second degree</li> <li>• Burglary in the first, second, or third degree</li> </ul> <p><b>Total Score</b> _____</p>																			
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Offender Category / Risk Rating</th> <th>Category I 6 - 10 points</th> <th>Good Risk</th> <th>Category I 3 - 5 points</th> <th>Fair Risk</th> <th>Category II 0 - 2 points</th> <th>Poor Risk</th> <th>Category III</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Offender Category / Risk Rating	Category I 6 - 10 points	Good Risk	Category I 3 - 5 points	Fair Risk	Category II 0 - 2 points	Poor Risk	Category III								
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<p>Maryland Parole Commission  <i>Stuart O. Simms, Secretary</i>  <i>Patricia K. Gushwa, Chairperson</i></p>		<p>6776 Reisterstown Rd., Suite 307  Baltimore, MD 21215  410-385-3200 fax 410-764-4355</p>																			

## Figure C

### Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole: Parole Decision-Making Guidelines



#### PENNSYLVANIA BOARD OF PROBATION AND PAROLE

#### PAROLE DECISION MAKING GUIDELINES

Name _____
Parole No. _____ SID No. _____ Institution No. _____
Date of Interview _____ Institution _____
Interview Type <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Reparole Review <input type="checkbox"/> Parole Application

#### *Violence Indicator*

##### 1. Instant Offense

Violent	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3
Non-Violent	<input type="checkbox"/>	+1

(1) Murder, Voluntary Manslaughter, Aggravated Assault, Robbery, Arson, Burglary (Residential), Assault by Prisoner, Assault by Life Prisoner, Kidnapping, Extortion Accompanied by Threats of Violence, all Sex Crimes, and criminal attempt, criminal conspiracy, and/or criminal solicitation to commit any of the above-noted offenses.

#### *Risk/Needs Assessment*

##### 2. Level of Service Inventory - Revised

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

High Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3
Medium Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	+2
Low Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	+1

##### Sex Offender Risk Assessment (Static 99)

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

High Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	+3
Medium Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	+2
Low Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	+1

(All offenders considered for parole shall be assessed using the Level of Service Inventory - Revised ("LSI-R"). Offenders convicted of a sex offense shall be assessed using the LSI-R as well as the Sex Offender Risk Assessment Instrument. **The higher level of risk shall be used for all sex offenders.**

#### *Institution Adjustment*

##### 3. Institutional Programming

Unacceptable Program Compliance

<input type="checkbox"/>	+3
<input type="checkbox"/>	+2
<input type="checkbox"/>	+1
<input type="checkbox"/>	+0

Reasonable Efforts (2)

Currently Involved

Completion of Required Programs (3)

(2) No access or on waiting list.

(3) Includes offenders who are currently involved and will complete prior to release

**Figure C**

**Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole:  
Parole Decision-Making Guidelines  
(continued)**

**4. Institutional Behavior**

Any of the following acts which occurred: while incarcerated on the instant offense; and, within one year of the parole interview date or since the date of last review.

1. Crimes Code Violation - *Criminal charges pending in which probable cause has been established or a conviction has occurred from an offense that was committed while serving sentence currently under consideration for parole; and/or*  
 +5
2. Drug/alcohol offense - *Determined to be in possession of any controlled substance and/or positive test result of drugs or alcohol; and/or*
3. Assaultive behavior - *Verbal or physical aggression which is documented by the Department of Corrections or the Board of Probation and Parole; and/or*
4. CCC failure - *Return to institution as a result of inappropriate behavior occurring while in prerelease status; and/or*
5. Pattern of institutional misconducts - *Three or more class II, two class II and one class I, or two or more class I misconducts.*

No occurrence within one year of the parole interview date or since date of last review.

+0

Notate cumulative score \_\_\_\_\_ from first four components \_\_\_\_\_

Likely to Parole  
Unlikely to Parole

2 to 6  
7 or greater

If a goal of a paroling authority is effective transition and reentry, the factors that influence transition within correctional settings and into the community must be considered. The principles that research indicates reduce recidivism must be considered in both the way decisions are made and the type of information needed for effective decision-making.

### ***Leadership and Management Requirements***

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*Achieving  
the intended  
consequen-  
ces of either  
probation  
or parole  
requires  
implement-  
ing the  
systems as  
they were  
designed*

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To become a paroling authority that effectively supports offenders' successful transition back into society requires an infrastructure and organizational culture that supports the transition and reentry vision, mission, and goals. Adequate resources to implement the mission are needed. Appointing and hiring people with needed skills and abilities as well as providing ongoing training and staff development are required. Having access to the technology and tools that are needed for effectiveness as well as efficiency is critical.

The field of corrections has long suffered from being "penny-wise, pound-foolish." As was often said in the 1980s, "We never really tried probation or parole." Achieving the intended consequences of either probation or parole requires implementing the systems as they were designed. This lesson is being learned again today with evidenced-based programs. To reduce recidivism, the programs must be implemented as designed. If parole is to "work" in achieving successful transition and reentry, paroling authorities must have the needed resources to get the desired results.

This section of the report discusses the leadership and management competencies as well as the structural and human resource infrastructure that are needed to be an effective paroling authority.

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It is not enough to have dynamic leadership that understands what must be done to create an effective paroling authority. There must also be the resources to transition the organization to be evidence-based.

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For many paroling authorities, the greatest challenge is garnering the resources to put needed management systems and procedures into place.

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## *Human Resource Requirements*

### Parole Board Member Qualifications and Competencies

One of the key functions of a paroling authority is directing and facilitating the achievement of desired outcomes through people and resources. Getting the work done through others is a reality for most leaders and managers, and this is particularly true given the structure of parole. Paroling authorities can set the terms and conditions of parole, but they rely on others to implement them. Even in those cases, where the paroling authority and supervision agency are combined, parole board members rely on others to implement the terms and conditions that they set. Effective governors appoint paroling authorities who have both leadership and management skills.

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Becoming an evidence-based leader requires a willingness to learn and to grow.

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It requires leaders to examine beliefs and behaviors that may have served them well in the past but may not serve them well in the future. It also requires the ability to influence others to change their beliefs and behaviors. In short, paroling authorities who want to use the best evidence to make parole an effective transition and reentry process must be able to lead *transformational change*.

As Jim Collins has said, “First get the right people on the bus.”<sup>xxxvi</sup> This is often difficult in the public sector but not impossible. To accomplish the goals of successful reentry and public protection requires leaders who understand the pivotal role that parole can play in protecting the public by helping offenders transition and reenter society successfully. Most parole board members are appointed by elected officials. These officials need to understand what competencies the “right people” possess and what type of organizational support parole needs in an era of transition.

Because of the many different ways parole boards are structured, it is not possible to speak to the specific duties and responsibilities of any one system. It is possible to consider the broader competencies needed by a parole board member to be effective in an era of transition and reentry. Similarly, the role of parole board chairpersons

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*Effective governors appoint paroling authorities who have both leadership and management skills*

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varies considerably. Those who head separate agencies have responsibility for human resource functions, including labor relations and budget, while chairpersons of parole boards that are part of larger agencies often do not.

To be successful in helping offenders transition and reenter society effectively, a parole board member needs competencies<sup>8</sup> in several areas:

### **Business Savvy**

Supports and advances a shared vision, mission, and goals for parole. Has the knowledge, skills, and ability to understand the purpose of transition, the most effective proven methods for enhancing transition and reentry outcomes, and consistently seeks to enhance understanding of the research that identifies successful strategies and tactics to enhance outcomes. Knows how to use technology and to manage data. Is a strategic thinker.

### **Information and Communication**

Understands how to get information and make sense of it and to communicate information and ideas to a wide array of people. Is able to understand and interpret management reports such as budget and finance data as well as programmatic information such as assessment and evaluation data. Writes well and is an effective public speaker.

### **Decision-Making**

Has the administrative and organizational ability to organize and synthesize large volumes of information. Understands and is committed to a structured decision process and is able to articulate the shared values and goals of the process. Is an evidence-based decision-maker who is willing to assess the risks and needs of inmates, probationers, and parolees, and to innovate to enhance understanding of what strategies and tactics are most effective.

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<sup>8</sup> While competencies are identified, specific skills and abilities that are parts of those competencies that relate uniquely to parole are also listed.

### **Respect for Self and Others**

Has a high level of self-awareness, including accurate self-assessment, emotional awareness, and ability to manage emotions. Has a service orientation and is empathic. Works well in teams and understands how to manage conflict effectively. Has effective interpersonal skills with a wide variety of people.

### **Effective Use of Self**

Has good time-management skills, copes well with pressure and adversity, and engages in self-development. Exercises sound judgment.

It is clear that in any paroling authority, the parole board chair has additional responsibilities and duties that require additional skills and abilities. Additional competencies needed by parole board chairs include the abilities to:

#### **Lead the Business**

Defines decision-making processes and shares information with stakeholders. Develops an organizational culture that supports ownership, pride, and learning, and implements and monitors performance-management systems.

#### **Lead Others**

Is proactive in establishing and advancing a shared vision, mission, and goals for parole. Is able to facilitate and lead change processes. Is a system thinker who engages other systems to plan and evaluate outcomes, and partners and collaborates with other individuals and systems to develop a continuum of services.

#### **Lead by Personal Example**

Learns from experience, and is willing to use power and influence others. Models desired cultural norms.

As evidenced by this list, appointing authorities need to hire highly skilled individuals. They should be

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*Parole board members can only be effective when they have the type and quality of staffing needed to fulfill their mission*

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full-time, receive competitive salaries, and come from varied backgrounds; and they should be appointed for the contribution they can make to improving public safety and the lives of offenders, not as political “patronage.”

One of the greatest challenges for many parole board members is the sheer caseload size. If parole board members are to be effective, they must have adequate time for decision-making and for system-wide planning, assessment, and evaluation efforts. Similarly, time should be available for internal functions, such as training and mentoring staff, and external functions, such as working to create understanding and support for offender transition and reentry with the public and the media.

Parole board chairs should have time for additional leadership functions, such as hiring and training staff, ensuring staff development, initiating and monitoring strategic planning, and ensuring adequate individual and organizational performance measures are in place and providing feedback that can be acted on. Typically board chairs are also responsible for working with legislators, heads of other agencies and service providers, the governor’s staff, and community and citizen groups.

#### Agency Staff Required

Parole board members can only be effective when they have the type and quality of staffing needed to fulfill their mission. Either on staff or the board, there must be the understanding of how to recruit, select, train, and evaluate employees. The following is a list of the type of staff and/or resources parole board members need access to and a brief description of typical duties:

#### **Support Staff**

A paroling authority requires support staff to assemble materials, schedule and prepare for hearings, notify hearing participants, compile files, secure victim input, ensure victim and witness notification, and, in general, ensure the daily functioning of the authority.

#### **Legal Counsel**

A paroling authority has legal liability for its decisions and thus requires the guidance and

expertise of legal counsel to help with individual cases as well as to develop policies and procedures.

### **Performance Management**

Resource access with experts is required for designing and monitoring the systems needed to capture individual and organizational performance measures. Dedicated agency staff is needed for ongoing monitoring and modification of systems.

### **Research and Evaluation**

To assess decision and supervision effectiveness, staffing to perform the research and evaluation functions is necessary.

### **Public Information Officer**

Some resources must be dedicated to managing the function of communicating with citizen groups and the media. Citizen groups include victims groups, advocacy groups, and offender families.

### **Human Resource Staff**

To ensure that recruitment, hiring, and retention of high-quality staff occur requires the support and guidance of skilled human resource staff who can negotiate the complex public-sector processes. Expertise is often needed in labor relations.

### **Information Technology Staff**

To effectively integrate into systems engaged in both transition and reentry, paroling authorities must have access to current technology to communicate, access, and store information and data. Programming, networking, and training staff are needed to manage information systems.

### **Training Staff**

For example, to ensure optimal organizational functioning, training to enhance team work and communication is needed. Technical training is needed to ensure effective use of technology, and program training is needed to ensure

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*Organizational progress-tracking mechanisms should be created and codified in a quality assurance plan*

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understanding of the agency mission and effective use of assessment and decision-making tools. Independent paroling authorities will often have their own training staff and rely on contract trainers. Smaller agencies will typically need resources to access contract training resources. No matter how large or small, effective paroling authorities ensure that they and their staff receive ongoing training and development.

#### **Internal Affairs**

Given the significant amount of power a paroling authority has over the lives of offenders, it is important to ensure that it has the capacity to investigate allegations of misconduct and/or violations of policies and procedures.

#### **Performance Management**

In the early stages of change, performance management is the way in which leaders establish an organizational culture that embraces its role to enhance public safety by increasing an offender's successful transition and reentry. This requires time to work with internal and external stakeholders to develop ownership of the vision, mission, goals, and performance measures. Ownership develops over time as parole board members change the policy, procedures, practices, and individual and organizational performance measures that align with the mission.

Organizational progress-tracking mechanisms should be created and codified in a quality assurance plan. Ideally this plan is developed with the input of other corrections and community stakeholders. The principles of a quality assurance plan that embraces evidence-based practices include:<sup>xxxvii</sup>

- All key stakeholders must be committed to ongoing quality assurance with a goal of creating a “culture of quality.”
- Specific, measurable outcomes and their indicators must be precisely defined.
- Appropriate information management systems must be in place.
- Data should be incorporated into ongoing practice.

For example, data should be gathered and analyzed to determine if decision-making guidelines are being adhered to and if the guidelines are achieving their intended results. This data should be shared with parole board members and staff as well as appointing authorities and other key stakeholders. Data-sharing provides an opportunity to talk about the mission of the paroling authority and about what the steps are to achieve the mission.

Just as there are organizational performance measures, individual measures must be defined. Effective organizations discuss the performance expectations of positions and reach shared agreements regarding role requirements. Staff supervisors then identify with individuals their performance measures and work with them to achieve the desired results.

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The same strategies employed to work with offenders to enhance intrinsic motivation should be used with staff to encourage their development.

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*Catching people doing things right is one of the most effective tools in performance management*

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Catching people doing things *right* is one of the most effective tools in performance management.

A critical aspect of performance management is creating ways for the parole board members and staff to see themselves as a group that are committed to a shared purpose. Activities such as picnics, ball games, awards, and recognition events help people get to know each other. Symbolic measures such as special ID tags, letters of commendation, and internal and external media coverage also help individuals feel appreciated for their hard work and see themselves as part of a larger team.

### **Staff Training and Development**

Staff training and development is often thought of as attendance at external conferences and workshops. While it is important for paroling authorities to take advantage of opportunities to learn from their colleagues in other jurisdictions, staff training and development begins at home. Training is both formal and informal. On a daily basis, informal opportunities exist to discuss how a particular action or function supports the vision, mission, and goals. As new policies and procedures are developed, they should be reviewed together as a staff. This requires regular staff

meetings that dedicate time to training.

When introducing or modifying a significant policy such as decision-making guidelines, it is not enough to discuss the topic. Formal training is required. Role modeling and interactive exercises such as reviewing a case with the new or modified guidelines assist people in understanding how to use the policy and to ensure fidelity to the model.

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*Perhaps the most obvious and difficult issue facing many paroling authorities is the lack of basic management systems for capturing, analyzing, and interpreting data*

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The same social learning strategies that apply to all individuals should be considered in the development and design of staff training.

To develop excellent training typically requires hiring the expertise and credibility needed to design and implement an effective training. Skilled trainers have the ability to reach a variety of learning styles and often have greater credibility than colleagues.

### ***Organizational Infrastructure Requirements***

#### ***Management Systems***

An effective paroling authority has to have basic operating systems for gathering information, making decisions, and capturing and analyzing data. Perhaps the most obvious and difficult issue facing many paroling authorities is the lack of basic management systems for capturing, analyzing, and interpreting data. Many paroling authorities do not even have automated case file systems. Some paroling authorities spend hours traveling for small numbers of in-person hearings because of lack of systems to handle hearings on a long distance basis. Even those paroling authorities that have adequate infrastructure struggle to acquire the fiscal support to maintain or sustain initial investments. The management systems and needs identified in this section require resources. Paroling authorities may need the help of other agencies and systems to advocate for these resources.

- **Key among the program requirements is a validated and reliable risk/needs assessment instrument.** In some situations, a corrections system may have an instrument that could be used or modified. Certainly the experience of other systems can be used to guide the development of an instrument. In any situation,

it is important that the instrument that is adopted be modified to meet the unique needs of the paroling authority and the offender population. It takes time and resources to norm and test an instrument. Additional tools may be needed for special populations, such as sex offenders, female offenders, substance abusers, and the mentally ill.

- **To ensure that agency goals are being reached requires the capacity to capture, manage, and evaluate data.** Handling data effectively requires having resources available for expert consultation on systems design, for staff to ensure that data systems are working, and for staff to evaluate results. Smaller paroling authorities may be able to rely on staff from central research and evaluation units of other criminal justice or policy units in the executive branch.
- **The ability to capture data requires that a paroling authority has the necessary and sufficient technology to capture data and to run management reports.** Many paroling authorities do not have electronic case files. Electronic files not only save time and money but allow for the collection of needed data to evaluate outcomes. The up-front investment of automating case files is insignificant when compared to the possible long-term savings of time and resources.
- **Electronic case file and data management systems must be connected to other agencies in the corrections system.** It is only when consistent measures exist across corrections, paroling authorities, and supervision agencies that the best outcomes in transition and reentry can occur.
- **Finally, in order to manage the high caseloads, video-hearing capacity is essential.** In some jurisdictions, the lack of this technology requires parole board members to travel long distances for hearings. Not only does this increase costs because offenders wait longer for hearings, but

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*The up-front investment of automating case files is insignificant when compared to the possible long-term savings of time and resources*

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parole board members cannot handle as many cases because they are traveling long distances. Not only is a video hearing more efficient but it also often allows for the inclusion of victims and witnesses who can not travel, and it works well for interstate situations.

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*The political appointment system makes it imperative that policies, procedures, and practices be codified in operations manuals*

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### ***Policy Requirements***

The vision, mission, and goals should be codified in well-written policies and procedure. Ideally, these are electronically accessible to allow for easy access and for updating as needed.

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Three areas of policy that should be clearly delineated are:

- The paroling authority decision-making guidelines,
  - The strategic plan, and
  - The quality assurance plan.
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The political appointment system makes it imperative that policies, procedures, and practices be codified in operations manuals. These manuals should explain how the systems work and provide a clear description of the procedures that must be followed. This type of manual is another tool for reinforcing the desired culture of the paroling authority.

It is very helpful for new parole board members to have a handbook and a well-structured orientation into and training for their work. There must also be an efficient system for updating policies with changes in law or regulation.

## **C. COLLABORATION**

### **Comprehensive Transition and Reentry Planning and Collaborating**

*In an effort to improve public safety and maximize existing resources, states are adopting interdisciplinary strategies that improve how prisoners are released from prison.<sup>xxxviii</sup>*

Governors and other elected officials are beginning to recognize that increasing the likelihood of successful reentry requires more effective coordination and collaboration between state agencies and also between state, local, and community services. Many agencies do not want to serve offenders and, as a result, place them as a low priority. To overcome the resistance to serving the offender population requires more than coordination; it requires true collaboration and joint planning.

Some Governors have signed executive orders that have created interagency governance structures for the reentry of offenders. In Rhode Island, the governor signed an executive order creating the Governor's Reentry Steering Committee for Released Inmates, which focuses on reducing policies or practices that are obstacles to successful offender reentry.<sup>xxxix</sup> Rhode Island has created a three-tier leadership structure to engage stakeholders, which ranges from state cabinet members to local community-service organizations. This type of structure creates an opportunity for collaboration, but only effective leadership will ensure that it occurs.

NIC, in conjunction with Abt Associates and the Center for Effective Public Policy, has created the “Transition from Prison to the Community Model” (TPC).<sup>xl</sup> It outlines the steps needed to transition an offender effectively from prison to the community. The steps include:

- **Mobilize interdisciplinary, collaborative leadership teams** convened by corrections efforts to guide reentry efforts at state and local levels.
- **Engage in a rational planning process** to carefully define goals, develop a clear understanding of reentering offender populations and their rates of recidivism, and review existing policies, procedures, and resources for reentry.
- **Integrate stages of offenders processing** through the justice/corrections system (beginning at commitment to prison or earlier and continuing through assessment, prison programming, preparation for release, release, and supervision in the community), resulting in a carefully

planned process with close communication and collaboration among prison officials, releasing authorities, and post-prison supervision staff.

- **Involve non-correctional stakeholders** (public, private, and community agencies) who can provide services and support as reentry efforts are planned and implemented.
- **Assure that transitioning offenders are provided basic survival resources**, such as identification documents, housing, appropriate medications, linkages to community services, and informal networks of support before, during, and after they are released from prison.
- **Implement valid offender assessments** at various stages of offenders' movements through the system.
- **Target effective interventions**, based on good research, to address offenders' risks and criminogenic needs as identified by assessments.
- **Expand the traditional roles of correctional staff** beyond custody, security, accountability, and monitoring to include an integrated approach to offender management that engages offenders in the process of change.
- **Develop the capacity to measure change** toward specific outcomes and track information that can be used for planning future improvements.

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*This section of the monograph will address the complex and challenging issue of how paroling authorities must collaborate and plan with other system and community stakeholders*

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A clear theme in the TPC model is the need for corrections systems leaders to create collaborative relationships and to use these relationships to plan and to implement system change. This section of the monograph will address the complex and challenging issue of how paroling authorities must collaborate and plan with other system and community stakeholders.

## The Role of Paroling Authorities in Transition and Reentry Planning

The effort required to create shared system goals and plans is significant. In many jurisdictions, stakeholders will indicate they share common broad goals such as public safety but, in fact, they have different beliefs and perspectives about the goals of the system. The paroling authority can serve as a convener of these entities to develop system-wide goals and plans for transition and reentry.

Paroling authorities must be strategic in their use of resources and know how to collaborate and cooperate with other systems. Three separate authorities have responsibility for transition and reentry of offenders.<sup>xli</sup> They are:

- A corrections authority (operates prisons);
- A releasing authority (makes decisions about release and revocation);
- A supervision authority (supervises offenders released from prisons).

The TPC model graphic below shows the overlap of these three entities.

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*Paroling authorities must . . .  
know how to collaborate and cooperate with other systems*

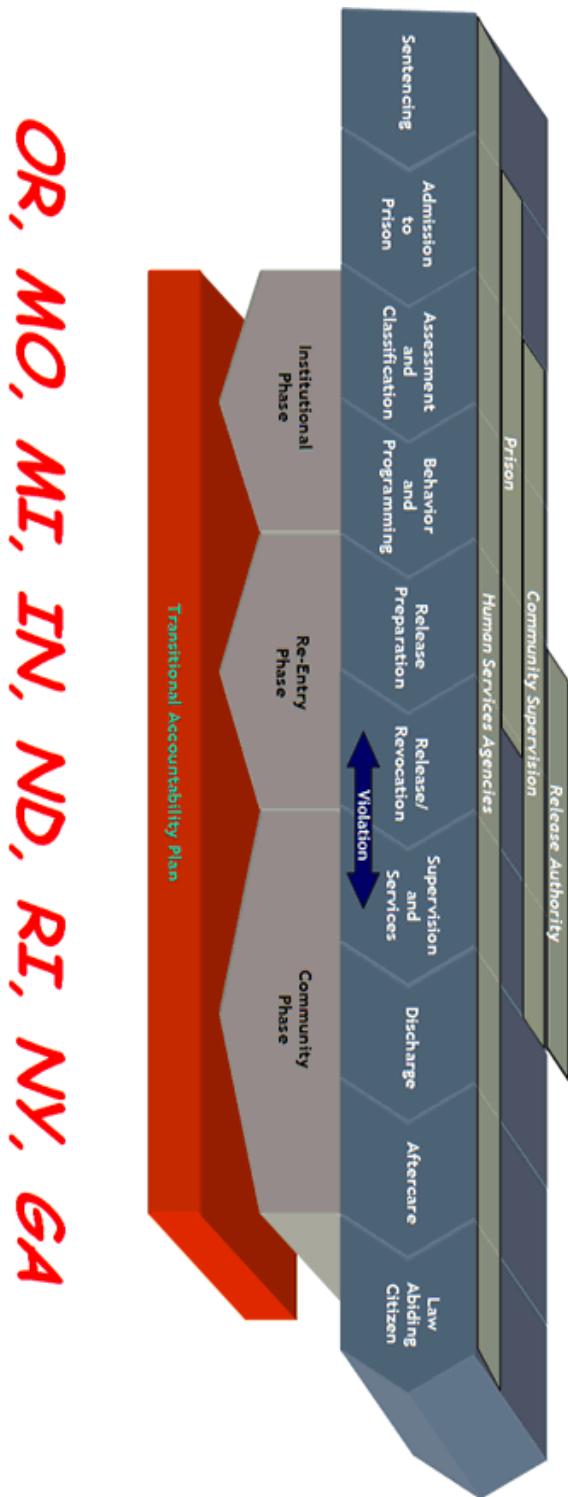
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Figure 6

The TPC Model

# Transition From Prison to Community

Transition from Prison to Community Initiative



**OR, MO, MI, IN, ND, RI, NY, GA**

For transition and reentry to be effective, these three entities must work together to develop a plan that identifies agreed-upon goals and shared methods for achieving these goals. In doing so, the separate authorities can reduce duplication of efforts and create the quality and type of consistent messages and services to offenders that increase the likelihood of a successful transition and reentry into society.<sup>9</sup> Shared planning also creates the possibility for system-wide measurement of intermediate and long-term outcomes.

Several jurisdictions that have engaged in the TPC project are finding creative ways to plan and to work together. Critical to the effectiveness of the planning effort is the team leadership structure. While the leadership structures vary and reflect the corrections system of each state, they share common elements.

Each leadership structure has a high-level authorizer or champion who has the political authority and capacity to assume the role of convener. Typically this is a governor or his or her cabinet-level designee. The structures are often multi-tiered and have the highest-level officials involved in steering committees that meet less frequently but provide agreement on strategic direction. There is also a policy team that is typically composed of senior-ranking appointed officials in the corrections, releasing, and supervision agencies as well as other partners in agencies that control resources or services needed for successful reentry. This team reaches the policy agreements needed for the next tier of teams that are responsible for implementation of the policies agreed upon by the steering and policy teams.<sup>10</sup>

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In jurisdictions that have active transition and reentry initiatives, paroling authorities should be actively involved in planning and change efforts.

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In those jurisdictions that have not engaged in formal efforts to enhance reentry programs and systems, paroling authorities can serve as conveners to pull together the needed leaders to develop a planning and implementation process.

Just as the details of which assessment tools, treatment services, or planning processes will be used

<sup>9</sup> See TPCI Glossary for ways to create consistent terminology and definitions.

<sup>10</sup> See the TPC project site information at: [www.nicic.org/TPCIModel](http://www.nicic.org/TPCIModel).

must be agreed upon, so must strategies for educating and informing appointed and elected officials, advocacy groups, other criminal justice partners, and the media. Even if the corrections authorities work together to create a cohesive system, there are other key criminal justice and community groups that must become part of the planning, assessment, and evaluation process and systems.

### **Collaborative Partnerships**

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*True  
collaboration  
takes time  
and an ability  
to submerge  
one's own ego  
in the interest  
of the greater  
good*

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The transition mission requires the collaboration of not just corrections agencies but of other government agencies—such as health; public assistance/human services; housing and education; licensing; Social Security; homeland security and immigration; federal, state, and local law enforcement; and labor—as well as secular and faith-based community groups and service providers. To ensure that this wide array of constituents shares the same transition and reentry mission requires multi-disciplinary structures and forums for communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. Such structures enhance the ability to avoid duplication of effort and resources and maximize results. They create opportunities for resource and information sharing.

Paroling authorities must encourage the development of such multi-disciplinary partnerships. If serving as conveners, the paroling authority would be responsible for prioritizing issues, clarifying relationships and functions, and creating a conflict resolution forum. This requires the active participation of key decision-makers, which means time and energy must be devoted to developing successful relationships with the decision-makers.

Many leaders label themselves as collaborative when, in fact, they are not. True collaboration takes time and an ability to submerge one's own ego in the interest of the greater good. Using the Wilder Foundation definition of collaboration, it becomes clear that to collaborate requires time, planning, and a willingness to share power, resources, and rewards.<sup>xlii</sup>

*Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and*

*goals, a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility, mutual authority, and accountability for success and the sharing of resources and rewards.”*

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for most paroling authorities is to build and maintain effective relationships with its criminal justice partners. All too often prisons, the paroling authority, and supervision agencies do not work well together. The failure of reentry efforts often rests squarely on the shoulders of the corrections agencies themselves. Historically, our schools and organizations have done a better job of teaching people to compete than to partner. Many senior and appointed leaders do not understand what true collaboration is.

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Paroling authorities will have to demonstrate leadership that rises above past history and works to encourage their agencies and their partner agencies to define and develop mutual goals and the structure to support these goals, and develop a willingness to share resources as well as responsibility for success and failure.

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Collaboration requires an understanding and willingness to network, coordinate, and cooperate in structured and unstructured ways. Examples of structures include: reentry councils; institutionalizing agreements through memoranda of agreement; community forums; shared education and training; shared management information systems; assessment, case management, and evaluation processes; executive orders that mandate shared planning and cooperation; advisory councils; victims' advisory boards; and offender and victim focus groups. The key to the effectiveness of any of these structures is not just asking for input but sharing decision-making and having joint responsibility for the achievement of outcomes. Unstructured ways to collaborate can include participation in conferences, task forces, community events, and social and professional occasions that create opportunities to develop understanding and relationships with key stakeholders.

There are numerous examples of paroling authorities collaborating with others to develop better transition and

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*Collaboration requires an understanding and willingness to network, coordinate, and cooperate in structured and unstructured ways*

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reentry mechanisms and systems. A few examples of such authorities include the following :

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*The key  
to the  
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achievement  
of outcomes*

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- **The Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles** is the lead agency for an innovative reentry housing partnership with the Department of Corrections, the Federal Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless. The goal is to create housing for those offenders who would be granted parole if they had a viable housing option. By working together, these agencies have created a way to create needed housing and stability for offenders reentering the community.<sup>11</sup> As of October 2007, this program had resulted in a net savings of \$6,263,225. Despite the special needs of many of these parolees, the initial data on their supervision outcome overall is very positive.
- **The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB)** has been involved in many creative and collaborative partnerships. It has hired a faith-based coordinator to enhance and build linkages with the faith-based community, including hosting several regional faith-based conferences. The SPB has also developed the Seth Boyden Community Resource Center, which serves local residents and current or ex-offenders. HIV/AIDS counselors, legal aid clinic staff, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and other providers come to assist residents and offenders with issues in a community setting.
- Today many organizations have created forums to share with corrections agencies and others ways to enhance and create collaboration among system stakeholders as well as community partners. The

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<sup>11</sup> See The Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles at: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/specialneeds/programs/rph.asp>.

**National Governor's Association** has a Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy that supports identified states in an effort to help governors and other state policy-makers develop and implement state-wide prisoner reentry strategies that reduce recidivism rates by improving access to key services and supports.<sup>xliii</sup> NIC, ABT Associates, and the Center for Effective Public Policy have developed working papers that identify the formal structures needed for effective partnerships in the Transition from Prison to the Community Initiative.<sup>xliv</sup> The Urban Institute has created a reentry roundtable that brings together practitioners, academics, researchers, community leaders, policy-makers, advocates, and former offenders to support policy innovation that supports effective reintegration of prisoners.<sup>12</sup> The JEHT Foundation has several initiatives that support the development of paroling authorities. In addition, organizations such as the American Bar Association and the National District Attorneys Association have developed policies, training clinics, and other tools that support effective collaboration among criminal justice system stakeholders.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See the Urban Institute at: <http://urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/index.cfm>.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see National District Attorneys Association-adopted "Policy Positions on Prisoner Reentry Issues," available at: [http://www.ndaa-apri.org/pdf/policy\\_position\\_prisoner\\_reentry\\_july\\_17\\_05.pdf](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/pdf/policy_position_prisoner_reentry_july_17_05.pdf).



## VI

# MOVING FORWARD

It is one thing to know what needs to be done and another to know how to do it. Given the uniqueness of each parole system, there is no simple blueprint to becoming an effective paroling authority. Just as each paroling authority will be at a different developmental stage, so will individual parole board members. The value of the following steps and suggestions will vary depending on the individual and organizational developmental stage of a given paroling authority. Appendix I lists some of the organizations and information that might assist a paroling authority as it moves forward to develop effective evidence-based practices and transition services.

### A. INDIVIDUAL

Transformational change assumes, not just the ability to acquire and integrate new skills and behaviors, but to understand the impact of one's own lens or frame of reference. Understanding the unspoken aspects of our culture requires reaching out and embracing opportunities for learning. There are some very valuable resources that can help any parole board member develop a better understanding of his or her individual role and how most effectively to work and lead change in a complex environment like corrections.

The National Institute of Corrections has developed a competency model for first-line supervisors, mid-level managers, and senior-level leaders and executives. The executive-level and senior-level competencies are particularly well suited for paroling authority chairs and board members. The competencies provide a definition, a knowledge base, and a listing of key skills and behaviors as well as additional resources related to each competency. The competency model can be found on the NIC website.

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*Understand-  
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aspects of  
our culture  
requires  
reaching  
out and  
embracing  
opportunities  
for learning*

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The Association of Paroling Authorities International (APAI) offers training for parole board members, parole board chairs, and their staffs. This training addresses most of the key issues discussed in this monograph.

There are also resources for specific skill-building, as well. NIC offers self-study training for such skills as motivational interviewing, understanding evidence-based practices, program planning and design, transformational change, and workforce development.

In addition, the National Training Academy of NIC also offers several excellent leadership development programs. Courses for executives and senior and mid-level managers are all possible learning venues for paroling authorities and their staffs.

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*Being  
an effective  
team begins  
with efforts  
to develop  
a shared  
mission and a  
collaborative  
climate*

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All of these options assume that the paroling authority and its sponsors support and encourage training and developmental efforts through funding and by providing the time for individuals to dedicate to self-development. This also means that the work schedule of parole board members includes time for professional development.

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## B. TEAM

Effective transition requires collaboration. This means paroling authorities must operate as effective teams themselves and work effectively across boundaries with the teams of other organizations.

Being an effective team begins with efforts to develop a shared mission and a collaborative climate. Small efforts are important in this endeavor. Team members must have time to spend getting to know each other in informal and formal settings.

Formal settings include regularly scheduled meetings in which issues regarding the way business should be conducted can be reviewed. Time should be scheduled to discuss issues of mission and goals and to develop an agreed-upon approach to the way the team will work together. This process will need to be repeated regularly because of the rotation of new members onto the team. Time should be dedicated for training and developing new skills as well as for support and recognition of a job well done.

Informal opportunities, such as holiday gatherings, pot luck lunches, and brown-bag discussion luncheons,

are excellent opportunities for board members and staff to develop understanding and trust, which are two of the foundational elements of effective teams. Effective teams schedule time for social interaction because they know it is an essential element in trust-building.

New board members and staff should receive training that is designed to assist them in understanding the organizational vision, mission, and goals as well as the agreed-upon team operating norms. They need help in understanding parole's role in the context of the larger criminal justice system and the community. APAI and NIC jointly sponsor an excellent training that complements the local orientation for new parole board members. The local orientation should be a well-structured and organized program that fully equips the new member to do the job.

Ongoing developmental training for current board members and staff should be scheduled regularly. This is the opportunity to expose staff to new research and approaches to improving their effectiveness as a team and organization. Many organizations provide excellent resources regarding both evidence-based practices and transition and reentry services.

### C. ORGANIZATION

Every paroling authority should have a written plan that articulates how the established mission will be carried out. The mere thought of planning causes many people to find other work to do. Past experiences with complicated, lengthy, and often boring planning processes cause people to avoid planning. The old adage that “if you don’t know where you are going, you are bound to end up someplace else” applies here.

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It is imperative to have a plan so the paroling authority can measure whether it is achieving its goals.

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The way in which this plan is designed, implemented, and measured will symbolize the type of culture the senior leaders and staff are trying to create.

A good strategic plan clearly articulates the desired future direction. It is in the development of a strategic plan that people can challenge themselves to understand how they must change both individually and collectively

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*Every  
paroling  
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to become an effective paroling authority. This is the time for questioning current operating assumptions and ways of doing business. It is the time to pull back from the details and to see the connections between systems and the way the individual and collective actions of the agencies either support or hinder the effective transition of parolees. It is a time to ensure again that all members of the paroling authority share the same policy direction.

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*Time must be dedicated to “cross-team talk”*

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Effective strategic planning provides ways for all of the organization to provide input into the planning. It is an excellent time for executive and senior leaders to get out and experience and listen to the daily work of employees. It is a time to reach out and ask for staff to use their creativity to find answers to challenges. At least annually a formal review of goal accomplishment should be undertaken and modifications made to the paroling authority's strategic plan.

Just as individual teams must take the time to discuss, not just the tasks at hand, but whether the team is doing well at working together, so must the organization. Time must be dedicated to “cross-team talk.” Ensuring that all agency teams share a collective vision and understand their roles in accomplishing the tasks of their units and of the larger organization requires ways of gathering the entire organization. In small organizations, this can literally be done with all-staff meetings and gatherings. In larger organizations, this may require pulling together several units at a time and communicating to the entire organization through newsletters, online alerts, and e-mails and through managers at their team meetings. It is essential to have an identified plan of how, when, and what communication tools will be used to ensure that staff throughout the organization are aligned with the agency mission.

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The approach to planning is a mirror of the expectations of senior-level leaders for themselves and others.

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Organizations, like individuals and teams, go through different developmental stages. Sometimes a great deal of change is needed while at other times the goal is to slow the pace of change and to let new innovations take root by focusing on implementation. Skilled leaders take the pulse

of an organization just as they do for individuals. They pace change to prevent individual and organizational fatigue, and they know how to keep a healthy balance between the tasks to be accomplished and maintaining the capacity of staff to do the job. They plan to celebrate accomplishments and to ensure that those doing the work are having fun!

#### D. SYSTEM

Parole, largely ignored for many years, today is a central focus of national research and discussion. The volume and amount of work focused on how to improve parole practices has increased significantly in the past decade.

Many national associations and foundations are sponsoring work that is designed to enhance the effectiveness of the criminal justice systems in states. The methods and focus of these projects vary, but they all recognize that parole is a critical link in both enhancing public safety and saving public resources. Several of them are focusing, not just on best practices, but on evidence-based practices. Some recent efforts include:

- The National Institute of Corrections has sponsored the Transition From Prison to the Community Project and the Paroling Authority Orientation and Training.
- The National Governor's Association (NGA) has created the Prisoner Reentry State Policy Academy for states to learn about effective transition and reentry efforts. Position papers and findings can be found on the NGA website.
- In 2000, the Urban Institute created the Reentry Roundtable that provides a forum for academics, practitioners, community leaders, policy-makers, advocates, and formerly incarcerated individuals to meet and discuss issues that are important to ensure effective transition of offenders. Roundtable reports can be found on the Urban Institute Web site.
- The Center for Effective Public Policy has created excellent publications ranging from

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*Parole . . .  
today is a  
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how-to manuals for responding effectively to parole violations to thoughtful discussions on the future of parole.

- APAI surveys paroling authorities, and it documents trends and changes in practice as well as sponsoring training for paroling authorities.
- The Pew Charitable Trust, working with the Council of State Governments (CSG) and the Vera Institute, is sponsoring the Public Safety Performance Project, which “seeks to help states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control corrections costs.” This project meets the following three objectives by sharing comparable information for all fifty states and a “what works” searchable database, and will sponsor selected states to participate in change using data-driven analyses and policy audits to identify promising practices and policies:
  1. To help states collect and analyze data on those admitted to their prisons, how long they stay, who returns, and the implications of these practices for public safety and state budgets;
  2. To help states understand how their existing sentencing, release, and community supervision policies, practices, and outcomes compare to those of other states;
  3. To encourage states to use the best research available to advance reforms that will reduce crime and recidivism and deliver a solid return on taxpayers’ investments.

The work done by the groups listed above and many others has raised many new issues and questions that need to be addressed. The following are some of the areas that must be considered to increase the knowledge and understanding of how to increase the capacity of paroling authorities.

## Research

There are many areas in which additional research is needed. For example, research is needed on specific issues such as the value of in-person hearings or the impact of structured policy-driven decision-making. What is also needed is to bring together the leading researchers and practitioners who are engaged in research on the role of parole in transition and those who are working on implementing evidence-based practices in corrections. Just as the NGA has done an excellent job in providing support for specific states to improve their transition capacity, NIC could choose sites to test some of the elements of this framework and could shape its use of technical assistance resources to focus on specific elements of the framework.

## Information Sharing

The creation of a repository of information regarding resources that can increase a paroling authority's capacity to implement EBP and transition services would be a valuable resource for paroling authorities. In developing this monograph, it became clear how difficult it is to understand what resources exist because of the lack of any central collection point for information. An excellent first step in this process might be an "information summit" where the leaders in advancing transition services might come together to share and to discuss what they have learned and what future steps they are planning.

Efforts should continue to share information among states. National organizations could use their existing Web capacity to disseminate information more quickly and in a simpler format that is easier to access. For example, Web alerts regarding promising practices or research could be sent to paroling authorities. Similarly, a simple system could be created that would identify for any state the parameters of its paroling authority and how its system functions.

## Training

In addition to the new parole board member orientation sponsored by NIC, APAI, and the JEHT foundation, the development of a defined curriculum would be valuable, not only for parole board members and staff who participate

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*In developing this monograph, it became clear how difficult it is to understand what resources exist because of the lack of any central collection point for information*

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in the national training, but as a tool for modifying the training for local purposes. This curriculum should include a focus on the leadership competencies needed as well as expanding the focus on policy-making.

Creating Web-based trainings regarding specific topics, such as how to handle violations, or broader topics, such as competency development, would assist local paroling authorities in getting their board members, staffs, and other corrections partners trained in needed areas. Reading is not always the best learning method for busy people. Interactive Web strategies are often more engaging and can create interest in reading.

Existing training at the national and state level for governors and legislators should include a historical perspective on parole, what types of qualifications paroling authority members should have, and how research is informing the ability of parole to improve public safety. Information regarding the cost benefit of parole should also be reviewed. Most importantly, the desired outcomes of parole should be carefully reviewed by policy-makers.

## VII CONCLUSION

In the thoughtful *Call to Action* by the Center for Effective Public Policy, one of the last recommendations is to “Support a substantial effort to equip the roughly 200 individuals who make up paroling authorities nationwide with the new skills, knowledge, perspectives, and tools required to be effective reentry partners.” Not to engage in a “chicken or the egg” conversation, but it seems unlikely that any of the other critical recommendations can take place unless paroling authorities have the knowledge, skills, and abilities, not just to understand the reentry vision, but to actively contribute to shaping and implementing it.

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There is no question that paroling authorities have lost discretion, authority, and responsibility in most corrections systems throughout the United States.

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Whether this has helped or hindered offenders and the corrections system is open to debate. What is not debatable is that in those systems in which paroling authorities have an impact on deciding when and/or under what circumstances offenders are released back into the community, their ability to support reentry efforts is difficult, if not impossible, unless they understand what practices enhance or hinder successful reentry and have access to the tools and resources needed to implement proven practices. Good decisions will not come from poorly educated and unprepared decision-makers.

Failure to invest in understanding the needed qualifications of paroling authorities, appointing qualified board members, and ensuring that they have the tools and abilities to understand and implement evidenced-based practices is tantamount to saying that, despite knowing what works to ensure effective reentry, we just don’t

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*Good  
decisions  
will not come  
from poorly  
educated and  
unprepared  
decision-  
makers*

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care. Paroling authorities are needed, not just to support effective reentry efforts, but to *lead* them.

The return on investment for preparing paroling authorities to design and lead reentry efforts would make any banker salivate. To squander such an opportunity is to forfeit the inheritance of current and future generations. It is to accept high recidivism rates and the collateral damage of unsafe communities and to spend tax dollars on a system that is designed for failure, not success.

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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I

### Resources of Interest Transition and Re-entry Efforts

#### ORGANIZATIONS

American Probation and Parole Association: [www.appa-net.org](http://www.appa-net.org)

American Correctional Association: [www.aca.org](http://www.aca.org)

Association of Paroling Authorities International:  
<http://www.apaintl.org>

Bureau of Justice Assistance: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/reentry.html>

JEHT Foundation: <http://www.jehtfoundation.org>

National Governor's Association, Center on Best Practices: <http://www.nga.org>

National Institute of Corrections: <http://www.nicic.org>

Pew Center on the States: <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org>

United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: <http://www.reentry.gov/sar/welcome.html>

Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/justice>

Vera Institute of Justice: <http://www.vera.org>

Washington State Institute for Public Policy: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov>

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“Emerging Roles and Responsibilities in the Reentry Partnership Initiative: New Ways of Doing Business,” : U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. Washington, D.C.

“Successful Transition and Reentry for Safer Communities: A Call to Action for Parole.” Center for Effective Public Policy. Silver Spring, MD.

Transition from Prison to Community Initiative:  
<http://www.nicic>

## *Collaboration*

“Collaboration for Successful Prisoner Reentry: The Role of Parole and the Courts,” *Corrections Management Quarterly* 5(3):11-22. NCJ 189673.

“Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Executives and Senior-Level Leaders,” U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C.

## *Evidence-Based Practice*

“A Handbook for New Parole Board Members,” National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C.

“Implementing Evidence-Based Principles in Community Corrections: An Integrated Model,” National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C.

## *Organizational Development in Corrections*

“Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Executives and Senior-Level Leaders,” U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C.

“Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Managers and Supervisor Levels,” U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C.

“Future Force: A Guide to Building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Corrections Workforce,” U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. Washington, D.C.



## APPENDIX II

### Implementation: Intermediate and Process Measures<sup>1</sup>

The measures are broken down into the following categories:

**1) Outcome Measure: RECIDIVISM REDUCTION**

**2) System Process Measures**

- a) Risk
- b) Proxy Risk
- c) Supervision Length
- d) Dosage
- e) Revocation & Violation

**3) Program Measures**

- a) Program Effectiveness

**4) Individual Performance Measures**

- a) Assessment
- b) Case Plans
- c) Workload
- d) Violations

**5) System Process Measures**

- a) Organizational Assessment
  - i) Organizational Structure Data (i.e., hierarchy levels, span of control)
  - ii) Organizational Climate Assessment
- b) Collaborative Assessment
  - i) Collaborative Structure Data
  - ii) Collaborative Climate Assessment

While this tool was developed initially for the pilot states involved in the NIC / CJI initiative (Illinois and Maine), it is equally applicable to other state and local jurisdictions who are committed to implementing evidence-based principles. The unique feature of the Integrated Model is its insistence that systemic change cannot be fully implemented or sustained without equal and integrated focus on evidence-based principles, organizational development, and collaboration. This document provides measures to monitor achievements in all three of those domains, assisting leaders and their organizations to achieve true systemic change. The research is clear about which interventions result in reduced recidivism. The Integrated Model and the measures identified in this document will help community corrections agencies be clear about how to implement those interventions and achieve those improved outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Bogue, Brad, Bill Woodward, Nancy Campbell, Mark Carey, Elyse Clawson, Dorothy Faust, Kate Florio, Andrew Goldberg, Lore Joplin, Billy Wasson. (2005). "Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community: Outcome and Process Measures." National Institute of Corrections, Community Corrections Division. Washington, D.C.



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