

Releasing Inmates From Prisons

Profiles of State Practices

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Introduction

In the late 1990s, criminal justice and corrections policy-makers and practitioners began taking a closer look at the importance of the reentry of inmates into society and their transition process from prison to community. Among the factors driving more interest on this issue were:

- inmates being released from prisons at record numbers;
- research showing high rates of recidivism and return to prison for released inmates;
- growing literature that indicated some interventions reduced recidivism; and
- an economic downturn in 2001 that resulted in state budget shortfalls and pressures to reduce or contain costs of state services such as corrections.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), U.S. Department of Justice reported that state prisons held nearly 1.3 million inmates at midyear 2003, with another 170,000 in Federal prisons. The record numbers of inmates also mean record numbers of inmates being released. In 2002, more than 615,000 inmates were released from state and federal prisons. By comparison, only 147,895 inmates were released from prisons in 1977.

BJS also released reports that tracked the rate of return to prison for inmates released from state facilities. A group of 272,111 inmates, released from prisons in 1994 from fifteen states, was monitored. Within three years of their release, 67.5% were rearrested for a new crime and 46.9% had been convicted of a new crime. More than one half (51.8%) was back in prison within three years for conviction of new crimes and/or violations of release conditions. There was speculation that the growing number of inmates being released would contribute to increasing crime rates and gang activity.

With those reports showing high rates of return of released inmates, research was also on-going that indicated success with some treatment and offender program interventions. Meta-analysis of correctional research has concluded that some programming reduces recidivism in the range of 10-30%, and that some interventions “targeted to specific criminogenic risk factors” could reduced reoffending by even higher rates.

Against this backdrop, states were running into major fiscal problems beginning in 2001. After nearly a decade of economic growth, the economic downturn in mid 2001 resulted in significant budget shortfalls in many states. The corrections budgets in more than half the states were cut for the first time in Fiscal Year 2002 after years of significant expansion. According to BJS, state spending for corrections had increased from \$65 per resident in 1986 to \$134 per resident in 2001. The annual average increase for corrections had outpaced health care, education, and natural resource expenditures during that period. But even as correctional and prison populations were increasing in most states, funding problems were pressuring policy-makers and corrections officials to find ways to reduce costs. One way was to reduce the number inmates returning to prisons where the national average operating cost per inmate had risen to \$22,650 in 2001.

Several government agencies and private organizations began funding or promoting steps

to improve inmate re-entry and transition efforts. Several are listed below.

- Federal Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI). This joint effort by the U.S. Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services provided grants to sixty-nine state and local agencies to reentry services to adults and juveniles leaving correctional facilities. A total of \$110 million was awarded to grantees in all states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Individual grants ranged from \$500,000 to \$2 million.
- National Governors Association (NGA). The Association's "Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy" worked in seven states to form interdisciplinary teams (including governors' offices) to develop strategic plans and closer coordination among state government agencies in providing reentry services for inmates returning to society.
- The Council of State Governments (CSG). CSG formed a Re-Entry Policy Council (RPC) consisting of nearly one hundred state and local government and community leaders to review the issues of reentry. After two years of activity, the RPC is scheduled to release a report in late 2004 with recommendations to improve inmates' transition to communities.
- Urban Institute. The Institute has conducted research and published reports on a variety of reentry topics, including detailed analysis and descriptions of transition and reentry procedures in several states.
- National Institute of Corrections (NIC). NIC's Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI) was first piloted in two states, then expanded in six additional states and the District of Columbia. The TPCI model focuses on a comprehensive approach involving offender assessment, programming, release planning and preparation, release decision-making, aftercare services, and response to violations in the community.

This report provides a profile of each state's corrections systems and the agencies and processes involved in planning for and releasing inmates from state prisons. It is intended to show the contrasts and variety of reentry approaches, provide information to officials and organizations involved in reentry and transition projects, and provide some baseline information to measure changes in transition and reentry efforts within state corrections systems. Information was collected through interviews with state corrections officials in each state, and supplemented with data from agency publications and online resources. Contacts were made during the fall of 2003 through midyear 2004.

National Overview

Contacts with state corrections officials throughout the U.S. confirmed that every state is taking some initiative to revise and improve the process for preparing inmates for release from prison and the delivery of post-release services. At a minimum, some states are using federal grant funds to target younger, higher risk inmates for more intensive institutional release preparation and aftercare services. Some states, however, have expanded “reentry” or “transitional” initiatives beyond changing the activities at the end of inmates’ prison terms. Those states are engaged in major organizational or systems changes that identify inmates’ success after release as a systems’ goal.

Indicators of these organizational and systems changes within state corrections include the following activities.

- Agency mission and vision statements are being modified in some states to reflect emphasis on preparing inmates to lead crime-free lives or to improve reentry efforts.
- New offices or administrative positions are being established in some agencies to develop and coordinate reentry efforts.
- Some states are establishing new reentry or transitional specialist positions in prisons and the field to coordinate reentry services.
- Corrections agencies are more effectively reaching out to other governmental and community groups to partner with corrections in addressing offender needs.
- New offender assessment instruments, release planning procedures, and programs with a sharper focus on reducing criminal behavior are being developed.
- Some states are integrating institutional programs, release decision-making, and field services for more effective offender management and transition to communities.

But contacts with state corrections officials also identified some forces that are restricting progress toward developing better reentry processes and improving success rates of released inmates.

- The corrections’ organizational culture and justice policy emphasis in recent decades has been more supportive of punitive approaches toward offenders and managing risk through monitoring and controls. There is some staff resistance to balancing these approaches with treatment interventions and a new emphasis on more supportive approaches.
- Corrections agencies are attempting to initiate new reentry programs at a time when states are under significant fiscal strains and unable to support new programmatic efforts.
- Society in general is resistive to integrating offenders back into society. Laws and policies often limit housing opportunities, employers are reluctant to hire ex-offenders, and resources for sex offenders, mentally ill, and other high-risk offenders are limited.
- Officials assigned to coordinate new reentry initiatives sometimes lack the information or support systems to assist them with the challenges they face in changing systems.

Most of the officials contacted to describe the current reentry and transition activities also indicated that their systems were in various stages of change and they expect current planning to result in modifications to reentry and transition procedures in the near future.

State Profiles

Alabama

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 28,440 state prison inmates in Alabama. 7,472 inmates were released from state prisons during 2002. The Alabama Department of Corrections (DOC) operates state prison facilities and the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles has authority to grant paroles to state inmates. The Board also administers statewide probation and parole services for adult offenders.

The Board has authority to release inmates when they become eligible for parole, which for most offenders is after completion of one-third of the imposed sentences or ten years. Inmates convicted of some violent crimes must serve at least 85% of the sentence. Inmates released from state prisons during Fiscal Year 2002 (ending Sept. 30, 2002) were in the following categories:

- 36.2% were released for completion of their sentences with no supervision;
- 33.4% were released to probation supervision (split sentences);
- 23.7% were released to parole supervision; and
- 6.7% were in other categories.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Inmates entering prison go through intake assessment at the women's facility or at a reception facility for men. The process involves classification for facility assignments and assessment of program needs. A Central Records office calculates dates for parole eligibility, which may be adjusted for some inmates who are eligible for good time awards. Inmates may be involved in a variety of prison programs such as substance abuse treatment, education, mental health, and vocational training. When inmates near dates for parole reviews by the Board, institutional parole staff prepare reports for the Board that may include recommendations from the facility warden concerning parole.

Pre-release classes are available at all facilities for inmates near their parole dates, end of sentence (EOS) dates, or dates for release to probation. The content and length of classes vary by facility, but range between 12 and 25 hours. Content includes substance abuse education, job readiness, and information regarding community resources.

Two types of programs were used extensively through 2003 for inmates nearing release. One was a work release program that provided opportunities for inmate employment at civilian jobs for several months prior to release. Average daily population of inmates in work release in 2003 was 3,000, but only 1,600 were in work release at midyear 2004. A Supervised Intensive Restitution (SIR) program provided non-residential options for a daily average of 400 inmates in 2003, but the number of participants dropped to 24 at midyear 2004. The placement rates declined in those programs due to an effort to parole more inmates from prison to make space for state inmates backlogged in local jails. The increase in parole releases drained many of the inmates in those two programs, and reduced the pool of eligible inmates to "backfill" the

programs.

The DOC is using federal grant funds to support a reentry program for higher risk women leaving prison and returning to the Birmingham area. The program includes needs assessment before release, intensive planning for reentry, and support from community resources (including transitional housing).

Parole Board Planning

The Board opens a file on every inmate soon after sentencing that incorporates reports or investigations completed prior to sentencing. If no presentence reports were completed, a report is prepared by field staff for the Board that provides information regarding the offense and other background information. Scheduling of an initial parole review depends on the length of sentence. Reviews are scheduled soon for inmates with less than 5-year terms, scheduled 12 months before minimum eligibility for inmates with 5-10 year sentences, and set 24 months before minimum eligibility for inmates with sentences between 10-15 years. Reviews are scheduled 36 months prior to minimum eligibility for inmates with sentences longer than 15 years. The Board does not consider release of inmates returning to probation with split sentences.

Institutional parole officers interview inmates within 3 months of the parole reviews to determine the parole plan and provide the inmate an opportunity to make comments for the Board. The proposed plan is usually investigated by field staff prior to the Board's review of the case. One month prior to the review, the Board receives case summaries that include criminal and social histories, prison adjustment, and details of the offense. Board members individually consider the information before reviews. Reviews are conducted in meetings open to the public, but the inmates are not present. Notice of meetings is provided to the victims or their families and other officials such as prosecutors and judges. The Board may approve or deny paroles at the public meetings, or reconsider parole at a later date.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates leaving state prisons receive \$10 "gate money," a bus ticket to the jurisdiction of conviction, civilian clothing if needed, and transfer from prison to the bus station. Offenders released to parole or probation supervision must report immediately to the Board's field office.

Alaska

System Background

The Alaska Department of Corrections is a unified system, providing statewide prison, jail and community corrections services. There are twelve correctional facilities, two of which are exclusively pre-trial facilities and ten with both pre-trial and sentenced populations (Some Alaska inmates are also held in a private prison in Arizona.) A five-member, part-time, Parole Board is responsible for adult parole releases. Because the system provides both prison and jail services, there are high rates of commitments and discharges. On June 30, 2003, there were 4,431 prisoners in the system, 2,394 sentenced prisoners were released in 2002. In 2003, 614 offenders were paroled.

Alaska's criminal sentencing system includes mandatory minimums for the most serious crimes and presumptive sentences for less serious felonies. Offenders must serve the mandatory minimums for serious crimes, or one-fourth to one-third of sentences for less serious crimes, to become parole eligible. If not released on discretionary parole, inmates will be released on mandatory parole after serving about two-thirds of their imposed sentences. Inmates serving presumptive sentences may earn time credits potentially reducing a sentence by about one-third of the term imposed. The term of parole supervision is the remaining period of the imposed sentence. Superior Court judges also have the discretion to require a term of probation following the prison term.

Prison-Based Planning

Release planning begins during pre-trial status in most state facilities. Unsentenced prisoners are classified by a matrix that reviews the crime (without the Pre-Sentence Investigation being complete) and conduct information. The classification status can be reviewed every 120 days. Within two to three weeks after being sentenced, a more extensive classification matrix determines facility placement and programming needs. When an offender is within two years of release, they are re-classified every six months.

During intake, an initial sentencing computation identifies the parole eligibility date, projected release date (the date after which two-thirds of the sentence is served), and the maximum release date (total sentence with no credit for good time). Basic program services include substance abuse (85% have a need), anger management, parenting skills, life skills and education. Once sentenced, an offender usually meets with an Institutional Parole/Probation Officer (IPO) within a week to review the potential release dates and program recommendations. The offender can apply to the Parole Board for discretionary parole after serving about one-fourth of his/her sentence.

For inmates who are not granted discretionary release or leave for completion of sentence, a release plan is developed 6 months prior to discharge. Many are placed on furlough status in community residential facilities. Pre-Release programs in prison are voluntary and an offender can typically access them at any time. Courses include resume/job skills, check writing, job placement and information regarding community resources.

Parole Board Planning

Institutional parole officers (IPO) interview inmates two months prior to parole hearings to identify a release plan and prepare information for the Parole Board. The IPO also contacts victims, judges, and case attorneys for input to the Board. The inmate and IPO appear at hearings where the Board uses a matrix scoring instrument to guide parole decisions. The matrix score is provided to the inmate during the parole hearing. After appearing before the Board, final deliberations are in closed sessions. The IPO receives written notice of decisions, who usually reports the outcome to the inmate the next day. The Board may grant, deny, or delay the decision to a later date.

If parole is granted, the release date is usually set in 3 to 5 weeks to allow the IPO to initiate a verification and approval of the release plan by field staff, or to arrange placements in programs or facilities if so ordered by the Board. The Board cannot alter the release dates for inmates leaving prison on mandatory parole, but may set special conditions of supervision. An Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Program (ISSP) is available in Anchorage for high risk parolees such as long-term offenders needing reintegration assistance and offenders who have failed on parole.

Inmate Release Process

Many sentenced inmates are placed on furloughs before release, which are usually served in community residential facilities. Late stage furloughs can be completed within a home environment. About 70% of offenders go out on furlough prior to release. Upon release from a prison or halfway house, the state pays for transportation to the point of arrest. Since October 2003, no "gate monies" are allocated to released inmates. Seasonal clothes will be provided.

The DOC notifies victims and local law enforcement of inmate releases.

The DOC is using the federal grant funds to expand transitional services for younger, higher risk inmates returning to two regions in Alaska. The project provides mental health and substance abuse services, vocational training, housing assistance, and other transitional services for selected offenders up to age 35.

Arizona

System Background

The Arizona Department of Corrections inmate count on June 30, 2002 was 29,273. During Fiscal Year 2002, 13,844 inmates were released from the Arizona prison system. The Department of Corrections manages state prisons for adults and provides adult parole supervision statewide. An estimated 75% of released inmates are placed under parole supervision. About 20% of released inmates fully complete their sentences and return to communities without supervision. Most of those released without supervision are offenders whose parole was revoked and returned to custody to complete their sentences. Some inmates convicted for DUI crimes are returned to probation after serving a term in prison. The Board of Executive Clemency has authority to release inmates convicted before 1994. Inmates sentenced since 1994 fall under a "truth-in-sentencing" model that requires completion of approximately 85% of the sentence in prison, with the remainder under parole supervision. The Board does not have discretion to release offenders under the new sentencing laws, but does make revocation decisions.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Prison staff are able to calculate the release dates for inmates when they enter prison under the current truth-in-sentencing laws. The release dates are not major factors in determining inmate placements in facilities or programs. Institutional programs include substance abuse, life skills, sex offender education and treatment, mental health, and basic education. Arizona law requires that inmates acquire basic reading and writing skills. A literacy test at intake determines if inmates will be enrolled in basic literacy courses while in prison. Inmates must pass the literacy test to be eligible for release after completing 85% of their sentence. Sex offenders are required to complete a sex offenders education course, which is scheduled for completion near the inmates' discharge dates.

Approximately six months before the scheduled inmate release, Correctional Program Officers in the institutions initiate release-related activities. Inmates complete a packet to propose details of their release plan which is forwarded to field staff to investigate. Notifications of pending releases are sent to victims, prosecutors, and judges (if they have so requested). Some non-violent offenders may be released 90 days prior to the release date calculated by the truth-in-sentence formulas. Such a release, termed "temporary release," may be used by the Department as a reward for good behavior, for inmates who are ill, or to reduce crowding. The Department also coordinates with local law enforcement task forces prior to release of higher risk offenders such as sex offenders and gang members. Specific plans are made to comply with sex offender registration requirements.

Arizona has prerelease programming in many institutions, but it is not standardized statewide. The Department's strategic plan calls for systemwide prerelease programs in 2006. The Department has initiated a release program for inmates with substance

abuse histories. Correctional Officers IIIs are being trained to coordinate linkage services for such inmates from the Department of Health Services and local behavioral health systems. These efforts will begin 6-9 months before inmates' release dates, and training videos and offender workbooks have been developed to support this program.

One of the most significant inmate reentry problems the Department faces is finding suitable housing for parolees. Arizona's "crime free" housing policies allow property owners and housing projects to reject convicted felons. Zoning regulations in Phoenix, the state's largest city, restrict the development of halfway houses for offenders. As a result, many offenders are released to shelters for temporary housing immediately following release from prison.

Parole Board Planning

Since the Board of Executive Clemency has no discretion to release inmates convicted since 1994, the Board is not involved in planning for inmate releases. The Board has authority to parole inmates sentenced before 1994, but that pool of inmates sentenced under the old laws is decreasing in number. A high percentage of those "old law" inmates remaining are serving life sentences, further reducing the number of inmates eligible for release by the Board.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates can be released from any of the Department's facilities. Each inmate leaves with at least \$50 "gate money." The Department monitors inmate accounts to accumulate at least \$50 in their "dedicated discharge account," but state funds are used to supplement the account if an inmate has less than \$50. Civilian clothing is provided if needed by the inmate. Inmates are responsible for their own transportation to parole destinations, but the agency provides transportation for some indigent inmates.

As previously mentioned, housing is a major problem for many new parolees. For some indigent parolees, the Department provides a 30-day housing subsidy. Others are referred to homeless shelters. Some shelters have such high parolee occupancy levels that parole officers are assigned to monitor the facilities. A voter initiative (Proposition 200) has generated funding that is used to provide substance abuse treatment through a statewide network of health care providers. Additionally, the Department contracts for a limited number of residential programs for substance abuse treatment and services for offenders with co-occurring disorders.

Arkansas

System Background

On June 30, 2003 there were 12,378 state prison inmates in Arkansas. During 2002, 7,640 inmates were released from state prisons. A seven-member Board of Corrections serves as a policy board that oversees the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC) that operates adult prison facilities, and the Department of Community Corrections (DCC) that provides statewide adult probation and parole services. An independent Post Prison Transfer Board (PPTB) has authority to release adults from prison.

The PPTB has broad paroling authority for offenders sentenced prior to 1993, and for offenders convicted of a limited number of crimes since 1993. Sentencing and parole laws were changed in Arkansas in 1993, providing for categorization of offenses and reducing discretionary parole authority of the PPTB. Most inmates sentenced since 1993 are transferred to post prison supervision at transfer dates set by statute, unless convicted of violent crimes or involved in prison disciplinary actions. Statutes categorize crimes into severity groups. Inmates convicted of crimes in lower severity groups are transferred to supervised release after serving one-third of sentences. Inmates convicted of more serious offenses must serve one-half of sentences before transfer, and inmates convicted of crimes in the most serious category must serve 70% of sentences before transfer. Repeat violent offenders may be required to serve 100% of their sentences. The Board has authority to review cases involving violent crimes or prison disciplinary actions and may defer post prison transfers on statutory schedules if the PPTB requires inmates to complete ADC programs.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The ADC conducts classification and assessments for offenders entering prison and makes recommendations for assignments in programs such as basic education, substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, mental health services, vocational education, and parenting. Planning for release begins when the inmate is approximately 4 months from the scheduled date of transfer to post release supervision. Institutional release officers (IROs) meet with the inmates to develop acceptable release plans. Investigations are requested of DCC field staff to verify and approve the proposed plans, or assist in developing an acceptable plan. Field staff contact victims and notify local law enforcement of the pending releases.

Some inmates are placed in pre-release programs offered in four of the ADC facilities. The programs provide life skills classes, anger management, communication skills, and cognitive training. Courses are scheduled in half-day sessions over a 62-day period near the inmates' transfer dates. Participation in pre-release is limited to approximately 700 inmates each year with priority given to younger inmates who have served three or more years in prison. The ADC, through the Board of Corrections and with approval of the PPTB, has authority through

emergency release laws to release inmates up to 90 days early if the inmate population nears system capacity levels.

The ADC has several work release units that provide opportunities for inmates to work at civilian jobs as a way to transition back into communities. Federal grant funds are being used for a re-entry project for younger, higher-risk offenders returning to the Little Rock area. The project serves about 40 offenders each year with more intensive release planning, transitional residential services, additional aftercare services and coordination with local law enforcement.

Parole Board Planning

Since the Post Prison Transfer Board is not involved in determining the release dates of most inmates sentenced in the past ten years, the PPTB's role in planning for releases is limited. The PPTB will conduct a review of case material for inmates being transferred to post prison supervision, but usually will not hold a hearing. The PPTB may impose special conditions of supervision if indicated in case reviews.

For violent offenders or inmates that have had prison disciplinary problems, a hearing is held before one to three PPTB Members. Crime victims or their families and friends, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement from the sentencing jurisdiction have opportunities for input. The PPTB has authority to parole such offenders, or they may prescribe a course of action such a completion of specific programs before transfer to community supervision. The PPTB may hold a subsequent hearing to review progress in completing the course of action, or may approve release based on ADC reports without a hearing.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any of the ADC's correctional facilities. Inmates are provided \$100 "gate money," civilian clothing if needed, and a bus ticket to their destination within the state. ADC staff transport the released inmate from the facility to the bus station. Inmates being transferred to DCC supervision must report within 24 hours of release to a DCC field office.

California

System Background

The California Department of Corrections (CDC) held 157,142 inmates at the beginning of 2002. During the previous 12-month period, 125,109 inmates were paroled and 5,113 inmates were discharged for completion of sentences. A majority of inmates paroled were being re-released on parole supervision after having been returned to custody for violating terms of an earlier parole. The CDC manages state prisons and provides parole supervision statewide. Under California determinate sentencing laws, a statutory formula sets a date for mandatory parole release. The period of mandatory parole supervision is three years. The Board of Prison Terms does not set special parole conditions and becomes directly involved in parole cases if the CDC recommends revocation of parole. The Board may return violators to prison for a period of 3 to 12 months, then the inmate is re-paroled to complete the remainder of the 3-year parole period. The Board has discretionary parole authority only for offenders sentenced to life with possibility of parole.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Release planning begins for inmates approaching initial parole release dates when they are approximately 8 months from their mandatory release. Planning is coordinated by the CDC's parole agents and parole service associates who meet with inmates and discuss parole plans. About six months from the parole date, pre-parole packets are sent to a social worker in the field office where the inmate is to be paroled. The social worker begins identification of community-based programs and services for the inmate. Approximately 90 days before the parole date, the case is assigned to a parole agent who prepares to receive the paroled inmate and begin field supervision. The agent reviews potential community resources, examines case background, and coordinates with CDC institutional staff regarding any special instructions or conditions for the parolee.

In the last few months of confinement prior to parole, inmates have voluntary access to pre-release classes. The classes consist of two components. The CDC's Education Department offers classes on life skills and general reentry information approximately 90 to 120 days before release at most facilities. A 3-week course is provided for men and a 6-week course is provided for women. The classes include cognitive instruction, life skills, and addressing logistics such as proper identification. The course for women addresses gender-specific needs and child care and child custody issues. The Education Department also maintains a directory of local programs and resources (updated quarterly) and is used for inmate referrals. A second component of pre-release sessions is provided by the Parole and Community Services Branch which addresses parole conditions and individual parole plans with inmates nearing release.

Parole Board Planning

Since the Board of Prison Terms does not have discretion to release most inmates, release planning does not involve the Board. The Board operates in a quasi-judicial mode and does not have significant involvement in program planning or development with the CDC. The Board becomes involved in parole cases if the CDC requests a revocation hearing.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates are released from any of the state facilities. Inmates are provided \$200 “gate money,” transportation to the nearest bus station, and civilian clothes if necessary. State law requires the CDC to notify local law enforcement and crime victims (at their discretion) of the release of inmates. New parolees are required to report to a field agent upon release to begin community supervision. The CDC’s Parole and Community Corrections Division has initiated PAC (Police and Corrections) programs in 12 locations. Within the first few weeks of supervision, parolees will attend a PAC session that involves local law enforcement, local service providers, and resource agencies that offenders may access in the community. The CDC plans to expand the program statewide during the last half of 2004. As a part of parole reforms being instituted in California, programs are being developed or expanded that include multi-service residential programs offering 3-4 month placements, short-term, jail-based substance abuse programs, non-residential drug education programs, and literacy labs.

The CDC is using federal grant funds to pilot a program of improved case management and service delivery coordination for higher-risk offenders returning to Los Angeles with dual diagnosis (mental illness and substance abuse).

NOTE:

At mid-year 2004, the California corrections system is undergoing a period of transition and planning. The CDC is implementing a series of parole reforms aimed at providing more substance and mental health services to parolees and developing alternatives to returning technical parole violators to prison. An independent panel established by the governor also released a review of the corrections system that included 239 recommendations being reviewed by state corrections officials and policy-makers. Several of the recommendations specifically address offender release planning, including:

- beginning release planning at the time of initial incarceration;
- expansion of educational and vocational programs;
- providing job training at the PAC orientations; and
- expansion of the Community Re-Entry Bridging program.

The recommendations for correctional program expansion coincide with a continuing state budget crisis, complicating implementation of correctional reforms.

Colorado

System Background

On June 30, 2002 there were 17,072 inmates in Colorado state prisons and 6,554 inmates were released during that year. The Colorado Department of Corrections manages state prisons and provides supervision for inmates released on parole or placed in community-based programs.

Inmates leave prison in several ways:

1. Release to community-based programs while still on “inmate” status;
2. Release on Discretionary Parole;
3. Release on Mandatory Parole; and
4. Release upon completion of sentence.

State statutes determine parole eligibility dates (PEDs) when inmates may be considered for discretionary parole release authorized by a seven-member Parole Board. If the Board does not grant an inmate discretionary parole release, a mandatory parole release date (set by statutory guidelines) results in a period of post-release supervision. The length of parole supervision for either discretionary or mandatory release varies from 1 to 5 years, depending on the felony class of the conviction. Inmates who are returned to prison for parole violations may be released again on parole at the discretion of the Board. If not re-released, those inmates will be discharged after remaining in custody for the length of their parole period.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Most inmates received for new convictions are processed through a reception and diagnostic center where a time computation is completed to determine PEDs (inmates can earn time credits that will affect parole eligibility) and mandatory parole release dates. Those dates are among several variables considered in determining the facility assignments and program tracks for an inmate. When an inmate convicted of a non-violent crime nears 16 months of PED, or a violent inmate nears 6 months of PED, the inmate may be referred for placement in a Community Corrections transitional facility (most privately operated). Referral information packets are prepared by case managers for review and approval by community boards and programs before a Community Corrections placement can be completed.

If accepted for placement, the inmate remains until paroled or regressed to prison. Some inmates within 6 months of PED may also be placed in a non-residential, Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) with electronic monitoring until paroled. Inmates in these community-based placements receive transitional services including job placement assistance, financial planning, and counseling services.

If an inmate is not placed in Community Corrections or ISP, the next opportunity for release is through discretionary parole. Prison case managers prepare a release plan that will be considered by the parole board. In recent years, the DOC has established a Reintegration Project that provides additional resources for planning and releasing inmates. Reintegration staff are available in 17 of the 22 facilities to assist case managers in developing release plans and coordinating with community services. The project also provides 180 hours of pre-release programming for some higher risk inmates not having access to Community Corrections or ISP

services, and operates a “drop-in” facility in Denver that provides a wide range of re-entry services and referrals for recently released inmates. The project is partially grant-funded.

Inmates who are denied discretionary parole are eventually released to mandatory parole status. The mandatory release date is based on statutory guidelines and earned time credits that affect the release date. Therefore, planning for release of mandatory parolees often cannot be completed or projected as systematically as discretionary parole. Mandatory parolees are often released and arrive at parole destinations with minimal planning or prior field investigation of parole plans.

Parole Board Planning

A release plan is prepared by prison case managers for inmates being considered for discretionary parole, or due for mandatory release. Notification of Parole Board hearings are provided to the prosecuting attorneys and to victims who have asked for such notification. The Board may specify special parole conditions for either type of parole release. The Department of Corrections conducts a field investigation prior to all discretionary parole releases and prior to mandatory parole releases when possible. The approved plans are submitted to the Parole Board prior to release on discretionary parole, but mandatory parole releases must be processed at times defined by statute. Plans for some inmates considered likely candidates for discretionary parole release are referred for field investigation prior to the parole hearing to facilitate the release process. Due to limited resources, only a limited number of plans can be investigated prior to parole hearings.

In some cases, discretionary parole is approved pending completion of a field investigation. Field staff attempt to complete the investigations within 15 days, but workload pressures can delay completion of the investigation and eventual discretionary parole release of the inmate.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates released from Colorado prisons must be processed out from a state-operated facility, not from any of the four contractual facilities. Most are released after 8:00 a.m. on the release date. If the inmate does not have civilian clothing, the inmate is provided shoes, shirt, pants, and a coat in winter. In addition to funds in the inmate’s account, an inmate is provided \$100 “gate money” at the time of first release. Inmates being released after return for violation of community placement are not eligible for a reissue of “gate money.”

Unless a release process involving private transportation is approved by the warden of the releasing facility, an inmate is provided transportation to the in-state destination in one of several ways. DOC transportation to larger communities is provided to some inmates being placed in Community Corrections or ISP. Bus fare is provided to inmates being released on parole or completion of sentence to in-state destinations, or to the closest state-line location for transferring buses to an out-of-state location. Appointments are set for the released inmates to contact the parole office to begin post-release supervision on the date of release if possible, or the following business day. Parole staff at the release destination will have had involvement in planning and verifying release plans for discretionary parolees, but not for most mandatory release cases.

Connecticut

System Background

The Connecticut Department of Correction (CDOC) operates a combined jail and prison system. There were 20,525 prison and jail inmates in the state system on June 30, 2003. In 2002, the state released 6,209 inmates who had served sentences of one year or longer. The CDOC operates all state facilities and manages inmates placed in community programs. Under a recent reorganization, the Parole and Pardons Board was attached to the CDOC and their parole field staff were transferred to the CDOC. While the Board's chair now reports to the CDOC Commissioner, Board members are appointed by the governor and have independent authority for parole decisions.

The Board has parole authority for inmates sentenced to terms of two years or more. Inmates sentenced before 1981 under indeterminate laws must serve the minimum term to be parole eligible, except for some violent crimes that are not eligible for parole. Inmates sentenced between 1981 and 1994 are eligible after serving 50% to 70% of sentences. If not paroled most are released due to good time accruals. Inmates serving sentences after 1994 are not awarded time reductions, but may be paroled between 50% or 100% of sentence completion. Inmates convicted of specific violent crimes since 1996, or who have prior convictions for specific violent crimes prior to a current offense, must serve 85% of sentences to be parole eligible.

Offenders sentenced for terms less than two years may be released under "transitional supervision" after serving 50% of their terms. Transitional supervision is based on CDOC criteria and facility wardens make the final release decisions, with CDOC field staff supervising offenders in the community. The Courts also have the authority to add a "special parole" condition that is non-discretionary at the end of a sentence. Those offenders are also supervised by CDOC staff.

Prison-Based Planning

There are four intake centers which may include both jail and prison inmates. The assessment and classification process usually takes from two to six weeks. A new statute now requires a Parole Board Orientation during intake to begin to address release issues. This process will lead to development of "program plans" that will meet parole requirements. Assessments also identify institutional programs such as substance abuse treatment, education, vocational training, sex offender treatment, anger management, parenting classes, and domestic violence treatment to address offender needs.

Release planning begins 40-60 days before parole or release dates. Housing placements are carefully verified for all offenders awaiting release. A variety of transitional programs are, or soon will be, in place and some type of release programming should be available for all inmates leaving prison by the fall of 2004. They include the following.

- Job Centers at 3 facilities with links to state employment resources to identify job listings before release.
- Transition Counselors in 9 facilities that offer job readiness training, job fairs with prospective employers, and assist in preparation of transition plans.
- Coordination with housing programs for homeless, higher risk offenders.
- Discharge planning in coordination with state mental health and addictions departments for mentally ill offenders.
- Intensive faith-based, transitional courses in 5 facilities.
- Transitional linkages for all HIV/AIDS offenders leaving prison.
- Family re-entry programs are provided by volunteers at all facilities.
- Information kiosks in libraries of some facilities with listings of community resources available to offenders.

These and other transitional programs being planned reflect the CDOC's priority for strengthening programming that supports inmates' successful return to communities.

The

CDOC's mission statement has been changed to reflect the commitment to these goals.

Parole Board Planning

The Parole and Pardons Board's initial review of cases occurs within a few months of an offender's admission. The Board will review cases to determine if the offender falls within a category requiring completion of 85% of the sentence, or will be eligible for parole after serving 50%. When parole eligibility dates near, the Board is notified and institutional parole officers, who work for the Board, develop progress reports for the Board's review. The Board is in the process of integrating and new risk/needs assessment instrument into their release decision-making process.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates being released are provided transportation to their point of origin and, if an offender is indigent, \$75.00 "gate monies" are available. There is transportation to the point of origin for indigents as well. Victims are notified if they are "registered" with the CDOC or the Courts Office of Victims Services. Federal grants are being used for a multi-jurisdictional collaborative effort for serious and violent offenders who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness upon release. Major focus areas are for those with significant mental illnesses and for those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. The CDOC also contracts for 733 halfway house beds that provide transitional placements for some offenders.

Inmates who are not paroled or released to transitional supervision are released without supervision. Policy makers are exploring options that would ensure that all offenders will have some type of post-prison support or supervision in the future.

Delaware

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 6,879 inmates in the Delaware corrections systems, an integrated system that provides both prison and jail services. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 4,073 sentenced inmates were released from Delaware facilities in 2002. As a unified system, the Department of Correction (DOC) provides prison, jail, and community supervision services. A five-member Parole Board has authority to parole inmates convicted prior to 1990 and has authority to revoke community supervision of offenders on parole or conditional release.

The Board also reviews inmate requests for sentence modifications and may make recommendations to judges for lowering sentences if a good cause is presented to the Board. Such actions have been rare.

In 1990, the state adopted a truth-in-sentencing model that abolished discretionary parole and requires most inmates to serve at least 85% of sentences. The sentencing laws provide two types of time credits for sentence reduction. Statutory good time and meritorious good time combined can provide sentence reductions of up to a maximum 6.5 to 7.5 days per month. Accrual of time credits usually allows inmates to reduce time served in prison by 13-15%, then inmates are placed on conditional release to serve the remainder of their sentences in the community. Judges frequently require a period of probation to follow the prison sentence. Such probation supervision would begin following the inmate's completion of conditional release.

All probation, parole, and conditional release supervision is provided by the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The DOC conducts screening and classification of sentenced prisoners and calculates the possible release dates based on minimum or maximum time credits. Assignment to facilities or institutional programs is usually based on inmate needs rather than release dates. Institutional programs include inmate education, mental health services (including sex offender treatment), substance abuse treatment, self-help groups / classes, and work programs. Inmates may also be assigned to complete one of two pre-release programs. One is a 12-week program delivered by the Education Office that covers a variety of life skills courses. A second course focuses on transitional planning and addresses offender programming that may not have been addressed during incarceration. Most inmates participate in one or both.

Within a week or two of an inmate's release, an institutional release officer from the Bureau of Community Corrections meets with the inmate to "sign up" the inmate for supervision. This is usually the first field office contact with the inmate. The officer reviews conditions of release, provides instructions for reporting to a field office, and clarifies the release plan with the inmate.

Parole Board Planning

The Parole Board is not directly involved in release planning for inmates sentenced since 1990. The Board has authority to parole inmates sentenced prior to that date. In release hearings for such inmates, the Board considers factors such as prior criminal history, time served, rehabilitative efforts, and input from victims, police, and the Department of Justice. Inmates approved for parole are released through a Controlled Release Plan that combines the needed supervision intensity level with appropriate treatment. If an inmate is not approved for parole, he or she is released on conditional release to serve the remainder of the sentence minus reductions for time credits.

Inmate Release Process

The resources provided inmates at release vary by facility. Inmates are provided civilian clothing if needed. The state does not routinely provide gate money or assistance to travel to parole or release destinations. Limited funds may be provided on a case-by-case basis for indigent inmates or in special circumstances. The state operates 3 work release facilities (one in each of the state's counties) that may be used to transition some inmates to communities. Re-entry assistance is also provided by some private agencies and faith-based groups in Delaware.

The state is using federal "Going Home" grants to experiment with intensive transition services for approximately 300 younger, high-risk inmates leaving prison. In collaboration with the Delaware Health & Social Services Department, those offenders will be involved in more extensive assessment and pre-release planning, as well as intensive aftercare and referral to services such as housing, substance abuse, and employment or job training. The DOC will track the success of this model for possible expansion or modification of transition programs in the future.

Delaware has also experimented with a reentry court in one community, modeled after specialized drug courts.

Florida

System Background

On June 30, 2003 there were 80,352 state prison inmates in Florida. During the twelve-month period ending on that date, 26,599 inmates had been released from the state prison system. The Florida Department of Corrections (FDOC) provides a centralized correctional system for adult and youthful offenders. The Department has two main entities. (1) The Office of Institutions manages incarcerated offenders through 62 main institutions, 34 work/forestry camps, 6 road-prisons, 2 boot-camps, and 21 work release centers. (2) The Office of Community Corrections supervises offenders which are linked to 4 regions, 20 circuit offices, 145 probation field offices, and 5 reception centers (3 male and 2 female).

The Florida Parole Commission has discretionary parole authority for inmates sentenced prior to 1983. The Commission also has authority to release inmates in a limited number of categories that are described below. Therefore, only 7% of inmates in Florida prisons are eligible for parole release. In Fiscal Year 2003, more than 62% of inmates were released because their sentences expired, almost 18% of inmates released were assigned to probation or community control, and more than 16% of released inmates were placed in conditional release supervision (a type of release for more serious offenders).

Prison-Based Planning

When an offender is received at a reception center, initial maximum and tentative release dates are established. Those dates are audited for accuracy by the Bureau of Sentence Structure and Population Management in the FDOC central office. The intake process also includes medical screening and a risk/needs assessment. This assessment is instrumental in determining vocational, alcohol/substance abuse, and education program needs as well as the security designation for facility placements.

Florida laws governing eligibility, accrual, and loss of sentence reduction credits (called "gain time) vary based on the type and date of convictions. Therefore, classification and security staff work closely together throughout an offender's stay in prison to continually monitor and adjust approaching release dates.

Offenders within 180 days of release participate in pre-release programming. All inmates are enrolled in a 100-hour transition program required under Florida statutes. A transition checklist is completed on every inmate addressing release issues such as continuity of care, program needs, Social Security, referral needs, special education, employment, substance abuse, and mental health. Release planning provides information on faith-based transitional housing, assisted living facilities or other types of special needs for homeless offenders. Release planning also considers the various resources and services available in the counties or cities where the inmates will be returning. This process is the same throughout all custody levels.

Parole Board Planning

The Parole Commission is an autonomous agency, with three Commissioners appointed by the governor. They make release decisions for the following inmates:

- offenders sentenced prior to 1993;
- inmates with terminal illness or who are permanently incapacitated (Conditional Medical Release);
- inmates who may be released under Control Release Authority to maintain prison populations within lawful capacity (currently not an issue in Florida); and
- inmates convicted of capital felonies who have served their mandatory minimum sentences of 25 years.

The Commission does not set release dates, but has authority to set conditions of release and revoke releases of two other categories of inmates:

- inmates eligible for the Addiction Recovery Supervision Program, a mandatory supervision period for offenders with addition histories who participate in prison treatment programs; and
- certain offenders who are required to serve a period of Conditional Release due to convictions for violent crimes after having prior felony prison commitments, or offenders serving sentences as habitual offenders, violent career criminals, or sexual predators.

When an inmate is determined eligible for discretionary parole, the Commission establishes an interview date. FDOC classification staff develop a report with recommendations for Commission hearings and inmates are interviewed by Commission staff.

Inmate Release Process

Offenders with less than \$100 in their inmate account and within six months of release are eligible to receive \$100 “gate money” if they are not released to a detaining agency. A bus ticket and clothing are provided as necessary. Probation/parole officers are notified by release officers when an inmate is being transferred to some type of community supervision. Notification is also provided to victims and state and local law enforcement.

Federal reentry grant monies are being used for a pilot project with the Palm Beach County Workforce Development Board and several other state and local agencies to develop a community-based reentry program for youthful offenders. Numerous job and education services, substance abuse and mental health treatment, community-based support, faith-based mentoring and family reunification are part of the program. FDOC’s “Re-Connect” project provides job fairs and other post-release job placement assistance for younger offenders who have completed educational and vocational training while in prison

Georgia

System Background

At midyear 2003, there were 47,004 prison inmates in Georgia. In the year ending June 30, 2003, 16,702 inmates had been released from prison in the state. Roughly two-thirds of the releases were to parole supervision and one-third were released for completion of sentence. The Department of Corrections operates state prisons and provides felony probation supervision statewide. A separate agency, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, has authority to grant and revoke parole and has field staff to supervise adult parolees.

Most non-violent offenders are paroled after completing at least one-third of their sentences. 1995 legislation eliminated parole for offenders convicted of seven crimes, with life terms without parole for repeat convictions of those seven crimes. By Board policy, parole will not be granted for 20 other serious crimes until offenders complete at least 90% of the imposed prison sentence.

Georgia courts frequently use “split sentences,” which require a period of probation supervision following the prison term.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The assessment and classification process begins at intake to identify offenders' needs that may be addressed by institutional programs such as education, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, and cognitive programs. Institutional parole officers coordinate with prison staff at intake to complete diagnostics and determine parole eligibility. Information packets and case summaries, prepared by the Board's field staff within the first year of an inmate's prison term, are used by the Board to determine the Tentative Parole Month (TPM), as described below. The TPM provides the inmates, prison staff, and parole field staff with a projected release date to plan for institutional programming and verification of parole plans. The Department may recommend extension of the TPM if an inmate's adjustment is not satisfactory.

Near the TPM, prison staff assist in preparation of a Parole Review Summary that is again reviewed by Board members. The Summary updates an inmate's institutional conduct and program participation.

The Board may recommend, and the Department may place, inmates in one of 9 state-operated Transition Centers. These placements usually occur 9-12 months before inmates' scheduled release. The Centers provide services such as basic education, cognitive classes, substance abuse education, and outside work opportunities to assist in transition to communities. Release through the Centers has proven to improve success rates, but current program capacity limits participation to 10-15% of all releases.

The Department is collaborating with the Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Criminal Justice Coordination Council, and other agencies in a federally-funded project providing more intensive re-entry planning and services for young, higher risk offenders returning to four regions of

Georgia. Faith-based housing units are coming on line in 6 facilities that will connect some inmates to church groups and religious organizations providing transition assistance.

Parole Board Planning

Within the first year of an inmate's prison term, members of the Board review individual case "packets" to determine the TPM. Establishing the TPM does not involve a hearing, but a process of independent case reviews until three Board members have concurred on a projected month for release of an inmate on parole. The Board uses guidelines to structure decisions that are based on severity of crimes, crime impact, and other risk factors. Information reviewed by the Board consists of summary information from prison staff, and investigations by parole officers that address inmates' criminal and legal history, personal history, the parole plan, and interviews with key people in the inmates' lives.

As the TPM nears, parole officers verify the parole release plan, input is solicited from prosecuting attorneys and victims regarding parole, and updates from prison staff are included in a Parole Review Summary. The Summary is again reviewed individually by Board members until three concur on final approval for parole release.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates can be released from any of Georgia's prisons. They receive \$25 "gate money," a change of civilian clothes, and a bus ticket to their release destination. Additional resources are provided to inmates with mental illness under the Transition Aftercare for Probationers and Parolees (TAPP) program. Those offenders are provided medication for 30 days and coordination with community service providers that will assist with treatment re-entry support.

Note: The Georgia corrections system has engaged in several activities to improve inmate transition and re-entry. The state participated in the National Governors' Association effort to improve interagency coordination to assist offenders leaving prison. The Department of Corrections is participating in the National Institute of Corrections project to improve assessment, programming, and planning for inmates leaving prisons. The Department's commissioner has completed organizational changes and conducted meetings with line staff to stress the agency's emphasis on improving success rates for inmates leaving prison. The Department and the Board are engaged in ongoing planning to improve re-entry efforts.

Hawaii

System Background

On June 30, 2003, Hawaii had 5,635 inmates in their system. In 2002, 1,735 sentenced inmates were released from the state's corrections facilities. The corrections system in the state is consolidated. The Department of Public Safety operates both prisons and jails, and contracts for approximately 1,400 prison beds on the mainland for sentenced felons. During FY 2003 the Department's intake was 6,644 inmates for jails and 3,317 for prisons. Also in 2003, Hawaii released 10,629 offenders (both jail and prison).

Intake Service Centers provide screening and supervision for pre-trial detainees released to community supervision pending trial. Pre-trial offenders who are detained are transferred to one of four jails, called Community Correctional Centers. These centers also house inmates sentenced to terms of less than one year. Inmates sentenced to terms longer than one year are transferred to prison facilities. There are 4 prison facilities and 4 jails located throughout the islands. There are two privately contracted halfway houses for women. Each county-based Community Correctional Center operates a furlough program for reintegration and work release.

Under Hawaii's indeterminate sentencing system, felons are sentenced with minimum and maximum terms. Statutes set maximum terms for all crimes and the mandatory minimum terms for some crimes, and judges can impose mandatory and minimum sentences for repeat offenders. The Hawaii Paroling Authority (HPA) determines the minimum sentence length. The HPA established voluntary guidelines in 1989, but usually use their own discretion for determining release dates. There are no "good time" credits to reduce minimum prison terms.

Prison-Based Planning

Sentenced felons undergo a comprehensive assessment and diagnostic process at the Reception, Assessment, and Diagnostic (RAD) units located at various facilities. The process includes academic, vocational, treatment and security information. Classification is completed by social workers. Based on the assessment results, a "Prescriptive Plan" (based on a reintegration model) is created to prepare the inmate for return to the community. Among the programs offered by the department are: education, vocational training, correctional industries, substance abuse treatment and sex offender treatment.

The HPA fixes a minimum term for imprisonment, if not otherwise determined at sentencing, for each inmate within 6 months of sentencing. Prison staff coordinate with the HPA for a parole hearing approximately 2 months before completion of the minimum term. Prison staff provide institutional summaries for HPA review at parole hearings. When an inmate in a state operated facility nears the parole release date or the end of their sentence and are of the appropriate custody level, they are usually transferred to the Community Correctional Center in the county of release to participate in work release or furlough programs. They also begin planning for housing, employment, finances, continuing education, training, follow-up treatment services or other elements

of life after incarceration. Some female offenders may be transferred to a privately run transition center.

Parole Board Planning

The Paroling Authority fixes minimum terms of imprisonment within six months of a sentencing date. As an inmate nears the expiration of their minimum term, the HPA hears each case and decides to release or not release. Pre-Parole Officers, who report directly to the HPA Field Services Office, develop release plans. Prison case managers sit in on parole hearings.

If paroled, offenders will be supervised in the community for the duration of a sentence, or some cases may be discharged prior to sentence completion. If an inmate is denied parole, it is often due to failure to complete a recommended program in the prescriptive plan. The offender will be heard by the HPA annually or until they meet their "end of sentence date." During the last legislative session, the HPA received appropriations to assist parolees with substance abuse treatment. The HPA also determines whether a parolee will receive gate money and the amount, if approved.

Inmate Release Process

Most convicted offenders leave the Hawaii prison system under parole supervision. Less than half of Hawaii's offenders are released through the furlough centers and assisted with readiness for parole, due in part to the extensive number of offenders in mainland facilities. (Nearly 40% of the prison population was housed on the mainland in 2003.) When those offenders are returned to Hawaii for parole or discharge, they are released through a medium security facility. If not released through the furlough centers, Pre-Parole Officers assist with release planning. Inmates placed on parole are eligible for "gate money." Inmates approved for parole can apply to the HPA for such funds. Inmates released for completion of sentence do not receive "gate money." Donated civilian clothing is available at release if needed. County prosecutors are notified by law prior to release and given an opportunity to submit comments. Victims are also notified, if required by law or requested. The local police are notified of potentially dangerous offenders as a courtesy to the public. Low risk offenders in pretrial/probation or furlough programs, even though shy of a parole date, can be released to their homes.

Federal grant funds are being used for a reentry program for higher risk offenders between ages 18 and 35 who are returning to the Island of Maui. The project partners with agencies to provide substance abuse treatment, mental health services, employment assistance, family reunification assistance, and other transition support.

Idaho

System Background

In June 2003, 5,825 adults were confined in prisons of the Idaho Department of Correction. During 2002, 2,855 inmates were discharged from the Idaho prison system. Of all inmates released in 2001, 63% were paroled and 32% were released for completion of their sentences. Some inmates are placed in one of four community-based work centers operated by the Department before being released to parole supervision. The Idaho Department of Correction provides all institutional, probation, and parole supervision services. A five-member Parole Commission has discretion to release inmates after they have reached parole eligibility. Eligibility is determined under a formula set by statute.

Idaho has been a participating state in the National Governors' Association Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy that includes the governor's office in an interagency policy team involved in planning for improved reentry procedures.

Prison-Based Release Planning

When inmates enter the Idaho prison system, exact release dates cannot be determined due to the discretionary authority of the Parole Commission. Prison staff calculates the Parole Eligibility Date (PED) and can estimate a release date based on past practices of the Commission. The PED and estimated parole date are considered in making facility assignments. Also at intake, the diagnostic and classification process identifies which of the Department's "Core Programming" (includes cognitive classes, sex offender treatment, basic education, life skills, substance abuse, interpersonal skills, etc.) an inmate should complete prior to reaching PED. If the inmate's sentence is too short to complete identified programs prior to PED, completion of the program(s) is incorporated into a reentry plan that would be a recommended condition of parole supervision.

Inmates who are within two years of their PED have priority for placement in the Core Programming. Inmates with longer sentences or who have been denied parole may participate in the programs if space is available. The Department attempts to schedule placement and completion of Core Programming to avoid deferment of parole release. Several months before the parole hearing, Department case managers and parole hearing officers begin preparation of reports and packets for the Commission's parole hearing.

If an inmate has been denied parole, the inmate may participate in a "Self-Initiated Parole Plan" (SIPP). Through such a plan, the inmate works with a case manager to determine issues that were of concern by the Commission in denying parole. The SIPP allows the inmate to participate in programs to demonstrate actions and behaviors that might influence the Commission to reconsider rejection of parole release. The SIPP may also be used by inmates who were not approved for release by the Parole Commission and want to offer additional information to the Commission for

reconsideration.

Parole Board Planning

Approximately six months before the PED, the Parole Commission conducts a hearing to determine if the inmate will be released or denied parole. Parole hearing officers include a recommendation for or against release in their packets to the Commission. Crime victims are notified of the hearings if they have requested such notice. Victims also have access to an automated notification service (the VINE program) that will notify them of pending changes in the status of offenders. If the Commission decides to parole the inmate, a field investigation is initiated to verify and approve the release plan.

If field staff determine problems with the proposed parole plan, field staff and case managers will coordinate a modified release plan. The Department has also recently added Reentry Parole Officers who coordinate with prison case managers and parole officers in the field to address the needs of higher risk/higher needs inmates such as sex offenders or mentally ill.

Inmate Release Process

Currently the Department does not have pre-release classes available at all facilities. However, case managers and reentry officers do provide pre-release services as needed. Offenders are not released from incarceration unless they have a valid parole plan that includes a verifiable residence. Inmates may be processed out from any of the state's facilities. No routine "gate money" is provided for inmates leaving prison. Prior to release, case managers review inmate records to determine if they qualify as indigents for "transition" funds. Qualifying inmates receive an average of \$1,000 to support them during their first month of release. The funds are not provided directly to the parolees, but payments are made directly to providers of services such as housing, medications, transportation, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, clothing, or other necessities. Reentry officers may distribute a stipend for food and other necessities, but the parolee must provide receipts to document expenditures. Inmates are responsible for transportation from prison to the parole destination. Transition funds may be used for this purpose if approved by the case manager. Notification of release is made to victims, local law enforcement agencies, and prosecutors offices. Parole cases are assigned to field officers prior to the date of release. Those officers coordinate with case managers to approve methods of transportation to the parole destination and arrange schedules for parolees to report to the field offices. Field officers also coordinate with the case managers and the Parole Commission in determining special conditions of parole.

Illinois

System Background

At the end State Fiscal Year 2003, there were 43,186 inmates in the Illinois prison system and 34,229 inmates were released from prisons that year. The Illinois Department of Corrections operates all state prisons and provides supervision for adults under parole or mandatory supervised release. The Prisoner Review Board has release authority for inmates sentenced before 1978 under indeterminate sentencing laws. There are only a few hundred inmates left in the system sentenced under those laws.

Most inmates currently in Illinois prisons have been sentenced since 1978 under determinate sentencing laws, which have a statutorily defined release for inmates after serving half of the imposed sentence (unless good time credits have been forfeited due to misconduct). The period of mandatory supervised release is one, two, or three years for nearly all offenders, with longer terms for most serious offense categories. Illinois enacted truth-in-sentencing laws in 1998 that require murderers to serve all of the imposed sentences. Offenders convicted of categories of serious crimes, crimes resulting in great bodily harm, and other specific crimes involving firearms and reckless homicide under the influence must also serve at least 85% of the imposed sentences.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The Department conducts assessments for all incoming inmates to identify treatment needs and recommend institutional programs for inmates such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, basic education, or work programs. Projected release dates are also calculated at intake. Inmates scoring below a 6th grade educational level are required to complete at least 90 days of basic education courses and incentives related to pay rates for institutional jobs are based on attaining that level.

Specific planning for most inmate releases begins 12 months prior to release. Field services representatives contact inmates to develop release plans. For sex offenders and other high risk offenders, a “host site investigation” is requested of the Department’s Parole Division to verify the plan and site. The Parole Division will conduct verifications of plans for other offenders by phone or mail. For inmates with limited resources, the representatives may also enlist the assistance of Placement Resource Units (PRUs) located in four field offices. The PRUs assist in securing housing and other critical transition services. For example, the PRUs may pay for up to three months of housing for some released offenders. Institutional counselors also begin preparation of reports to the Board with recommendations for special conditions of release supervision, if indicated.

Within 90 days of release, all inmates participate in a one-week pre-release program called “PreStart” available at all facilities. The program consists of life skills classes, preparation of temporary identification, and information regarding community-based resources and services available statewide. Inmates may also request “Certificates of

Relief From Disabilities” that facilitate applications for certain licenses by state agencies. The Department also has several programs that provide more intensive re-entry planning or services. More than 1,300 inmates each year are released from ten adult transition centers that provide opportunities for work at civilian jobs and other transition opportunities. Federal grants support drug treatment programs and a re-entry program for younger, higher risk offenders returning to areas of Chicago.

At the beginning of 2004, the Illinois’s Governor and the Department initiated two projects intended to support a model treatment and reentry program. The Governor’s parole reform initiative (“Operation Spotlight”) doubled the number of parole agents and expanded their case management roles. The effort includes additional staff training and expanded use of graduated sanctions such as day reporting centers and a “halfway back” pre-revocation parole center. Additionally, a 1,300-bed state facility was reopened using a therapeutic community approach for substance abusers, along with an increase of field officers and reentry supervision and services. Approximately 1,000 offenders will leave the program each year with more intensive treatment, release planning, and post-prison services and supervision. Results and experiences from the project are expected to be used to guide future expansion of transition and reentry efforts.

Parole Board Planning

While the Prisoner Review Board does not set release dates, they do approve or deny DOC disciplinary reports (“tickets”) that recommend loss of good time. If there are no “tickets,” inmates are released under mandatory parole at the midpoint of their sentences with the exceptions noted above. Approximately 3 months before the scheduled release, the Board also reviews case information, input from victims or justice officials, and Department counselor reports and recommendations to determine if special conditions of release will be imposed. The Board also notifies victims of inmates’ releases, as well as other justice officials who have requested such notification. The Board also has authority to revoke paroles or mandatory supervised releases and return violators to prison.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates are released from any of Illinois’ correctional facilities. Inmates receive a bus ticket to their release site within the state, \$10 “gate money” in addition to funds in their personal accounts, and civilian clothing if needed. Offenders being released to mandatory supervision must report to a local field office within 72 hours of release. Offenders encountering unexpected problems or needs are referred to the Placement Resource Units for assistance.

Indiana

System Background

On June 30, 2003, the Indiana Department of Correction (DOC) managed 22,576 prison inmates. The DOC released 13,341 during 2003. The DOC system includes 24 adult facilities (three are work release centers) and 10 juvenile facilities. Indiana has had a determinate sentencing system since 1977 that allows inmates to earn time credits for good behavior and program participation. Inmates may earn time credits to reduce prison terms as much as 50% of the imposed sentence. Judges have the authority to suspend portions of a sentence. If a sentence is suspended, county probation agencies supervise the offender after his/her release from the DOC. About one-half of inmates released from the DOC return to probation supervision, and half are released to parole supervision (usually for 2 years) following completion of a prison term with no portion suspended by the court. Parolees are supervised by the DOC's Parole Services unit.

The Indiana Parole Board has authority to parole inmates sentenced under old indeterminate sentences. Approximately 150 inmates sentenced prior to 1977 remain in the DOC.

Indiana is participating in the National Institute of Corrections Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI). Planning groups were formed in 2004 to review and revise inmate assessments, prison programs, release planning, and aftercare services.

Prison-Based Planning

The intake process begins at a reception center with review of commitment documents, assessment of medical, psychological, and educational needs, and initial classification. The DOC currently uses a Classification Designation Instrument and refers inmates to programs such as education, sex offender groups, parenting classes, substance abuse counseling, psychological counseling, and vocational training. Through the TPCI, the DOC is planning changes in the assessment process to incorporate a risk instrument and to develop a more sophisticated evaluation process validated on the Indiana offender population. Data from the revised assessments is expected to also drive changes in the content and design of prison programs. Changes are also planned for case management, with release planning beginning at intake.

Planning and preparation for inmate releases are based on assumptions that inmates will be released when they complete 50% of the determinate sentence. Statutes require that all offenders participate in pre-release programming available at all facilities. The DOC has established 4 types of transitional programs.

- A 65-hour standardized pre-release for most inmates that addresses life skills, job searching, budgeting, family issues, health/wellness, substance abuse, community resources, and securing identification documents. Some facilities supplement the standard program with presentations by community-based service providers.
- Individualized pre-release orientation for inmates unable to complete the

standardized program. The participants receive information on community resources at the release location and other assistance based on individual needs and circumstances.

- Some offenders, usually returning to probation supervision or the Community Transition Program, qualify for work release placements. Employment assistance and transition services are provided through grants under the Community Corrections Act.
- The Community Transition Program allows eligible inmates to leave prison 60 to 180 days early. Initial placements are often in county jails, with later placement at home under electronic monitoring. Services may include day reporting, substance abuse treatment, and similar aftercare programs.
- A transition facility for women provides intensive planning shortly before release.

The DOC is also using federal grant funds for intensive aftercare services for some young, higher risk offenders returning to Fort Wayne and Indianapolis locations.

Parole Board Planning

Since so few inmates remain in prison who are eligible for discretionary parole release, the Parole Board has a limited role in planning inmate releases. The majority of offenders under the determinate sentencing laws do not see the Board unless there is a violation of conditions. The Board has revocation authority for inmates released on parole under the determinate sentencing system and may set special conditions for violators of standard parole conditions.

Inmate Release Process

Released inmates are given up to \$75 “gate money” and if the inmate has no transportation home, a bus pass is provided to the city closest to the inmates release destination. Notifications of releases are provided to victims, if they have requested it, and to the State Police. The courts and chief probation officer of each county also receive notification of inmate releases. Sex Offenders must register as required by the violent sex offender notification law, which is monitored by the Indiana Sheriffs’ Association and the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. Inmates released to parole supervision must report to the DOC’s parole field offices.

Iowa

System Background

On December 31, 2002, there were 8,398 inmates in Iowa's prisons and 6,231 inmates were released during the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2003. The Department of Corrections manages state prisons and provides staffing services to the five-member Iowa Board of Parole. Offenders released to community supervision are managed by eight, multi-county Correctional Services Departments, organized within Iowa's judicial districts. The Departments are state funded and overseen by locally appointed boards of directors.

Most inmates leave Iowa prisons in one of four ways:

1. work release;
2. release on discretionary parole;
3. expiration of sentence; or
4. reconsideration of sentence and release to probation supervision.

With the exception of life sentences or sentences with mandatory minimum sentences, inmates are eligible for parole release by a five-member parole board at any time. By policy, the parole board has established schedules for first review of inmates for parole.

For example, an inmate with a ten-year sentence is first seen by the board after serving one year. Institutional staff can also recommend an inmate for parole and request a hearing before the board.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Due to the discretionary release authority of the Board of Parole, accurate release dates cannot be determined when inmates are committed to prison in Iowa. However, based on past practices of the Board, prison staff project an "informal" release date at intake. That projection is considered among several factors in assigning inmates to facilities or placing in prison programs. As inmates near their dates for parole hearings before the Board, case managers develop a proposed parole release plan in coordination with the facility's in-house classification team. The case managers also make a recommendation for or against parole. No release plans are currently investigated by field staff prior to hearings by the Board. (Some planning is underway to initiate field investigations of plans prior to parole hearings.)

The Iowa correctional system recently developed a custom, computerized database called ICON (Iowa Corrections Offender Network). The network stores records of all offenders in the Iowa system and is accessible to institutional, parole, and field staff. That database and the network are used to provide "paperless" communication among the three components of the correctional system. When the Parole Board indicates tentative approval of a parole plan, ICON is used to request verification and approval of the plan and provide case history information to the field offices. Field investigations of the proposed parole plans are usually completed within 30-40 days. If approved, the field office provides a date to institutional staff for the parolee to report. If the Board

approves parole, each facility provides some level of pre-release programming. The curriculum varies among institutions and ranges from 10 to 60 hours. Development of a uniform pre-release curriculum for all facilities is under discussion.

Parole Board Planning

The release plan prepared by prison case managers for inmates being considered for discretionary parole includes a scored LSI-R assessment, and the Board also uses a parole risk assessment instrument developed for Iowa. The Board may specify special parole conditions for parole supervision. Notifications of Board hearings are provided to victims who request such notification. Prosecuting attorneys and judges are not notified of parole hearings.

The Board of Parole does not authorize release until a field investigation is completed to verify the proposed parole plan. If the parole plan is not approved, institutional staff revise the plan for Board review or parole release is denied and a hearing is rescheduled.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates' release may be processed from any of Iowa's state prisons. If the inmate does not have civilian clothing, the inmate is provided shoes, shirt, pants, and a coat in winter. Inmates being released are provided \$100 "gate money" and a bus ticket to their in-state destinations. Most inmates use public transportation or private sources to reach parole destinations. No formal investigation or review is made of methods of private transportation. Some "special needs" inmates are transported by the Department of Corrections to their release location. Inmates on medication are usually provided a 30-day supply of medication and a prescription.

The time of release usually occurs during early business hours.

U.S. Department of Justice re-entry grant funds have been used to develop transitional services through a sub-grant ("Going Home" project) to a community college in the Des Moines area, the State's largest city. The services include referral to community treatment, employment, and residential programs.

Kansas

System Background

On December 31, 2003, there were 9,168 inmates in the Kansas prison system. During Fiscal Year 2003, 5,764 inmates were released from Kansas prisons. The Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) operates prisons, supervises parolees, and administers the state's Community Corrections Act. Prior to 1993, the Kansas Parole Board had authority to release inmates under an indeterminate sentencing system. In 1993, sentencing guidelines were instituted and inmates now serve at least 80% of the imposed sentence and can earn up to 15%-20% time reductions. The period of the sentence not served in prison is completed in the community under "post release supervision." The Parole Board no longer sets release dates for offenders convicted after 1993, but may impose special parole conditions and has authority for revoking community supervision of inmates who violate conditions of release.

Due to changes in Kansas sentencing and parole laws, the number of inmates reviewed for discretionary release has declined and the number of inmates discharged for expiration of sentence has increased in the past ten years. Approximately 70% of inmates leaving prison in 2003 were released to post-incarceration supervision and nearly 25% were discharged without supervision for completion of sentence.

Prison-Based Release Planning

KDOC has embarked on a philosophical and organizational shift that integrates new strategies for offender "risk reduction" with their existing efforts for "risk containment." The shift includes improving offender risk-needs assessments, implementation of evidenced-based treatment interventions, and an emphasis on release planning and re-entry services. The initiative includes use of new assessment approaches at intake to target treatment needs that can be addressed by KDOC programs. Under the sentencing guidelines structure, prison officials can accurately project release dates and are beginning to develop release plans based on a risk reduction model. That approach places more emphasis on matching parolees with programs and services that address "criminogenic" needs of offenders. Institutional case managers work with offenders to develop a plan that is then forwarded to field parole officers to investigate and verify.

Several programs and services are available for inmates nearing release, including:

- a special case worker to assist in release planning and service matching for mentally ill offenders;
- a job-preparedness program for younger offenders available at 4 sites;
- 3 work release centers that allow some inmates to begin jobs in the community prior to release;
- a dozen volunteer programs that address transition needs of parolees; and
- a pre-release program at one facility that provides cognitive classes and life skills training.

While most release planning is now done within 6 months of release, KDOC plans to gradually implement planning at intake or during the early period of incarceration to more closely integrate institutional programming with re-entry efforts.

Crime victims, prosecuting attorneys, judges, and local law enforcement receive notifications of inmate releases.

Parole Board Planning

All inmates being placed on post release supervision have 12 standard conditions and institutional parole staff may also recommend that the Parole Board designate special conditions of supervision if appropriate. The Parole Board's role in determining the release date of inmates is sharply declining. In 1993, the year indeterminate sentencing was abolished in Kansas, the Board released 2,634 inmates on parole. The Board now releases less than 10% of that number since the pool of inmates sentenced under old laws has become so small.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates can be released from any of Kansas' correctional facilities. The state will provide up to a maximum of \$100 "gate money" for the first-time release of an inmate. That amount is reduced for inmates returned for violations of community supervision and subsequently re-released. All released inmates are provided a bus ticket to their release destination or to the state line if leaving Kansas. A change of civilian clothing is also available if necessary. Inmates being released to post-incarcerations supervision or parole are required to report to the DOC's field offices on the day of release or next business day, based on travel distances and individual circumstances.

Kentucky

System Background

The Kentucky prison system had 16,377 inmates on June 30, 2003. During Fiscal Year 2003, 10,308 inmates had been released from the system. The Department of Corrections (DOC) operates 12 state prisons and contracts with two private facilities. The DOC is a department under the Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet.

The DOC's Division of Probation and Parole provides community supervision for adults statewide. The Parole Board, a division of the Justice Cabinet, is appointed by the governor and makes parole decisions for adult and youthful felony offenders. Most inmates serving time for non-violent crimes become eligible for parole after serving 20% of their sentences. Most inmates convicted of violent crimes must serve 85% of sentences to be considered for parole release.

In Fiscal Year 2003, 44% of inmates released were placed on parole supervision, approximately 30% were released for completion of sentence, and 12% were serving "shock probation" terms that resulted in release to probation supervision under jurisdiction of the courts. More than 8% of the releases during that period were commuted sentences for non-violent offenders nearing release dates that reduced inmate populations to deal with state budget shortfalls.

Prison-Based Planning

Offenders received by the DOC are screened at the Assessment Center and classified based on an objective-based scoring system. Assessments identify inmate needs that may be addressed with a variety of prison programs including educational programs, vocational training, substance abuse counseling, mental health services, cognitive skills training, sex offender treatment, and violence prevention. Several months before inmates reach parole eligibility, DOC staff prepare case background information for the Parole Board's review. Parole hearings are held as described below. Institution classification/treatment staff write the pre-parole progress report and attend parole hearings.

Inmates who are within 6 months of release participate in a 10-day pre-release program. The DOC is negotiating with a company for a 100-hour pre-release program that will be televised as one of several new reentry initiatives. The DOC also uses pre-release furloughs, family visitation, and work release placements to assist some eligible inmates in transition. The DOC also contracts for 578 halfway house beds throughout the state. There are additional halfway house beds available to parolees, with plans to increase the use of community-based residential placements over the next biennium.

Parole Board Planning

When inmates are within several months of parole eligibility or dates set for reconsideration of parole, the DOC provides notices to the Board and submits case

background information. Staff of the Board interview inmates to identify release plans and score a risk assessment instrument used by the Board to measure risk of recidivism. Hearings are scheduled that may include a Board member present with the inmate, or with members participating through video conferencing. Three-member panels review case background information, risk assessments, statements from victims, official and community opinions, and the proposed parole plan in considering parole release. If the panel reaches a unanimous decision, the inmate is informed of the decision. Otherwise, the case is referred to the full Board where a majority vote is required to make a decision. The Board may deny parole and defer the case for future consideration, decide that parole will not be granted and the inmate must serve the full sentence, or authorize parole release. If parole release is authorized, the DOC's field staff investigate the release plan and report back to the Board with findings. After receipt of the approved field investigation, the Board issues a certificate of parole with the release date. Offenders can be released with special conditions or given general parole.

Inmates housed in county jails for some less serious classes of crimes receive a file review, rather than face-to-face hearings with the Board.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any state facility. Indigent offenders can receive up to \$50 from canteen funds to help with clothing and travel expenses. Public officials and victims are notified of inmate releases as required by statute, and others may also register with the VINE system to receive notification upon release of an inmate.

Federal reentry grant funds are being used in Kentucky for a juvenile program for male offenders from 14-16 years old.

Louisiana

System Background

At midyear 2003, there were 36,091 state inmates in Louisiana. During 2003, 15,179 inmates had been released. State-operated prisons hold over 18,000 inmates and 15,000-16,000 inmates are held under contractual agreements in parish (county) jails. The Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections manages state prisons and provides supervision for probationers and parolees. A seven-member Board of Parole has authority to parole eligible offenders, set conditions for release for all paroles, and revoke paroles of those who violate conditions of release.

First time, non-violent offenders are eligible for parole after serving one-third of their sentences. Repeat non-violent offenders are eligible for parole after serving one-half of sentences. All violent offenders must serve at least 85% of sentences, and some violent offenders are not parole eligible. Offenders who are not paroled at the discretion of the Board are released to mandatory parole supervision to complete their full sentence minus good time. In 2003, inmates released to mandatory parole accounted for 80% of all releases, 10% were released at the discretion of the parole board, and 7% of released inmates had fully completed their sentences.

Prison-Based Release Planning

At intake, state prisoners are assessed and calculations of parole eligibility dates (PED) are completed if applicable. Inmates are placed in a variety of institutional programs such as basic education, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and vocational training. Prison classification staff complete an annual evaluation of every inmate that includes a review and update of release plans. When inmates near their PED, an evaluation is completed for review by the Board as described below.

A 100-hour pre-release program is provided for inmates within one year of their mandatory release date or completion of full sentence. The program consists of classes on topics such as job readiness, financial management, parenting, victim awareness, substance abuse education, and communication skills. Inmates are also issued identification documents and Social Security cards if needed. Because release dates cannot be accurately predicted for inmates granted discretionary parole, such offenders may not complete all of the 100-hour program.

The Department also uses placements in jail-based work release programs as a transition process for approximately 10% of offenders scheduled for release. The state also contracts with 10 privately operated community residential centers that may be used for transitional placements for some inmates. Federal "Going Home" grant funds are being used to deliver more intensive re-entry services for young offenders (ages 18-

35 years) returning to the New Orleans area from three prisons. The program includes more intensive release planning and preparation and additional support and services when released.

Parole Board Planning

As parole eligible inmates near their PEDs, prison staff complete an evaluation that summarizes inmates' institutional program participation and institutional behavior. Probation and parole field staff also complete a verification of the proposed release plan. Local law enforcement, prosecutors, and crime victims are also contacted for input on parole decisions. A new risk assessment instrument is currently being developed for the Board's use in considering parole. A 3-member panel of Board members conducts hearings and all must concur on a decision to grant discretionary release.

Current rates of discretionary parole release are relatively low. One contributing factor cited by a parole official is that the Board will frequently approve parole on conditions that inmates successfully complete specific institutional programs. If inmates fail to complete the programs, the Board rescinds parole release.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any state facility or contract facility. They receive \$10 "gate money" and are provided a bus ticket to their parole or instate release destination. A change of civilian clothing is provided if necessary. Inmates granted discretionary parole are instructed to report to field offices to begin parole with approved plans. Currently, there is no advanced investigation of plans for inmates being released to mandatory supervision. Probation and parole has designated "community resource officers" in each district to identify and develop listings of programs and resources that could assist offenders. Those officers work with supervising parole officers to refer parolees to available services.

Note: The Louisiana corrections system has identified the improvement of inmate re-entry to communities as a major organizational priority. The initiative is known as CORE (Corrections Organized for Re-entry). Some of the current activities related to this effort include:

- planning for improving offender assessment and expanding pre-release programming;
- collaboration with community organizations able to serve returning offenders, such as the Louisiana Interagency Council for the Homeless to address offender housing needs;
- planning for expansion of work release capacity for inmates leaving prison; and
- in communities with highest offender populations, conducting community focus groups with community leaders and service providers to inform them of the importance of re-entry and to develop more support for offender transition efforts.

Maine

System Background

The adult prison population in Maine was 2,009 on June 30, 2003. Maine has one of the lowest prison incarceration rates in the U.S. (148 state prison inmates per 100,000 residents compared to a national average of 429 per 100,000 in 2003). During 2002, 799 inmates were released from state prisons. The Maine Department of Corrections (DOC) operates adult and juvenile institutions and provides community supervision for adults and juveniles statewide. Maine abolished parole in 1976, and the Maine Parole Board has release authority for the small number of inmates in prison who were sentenced under the old laws. Even though there is no more post-prison parole supervision, approximately two-thirds of the inmates have split sentences that result in a period of probation supervision following release from prison terms.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The intake process for new inmates includes computation of projected release dates and assessments for inmates. Assessments provide direction for inmate participation in prison programs such as education, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, vocational training, gender-specific programs for women, cognitive training, violence prevention, and sex offender treatment. Prior to 2003, the intake and case management process did not include as strong an emphasis on release planning. But since that year, more intensive efforts are being made to prepare inmates for release and to coordinate with state agencies and service providers to assist with reentry to communities. Transition and reentry efforts now include:

- intensive assessment and case management of younger offenders in a program sponsored by federal grant funds. The project includes comprehensive assessments, release planning by a team including prison staff, local service providers, and community supervision staff, and community services from a Reentry Network in four counties of the state. Use of the team approach to release planning and other approaches of the project will be evaluated for implementation on a broader basis.
- placement of a limited number of inmates in Supervised Community Confinement (SCC) during the last months of sentences, allowing closely monitored living in the community and opportunities for civilian employment in transition to discharge. The SCC program may be expanded as a transition process.
- increased contact with some victims to support them as their perpetrators return to their communities.

- placement of some inmates in a 50-bed pre-release center within 14 months of release that provides opportunities for civilian jobs, to become self-sufficient, and to reestablish family ties.
- use of a state video network to communicate with community agencies in coordinating release planning and referrals for post-prison services.
- closer collaboration with other state agencies that provide community services to offenders, such as the Maine State Housing Authority, state Department of Labor, Health and Human Services (social services), Education, Public Safety and non-government resources such as faith-based organizations.
- increased case management focused on reentry planning for all inmates
- pre-release classes at the Maine State Prison dealing with release preparation, job readiness, planning for housing, and securing identifications and licenses.

Parole Board Planning

Since parole was abolished in 1976, few inmates remain in prison under sentencing laws that provided for parole release. Now the Parole Board plays a very limited role in release planning and programming.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates leaving prison are provided \$50 “gate money” if they have no funds in their personal accounts or no other resources. They are also provided a bus ticket or transportation to the release destination within the state, and civilian clothing if needed. The Maine State Housing Authority will provide vouchers for a limited number of transitioners to assist with up to two years of transitional housing. To qualify, offenders are required to pay \$50 per month or one-third of monthly earnings and agree to a “self actualization” plan focused on behavioral issues and program participation. Referrals to community providers are made. *MaineCare* applications are made 45 days prior to release so those eligible will have their insurance card, food stamps, and other DHHS assistance on the day of release.

Maryland

System Background

The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services operates prisons under their Division of Correction (DOC). A separate agency within the Department, the Division of Probation and Parole, provides community supervision of adult offenders. The Maryland prison population was 23,975 on June 30, 2003. During the 12-month period ending on that date, 15,353 inmates had been released from Maryland prisons. Maryland prisons hold inmates sentenced to one year or more, except offenders sentenced from Baltimore. Offenders from Baltimore with sentences exceeding 30 days are committed to the DOC.

The Maryland Parole Commission has authority to release most inmates to parole after they have served between 25-50% of their sentences, depending on the classification of their offense. With the exception of some violent crimes, inmates are eligible to accrue time credits based on behavior in custody and for filling some institutional jobs. Inmates who are not paroled are released to community supervision to complete their maximum sentence minus time credits, but remain under the Parole Commission's jurisdiction for purposes of revocation. Due to the high number of Baltimore offenders with short sentences in the system, the majority of inmates leaving the DOC are released without parole or community supervision.

Prison-Based Release Planning

For inmates with sentences of more than one year, a tentative release date is calculated at intake. The DOC intake assessment identifies offenders that are appropriate for prison programs such as education and substance abuse treatment, or alternatives to prison such as home detention or boot camp. Enrollment in those programs is prioritized for those inmates who are nearing a parole or release date. As inmates near parole eligibility, the prison case managers prepare a "parole summary" that describes prison programming and behavior. Parole commission staff prepare a "parole file" that provides a general social and criminal history. This information is provided at an initial parole hearing, along with the inmate's parole plan. A parole release decision is usually not rendered at the initial hearing, but the Commission members will indicate their expectations regarding inmate program completion or other requirements for granting parole. Usually a second hearing date is scheduled that may be an indicator of the Commission's timing for granting parole.

The DOC prioritizes placement in treatment and release programs for those inmates who are nearing release or have indications from the Parole Commission that program completion is a critical element to parole release. The DOC uses nine work release centers (with approximately 1,000 beds) across the state to assist some inmates establish community ties and begin work at civilian jobs before release. The most extensive re-entry program currently operating is for inmates returning to Baltimore, the state's largest metropolitan area. The "Community Re-Entry Partnership" model, based in a Baltimore facility, provides pre-release classes, links inmates with community advocates who assist in identifying inmate needs and provide referral to community-based resources, and begins inmate interaction with parole officers and law enforcement staff in five, targeted Baltimore neighborhoods. The DOC plans to expand this model to other regions of Maryland. In the interim, the DOC does provide inmates being released to other parts of the state with packets that identify community-based agencies and resources in the parole/release destination area.

Transition planning has become a system priority. Monthly meetings are held by managers from the DOC, Parole Commission, and the Division of Probation and Parole to implement and expand re-entry efforts. Quarterly meetings are also held with community-based partners providing assistance to parolees and released offenders.

Parole Board Planning

As mentioned above, the Parole Commission usually conducts an initial review as inmates near parole eligibility to communicate to the offender and DOC staff the Commission's expectations for granting parole. DOC staff are present at parole hearings to provide information on inmate adjustment, and input is requested from crime victims who indicate such interest.

At the second hearing before the Commission, one of four decisions is made:

64. The Commission may order an immediate release and the DOC and field staff process the release.
65. The Commission may order a delayed release that may include some conditional requirement such as successful completion of work release or a treatment program.
66. The Commission may set a date for a later hearing to review the case.
67. The Commission may indicate that they are not planning to approve parole release.

When the Commission orders a release, the Commission's Release Unit will request a field investigation and verification of the parole plan before the inmate is released.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates being released are provided at least \$40 "gate money" if their individual accounts do not have that amount. Civilian cloths are provided if necessary. Inmates are responsible for arranging their own transportation to parole/release destinations. The DOC will transport inmates from the release facility to a bus station if needed.

Massachusetts

System Background

The Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) incarcerated 10,511 inmates on June 30, 2003. It was estimated that an additional 6,200 inmates with sentences of more than one year were held in county facilities. During 2002, 2,290 inmates were released from the state prison system. The DOC operates 18 adult correctional institutions. The Commissioner of the DOC reports to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety. The Massachusetts Parole Board, an independent agency also within the Office of Public Safety, is the paroling authority for adults. The Board's field staff provides supervision for adult parolees. Probation services are provided by a separate agency in the judicial branch of state government.

The sentencing structure in Massachusetts is complex, with adjudication of misdemeanor and felony cases shared by District and Superior Courts. In Fiscal Year 2002, 28% of District Court convictions were felonies and 72% were misdemeanors. During that year the Superior Court convictions were 91% felonies and 9% misdemeanors. Some classes of felonies can only be processed in Superior Courts, and some sentences may be served in either county Houses of Corrections (if less than 2.5 years) or in state prisons.

Before 1994, offenders convicted of serious, violent crimes were required to serve two-thirds of their sentences to be parole eligible and offenders convicted of less serious offenses served one-third of sentences to become parole eligible. In 1993, truth-in-sentencing laws were established with minimum and maximum sentence dates. Parole eligibility dates are the minimum sentences imposed for inmates in state prisons. Inmates sentenced to the Houses of Corrections for more than 60 days are parole eligible after serving one-half of their sentences.

Sentencing courts frequently impose minimum and maximum sentences to state prisons that differ by only one day, which precludes consideration for parole. (47% of state prison sentences in FY 2002 were so structured.) Courts also commonly impose periods of incarceration and post-prison supervision. Split sentences may be ordered with sentences to the Houses of Corrections, or post-prison probation may be ordered when multiple counts are involved in convictions resulting in state prison sentences. Split sentences cannot be used, however, for state prison sentences for single counts. It was estimated that 42.6% of incarceration sentences in FY 2002 involved a period of post-prison probation supervision.

Prison-Based Planning

Upon intake the Records Administration establishes sentence release dates and the DOC calculates parole eligibility dates for new inmates. Within 30 days of admission, a "Classification Board" determines placements for inmates through an informal, non-objective, classification system. Risk/needs assessments for programming are also completed. Inmates are referred to a range of institutional programs that include

cognitive training, violence reduction programs, substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, educational and vocational services, parenting programs, life skills training, and mental health services.

Release planning begins one year prior to release, prioritized by release dates. Reentry Officers begin to discuss release plans with inmates, then coordinate with a triage team (consisting of program staff, medical, mental health and institutional parole officers) to assist in release planning for each inmate. The team meets at intervals of 6 months, 3 months, 2 months, and 1 month prior to an inmate's release to assist in developing a release Action Plan. Inmates also attend a five-day workshop, three hours per class, to discuss release planning. A limited number of inmates are placed in work-release programs that permit working at civilian jobs several months before release. The DOC is also using federal grant funds to assist higher risk offenders between ages 18-35 with more intensive reentry services, emphasizing housing needs, and substance abuse and mental health services.

Parole Board Planning

As inmates near their parole eligibility dates, parole officers within the institutions contact inmates to develop their release plans. Reentry officers and triage teams assist in release preparation, as previously described. The Board opened 8 Regional Reentry Centers in September, 2004. These Centers will expand services to include assistance with reentry planning and, in later phases of operation, will have representatives of other state agencies or service providers co-located at the Centers to coordinate with parole staff and DOC personnel.

Inmate Release Process

Offenders being discharged without post-release supervision, are transported to one of 8 Regional Reentry Centers (RRCs) nearest their release destination. Inmates being released to some form of post-prison supervision are responsible for their own transportation. Inmates being placed on parole must report immediately to parole offices, which are in close proximity to the RRCs. Reentry case managers at the RRCs provide information regarding resources in the area to assist in transitions to the community. Suffolk County receives offenders from their county several months before release allowing for transition through the local jail. The probation system also operates a network of community corrections centers that can assist inmates returning to probation supervision as they transition from prison.

Offenders can receive \$50.00 in gate money if they do not have personal resources, and they can purchase "street" clothes while in prison. Transportation money for a bus ticket is provided as needed and the institution will transport offenders to a bus station. Judges and victims may register for release notifications, and law enforcement agencies are notified of sex offender releases.

Michigan

System Background

There were 49,524 prison inmates in Michigan on June 30, 2003 . During 2002, 12,771 inmates were released from prison. The Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) operates state prisons and provides statewide community corrections services. A ten-member Parole Board has authority to grant paroles, set parole conditions, and revoke paroles.

Under Michigan's sentencing system, judges impose indeterminate sentences with minimum and maximum terms. (Minimum terms are usually set by judges and the maximum set by statute.) Inmates become eligible for parole after completion of the minimum term. More than 85% of the inmates leaving Michigan prisons are released to parole supervision. In 2002, the parole approval rate of inmates reviewed by the Board was 48.4%. Also in that year, mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes were revised that resulted in more drug offenders being eligible for parole and judges having more discretion in sentencing.

Michigan is participating in the National Governors' Association prisoner re-entry program to improve interagency cooperation in meeting offender needs, and in NIC's Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI).

Prison-Based Release Planning

All inmates entering prison are processed through an intake center where assessments are conducted and parole eligibility dates are determined. Recommendations for inmate program participation are completed, which are reviewed and revised annually. Inmates are recommended for a variety of institutional programs. There are, however, some programs that are mandatory. Inmates convicted of sex crimes must participate in sex offender treatment to be eligible for parole, and inmates convicted of assaultive crimes must participate in programs addressing aggressive behavior to be parole eligible. Offenders with less than a high school education must complete GEDs to be parole eligible, with some exceptions.

When inmates are within 8 months of parole eligibility, preparation begins for a hearing by the Board. Prison counselors prepare a Parole Eligibility Report (PER) that provides case background. The Board attempts to conduct hearings and time decisions to provide the MDOC with several months to prepare for an inmate's release. When approved for parole, prison counselors meet with inmates to discuss transition issues and MDOC field staff conduct an investigation to verify the parole plan. All facilities offer pre-release classes that may last up to 78 hours. The classes are optional for inmates and cover life skills such as anger management, job readiness, financial management, and cognitive training.

Federal grant funds are supporting an intensive pre-release program for some younger, high-risk inmates returning to the Detroit area. Programming begins 6 months before

release and includes linking with community resources and support systems. A Females In Transition (FIT) program also provides 6 months of intensive community-based residential programming for selected women leaving prison.

Parole Board Planning

For most parole considerations, the Board is divided into three-member panels. Decisions to grant or deny parole must be agreed to by two members of the panel. The Board uses a guidelines instrument to score inmates nearing parole eligibility. The score is based on current offense, prior record, institutional conduct and program involvement, age, mental status, and risk. That score and the PER are reviewed to determine if a hearing will be held or if parole review will be deferred to a later date. The Board could approve or deny parole release without a hearing. If a hearing is held, a single panel member usually meets with the inmate who can also designate one advocate (such as family member, friend, or MDOC staff member) to be present at the hearing. The Board also considers input from victims, justice officials, or other interested parties. If parole is approved, victims are notified as well as local law enforcement agencies and prosecuting attorneys.

If an inmate is approved for parole but engages in institutional misconduct before release, parole may be suspended. Parole approval rates vary among offender categories. In 2003, parole approval rates ranged from 10.6% approval for sex offenders to 78.3% for drug offenders.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any of Michigan's correctional facilities. Released inmates receive \$75 "gate money," a bus ticket to the instate release destination, and a change of civilian clothing if needed. Inmates being released to parole supervision must report to the local parole office within 24 hours of release.

NOTE: A Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative has resulted in formation of a ten-member policy team, a 30-member executive management team, and an advisory council of more than 200 members involved in planning and implementing improvements in offender release processes. Planning and efforts are underway to improve offender assessment, expand institutional programs to improve offender success after release, increase coordination between prison and field staff, and develop more support and assistance for inmates after release.

Minnesota

System Background

The Minnesota prison system held 7,612 adults on June 30, 2003. During 2003, 5,675 inmates were released from state prisons. The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) operates 8 adult correctional facilities and one juvenile facility. Community corrections services in Minnesota are delivered in 3 different administrative approaches.

Of the 87 counties, 31 counties participate in the Community Corrections Act (CCA) and receive state funding to deliver probation and post-release supervision for adults and juveniles. In the remaining 56 counties, community supervision is provided solely by the DOC, or through a combination of DOC and county probation offices in the judicial branch.

Minnesota has determinate sentencing, except for offenders with life sentences. The majority of offenders serve two-thirds of their sentences in prison and one-third under community supervision called "supervised release." Prison time can be extended for disciplinary infractions. Those sentenced for murder must serve 30 years of their sentence before being reviewed by the Commissioner Panel. The Commissioner Panel has authority to grant pardons and pardons extraordinary and commute sentences. The Panel consists of the governor, commissioner, chief justice of the Supreme Court, and attorney general.

In 2003, 70% of the inmates leaving prison were under supervised release or parole, 16% were discharged for sentence completion, and 14% were released to community programs.

Prison-Based Planning

Male inmates entering prison are processed through an intake facility and female offenders are processed at the main female facility. During the intake process, social histories are developed; education, psychological, and medical assessments are completed; and inmates are classified for facility and programs assignments. Based on risk assessments, inmates are placed in one of five custody levels. The DOC also initiates applications for copies of birth certificates and Social Security cards. Prison programs include educational and vocational classes, substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, mental health services, and work programs.

Caseworkers develop formal release plans 120 days prior to inmate release dates. Local parole/probation staff investigate and verify the release plan, which is then approved by a local supervisor. Each facility has developed a "resource center" in the library that contains information on community resources and programs that may be accessed after release. The centers were modeled after a Federal Bureau of Prisons program that is employment related, but the Minnesota model addresses additional inmate needs such as housing, health services, and other resources. Inmates use the resources to coordinate release plan development with caseworkers. Most inmates also are required to complete a pre-release class that includes sessions on job

searching, housing, wellness, financial management, and requirements of post-prison supervision. The course is 18 hours, with supplemental handouts and outside speakers.

The DOC has established transition coordinators at most facilities that coordinate with both case managers and offenders nearing release to assess needs and identify resources to assist inmates in transition. The DOC also uses jails and halfway houses to provide work release opportunities for some inmates nearing release.

The DOC uses federal grant funds to support a reentry program for young, higher risk offenders returning to Hennepin County. The project provides more intensive assessment and release planning/preparation, and release coordinators to assist in transition and collaboration with aftercare service providers and law enforcement.

A pilot project allowing the issuing of driver's licenses from a facility for those being released is so successful that it will be expanded to 5 facilities in the future and DOC staff will be trained to complete the processing.

Parole Board Planning

Offenders with life sentences who are granted a community release are provided with extensive pre-release programming two years prior to release to assist with social readjustment. Release is discretionary by the Commissioner Panel. In an offender's community supervision is revoked, the offender is returned to a specialized unit that is segregated from the general population in one of two facilities. This time served is considered "punitive," therefore offenders cannot have access to normal prison programming. Offenders may be re-released or could serve the remainder of their sentence within these special housing units, depending on the severity of the offense or number of revocations.

Inmate Release Process

At release, inmates with funds in their personal account are not supplemented with gate monies. However, if indigent, \$100 is provided with no additional transportation monies. For most offenders, only the parole/probation office that will provide community supervision is notified upon release. However, law enforcement agencies are notified of releases of all sex offenders, and with some types of sex offenders, additional notifications are made to other community agencies or the general public. Released offenders returning to some metropolitan areas have access to "job clubs," provided by community agencies through DOC contracts, to assist in finding employment.

Mississippi

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 20,542 inmates in Mississippi prisons. During 2002, 5,592 inmates had been released from the state prison system. The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) operates three state prisons and 11 regional facilities, and also contracts with 5 private prisons. The MDOC's Community Corrections Division provides statewide probation and parole services and manages 17 community work centers and 4 restitution centers.

The inmate release authority of the Mississippi Parole Board varies, based on the conviction dates of the inmates. Inmates whose crimes were committed before mid-1995 become eligible for parole after completing 25% of their sentences. If not paroled, those inmates receive "flat time" releases after serving 50% of sentences. Inmates whose crimes were committed between mid-1995 and 1999 must serve at least 85% of imposed sentences, then complete the remainder under Earned Release Supervision (ERS). Inmates convicted of non-violent crimes for the first time since 2000 are eligible for parole after serving 25% of sentences. Others convicted of violent crimes or who are repeat offenders must still serve 85% of their sentences.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Inmates entering prison are assessed for program needs and placed in programs such as basic education and GED courses, job skills programs, and substance abuse treatment. Tentative release dates, maximum release dates (without earning time credits), and parole eligibility dates are projected at intake. The MDOC monitors inmates' terms and prepares monthly lists for the Parole Board of inmates approaching parole eligibility. Planning for release begins about 6 months before release to ERS supervision or parole. Some eligible inmates are placed in community work centers toward the end of their sentences, or in county jail placements, where inmates provide free labor for cities, counties, state agencies, or charitable organizations.

Approximately 1,000 inmates each year are released through pre-release programs that begin 6-12 months before release dates. The programs focus on improving offenders' employability and their social and interpersonal relations skills. The programs are located in 6 facilities. Tracking of inmates who complete the program shows a recidivism rate significantly lower than national averages. Federal grant funds are used by the MDOC for a re-entry program serving younger high-risk offenders returning to the Jackson area. The program provides more intensive release planning and programming, with support from partnering community agencies for post-release assistance. MDOC also operates a therapeutic community model drug program that includes intensive transition planning and preparation for substance abusing offenders.

Parole Board Planning

If inmates are eligible for discretionary parole release, the Board holds a hearing to review the case. Crime victims or their family members may be present. The Board may approve or deny parole, or set a date for later parole consideration. The Board also reviews cases of inmates being released on ERS and may set special conditions of supervision.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates being released who have served less than one year receive \$15 “gate money,” and inmates who have served more than a year receive \$25. All inmates being released receive a bus ticket to their release destination within the state, and civilian clothing if needed.

Missouri

System Background

On December 31, 2003, there were 29,866 inmates in Missouri prisons. During 2003, 16,533 inmates were released. Of those released, 10,411 were placed under parole supervision, 4,249 were placed on probation or into treatment programs, and 1,873 were discharged for completion of sentences. The Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC) manages all state prisons for adults, and a seven-member Board of Probation and Parole has discretion to release inmates on parole. The chair of the Board is the chief executive officer over the Division of Probation and Parole, which provides field supervision of adult offenders.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Currently, inmates' projected release dates are not determined upon intake and projected release dates are not a significant factor in the initial classification process. The Missouri Board of Probation and Parole uses a salient factor grid that serves as a guideline in setting parole release dates. The grid is used by Institutional Parole Officers to project a release date and to schedule an initial parole hearing before the Board approximately two years prior to the projected date. Inmates with two-year sentences or shorter are scheduled to appear before the Board as soon as possible. The department offers a variety of voluntary inmate programs, but three types of programs are statutorily mandated. (1) Sex offenders must complete sex offender treatment; (2) some offenders must complete mandated substance abuse treatment; and (3) all inmates must have completed a GED or made a good faith effort to do so to be eligible for parole.

When the Board approves a tentative parole release date for an inmate, a field investigation is requested 60 days prior to the date to verify and approve the parole plan. In 5 of the 21 state facilities, pre-parole classes are provided to inmates shortly before release. The classes range in length from 8 to 24 hours and address issues such as housing, job readiness, and life skills.

Parole Board Planning

The Board attempts to hold an initial parole hearing two years prior to the release date projected by the Board's salient factor guideline grid. Institutional Parole Officers prepare packets for the Board hearings that include scored guidelines grids, case backgrounds, institutional conduct summaries, and proposed parole plans. The Board uses the grid as a guide, but is not obligated to comply with the grid calculations. Victims have the option of attending or providing input to the hearings.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any of the Department's facilities. "Gate money" is not provided by the State, but a bus ticket is provided to the parole destination, or the state line closest to the parolee's out-of-state destination. Civilian cloths are also provided if necessary. The parolee must report to the local parole office within 24 hours of release.

Local law enforcement agencies receive lists of inmate releases, and sex offenders must register with local law enforcement in the communities where they will live.

Missouri was one of two pilot states involved in the National Institute of Corrections' "Transition from Prison to Community Initiative" (TPCI). The TPCI model aims to improve coordination among prison, parole, and field supervision agencies through use of assessment, release planning, and services to improve offender success after release from prison. Missouri's implementation of TPCI began in 2002 when the DOC director involved other state agency directors in discussions to increase awareness of transition issues and the delivery of services by those other state agencies to offenders.

With support of cabinet-level officials, a steering committee was formed to more closely analyze inmate re-entry in the state. The members included representatives of corrections and non-correctional agencies and their six-month study identified seven key areas of transition to be addressed by the project. They included topics such as employment, substance abuse, housing, and family relations. In addition to analyzing available data, focus groups were held around the state to fill data gaps, including groups of offenders who failed and succeeded on parole.

Working groups were then formed (involving correctional and non-correctional agency staff) to form recommendations and plans in each of the seven key areas. The working groups presented 80 recommendations to improve offender transition efforts. The recommendations were reviewed and approximately half were adopted for statewide implementation as a first phase of the TPCI project. They address changes in assessment and release planning and coordination with resources for assisting offenders released to the community. The goal is to implement all phase one plans during 2004, then address other transitional goals that will require legislative action or new funding sources.

Montana

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 3,440 inmates in Montana prisons. There were 1,518 inmate releases from prisons in 2002. The Montana Department of Corrections (DOC) oversees adult and juvenile institutions, and provides supervision for adult probationers and parolees. The DOC has a prison for men, a prison for women, a boot camp program, and contracts with a private prison. The DOC also contracts with a network of community-based residential facilities. The Board of Pardons and Parole (Board) is attached administratively to the DOC, but is autonomous in its authority to parole adults.

Judges in Montana have the option to sentence felons directly to the Montana State Prison, or to the DOC, who may then place offenders in a range of correctional placements, including prison. Approximately two-thirds of the felons receive sentences to the DOC. Judges may also suspend a portion the sentence and return the offender to probation supervision after completion of the prison term. Once an inmate is placed in a secure prison (by direct sentence of the court or by DOC assignment), the Board has exclusive parole release authority. However, if an offender sentenced to the DOC is placed in an alternative program, the DOC retains authority to place the offender on “conditional release” to serve out a sentence. Offenders released to parole or placed in alternative programs such as the Intensive Supervision Program or conditional release are supervised by the DOC’s Adult Community Corrections Division.

Prison-Based Planning

As mentioned above, felons may be sentenced directly to the Montana State Prison, or to the DOC. Inmates sentenced to the DOC are processed within 45 days at the Intake/Reception Center. Offenders may be placed in a secure facility and referred to programs such as sex offender treatment, substance abuse treatment, anger management classes, parenting courses, or cognitive restructuring. Or, inmates sentenced to the DOC may be diverted from secure settings and placed on community supervision or in contract pre-release or transition facilities. Those community facilities may also be used for inmates in secure facilities when they are within 12 to 24 months of parole eligibility. While in those community programs, offenders may participate in educational release, work release, or furlough programs to prepare for transition to communities.

Parole Board Planning

The Board has parole authority for any felon placed in a secure corrections facility. Dates for parole eligibility as well as provisions for earning sentence time reductions have been revised by statute several times during recent decades. Since 1997, inmates are generally eligible for parole after serving one-fourth of their sentences and there are no provisions for time reductions.

The DOC provides the Board lists of inmates who are several months from parole eligibility. Staff of the Board then meet with those inmates in groups to explain the

parole application process. Institutional parole officers prepare inmates for hearings before panels of 2 to 3 Board members, and the officers attend the hearings as well. All interested parties, if requested, are notified of upcoming parole hearings (judge, county attorney, sheriff, victim, police and parole officer). If the Board approves parole release, an investigation of the release plan must be completed by DOC field staff prior to release. Parole is often granted on condition that the offender complete placement at a prerelease or transition center.

Inmate Release Process

Most offenders are released through prerelease centers after screening by committees for each program and each community. There are 1,300 prerelease center beds. Inmates can participate in release programs when they are within one year of release (longer for some offender categories). "Gate money" up to \$100 may be provided at release. Also, Prison Industries has established a welfare fund that may provide inmates up to \$500 for release purposes. Applications for that fund are reviewed by a committee that includes staff and inmates. Bus tickets are also be provided as needed.

Offenders released to any form of community supervision must report to DOC field offices where job specialists in each parole office assist with community placement. Federal grants for reentry services in Montana are being used for juvenile offenders.

Nebraska

System Background

The average monthly inmate population in the Nebraska prison system during 2003 was 4,037. During that year, 2,643 inmates were released from prison. Most of those released (1,347) were discharged without supervision for completion of their sentences.

However, 737 inmates were released on parole supervision in 2003. The remaining discharges that year were offenders returned to the jurisdiction of local courts after short-term commitments for evaluations or participation in a 120-day work ethic camp. The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services manages adult prisons and provides statewide parole supervision services for adults. Most felons are sentenced under an indeterminate system that imposes minimum and maximum prison terms. The Nebraska Board of Parole has discretion to parole offenders after they have served the minimum range of their sentences.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Institutional and parole planning begins shortly after inmates are received in the Department of Correctional Services. A “personalized plan” is developed in the assessment and classification phase that outlines programmatic goals during incarceration. That plan is usually presented to the Board of Parole by case managers and classification staff at an initial review within the first three or four months of the inmate’s prison term. During the initial review, the Board will often outline the institutional programs they expect an inmate to complete in order to be approved for parole. The Board may also set future review or hearing dates, or determine a projected release date at the initial review. Facility assignments are then made with access to programs identified in the personalized plan as one factor in assignments. Institutional programs include substance abuse, mental health services, sex offender treatment, education, services for developmentally impaired, parenting, cognitive, and life skills. As inmates near their projected parole dates, or discharge dates for completion of sentence if not paroled, case managers and institutional parole officers begin pre-release planning. For inmates that have a projected parole date or are expected to be paroled, field staff are asked to verify and investigate the home and employment plan.

The Department operates two community facilities (335 beds combined) that provide opportunities for inmates to work civilian jobs and prepare for release. Most inmates nearing release from other facilities participate in 36-hour pre-release classes shortly before their release. The classes address areas such as money management, job interviewing, resume development, and similar topics. Crime victims are given options for notification of inmates’ releases and law enforcement agencies are also notified of inmate releases.

The Department of Correctional Services is using federal grant funds to expand transitional services for higher risk inmates ages 19 through 35. Through an agreement with a state university, the Department is increasing efforts to secure housing and

employment, improve family relationships, and address other re-entry needs. The Department is also planning for a broader range of graduated sanctions (such as halfway houses and day reporting centers) to respond to technical violations of parole. The Department is reviewing the process for assessing offenders' risks and needs and anticipates development of a new instrument for that purpose.

Parole Board Planning

As mentioned above, the Board of Parole usually meets with inmates during the first four months of incarceration to review each case. Those reviews include discussion of the personalized plans, how compliance with the plans will be weighed in parole decisions, and the Board's schedule for release dates or dates for later reviews or hearings. If the Board schedules a future review or hearing date, institutional parole officers and prison staff prepare case updates and reports of field staff investigations of release plans. Those crime victims who wish to attend public hearings are notified in advance of hearing dates. The Board will not approve parole release without a field investigation to verify the release plan.

Statistics during the past ten years indicate that the ratio of releases by parole compared to releases for completion of sentence has been declining. During the early 1990s, roughly the same numbers of inmates were released on parole as inmates completing their sentences and released without supervision. From 2001-2003, 2,231 inmates were paroled and 3,755 inmates were discharged for completion of sentences.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any of the Department's facilities. While most inmates have at least \$100 in their personal accounts at time of release, the state will supplement accounts up to that amount as "gate pay." The state also provides seasonal civilian clothing if needed and provides a bus ticket to any release destination in the lower forty-eight states. Inmates are also transported from the facility to the closest bus station. Parolees must report to local parole officers within 24-48 hours of release.

Nevada

System Background

The Nevada prison system held 10,527 inmates on June 30, 2003. During 2003, 4,928 inmates were released. The Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) operates state prisons, the Nevada Board of Parole Commissioners (Board) has parole release authority, and parole supervision is provided by the Division of Parole and Probation, which is within the Department of Public Safety. The NDOC Director is appointed by the Governor and reports to a Board of Corrections that includes the Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State. Nevada DOC has 8 prisons, 10 conservation camps, 1 restitution center, and 1 private prison.

Felony crimes are divided into five classes and prison sentences for felons include minimum and maximum terms within ranges set by statutes. Judges impose sentences within the ranges, but the minimum sentence must not exceed 40% of the maximum. Inmates become eligible for parole after serving the minimum sentence. If an inmate, sentenced for more than 3 years has not been paroled by the Board and is within 12 months of discharge, the inmate is released to parole supervision for the remainder of the sentence.

Prison-based Planning

Parole eligibility and release dates are established during intake by a computerized system. Risk assessments are conducted to guide inmates to institutional programs such as education, cognitive training, violence prevention, vocational training, sex offender treatment, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment. NDOC monitors cases to advise the Board when an inmate is nearing parole eligibility. Prison staff prepare progress reports and the proposed parole plan for Board hearings, which are held approximately 4 months before parole eligibility dates. NDOC case workers usually attend the Board's hearings.

If a parole release date is set, NDOC staff begin release coordination activities with the Board's prerelease unit. The NDOC has prerelease classes called the "Street Readiness" program. It is currently not standardized throughout the system, with each facility having a varied curriculum. More intensive release planning and coordination with community resources are provided for inmates with mental illnesses. The NDOC received final approval in the summer of 2004 for a 400-bed transition center, which will be built in Las Vegas. The center will provide a 4-6 month placement for inmates before release, and will include opportunities for inmates to work at civilian jobs and participate in other transition activities. (Approximately 65% of inmates are released to the Las Vegas area.)

NDOC uses federal grant funds for a reentry program for young, higher risk offenders returning to the southern parts of Nevada. The project includes collaboration with other state agencies, law enforcement (with information links to repeat offender units), and community-based providers for more intensive services and supervision of released

inmates.

Parole Board Planning

The Board forms panels to meet with inmates nearing parole eligibility or inmates who have previously been denied parole and are rescheduled for parole consideration. Prison case workers provide reports for Board members and sit in on parole hearings. In some cases mental health practitioners are also requested to attend hearings and provide information to the Board. The Board may conduct reviews without hearings for those inmates nearing mandatory release dates. When an inmate is approved for release, the Board has a pre-release unit that coordinates release activities with the NDOC and Board field officers. The field staff complete an investigation to verify and approve the proposed residence of each offender being released to parole supervision.

For inmates without a viable housing plan, the Board may require placement in a halfway house as a special parole condition to assist in the transition process. The prerelease unit also coordinates transportation from the release facility to the parole location.

Inmate Release Process

Offenders are given \$25 "gate money," and jeans and a shirt upon release. Staff often provide inmates transportation to Reno or Las Vegas (where most inmates are returning), or they may be provided bus tickets. Victims who have registered with the Victim Service Unit are notified of inmate releases, as well as county clerks where the conviction took place. Convicted felons must register in the communities where they return. The Board has a parolee fund that can be used to provide loans to some parolees to assist with transitional needs.

New Hampshire

System Background

The New Hampshire prison system held 2,483 inmates on June 30, 2003, and 1,426 inmates were released from prison during that year. The Department of Corrections (DOC) operates 4 adult prisons and 3 community facilities, and provides probation and parole services through the Division of Field Services. The seven-member Board of Parole (Board) has authority for granting and revoking parole.

New Hampshire has a two-tiered court system. Superior Courts handle all felony cases with probation up to five years and the State District Courts handle all misdemeanants for up to two years probation. Felony prison sentences in New Hampshire include a minimum and maximum term. For each year of the sentence, 150 days is added to the term. Inmates, however, may earn time reduction credits at the rate of 12.5 days per month to eliminate all or a portion of the 150-day addition. Inmates become eligible for parole after completion of the minimum term, adjusted by time credits.

Prison-Based Planning

Inmates received by the DOC are placed in an intake status for 30-60 days for assessment and classification. If a presentence investigation (PSI) report is available at reception, it is reviewed by classification and counselor/case managers to establish a release plan. If a PSI is not available, classification and case management staff gather information to determine a release plan. Periodic reviews of this plan will take place during incarceration. This information is used to determine the classification level of the offender along with general medical, education and programmatic needs. Inmates are assigned to a facility and referred to institutional programs that include substance abuse treatment, education, violence prevention, vocational training, cognitive skills classes, mental health services, life skill courses, and victim impact classes.

Inmates may participate in several transitional and reentry programs as they near their parole or release dates. Three halfway houses with 152 beds provide opportunities for work release and increased community linkages. Some inmates are also placed in "Administrative Home Confinement," which includes electronic monitoring and close supervision by DOC field staff. Approval of such placement is based on input from sentencing judges and victims. Prerelease classes are provided at some facilities, and the DOC is using federal grant funds to support an intensive reentry program for young, higher risk inmates returning to the Manchester area.

The DOC is planning changes to improve transition and reentry procedures, including modifications to the intake process and designation of one institution as a prerelease center for all inmates leaving the system in the future.

Parole Board Planning

Hearings for parole consideration are conducted by three-member panels of the Board, with inmates present or participating by video connections. Hearings are held two

months prior to initial parole eligibility to provide time for verification of release plans and release preparation by the DOC. The Board sends a notice to the prison counselors that an offender's hearing date is approaching. The DOC counselors develop a plan for work, housing, and treatment and submit it to the Board before the hearing. Staff of the Board assemble case information into a parole summary used by the Board for hearings.

If parole is approved, a valid plan must be in place and verified by the field officers before release. The Board does allow some parolees to seek employment after release to parole supervision. Future plans include development of release plans six months prior to parole eligibility, with reentry staff who would then assist offenders following release. Parole Officers would maintain more of a supervisory role with the reentry staff as case managers. The Board publishes notices in the local newspapers of inmates being released on parole.

Inmate Release Process

If inmates are not paroled, they are released directly from prison or halfway houses. Released inmates could receive gate monies of up to \$100. As New Hampshire continues their reentry initiatives, they are exploring vouchers that could be used for transportation, clothing, and other transition expenses.

New Jersey

System Background

There were 27,328 state prison inmates in New Jersey on June 30, 2003. During 2003, 14,267 inmates were released from state prisons. The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) operates 12 adult prison facilities and an intake center for men, and a women's facility. The NJ State Parole Board has authority to parole inmates in state prisons and offenders in county jails with terms in excess of 60 days. Parole officers are employees of the Board. Most inmates (60%) have sentences with mandatory minimums that must be served before being eligible for parole. Inmates sentenced without mandatory minimums must serve one-third of their sentences, minus sentence reduction credits, to become parole eligible. In January 2004, the NJ Legislature established a Commission to Review Criminal Sentencing that will make recommendations for statutory changes to ensure fair and proportionate criminal sentences.

In 2003, approximately 60% of the inmates leaving state prisons were released to parole supervision. Approximately 33% of inmates are discharged for completion of sentences without supervision. New Jersey also has an intensive supervision (ISP) program that involves screening inmates and recommending that some be returned for resentencing and placement in a closely supervised community program administered by probation personnel in the judicial branch. Approximately 900 inmates are released to ISP each year.

New Jersey is a participating state in the National Governors' Association Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy. The governor's office participates in ongoing meetings of the New Jersey Reentry Working Group, which involves NJDOC with other state agencies and community organizations in planning expanded support and services for inmates leaving state prisons.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Inmates entering prison are processed through the intake facility for men or the intake unit at the women's facility. The classification process includes medical, mental health, and substance abuse screening, as well as designation of facility assignments for men. After transfer to the designated facility, a secondary assessment identifies program recommendations based on inmate needs. Institutional programs and services include substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, violence prevention, educational programs, cognitive skills training, vocational training, victim sensitivity training, and mental health services.

When inmates near parole eligibility, the Board sends the NJDOC a pre-parole package for completion that collects information regarding inmates' behavior and program involvement. Parole counselors interview inmates 4 to 6 months before parole eligibility dates to begin the parole planning process described below. When an inmate receives approval and a date for parole release, or if the inmate is near completion of a sentence, the NJDOC has several programs to prepare inmates for release. Pre-release classes are offered at some facilities. The classes vary, but last between 2 - 6 weeks and address life skills and job readiness issues. The state also contracts with 23 halfway houses for 2,800 transitional placements that are usually 6 months in length.

The NJDOC established an Office of Transitional Services in 2004 that is in the process of reviewing and developing discharge planning procedures. In coordination with the agency's Innovations & Best Practices Committee, efforts were underway in mid 2004 to review the inmate assessment process, release planning, institutional programming, and internal coordination of various departmental offices.

Parole Board Planning

Parole counselors meet with inmates approximately 6 months before parole eligibility dates to discuss parole plans and to review case background information relevant to parole decisions. Notices of approaching parole eligibility are sent to judges, victims, prosecutors, and law enforcement agencies with invitations for comments to the Board. Counselors then prepare reports for hearing officers for review. If hearing officers determine that there are no factors indicating denial of parole, they may recommend approval of parole release to a two-member panel of the Board. If the panel concurs with the recommendation, a parole date may be ordered without a hearing. If either the hearing officer or the panel determines that there are issues that may result in denying or delaying parole, the inmate is informed of the issues and a hearing before the Board's panel is scheduled. The Board may also hold separate hearings to gather information from justice officials or victims or their families. When the Board approves parole and sets a release date, field staff investigate and verify the release plan prior to release. Parole decisions are usually made several months prior to the release date to allow time for the field investigation and inmate release preparation by the NJDOC.

The Board, in coordination with the NJDOC, is using federal grant funds for intensive planning and transition services for younger, high risk offenders returning to Essex and Camden counties.

Inmate Release Process

On the dates of release, inmates are provided with bus tickets to their release destinations for a nominal fee and civilian clothing if needed. There is no standard issue of "gate money." However, the Board may authorize incidental funding to assist indigent inmates serving their maximum sentence or those leaving prison to parole supervision.

Like the NJDOC, the Board contracts with residential facilities that provide transitional placements for some parolees.

New Mexico

System Background

The New Mexico prison system held nearly 6,000 adults at the end of 2002. During that year, 3,809 inmates were released from state prisons. The New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) operates five adult prisons and provides probation and parole field supervision. The Department also contracts for services from five private prisons. The Adult Parole Board reviews inmates eligible for release and has authority to revoke paroles.

The sentencing system in New Mexico allows inmates to accrue time reductions for participation in treatment and work programs. The rate for accruing “good time” is 4 to 8 days per month for violent offenders, and up to 30 days per month for inmates convicted of non-violent crimes. Earning credits may be incremental for a combination of activities, or “lump sum” credits for certain certified programs such as therapeutic communities. Inmates are paroled at dates based on “good time” accruals, unless an unacceptable release plan is presented to the Board. The NMCD has identified inmates’ successful transition back to communities as an organizational priority, with planning and preparation for inmates’ release beginning at intake and expansion of transitional programming.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The NMCD’s institution staff conduct assessments at intake that provide direction for inmate institutional and program assignments. Assessments cover medical, mental health, substance abuse, housing and custody needs. Classification staff play a key role in monitoring inmate participation in programs such as substance abuse treatment, mental health programs, education services, and vocational programs that result in awarding of sentence reduction credits.

Records managers at each facility record and track “good time” and release planning begins when inmates are approximately 6 months from parole dates. Discharge plans are developed jointly by classification staff and the institutional reentry coordinator. At each institution, an Institution Reentry Committee (IRC), with staff representing education, mental health, addition services, medical services, classification, security and security intelligence, meet with the inmate and the reentry coordinator. An Individual Reentry Plan (IRA) is developed that provides a guide for the offenders proposed transition and identifies needed services, programs, and supervision. The IRA is sent to field offices for verification and investigation 90 days before parole hearings. Field officers may contact victims and modify plans to reflect available community resources. If problems are encountered in the field with the plan, a Regional Transition Coordinator is consulted to explore adjustments to facilitate approval of the plan. If acceptable alternatives cannot be developed in the field, an alternative plan is developed by institutional staff. Release planning is provided for every inmate leaving the NMCD. The report from the field is incorporated into a Discharge Plan that is forwarded to the Adult Parole Board at least 30 days prior to the parole hearing.

Inmates nearing their release dates may elect to participate in pre-release classes offered by the NMCD's Education Bureau. The classes are for inmates within 6 months of release and provide information on community-based resources and employment support. The Department is planning for expansion of these pre-release classes in the fall of 2004. The Bureau also has a more intensive job-related program called SOAR for selected inmates with at least 12 months before discharge. The program includes cognitive training, vocational assessment, and goal setting components, with post-release assistance from offender employment specialists with the state's employment service. Initial tracking indicated lower recidivism rates for program "graduates."

Parole Board Planning

The Board prepares dockets for hearings based on listings of inmates nearing parole dates. The hearings held by the Board are primarily to determine the acceptability of the release plans. Releases on the dates calculated through accrual of "good time" is generally assumed, unless the Discharge Plan is determined to be unacceptable by the Board. In those cases, the institutional parole officer and field staff will develop alternatives for Board review and release will be authorized upon receipt of an acceptable plan.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates are released from any of the NMCD facilities and receive up to \$50 at release, a bus ticket to their release destination within New Mexico, transfer to the closest bus station, and civilian clothing if needed. Two state-supported residential programs are used for some parolees needing housing, as well as several other halfway houses that often provide a 30-day grace period before requiring payments from residents. A network of approximately 20 non-residential programs is used to provide services such as substance abuse and sex offender treatment.

The NMDC is using federal "Going Home" grant funds to support the institutional parole officer positions, also called Re-Entry Coordinators, who develop release plans for all inmates nearing release and serve as liaisons between institutional and field staff. Other federal grant funds are used to improve the supervision and services for sex offenders being released to the community.

New York

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 65,914 state prison inmates in New York. During 2002, 26,829 inmates were released from state prisons. The Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) operates 70 correctional facilities throughout the state. The 19-member Board of Parole has release authority for adult inmates. Board members are appointed by the governor, with one member designated the Board Chair and chief executive officer of the Division of Parole. The Division provides both institutional and field parole services.

New York's criminal sentencing structure has both determinate and indeterminate sentences. Offenders convicted of most violent crimes receive determinate or "flat terms" of imprisonment. In these cases, inmates must serve at least 85% of their court-set term, may earn good time to reduce prison terms by up to 15%, then are released to mandatory post-release supervision. The Board may set special conditions, but does not determine the release date. The courts set minimum prison terms for non-violent and some violent crimes that must be served (minus time credits for good behavior and program completions) before the inmates are parole eligible, and a maximum term that the inmates can be held in custody. Certain non-violent offenders can be released prior to their court set minimum for completion of the Shock Incarceration Program.

Through New York's involvement in the National Institute of Corrections' "Transition from Prison to Community Initiative," corrections officials are reviewing current transition practices and planning changes based on the TPCI model.

Prison-Based Planning

Inmates are processed through one of three male or one female reception centers. The intake process includes a medical examination, mental health assessment referral if needed, and a classification counselor interview. A full orientation is provided along with a battery of academic aptitude tests. All inmates are given security classification, mental health, and medical levels. Once the inmates arrive at their first general confinement facility, they are reassessed and assigned to relevant programs as well as placed on Required Program Lists. The corrections counselor recommends specific programs such as substance abuse treatment, aggression replacement treatment, education, vocational training or sex abuse treatment. Failure to participate in prescribed programming can result in lost good time.

No release projections are done for individual inmates. Instead, all programming decisions are based on an inmate's earliest possible release date. DOCS has a three-phased Transitional Service Program to plan for and implement release. Phase I is a 3-week program at the inmate's first general assignment facility that provides an orientation to the corrections system. Phase II provides 160 hours of programming over 90 days and covers social living skills, goal setting, communications, and aggression/conflict management. Phase III, a 64-hour program administered when the

inmate is within one year of the earliest release date, includes sessions on decision making, career development, community preparation, and family reintegration. DOCS contracts with community agencies that provide assistance to inmates upon release. In Phases II and III, inmates are informed about community-based organizations and services who often send representatives to DOCS facilities to make presentations about their services. Additionally, the Division of Parole maintains close ties with these organizations. DOCS also coordinates securing Social Security cards and birth certificates.

The DOCS uses work release programs and furloughs as transitional placements for some inmates.

Parole Board Planning

Facility parole officers contact inmates nearing parole eligibility, collect case information from DOCS staff, and prepare “inmate status reports” for Board panels who conduct initial parole interviews. Those parole officers also score the parole guidelines that are based on time served for similar cases, with consideration to crime severity and criminal histories. Crime victims have opportunities for input to the Board. If the Board approves parole, it will be an “open date” if the plan has not been investigated and approved. The inmate will be on community preparation status to allow DOCS, the inmate, and parole staff to develop an acceptable plan. If a plan has been approved, the Board will set a “straight parole” date. The Board may deny parole and set a subsequent review within two years.

In 2003, the Legislature gave the Commissioner of DOCS the power to grant parole release to certain nonviolent inmates. DOCS Guidance Counselors review eligible cases and make initial recommendations for release. The ultimate granting of release on these cases is done following a Central Office review.

Inmate Release Process

All released inmates receive \$40 “gate money” plus funds in their personal accounts. They also are provided transportation to the county of conviction and civilian clothing if needed. DOCS provides notices of releases to victims (if desired) and to law enforcement agencies in the arresting jurisdiction and release location.

The DOCS is using federal grant funds to support a reentry program for younger, high risk offenders returning to a specific area of New York City. The project provides more intensive release planning and aftercare services using a special courts model.

North Carolina

System Background

The state inmate count in North Carolina was 33,334 on June 30, 2002. During 2002, 8,606 inmates with sentences of one year or more were released from state prisons. The North Carolina Department of Correction (DOC), Division of Prisons operates facilities that house sentenced felons and misdemeanants with sentences of 6 months or longer. The combination of felony and misdemeanor inmate releases in Fiscal Year 2002-2003 by the DOC totaled more than 23,000. The DOC's Division of Community Corrections supervises probationers, parolees, and post-release cases.

North Carolina enacted Structured Sentencing in 1994 that eliminated parole. The NC Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission has parole release authority for the decreasing number of prison inmates sentenced under the old laws. Only 8% of prison exits in FY 2002-2003 were paroles under old laws, compared to 21% of releases four years earlier. The Commission also has authority to establish release conditions for some classes of offenders under Structured Sentencing laws. Those classes include assaultive and other serious crimes that require a period of Post-Release supervision. Under Structured Sentencing, inmates must serve 100% of the minimum sentence imposed and approximately 85% of the maximum sentence imposed.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Felony inmates entering the DOC are processed through intake units that assess individual needs and make facility assignments. A "Correctional Plan" is initiated at intake that addresses institutional programming and release plans. The Correctional Plan is reviewed and modified during inmates' prison terms, including updates to the release plans. Institutional programs include a variety of work programs, academic and vocational education, substance abuse treatment, cognitive behavioral interventions, parenting skills and sex offender treatment.

Most felons now being released from the DOC will not be supervised following discharge. Of the 13,081 felons released in FY 2002-2003, only 14% were released to parole (old sentencing laws) and 11% were released to Post-Release supervision under Structured Sentencing. Release issues are updated in the Correctional Plan, but release planning intensifies when inmates are about one year from the scheduled release. The DOC begins a variety of transition activities and inmates near release dates. Inmates with qualifying classification are placed in programs that allow more community contact through day-pass volunteer programs, short home leaves, and work release. "Job Start" programs provide job readiness classes, resume preparation, and assistance in job searching. A faith-based network and other volunteer groups link inmates with community resources and religious groups within the state. Case managers use a release checklist to assist inmates nearing discharge that includes re-issuing drivers licenses and Social Security cards, providing certificates of program completion, and providing information on community resources near the inmate's release destination.

The DOC's federally-funded reentry initiative is providing a model for additional release planning and "cluster groups" representing community-based resources to assist younger offenders returning to seven regions of the state. The DOC plans to expand the use of this model in the future.

Parole Board Planning

With fewer inmates eligible for parole in prison, the role of the Commission in release planning is declining. The Commission employs a Mutual Agreement Parole Program (MAPP) for some parole-eligible inmates that includes a projected release date based on inmates' compliance with behavioral and program completion goals. For others eligible for parole, parole case analysts review cases as they approach parole eligibility dates to verify sentencing calculations and evaluate inmates for parole release. The analysts provide reports to the three-member Commission who do not hold formal hearings or meetings with inmates. Based on analysts reports and input from law enforcement, courts, victims, and other interested parties, the Commission may approve parole release or deny parole and set dates for later review. Case analysts also review cases of inmates nearing release to Post-Release supervision and make recommendations to the Commission regarding special conditions of community supervision for those offenders.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates are released from any of the state facilities. If inmates do not have funds in their personal accounts, they may be eligible as indigents for up to \$45 of "gate money" to cover transportation or other release expenses. Inmates must have served at least 24 months to be eligible for such assistance. Inmates may also be provided civilian clothing if needed.

North Dakota

System Background

The North Dakota adult prison system held 1,168 inmates on June 30, 2003. During 2002, 770 inmates were released from state prisons. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) has three primary prisons and contracts with one private prison for women. The DOCR Field Services Division manages all adult community-placed offenders.

North Dakota eliminated determinate sentences more than 30 years ago and now uses a split sentencing approach for most felons. Courts impose a determinate sentence, then suspend a portion of the sentence that will be served on probation following completion of the prison term. Violent offenders must serve 85% of the prison sentences before being parole eligible. With accrual of time credits, most violent offenders are near release dates when they become parole eligible. A 6-member Parole Board has authority to parole adult inmates. The Board uses a matrix to guide parole release decisions, although some crimes (such as drug offenses) have statutory-mandatory minimums. The matrix incorporates factors such as seriousness of offenses and prior criminal records. It is common for inmates to be placed on parole supervision to complete the prison-term of a split sentence, then be transferred to probation supervision to complete the probation portion of a split sentence. The DOCR's Field Services Division provides supervision for both probation and parole.

North Dakota is participating in the National Institute of Corrections Transition from Prison to Community Initiative to refine the assessment, treatment, release planning, and aftercare services for inmates leaving prison. In recent years, the corrections system has increased support for evidence-based treatment initiatives and the rate of parole releases with treatment interventions has increased significantly.

Prison-Based Planning

Assessments and evaluations for new inmates are conducted within the first four weeks of being admitted to the DORC. A multi-disciplinary team called the "Case Planning Committee" recommends a service plan that addresses treatment, education, and vocational programming while the inmate is in prison, as well as service needs to be provided in the community upon release. The DOCR's assessment tools and Parole Board's matrix are used in planning and scheduling treatment and services. The improved planning process has resulted in moving offenders more efficiently through the system, but is also placing stress on delivery of prison-based programs as scheduled in the treatment plans. In addition to the case planning process and collaboration with the Parole Board on release planning, the DOCR also has the following programs and services to assist with inmates' transition to the community.

- A 30-50 hour prerelease course that addresses life skills and emphasizes job readiness. The course (previously available for only inmates in minimum security status) is expanding to other facilities.
- A project, supported by federal grant funds, provides intensive aftercare services

- for younger, high risk offenders returning to the Fargo and Bismarck areas.
- Some inmates are transferred to minimum security facilities or community transition centers in Bismarck and Fargo where they can be placed on work release at civilian jobs.
- A 90-bed, clinically-based community transition program is available for substance-abusing offenders and those with co-occurring disorders at the North Dakota State Hospital.

Parole Board Planning

A staff representative of the Parole Board is involved with the Case Planning Committee, described above, in reviewing inmate cases shortly after intake and planning future programming. The matrix is used at intake to calculate a parole hearing date. Board members conduct an initial “paper review” of the case plan several months into the inmates’ prison terms. Based on the review, the Board provides feedback to the DOCR regarding the plans and/or endorses the staff recommendations regarding the projected date for a first appearance before a panel of the Board to consider parole release. The Board meets monthly to hold hearings scheduled through the planning process. Judges, sheriffs and victims are notified when someone is coming before the Board and can provide input. Parole officers investigate the parole plans. Prison case managers also review the plans and may appear before the Board if there is a special need. The increase collaboration between the DOCR and the Board has resulted in higher rates of parole approval.

There are two major transitional facilities with special programming; if an offender is participating in either of these, a face to face hearing before the Board is not necessary. The average length of community supervision is about 4 months; however, it can be up to 12 months in duration.

North Dakota has a Pardon Advisory Board (PAB) appointed by the governor with the Attorney General serving as 1 of 5 members. Inmates with no legal remedy through the Parole Board due to a minimum mandatory sentence, a truth in sentencing judgment, a life sentence, or a sentence without parole are eligible for review by the PAB. The PAB may recommend that the governor grant commutations, conditional pardons, pardons, remissions of fine, or a reprieve.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates released from prison receive bus tickets to their release destination and the Salvation Army assists in providing civilian clothing if needed. No “gate money” is provided. Two halfway houses are often used for transitional housing and supervision and a third facility is used for temporary housing in Fargo. Offenders released to post-prison parole or probation supervision must report to field offices within 24 hours. The TPCI efforts are also planning expansion of community-based resources for released offenders.

Ohio

System Background

At the end of 2002, there were 45,646 inmates in the Ohio prison system and 25,635 inmates had been released during that year. Adult institutional and community corrections services, including supervision of inmates released to some type of post-prison supervision, are provided by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). The Adult Parole Authority (APA), within the ODRC Division of Parole and Community Services, paroles adult felons. Ohio has 3 adult female institutions and 30 male institutions, as well as contracts with two private prisons. Community Services also manages state-funded community based-corrections programs: Community-Based Correctional Facilities (1,400 residential beds as prison diversion for young adult offenders); Community Corrections Act (CCA) non-residential programs for at-risk offenders in 50 counties; and 1,626 halfway house beds for inmates leaving prisons. Community Services also manages the halfway house vendors for residential placement of adult offenders under the Adult Parole Authority. Halfway houses are used as a sanction option and for transitional control.

Prior to 1996 Ohio had indefinite sentences with discretionary release by the Parole Board. In July of 1996, "truth in sentencing" legislation made sentences definite. Judges impose sentences for specific prison terms and post prison supervision, called Post Release Control (PRC) is required of some offenders. Statutes require PRC for up to 5 years for offenders convicted of violent and serious crimes, and judges may stipulate PRC at sentencing. The Parole Board assesses inmates convicted since 1996 of less serious felonies and determines which ones are to be placed on PRC and determines the length of supervision. The Parole Board uses their guidelines to maintain some level of parity with the old and new sentencing codes for release supervision. In 2002, 60% of the inmates released were released to post-prison supervision.

Prison-Based Planning

During intake, the Sentence Computation Bureau develops a statutory release date for new inmates. The classification process uses a "dynamic domains" model for assessing program needs and the ODRC provides a range of prison programs that include substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, educational services, mental health services, parenting skills, vocational training, work release, and community service programs. Release planning and preparation begin at intake.

The ODRC has identified inmate reentry as a major organizational initiative and adopted a formal Ohio reentry plan that addresses assessment and planning, programming

focused on criminogenic needs, and transition support. A steering committee consisting of agency deputy directors provides system-wide planning and policy direction for reentry efforts. Higher risk inmates are designated “Reentry Intensive Offenders” and offenders presenting lower risk are designated “Reentry Basic Offenders.” A Reentry Accountability Plan (RAP) is developed for each inmate leaving prison, with assessment and release planning for higher risk offenders involving multi-disciplinary Reentry Management Teams. Case managers assist in reentry planning for inmates presenting less risk. For Reentry Intensive Offenders, release planning may enlist the assistance of community reentry management teams who use the RAP and information from prison staff to develop referrals to community resources. Such resources are identified by Offender Services Networks, which are teams established in 1995 to develop partnerships with community service providers.

Six months before release, inmates participate in the Release Preparation Program. The Program provides a series of workshops addressing job readiness, community resources, faith-based resources, substance abuse, mental health, community justice, and information regarding post prison supervision. Some inmates in minimum security facilities are placed in halfway houses during the last six months of their prison sentence and placed in work release programs. Federal reentry grant monies are targeting serious and violent offenders returning to two major urban areas and one rural area.

Parole Board Planning

The Ohio Parole Board consists of 9 members, including the chairperson. The Board conducts personal interviews for inmates still eligible for discretionary release under the older sentencing laws. The Board can impose special conditions for an offender approved for release on parole, transitional control or post release controls such as treatment/programming conditions, residency in a halfway house and drug testing. Parole Officers can add any justifiable condition to the Board’s requirements with approval of their supervisor. A day each month is scheduled for offenders’ families to meet with the Parole Board staff. Offender conferences are conducted regionally in every major metropolitan area. The conferences afford interested parties the opportunity to exchange information with the Board prior to the hearing.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates without funds in their account receive up to \$75 in “gate monies,” a bus ticket to a destination site if necessary, and civilian clothing is provided if needed. If an inmate is being placed in a halfway house, transportation is provided by the halfway house. Community Centers have been developed in Cleveland and Youngstown, with local Advisory Boards, to assist the offenders with community linkages and neighborhood resources. Victims are notified of releases if registered with the Victim Notification Section of the Office of Victim Services. The judge and prosecutor are notified. Predatory sex offenders must register with the Sheriff.

Ohio has established Citizen Circles in 19 communities around the state that can serve as resources for offenders in transition. Community members, representing a wide range of organizations and interests, address offenders' needs while still focusing on accountability issues. ODRC is planning to increase the number of circles throughout the state. Through the Ohio Community-Oriented Re-entry (CORE), ODRC partners with local service providers for services such as substance abuse, physical and mental health, supportive education, workforce participation, housing, family reunification, faith-based issues and mentoring.

Oklahoma

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 23,004 inmates in the Oklahoma prison system. During 2003, 7,849 inmates were released from prison. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) manages state prisons and provides statewide probation and parole services. The DOC's director operates under the authority of the Oklahoma Board of Corrections. The Pardon and Parole Board is a separate state agency and the paroling authority of adult offenders. The Board makes recommendations to the governor for all forms of executive clemency, including parole decisions.

Oklahoma revised sentencing laws in 1997 and enacted a Community Sentencing Act (CSA) intended to divert some felons from the state prison system. Approximately 7,000 offenders have been sanctioned to date under this program. For offenders sentenced to prison, a determinate sentencing system stipulates minimum sentences for most crimes, but not maximums. Offenders with prison terms for most non-violent or less serious felonies are eligible for parole consideration after serving one-third of the prison term. Since 2000, inmates convicted of more serious crimes must serve 85% of their sentences before being eligible for parole consideration.

Representatives of the DOC and the Pardon and Parole Board are involved in planning for revisions to current transition and reentry procedures.

Prison-Based Planning

Offenders arriving at the Assessment Center are given a battery of tests, including the LSI, to determine classification and treatment planning. A case plan is developed for each inmate to identify treatment needs that can be addressed during the inmate's prison term. Since 2002, the plans also address reentry and release issues. The plan directs an inmate into programs such as substance abuse treatment, criminal thinking/cognitive classes, educational programs, vocational training, sex offender treatment, and life skill classes. The substance abuse, sex offender treatment, and life skills classes are scheduled toward the end of an inmate's prison term and address transitional and reentry issues.

Case managers intensify release planning 180 days prior to release. Specific release plans are developed with the inmate, and identification and referrals to community resources are completed. The DOC also uses several levels of community placements for transitional assistance for some inmates. The levels include use of 6 community corrections centers (636 beds) operated by the DOC, 14 work centers (1,000 beds) that provide work opportunities with local governments, and a network of contract halfway houses (1,000 beds) that allow inmates to work at civilian jobs. A limited number of inmates are also released to a closely monitored form of home detention.

The DOC uses federal grant funds for an intensive reentry program for younger, high risk inmates returning to the Oklahoma City area. The project utilizes a community team to assist in release planning and coordination of aftercare services. The DOC is expanding the “wrap around” team model for release preparation and aftercare services for high risk offenders leaving four DOC facilities. The planning will begin 6 months prior to release, with teams continuing support for offenders up to a year after release.

Parole Board Planning

The Pardon and Parole Board schedules monthly hearings for inmates eligible for parole consideration. The hearings are open to the public and the Board does not require the inmate to be present in most cases. Approximately 6 weeks prior to the hearings, a Board investigator contacts the inmate and prepares a report for Board review. DOC staff play no formal role in the process, but have opportunities for input in the investigators' reports. The investigators contact district attorneys and victims for input and comment, as required by statute. There is a scoring process used by the Board, and evidence-based guidelines have not been established. The governor must approve recommendations for granting parole. The current governor is informally providing guidance for the DOC to move offenders to lower custody when appropriate and supporting a “re-entry focus” for the corrections system. Before an inmate is released on parole, the release plan is sent to the Parole and Probation district for verification. The approval rate for recommending parole is approximately 45% of the cases reviewed. Most offenders are on parole by statute for three years and then a final review takes place. The offender can then become “unsupervised” until the maximum date is served.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any DOC facility. Offenders are reassessed using the LSI instrument before release. The DOC requires that 5% of all inmate earnings from institutional or work release jobs be placed in savings for the inmate's release. If the inmate does not accrue that amount, the DOC will supplement their account at release to ensure that each inmate has at least \$50 at release. A bus ticket to the in-state release destination is provided if needed, as well as a change of civilian clothing if necessary. Upon release, victims who register are notified of inmate releases as are prosecutors. Sex offenders must register with the Sex Offender Administrator. Oklahoma counties received state funds for reentry assistance for some special needs offenders. The services include treatment, education, housing, and other transitional

services for approximately 200 offenders.

Oregon

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 12,422 inmates in the Oregon prison system. During 2002, 4,339 inmates were released from that system. The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) manages adult prisons and administers funding for community corrections services that are provided by agencies in county governments. The DOC operates 12 prisons and manages inmates with sentences of 12 months or longer. A three-member Board of Parole and Post Prison Supervision (Board) has authority to release inmates to parole if they were sentenced prior to 1989, and to set conditions and revoke the post prison supervision releases of inmates sentenced since 1989.

Statutory changes eliminated discretionary parole release for inmates sentenced after 1989. Less than 13% of Oregon inmates in 2004 were sentenced prior to 1989. Most inmates now serve prison terms under a sentencing guidelines system that provides sentencing ranges based on the categories of the crime. The ranges structure judges sentencing decisions for prison terms, as well as define the length of post prison supervision an offender will serve following the prison term. The terms of post prison supervision are usually 1 to 3 years, but may be up to life for certain violent crimes.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The DOC's management of inmates centers around the Oregon Accountability Model. At intake, assessments are conducted that focus on the offender's associates, substance abuse, community functioning, education/employment, mental health, marital and family life, and attitudes. Results are used to develop a corrections plan that guides inmate programming and release planning. Because of structured sentencing, the DOC is also able to project a release date at intake. The release date will be affected by accrual of time credits (with exceptions for some types of crimes) that are in increments of none, 10%, or 20% and are based on inmate behavior and program participation.

The corrections plan will direct an inmate to prison programs such as education classes, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, cognitive training, and work programs. The Model includes a philosophy for daily institutional supervision that includes continual demonstration of pro-social behavior by staff, reinforces positive inmate behavior, and redirects negative inmate behavior. The Model also includes release preparation that moves inmates, when possible, to facilities close to their release destination. Release plans are developed considering risk factors that can be addressed by services and programs in the community, and family reunification efforts are initiated. Release planning is coordinated among DOC staff, the Board, and county agencies that will assume post prison supervision. Release plans are sent to county community corrections agencies for investigation. If plans are not acceptable, recommendations may be made for special conditions that may include placement in subsidized housing or other community-based programs.

The DOC's goal is to provide a coordinated effort, from intake through release to community

supervision, that increases the offender's ability to succeed after release from prison.

Parole Board Planning

The Board has paroling authority for inmates sentenced prior to 1989, as previously mentioned, and uses a structured decision-making instrument in making decisions for a continually decreasing pool of inmates sentenced under the old laws. The Board also conducts administrative reviews of inmate case records, recommendations of DOC staff, and community corrections field investigations of release plans for inmates assigned to post prison supervision. The Board then issues "Orders of Supervision" that specify conditions of release to post release supervision.

Inmate Release Process

Within 6 months of release, most inmates are transferred to one of seven facilities designated as release facilities. Inmates are moved to the facility closest to their release destination to increase inmate linkages with families, with community corrections agencies that will assume community supervision, and with community resource agencies before the date of release. On the date of release, offenders may be provided \$25 "gate money" if that amount is not available in their personal accounts. Released inmates have also been provided bus tickets to their release destinations, but a recent reduction of statewide bus service is requiring the DOC to review transportation policies. In rare cases, the DOC will provide transportation. A change of civilian clothing will be provided if necessary.

NOTE: The DOC tracks several factors to measure effectiveness of the Oregon Accountability Model. One is the rate inmates complete the institutional phase of the prison-based programming. Another is the rate of recidivism, based on the reconviction rates of released inmates. While recent rates of approximately 30% are slightly higher than DOC goals of 28.8%, they are lower than national averages. Components of the Offender Accountability Model have been incorporated into NIC's Transition from Prison to Community Initiative that is being implemented in several other states.

Pennsylvania

System Background

The inmate count at the end 2002 was 40,172 adults in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC). The DOC released 10,723 inmates during that year; 65.6% of those inmates were released to parole and 30.3% were unconditional releases. The DOC manages all inmates with sentences longer than 5 years. Judges have the option of placing inmates with sentences of 2 to 5 years in either state or county prisons. The sentencing process sets minimum and maximum terms, with parole eligibility at completion of the minimum terms. The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole has paroling authority over all inmates with sentences of 2 years or more, whether in state or county facilities. Approximately 10% of the inmate population eligible for parole release by the Board are in the 67 county prisons in the state. The Board has both institutional and field staff to coordinate parole hearings, coordinate inmate parole releases, and supervise offenders paroled by the Board from state or county prisons.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The DOC assesses all inmates committed to state prisons. The DOC places inmates in facilities based on their security classifications and program needs. Program needs are outlined in a Correctional Plan for each inmate. The Correctional Plan is organized in five areas:

1. Work/Education (academic, vocational, and special education),
2. Citizenship (victim impact, decision-making, and pro-social skills),
3. Family/Relationships/Self (parenting, family visitation, and gender-specific programs),
4. Offense Related (substance abuse, sex offender treatment, and cognitive classes), and
5. Reentry.

Standardized Programs to address the five areas above are available at most DOC facilities. The reentry programs are delivered approximately one month before inmates are released.

Participation in reentry classes is mandatory for parolees, and optional (but encouraged) for inmates with unconditional releases. The classes, called Community Orientation Reintegration (COR), provide refresher courses for the Standardized Programs and address job readiness, parole orientation, life skills, financial management, and other transition issues.

Additionally, the DOC staff coordinate with institutional staff of the Board of Probation and Parole to prepare case summary information for examiners, who conduct interviews of inmates as they consider parole decisions.

Parole Board Planning

When inmates are within seven months of completing their minimum sentences, the Board of Probation and Parole staff begins to prepare for inmate interviews by parole examiners. The preparation includes coordination with DOC staff to update institutional progress, discussions with inmates regarding parole plans, notices to judges and district attorneys, collection of case histories, field investigations of parole plans, and scheduling of the interviews on the parole docket. A separate agency, the Office of Victim Advocate, communicates and solicits input

from crime victims.

Examiners interview inmates eligible for parole, then provide recommendations and reports to members of the Board. For non-violent offenders, 2 concurring votes (cast by an examiner and two Board members) are required for a decision to approve or deny release. For violent offenders, five concurring votes from Board members are required for a decision and the Board provides certifications to the Governor that all laws and regulations were followed when parole is granted to violent offenders. Statistics in 2004 indicate the Board approves parole for approximately 68% of inmates on the parole dockets. Most inmates are released to community supervision, but the Board also paroles some offenders to one of 25 community-based facilities located in urban areas of Pennsylvania.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates are released from all of the DOC facilities, where pre-release classes are provided prior to release. Prison staff work with inmates to reserve funds in their individual accounts for transitional needs, but no state funds are provided to inmates at release. In the case of indigent offenders, the state will provide bus fare to release destinations. Institutional parole staff coordinate with field staff and inmates being paroled to provide instructions and information regarding reporting to field offices. Institutional parole staff also coordinate the release of offenders paroled from county prisons by going on site and providing reporting instructions to offenders before their release. Most releases are scheduled during the first working days of the week to avoid supervision or service gaps that could occur if offenders are released later in the week.

Rhode Island

System Background

Rhode Island corrections is a unified system, with the Department of Corrections (RIDOC) providing all prison, jail, and community corrections services. An independent Parole Board has authority to release adult inmates with sentences longer than six months. On June 30, 2003, there were 3,569 inmates (both prison and jail) in state facilities. During 2002, 3,312 sentenced prisoners were released from RIDOC facilities. Most inmates are committed with split sentences that suspend part of a prison term and require probation supervision following prison release.

Rhode Island is participating in the National Governors' Association (NGA) Prisoner Re-Entry Policy Academy and in NIC's Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI).

Prison-Based Release Planning

Sentenced offenders are processed through an intake center where inmates are recommended for a variety of institutional programs such as substance abuse treatment, mental health services, education classes, vocational training, cognitive training, domestic violence classes, parenting, and sex offender treatment. RIDOC uses contract service providers for prison programs where possible to increase the potential of continuity of services for released inmates.

Transition planning begins when inmates are 6 to 9 months from release. RIDOC currently uses grant funds to contract with 11 organizations to provide transitional services. Those contractors provide a total of 29 discharge planners, with some targeting specific types of offenders (such as mentally ill, women, infectious diseases, substance abusers) or offenders returning to specific geographic regions. The planners help develop release plans that are provided to the Parole Board and to probation or parole officers. Higher risk offenders receive more intensive one-on-one counseling and transition assistance. Other offenders may participate in group meetings to discuss release plans and receive information regarding resources to assist re-entry. The contractors usually continue to assist offenders for up to 90 days after release, or for up to 12 months for some special populations. Federal grant funds support services of one of the 11 transitional services agencies, which provides intensive planning and community service for younger, high risk offender returning the Providence area. (Planning is underway to improve intake assessment processes, begin release planning at intake stages, and develop systems that improve availability of case information for agencies and staff involved in institutional and community programming.)

Parole Board Planning

The Board receives notices when inmates have completed one-third of sentences, which triggers scheduling of a parole hearing. The Board holds hearings and reviews case backgrounds and summaries prepared by prison counselors. Psychological reports are also prepared for most inmates and input may be provided from victims,

prosecutors, and judges. Hearings are held prior to actual parole release dates, which by statute may be after serving at least one-half, two-thirds, or more of the sentences (depending on the category of the conviction). If approved for parole, discharge planners mentioned above begin to assist in release planning. The Board frequently requires special conditions of parole such as electronic monitoring or placement in residential programs.

Inmate Release Process

About 300 sentenced inmates are released each month, with assistance and coordination of the discharge planners. Those agencies may provide bus tickets or coordinate transportation to the release destination. The state also provides “gate money” of \$20 for inmates who have no funds in their personal accounts. A change of civilian clothing will be provided if necessary. Discharge planners will assist newly released inmates during the first months of supervision with direct services or referral to community resources. The planners coordinate with probation or parole officers who assume supervision of released inmates. Due to the frequent use of split sentences, supervision is transferred to probation officers more often than parole staff.

NOTE: As a result of Rhode Island’s participation in the NGA and NIC programs, the state has a 3-tiered planning effort to improve offender release processes. Tier 1 involves a top-level policy group that includes the Governor’s office and directors of state agencies involved in corrections or services for offenders. Tier 1 monitors progress and guides overall re-entry planning. Tier 2 involves agencies’ senior managers who meet monthly to facilitate implementation and propose major policy or statutory changes to Tier 1. Tier 3 involves meetings twice a month of staff involved directly in re-entry service delivery. With much of the current transition services supported by grant funds, the planning process is also attempting a shift to more stable state funding.

South Carolina

System Background

The average daily prison population in Fiscal Year 2003 was 22,845 inmates. During FY 2003, 12,538 inmates were released from South Carolina prisons. Nearly half (45%) of the inmates released that year were discharged for expiration of sentences, 24% were placed on probation, and 22% were released on parole, including inmates sentenced under the Youthful Offender Act.

The SC Department of Corrections (SCDC) operates state prisons, a seven-member Board of Pardons and Paroles has authority to grant and revoke parole, and a separate Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services (DPPPS) provides community supervision for adults.

During the national economic slowdown of 2001 and 2002 the SCDC budget was reduced by 18%, the biggest percentage cut of any state prison system. The resulting staff and programmatic reductions have complicated efforts to expand inmate services or initiate new transitional and re-entry efforts. Continued budget limitations have resulted in the SCDC filling only the staffing vacancies in critical positions such as security, health, and food services.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Tentative release dates are set for all incoming inmates, but release planning does not usually begin until inmates near release dates. Violent offenders (with possible sentences of 20 years or more) are not eligible for parole. These offenders must serve 85% of their sentences and two years of community supervision upon release. Most non-violent offenders are eligible for parole after serving 25% of their sentences. Six months prior to parole eligibility, prison staff assist DPPPS parole examiners and field officers prepare for parole hearings as described below.

A case manager or counselor at each institution will meet with inmates to be discharged for completion of sentences to review the offenders' needs and provide referral to known community services. Similar services are provided to inmates being released on parole, if requested by the inmate. Approximately 15-20% of inmates being released for expiration of sentences are processed through pre-release programs that provide classes on life skills, provide referrals to community and employment services, conduct needs assessments, and prepare identification cards. The programs for men and women are housed in different facilities, with the men's program lasting 30 days and women's program between 30-60 days. Some offenders with pending release dates are placed in one of 4 work release centers to begin seeking and working in jobs in the community.

Federal "Going Home" grants are now used to provide re-entry assistance for targeted, higher-risk offenders between ages 17 and 35 returning to seven designated communities in the state. The program includes additional assessment and release

planning, more intensive programming before release, and 12-18 month community aftercare supervision and support. There is also a special unit for HIV positive inmates that provides more planning and linkages with community services for that special population.

Parole Board Planning

Six months before parole eligibility, parole examiners and pre-parole investigators from DPPPS began preparation of a “parole case summary” that is provided to Board members two weeks prior to a parole hearing. Inmates are interviewed to determine parole plans that investigated in the field. The summary also contains risk assessments, case background, input from victims, judges, law enforcement, and others in support or opposition to parole. The Board currently rejects the majority of parole applications. The Board sometimes grants parole on the condition that offenders complete programs such as the 90-day substance abuse program provided the SCDC.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates leaving state corrections facilities are not provided “gate money.” They do receive a bus ticket to their in-state parole or release destination and a change of civilian clothing if necessary. Nearly half of inmates released in 2003 completed sentences and were not supervised after release due to the truth-in-sentencing provisions of state law or the decisions of the Board to deny parole release. Therefore, more judges are opting to impose “split sentences” that result in a period of probation supervision following prison. Nearly one-fourth of the inmates released in 2003 were returning to communities under probation supervision by DPPPS staff.

DPPPS and CSDC staff and managers are engaged in current planning and coordination with community agencies, faith-based groups, and governmental agencies to expand services for inmates leaving prison.

South Dakota

System Background

During Fiscal Year 2002 (July 2002- June 2003), the average prison inmate population in South Dakota was 3,098. There were 2,144 inmates released from state prisons during that time period. The South Dakota Department of Corrections manages state prisons and provides supervision for inmates released on parole or placed in community-based programs. The Department also provides support services to a nine-member Parole Board. Most inmates leave state prison in one of the following methods:

1. Release to community-based programs such as Work Release or Community Service;
2. Release on parole; or
3. Expiration of sentence.

South Dakota's paroling system could be described as "presumptive parole." Statutes set a percentage of time that inmates must serve on their sentence before reaching an initial parole date. On that date, an inmate's parole release may be approved by the facility warden if the inmate has complied with an "Individual Program Directive"(IPD) and has accepted terms of a release plan. The length of time served to reach the initial parole date varies from 25% to 75% of the sentence, based on the category of the crime of conviction. If the warden does not authorize the initial release, the Parole Board is the first point of appeal and the inmate appears before the Board. The Board may override the warden's decision and grant parole, or deny parole and reconsider release at a later date. Records of all case planning and program participation are entered into the department's computerized database that is accessible to prison and field staff.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Upon intake, a sentence computation is completed that establishes the initial parole date for inmates entering the South Dakota prison system. Based on diagnostic testing and case records, staff complete an IPD. The initial classification dictates institutional assignment, and the IPD drives program participation and parole release. The IPD identifies programming that the inmate must complete to be approved for release at the initial parole date. Institution programming primarily consists of combinations of the following:

- Chemical dependency treatment,
- Sex offender treatment,
- Education (GED level),
- Parenting classes (required of most inmates), and
- Life skills / re-entry classes.

If participation in prison-based programs cannot be scheduled before the inmate reaches the initial parole date, completion of prescribed programming becomes a condition of parole release.

When an inmate nears the initial parole date, the case manager verifies the release plan with the inmate and requests an investigation of the plan by field staff. If the inmate has

complied with the IPD and the field investigation is approved, the case manager recommends that the warden approve parole release. The state's Director of Parole Services also reviews cases investigated and recommended for parole prior to release of the inmate. If the field investigation is not approved, the case manager coordinates with the inmate to develop an alternate plan.

If an inmate's IPD requires participation in three or more of the program areas previously described, the inmate is also required to complete a Life Skills course that provides pre-release programming. That course addresses: job seeking and retention, financial responsibility, anger/stress management, communication skills, cognitive skills, and re-entry skills. Women are also provided classes in prevention of domestic violence. Other inmates make voluntarily participate in these classes that are scheduled within six months of the inmates' release. The Life Skills course is currently funded with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Other grant funds support two specialized field agents who assist with release planning and transitional services, especially with high risk/high needs cases. (Adequate housing is frequently a problem with that population.) Grant funds are also used to purchase some community-based transition services.

Parole Board Planning

The Parole Board is not directly involved in the process of releasing inmates at the initial parole release date if (1) the inmate has complied with the IPD, (2) agrees to the conditions of release, and (3) the release plan has been verified and approved by field staff. If the warden determines non-compliance and does not approve parole, the Parole Board conducts a hearing within one to twenty-four months. The Board may decide to parole or deny parole, resulting in some inmates serving their full sentence. The Board is also responsible for parole revocation decisions.

Inmate Release Process

Some inmates are placed in work release or community service projects that result in housing in local jails or other short-term placements. These inmates must be returned to a state prison for out-processing and release. Most releases are completed early during business hours on the date of release. Inmates are provided \$50 "gate money" and a bus ticket to their parole or release destination. The Department's inmate shuttle is available to transport some inmates to their release destinations. If the inmate does not have civilian cloths, he or she is provided one change of clothing. Inmates taking medications are provided with several days of meds and are usually scheduled for an appointment to renew subscriptions at the release destination.

Notifications of inmate releases are provided to victims who desire such notice, and to judges and district attorneys in South Dakota.

Tennessee

System Background

At midyear 2003, there were 25,409 prison inmates in Tennessee. More than 19,300 of those inmates were in 15 facilities managed by the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC), 3 of which are privately operated. The remaining state prisoners were being held in county jails awaiting space in state prisons. A separate agency, the Tennessee Board of Probation & Parole provides probation and parole services statewide, with the 7-member Board authorized to release prison inmates. In Fiscal Year 2003, 5003 inmates were released from TDOC facilities. Nearly 46% were released on parole, 40% were discharged for completion of sentence, and 13% were placed on probation or in community corrections.

The current director of TDOC is promoting expansion of offender programming and treatment, with an emphasis on improving pre-release and transition programming. Staff of the TDOC and Board of Probation & Parole are engaged in regular meetings to improve transition and inmate re-entry procedures. Corrections officials are also attempting to improve collaboration with other state agencies and community resources that could assist parolees.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Upon intake, inmates are classified and “release eligibility dates,” or RED, are calculated. That date is determined by the sentencing judge and is commonly in the range of 30-50% of the imposed sentence. The assessment process also identifies offender needs and matches inmates with TDOC programs that consist of mental health services, sex offender treatment, substance abuse treatment (education through therapeutic communities), basic education, and inmate work programs.

Preparation for parole hearings and possible release begins about 6 months before the RED. TDOC staff notify the Parole Board of the approaching RED for scheduling of a hearing. Prison counselors coordinate with institutional parole staff to prepare information for parole hearings. Counselors conduct a release preparation meeting with inmates that includes completion of a checklist called a “Service Availability Form” two months before release. That form addresses 12 issues related to planning for inmate transition and release.

Inmates who have a firm parole or discharge date are given priority for a formal, 90-day pre-release program. Only 20% of inmates nearing release are enrolled in the program in 2004, but the agency plans to triple the level of participation in 2005. The program includes a cognitive training component, life skills classes, and a restoration of citizenship class.

Tennessee has also used federal grants to initiate a re-entry program, called “Bridges” for 300 high risk, youthful offenders. The program includes comprehensive pre-release planning involving institutional staff and field officers who meet with the inmate. More

intensive assessments are completed, referrals are completed to community programs such as mental health or substance abuse treatment, employment assistance is arranged, local law enforcement is advised of releases, and more intensive supervision and aftercare services are provided.

Parole Board Planning

An institutional parole officer is placed at all state prisons to coordinate with TDOC staff in preparing for parole hearings and coordinating parole releases. After being notified of approaching REDs, parole staff and prison counselors contact inmates to determine parole plans, hearing dates are set, and notices of hearings are sent to crime victims, prosecuting attorneys, and others who may have input at hearings. Requests are made to Probation and Parole field offices to verify home and employment plans submitted by inmates. Parole hearings are usually conducted by hearing officers who do not have authority for parole decisions, but make recommendations to the Board. Depending on the type of offense, a decision to release or deny parole must be based on three or four concurring votes from members of the Board.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any of Tennessee's facilities. Inmates may be eligible for "gate money" of \$30 for completion of sentence, or \$75 for first-time paroles, if the inmates' personal accounts have not held these sums within 30 days of release. Released offenders are also provided with a bus ticket to their instate destinations or to the state line closest to their out-of-state destination. If needed, one change of civilian cloths is provided. Inmates being released to parole supervision must report to the probation / parole officer within 72 hours of release.

Texas

System Background

The Texas prison system held 164,222 inmates on June 30, 2003. During 2003, 68,595 inmates were released from Texas prisons. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is responsible for operation of state prisons and state jails, as well as contracts for private prison services for state inmates. There are 106 prisons and state jails (which are separate from local jail facilities) under TDCJ jurisdiction. TDCJ is overseen by the 9-member Texas Board of Criminal Justice. The primary offender management divisions of TDCJ are the Correctional Institution Division, Community Justice Assistance Division, and the Parole Division. There are 121 local probation departments (Community Supervision and Corrections Departments) that deliver adult felony and misdemeanor probation services in the 254 counties. TDCJ has established a Reentry Committee consisting of heads of agency departments to conduct system-wide planning and coordination of reentry efforts.

TDCJ facilities hold two categories of inmates:

11. Offenders, sometimes referred to as “confinees,” sentenced to state jails for 75 days to 2 years for convictions of lesser felonies. These offenders are not eligible for parole, although a small percentage return to communities under probation supervision. (At the end of 2002, approximately 9% of the TDCJ inmate population were state jail offenders.)
12. Offenders, sometimes referred to as “state prisoners,” convicted of more serious felonies with prison terms of 2 years or more. Most inmates convicted of non-violent crimes in this category become eligible for parole after serving one-fourth of their sentences. Inmates convicted of more serious and violent crimes must serve half of their sentences before reaching parole eligibility.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (Board), independent of TDCJ, has parole release authority for the “state prisoners” described above.

Prison-Based Planning

The intake and classification process for new inmates includes diagnostics in areas of sociological, medical, and treatment needs such as substance abuse, education, and sexual abusing behavior. Individualized treatment plans are developed and custody levels assigned. Calculations for inmates’ parole eligibility dates are also completed at intake and Institutional Parole Officers are available to discuss parole issues with inmates. Inmates are placed in facilities based on classification and referred to TDCJ institutional programs that include substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, educational courses, behavior-modification programs, mental health services, faith-based programs, and vocational training.

TDCJ attempts to move inmates from higher to lower security facilities as parole eligibility or release dates near. Most state prisoners are released to some form of supervision (84% in 2002) even though parole approval rates have been dropping. Some inmates sentenced prior to 1996 may earn time credits that result in their mandatory release with conditions set by the Board. Inmates sentenced since 1996 must be approved for discretionary release or mandatory release

by the Board. A variety of release preparation programs may begin up to 2 years prior to an inmate's release. Those programs include:

- Employment readiness programs, such as Project Re-Integration (RIO) provides prerelease and post release assistance in finding jobs;
- Work release opportunities through halfway houses or county jail placements;
- Prerelease programs with emphasis on substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, and mental health services;
- A 60-day life skills reintegration course provided through the TDCJ educational system; and
- Programs meeting gender-specific needs of women offenders, family reunification, and faith-based programs.

Federal reentry grant monies are being used for certain serious or violent offenders who are housed in segregation due to disciplinary actions and unable to participate in normal prerelease programs. Some programming is computer-based and delivered in-cell. Components include cognitive restructuring, gang renunciation, and anger management, with community assistance for offenders for up to one year after release. Three facilities are designated as prerelease centers.

Parole Board Planning

The Board has 3-member panels located in six major state locations for hearings. Six months prior to an inmate's initial parole eligibility date, staff begin to gather and review case information. The process begins 4 months before a Board review of a case previously denied parole. Institutional Parole Officers interview the offenders nearing parole consideration, but the majority of offenders are not personally interviewed by the Board. The Board uses a risk-based assessment instrument to assist on parole decisions. Offenders are either directly paroled, paroled on condition that the inmate complete a TDCJ program or prerelease placement, set for later parole consideration, or denied parole. A field investigation is completed to verify the parole plan prior to release. About 13,000 inmates are paroled each year and the Board approves parole for approximately 30% of the cases reviewed. Parole facilities include 7 privately-run halfway houses (1197 beds), 9 District Resource Centers, 1,802 intermediate sanction beds, and 2,400 pre-parole transfer beds for those within two years of mandatory release.

Inmate Release Process

Most male inmates are released from Huntsville and females from Gatesville, Texas. In Huntsville a local Baptist Church has a Welcome Back Program that assists offenders with linkages to community programs and resources. If an offender is to be supervised, the process begins 120 days before release. Prison inmates can get \$50 plus a bus ticket upon release and another \$50 when they report to their parole officer. District Offices have "clothes closets" to assist those in need and larger districts have District Resource Centers where programs and services are delivered, including referral to community resources. The terminally ill inmates are released by medical staff through local nursing homes. The mentally ill and mentally retarded are linked to local providers through an "express appointment" process. The sentencing judges, victims, families (if going to live there), district attorneys, and local law enforcement are notified of pending releases.

Utah

System Background

At the end of 2002, there were 5,567 inmates in Utah prisons. In 2002, 2,877 inmates were released from those prisons, and 2,245 of those released were placed under parole supervision. Adult correctional services in Utah are consolidated under the Department of Corrections (DOC). The DOC operates two prisons and four community corrections facilities, and provides statewide probation and parole supervision. A five-member Board of Pardons and Parole has authority to release adult inmates on parole.

Prison-Based Release Planning

The release process for inmates in Utah involves a three-phased re-entry Initiative, 1) Institutional programming, 2) Institutional transition programs, and 3) Community-based support.

Phase 1: At intake, a battery of assessments is used to develop an “Offender Management Plan (O.M.P.).” The plan reflects an estimated release time, but the exact date is set by the Board of Parole. The Board may set the parole release date at the initial parole hearing during the first year of incarceration. That release date may be set as much as two years prior to the actual release. The O.M.P. is entered into the Department’s computer tracking system, accessible to both prison and field staff. The O.M.P. will prescribe program participation from either a Core Curriculum and/or from Crime Specific programs. The Core Curriculum includes education courses, job readiness and training, and cognitive skills. The Crime Specific programs include substance abuse and sex offender treatment. To reward and encourage completion of the O.M.P., inmates who are discipline free and maintain participation in programming will receive increased privileges within their institution.

Phase 2: When an inmate is within five months of an approved parole release date, an Institutional Parole Officer joins prison staff in preparing for the inmate’s release. The parole plan is finalized and investigated by field officers, the inmate completes classes on job preparation and parole, resumes are referred to state workforce offices, referrals are made to community-based programs or resources, and a state identification card is processed. Some higher risk offenders are enrolled in more intensive pre-release classes. Also, family orientation workshops are held to explain the release process and requirements of the inmates’ parole.

Phase 3: See “Inmate Release Process” below.

Parole Board Planning

The Board of Pardons and Paroles usually holds an initial parole hearing during the first year of an inmate’s prison term. The prison staff are notified three to four months prior to the hearing to prepare case background information. The Board uses a matrix that structures decision-making and establishment of a parole release date. Use of the matrix allows the Board to establish a parole release date for most cases that is well in advance of the release, sometimes as much as two years prior to release. If the Board is not prepared to set a release date at the initial hearing, later parole hearing dates are

set. Crime victims may choose to be notified of all parole hearings and of changes in the status of offenders.

Inmate Release Process

Phase 3: The third phase of Utah's re-entry process involves community-based support following release. The corrections system designates Tuesdays as the weekday of release. Parole release dates are set on Tuesdays to provide more efficiency in release processing and to ensure that field staff have at least three normal work days to address transition issues with newly released parolees. Institutional parole officers review the financial resources and needs of individual inmates to determine if they will receive "gate" money, which may be up to an amount of \$100. Civilian clothing is provided if needed. Inmates are generally responsible for their transportation to the parole destination, but in some cases the Department will provide transportation in state vehicles.

During the first 45-69 days of parole supervision, parolees are supervised by "transition agents" who specialize in addressing re-entry issues and assisting the offender establish stability in the community. The Department contracts for 50 beds in a residential facility in Salt Lake City to provide temporary housing for homeless inmates and uses day reporting centers to track and assist newly-released parolees. The Department also funds an employment specialist with the state's workforce agency to provide assistance to parolees. Higher risk parolees are referred to local "police review boards" in the communities where they are paroled to allow law enforcement to be aware of their backgrounds and parole plans. After the reentry phase, the parolee is transferred to a regular parole caseload.

Note: The Department's Transition Coordinator reports that the renewed focus on re-entry has promoted more collaboration between institutional and field staff and created a shared departmental objective. The Reentry Initiative has also resulted in agency efforts to expand staffing in the field and increase the number of community-based alternatives and services for offenders.

Vermont

System Background

On June 30, 2003, there were 1,984 inmates in Vermont's corrections system, which includes both prison and jail functions. During 2002, 1,857 inmates had been released from the Vermont facilities. The Vermont corrections system is unified, with the Department of Corrections (DOC) having jurisdiction over all adult institutions (prison and jail), probation, and parole services. The DOC operates 9 facilities and 17 community-based offices. The jail/prison population includes about 2,000 inmates within correctional facilities and another 2,000 offenders who are sentenced but not incarcerated. The Commissioner of the DOC reports to the Agency of Human Services.

Vermont has indeterminate sentencing for most felonies, with mandatory sentences for some categories of serious crimes. Inmates must serve the minimum sentence, minus sentence reduction credits, to become eligible for parole. The Board of Parole is appointed by the Governor and may grant parole to adult offenders. If not approved for parole, inmates serve the maximum term (minus sentence reduction credits) in a DOC facility. Vermont is in the process of implementing a transition model that integrates the following components:

1. Corrections treatment interventions, based on principles of risk, needs, and responsivity;
2. Restorative/community justice approaches that involve community members in offender management; and
3. Intermediate sanctions that are used for graduated correctional placements into and out of prison.

Prison-Based Planning

Intake, classification, and evaluation processes all begin in the detention settings. The facilities are organized into "functional units" for offender groupings such as sex offenders, cognitive restructuring for violent offenders, and youth educational units. Minimum and maximum release dates are determined during intake, and within 30-60 days of commitment an "Offender Responsibility Plan" is developed. The Plan, developed with inmate's involvement, is based on assessments that identify offender risk levels and target prison programs that best reduce criminal behavior. Inmates are assigned to facilities based on risks and program needs. DOC programs include education, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, cognitive training for violent offenders, and domestic abuse treatment.

When inmates are placed at their assigned facilities, DOC staff coordinate a series of closed-circuit meetings with inmates and Community Panels from the regions where offenders will reside after release from prison. The Community Panels can include victims, victim advocates, treatment staff, community agencies, and community members at large. Much of this model for reentry has evolved from Vermont's intensive work in restorative justice. The Panels and inmates address issues related to the offenders' accountability to victims and communities, as well as the offenders' return to

the communities. The DOC is providing funding to local governments to staff the Panels and operate Community Justice Centers. The Centers are focal points for Panel operations and coordination for local agencies and providers of services for offenders under community supervision. The DOC plans to have 18 Centers in operation statewide by the end of 2005.

As inmates near their parole eligibility dates, the DOC transfers them to facilities closest to their release destinations when possible. Reentry units in the facilities begin more intensive interactions with the Community Panels regarding release planning. Prior to implementation of the new reentry model, the DOC used furloughs to initiate the transitional process from prison to communities for inmates. More than 40% of the inmates leaving prison were placed on furloughs. Recent statutory changes established a legal status of “conditional reentry,” allowing the inmates to return to a form of community supervision prior to parole eligibility. The placements follow completion of prison-based programs outlined in the Offender Responsibility Plan and coordination with Community Panels. The DOC has established a network of Community Corrections Service Centers to provide intensive case management and the expanding number of Community Justice Centers will provide each community with offices to facilitate matching offenders with local aftercare services. When inmates are scheduled for parole hearings, DOC’s prison or field staff are involved in preparation of reports to the Board and may appear at Board hearings. Federal grant funds are supplementing services under the new reentry model for younger, high risk populations returning to the larger communities in Vermont.

Parole Board Planning

When inmates are reaching parole eligibility and meet with the Board, many have been placed in “conditional re-entry” status and have demonstrated whether they are, or are not, adjusting in the community. DOC case workers and/or probation and parole officers present cases before the Board. The Board may grant parole, or reschedule annual reviews for parole consideration. Even if parole is not granted, the DOC has the option to continue inmate placements on “conditional reentry” status or return them to custody for unsatisfactory adjustment in the community.

Inmate Release Process

With the use of “conditional release” placements, many offenders are already in communities when officially released from inmate status. The DOC also attempts to relocate inmates to the closest facility to their release destination to reduce transportation needs. A DOC voucher system is available to provide transitional services such as temporary housing, food, and clothing. In the future, up to \$2,000 per inmate can be allocated through the Community Justice Centers for reentry purposes. Victims who have registered for notification are contacted regarding inmates’ release dates, as well as law enforcement agencies for inmates convicted for certain categories of crimes. Community Panels in the Criminal Justice Centers are also notified of releases.

Virginia

System Background

The Virginia Department of Corrections manages adult prisons and provides community supervision for adult felons through their Division of Community Corrections. The prison population at the end of 2003 was 31,728, and 11,931 inmates were released from custody during that year. The Virginia Parole Board has discretion to release adult felons sentenced for crimes committed prior to 1995.

Since 1995, felons are sentenced under a guidelines system that abolished parole and requires inmates to serve at least 85% of the imposed sentence. Inmates may earn time credits to reduce their sentences by no more than 15%. Judges may also suspend a portion of the sentence and require a period of probation of up to five years following the prison term (most inmates have such a sentence). If no probation period is ordered, a "post-release supervision" term of up to three years follows the prison term. The Parole Board is authorized to revoke post-release supervision and return the inmate to complete the full prison sentence.

Virginia is participating in the National Governor's Association Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy to increase inmate reentry coordination among state agencies and expanding support for released inmates.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Prison officials project inmate release dates upon intake and use those dates to classify and plan program tracks. Treatment needs are also identified at intake and a release plan is developed that is modified as necessary. Inmates must comply with program assignments and demonstrate acceptable institutional behavior to earn sentence reduction credits. When inmates come within six months of their release dates, several activities are initiated to prepare for release. Case managers arrange for acquisition of proper identification documents. Pre-release classes are attended by approximately 65% of inmates scheduled for release. The classes vary by institution, but usually consist of at least 60 hours of programming such as problem-solving, job readiness, anger management, communication skills, money management, and other life skills.

Before release, staff of the Offender Release Unit coordinate a variety of activities for each inmate. Probation and Parole field staff are notified of the pending release date and plan (most plans are not investigated prior to release at the current time unless there are unique circumstances). There are also notices to registered victims, judges, prosecutors, and local law enforcement agencies. Notification and registration of sex offenders are coordinated with state police.

A limited number of inmates who have completed the DOC's therapeutic community substance abuse program are placed into contracted community-based transitional programs 90 days before release and some inmates are placed in jail-based work release programs.

The DOC is currently piloting a pre-release process that may eventually be expanded statewide and be used for returning most inmates to the community. The model has three-phases and is currently in operation using five local jails. In Phase 1, the inmate is returned to a jail for approximately 45 days of pre-release classes. Sessions are coordinated by a DOC transition coordinator, but using local resources and presenters. Phase 2 provides for 45 days of work release with the inmate returning to the jail in non-working hours. Phase 3 lasts for several weeks following the inmate's release and includes supervision by the Probation and Parole Division, with some services and classes continuing at the jail.

Parole Board Planning

Discretionary parole release is being phased out in Virginia. The Parole Board has discretion to release a declining number of inmates in the prison system whose crimes were committed before 1995. Many of those remaining inmates have longer sentences and, if not granted discretionary parole, are released under mandatory parole supervision. In 2003, 576 inmates were released through discretionary parole and 2,203 by mandatory parole. By comparison, 9,151 of the inmates released in 2003 were sentenced under the guidelines system and most of those returned to a period of probation supervision.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates may be released from any of the state-operated prison facilities. Each offender receives a bus ticket to their instate parole destination, or the DOC will transport sex offenders and inmates being placed in work release or other special transition programs. If an inmate does not have at least \$25 in their personal accounts at release, the state will supplement their accounts up to that amount for "gate money." Civilian clothing will be provided as necessary.

Washington

System Background

There were 16,284 inmates in Washington prisons on June 30, 2003. During the preceding year (2002), 7,401 inmates had been released from state prisons. The Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) operates the adult correctional institutions and administers adult probation, parole, and community supervision. The DOC operates 15 prisons (including one pre-release center) and 13 work release centers, of which one is totally state operated.

Offenders sentenced prior to July, 1984, were under an indeterminate sentencing policy with discretionary parole. The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board is an independent agency reporting to the governor that maintains release authority for approximately 550 inmates sentenced under the old laws. A Sentencing Reform Act, which took effect on July 1, 1984, instituted determinate sentencing and abolished parole for crimes committed after June 30, 1984. Sentencing guidelines are used to determine the length of prison terms, but inmates may accrue time credits to reduce sentences up to 30%, or 15% for sex offenders. Under new laws, inmates are released to “community custody” (under jurisdiction of courts) after completion of prison terms. Community custody supervision of up to 4 years is required for all inmates convicted of violent crimes and other serious offenses. The DOC does have discretion to conduct risk assessments of non-violent, less serious offenders and release such offenders without post-prison supervision.

The DOC’s Office of Correctional Operations supervises adult parolees sentenced before July 1, 1984, offenders released from prison to “community custody,” and offenders placed on community supervision (probation).

Prison-Based Planning

Offenders are given a battery of assessment instruments during intake. These include medical, mental health, risk assessment, chemical dependencies, education level, and intelligence. Classification is primarily based on the current crime, criminal history, institutional behavior to date and escape risk. Inmates are referred to a range of prison programs that include substance abuse counseling and treatment, cognitive skills training, education courses, vocational training, violence prevention, psychological counseling, and victim awareness.

Reassessments and classification reviews are completed to move inmates to less secure settings as they near their release dates. Many inmates are placed in work release or pre-release centers where they may have access to civilian jobs and community educational opportunities. Within two years of release, most inmates participate in the “Offender Change Programs” that provide classes on life skills development and cognitive training. Higher risk inmates also are placed in a more intensive “Metamorphosis” program, a 100-hour program addressing cognitive,

interpersonal skills, job readiness, parenting, and financial management. Risk Management Specialists also assist with transition planning and community linkages for higher risk inmates. Those Specialists coordinate with law enforcement agencies in communities where inmates will live and contact victims to address their concerns in the transition process.

Federal grant funds support intensive reentry efforts for younger, higher risk offenders returning to three counties. The project includes use of Neighborhood Readiness Teams to assist in job placement, mentoring, and basic clothing needs.

Parole Board Planning

For indeterminate sentences, the Parole Board sets the minimum date of release. Relatively few inmates remain in the system sentenced under indeterminate laws, reducing the Board's role in the release process for most offenders. The Correctional Counselors work with the offenders to prepare for the hearings and develop "mutual agreement plans" with the Board that maps out a plan for release. However, recent statutory changes have assigned the Board responsibilities for reviewing sex offender cases and authority for extending correctional supervision with reviews every two years.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates released directly into the community get transportation and \$40 gate money. Victims, if requested, are notified of the release. It is usually up to the offender to notify the family unless a family member is a victim(s). Sex Offenders must register with the Sheriff and the Community Corrections Officers see that this contact is made.

Offenders returning to some form of community supervision must report to DOC community field offices to begin supervision. High-risk offenders are assisted by Risk Management Specialists in establishing family connections, job transition, and victim awareness issues.

West Virginia

System Background

On June 30, 2003 there were 4,703 state prison inmates in West Virginia. During 2003, 1,886 inmates were released from state prisons. The Division of Corrections (DOC) operates adult prisons and supervises adults released to parole supervision. The DOC, which is within the West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, operates 9 prisons and 3 community-based facilities. Two of the community facilities are work release centers and one is a DUI treatment/work release center. The Board of Parole (Board) is the paroling authority for adult offenders.

West Virginia's criminal sentencing structure has a combination of indeterminate and determinate sentences. For most lesser felonies, indeterminate sentences are imposed with minimum terms and maximum terms (usually up to 10 years). Inmates with indeterminate sentences become eligible for parole after serving the minimum term. There are exceptions for crimes involving firearms or distribution of drugs near schools. Inmates convicted of more serious and violent crimes are sentenced to determinate sentences that usually exceed 10 years. In most cases, inmates sentence to determinate sentences must serve one-fourth of the terms to be parole eligible. There are some categories of crimes requiring completion of one-third of the term or a specific number of years before being eligible for parole consideration.

The DOC has established a Reentry Steering Committee to conduct system-wide planning and coordination of transition services for offenders. The Committee has been endorsed by the Governor's office and includes representation from state mental health, social services, education, labor, Parole Board, and other agencies that provide services for offenders. The DOC is also using federal grant funds to enhance offender assessment, case management, and release planning within the agency. The funds provide additional aftercare services for targeted younger, high risk offenders.

Prison-Based Planning

The DOC operates two male and one female intake centers. New commitments are classified within 30 days of arrival. Screening includes a variety of risk assessments, psychological testing, and intelligence testing. Special instruments are used for assessments of sex offenders, substance abusers, and mentally ill, and complete social histories with violence risk appraisals are also completed. A program plan is initiated for each inmate at intake. Reentry planning begins soon after placement in one of the DOC's housing units and is reviewed and updated every six months. Inmates are referred to a range of prison programs that are divided into the following general categories: Educational Studies; Substance Abuse Treatment; Affective Skills Programs; Social Skills Programs; Life Skills Programs; Transition Skills Programs; Religious Services; and Recreation Services. The DOC streamlined programs to emphasize interventions based on evidenced-based principles.

Within 6 months of parole release, field parole officers collaborate with case managers on the specific needs of individual offenders nearing release. An aftercare plan is developed with

linkages to community resources. The DOC implemented a new reentry program in 2004 that includes updating offender assessments within 3 months of release, and using assessments to refer inmates to standardized programs such as life skills, relapse prevention, GED classes, or similar transition classes.

Parole Board Planning

An institutional parole (IPO) officer works at each DOC facility to facilitate parole activities with the Parole Board. When inmates near parole eligibility, the IPO prepares a pre-parole report that is sent to the Board for hearings. Three-member panels of the Board conduct parole hearings, seeing inmates in person or conducting some hearings by video. Victims are notified 45 days prior to hearings, and justice officials (judges, prosecutors, and arresting law enforcement agencies) are notified 2 weeks prior to hearings to provide input to the Board. The home plan is usually sent to parole field staff for verification after the Board has approved parole release. The IPO may request the investigation prior to the Board hearings if release appears to be likely. The IPO may attend the hearings, but usually does not participate in the proceedings. IPOs also coordinate quarterly Pre-Parole Orientations where field parole officers come to facilities to explain the parole requirements and supervision process for inmates nearing parole eligibility.

Inmate Release Process

The DOC is implementing a "Prescriptive Case Management" model in 2004 that places a stronger emphasis on release planning. Field parole officers and DOC case managers are beginning to develop post-release plans for inmates. Inmates are released from any of the DOC facilities, and some are placed in one of three community facilities that provide work release and transition assistance. Bus transportation and civilian clothing are provided for indigent offenders, but no routine "gate money" is provided. Case managers monitor inmates' personal accounts to encourage savings for release purposes. A private fund provides \$300 for inmates who are being discharged for completion of sentences. Inmates released to parole supervision, estimated to be 65% of the inmates leaving prison, must report to a field parole office within 24 hours of release from prison.

Wisconsin

System Background

On June 30, 2003 there were 22,366 prison inmates in Wisconsin, and during 2002 the state released 7,699 inmates (with sentences of one year or longer) from prison. The Department of Corrections (DOC) manages 16 state prisons and also provides adult probation and parole services statewide. The Wisconsin Parole Commission has parole release authority for inmates whose crimes occurred on or before December 31, 1999. Most of those inmates become eligible for parole after serving one-quarter of their sentences.

Offenders sentenced for crimes committed since that date are under truth-in-sentencing laws that do not provide for discretionary parole release. Under those newer laws inmates serve the entire confinement portion of the sentence imposed by the judge, then are released to a period of Extended Supervision set by the courts that is equal to at least one-fourth of the confinement portion of the sentence.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Inmates entering prison are processed through assessments and evaluations that result in facility assignments and “institutional plans” that identify appropriate programs. Prison programs include substance abuse treatment, mental health services, anger management, domestic violence programs, sex offender treatment, cognitive training, education, and work programs. That process of identifying programs based on needs will be replaced in late 2004 with a “comprehensive correctional plan” that places more emphasis on community risk and projects treatment interventions that may begin while incarcerated and continue after release to the community.

For inmates eligible for parole, prison case workers coordinate with the Commission to provide background for parole interviews and information to field staff investigating pre-release plans. For inmates being released to Extended Supervision, case workers coordinate with field staff prior to release dates to verify release plans and to explore community services that may be appropriate for offenders after release. The DOC does not have pre-release courses, but processes some inmates through a network of 16 smaller, minimum-security correctional centers referred to as the Wisconsin Correctional Center System (WCCS). The WCCS provides opportunities for work release and continued programming that is focused on preparing the inmate for release and reestablishing family and community contacts. Approximately 30% of the inmates being released are processed through the WCCS.

Case workers assist inmates to apply for Social Security benefits, if eligible, before release to the community. The DOC provides notices of release to victims who requested such information.

Parole Board Planning

The number of inmates eligible for discretionary parole release continues to decline and the Parole Commission has no role in the release planning of inmates sentenced under truth-in-

sentencing statutes. Inmates eligible for parole are interviewed by a Parole Commissioner one month prior to their initial parole eligibility date, or two months prior to new dates set if parole decisions were previously deferred. The Commissioner may approve release or defer the case to a later eligibility date. If parole is approved, a pre-parole investigation is completed by DOC field staff to verify the release plan. With approval of the pre-parole investigation, DOC processes the release on dates set by the Commission.

Inmate Release Process

Inmates are released on dates set by the Parole Commission or after completion of the confinement portion of their sentence under current sentencing laws, and after an “authorization to release” has been received documenting investigation of the release plan by DOC field staff. No standard “gate money” is provided. If an inmate does not have funds in his/her personal account, the DOC may provide funds to cover incidental and travel expenses to reach their release destination within the state. On rare occasions, DOC staff will transport some high-risk, high-needs inmates to their release destination. Civilian clothing is provided if necessary, and for offenders returning to communities under correctional supervision, the DOC field staff may use funds to purchase transition services such as temporary housing. In several locations, the DOC has established transition specialists who manage offenders during the first months of release supervision, then transfer cases to regular caseloads. The DOC also has a re-entry program for violent offenders returning to Racine that provides for increased coordination with law enforcement and services from a variety of community agencies.

Wyoming

System Background

The Wyoming prison system had 1,809 inmates on June 30, 2002. During 2002, 686 inmates had been released from state prisons. The Wyoming Department of Corrections (DOC) manages all prison and community corrections services statewide, and contracts for out-of-state private prison beds. The DOC's Division of Prisons operates 4 adult prisons and contracts for private prison beds. The DOC's Community Corrections Division contracts for community residential beds and supervises offenders in community placements. The Board of Parole has authority to release inmates on parole who, in most cases, reach parole eligibility after serving approximately two-thirds of their prison sentences.

Prison-Based Release Planning

Inmates entering prison are assessed with a risk / needs instrument that will be replaced in 2005 with a new instrument, which will be used system-wide for both institutional and field supervision of offenders. The DOC also calculates minimum and maximum sentence release dates, and the parole eligibility dates at intake. Based on assessments, inmates are referred to prison programs such as education, cognitive training, substance abuse treatment, violence prevention, mental health services, sex offender treatment, or vocational training.

Approximately three months before parole eligibility or release dates, prison case managers begin preparations for release. Some inmates may have been placed in one of three contract community-based residential facilities where inmates work at civilian jobs and have access to community-based programs and services. The case managers will prepare parole summaries if inmates are scheduled for parole hearings that provide background information and a proposed release plan developed with the inmate. In some cases, the case manager may consult with DOC field staff in developing the release plan. Inmates may also participate voluntarily in pre-release classes (Bridges to Freedom) that address a variety of life skills issues.

The DOC is using federal grant funds for intensive transition services for some younger, high-risk inmates returning to four of the most populated counties in the state. The program provides additional institutional case management and services, release through either intensive supervision or a halfway house, and aftercare services from other state agencies such as substance abuse treatment, health care, employment, and mental health.

Parole Board Planning

The Board receives listings from the DOC on a quarterly basis that identify inmates nearing eligibility for parole. The Board then schedules hearings before 3-member panels that will be conducted during the coming quarter. The Board receives the parole summaries for review approximately 21 days before the scheduled hearings. Victims who have requested notice of hearings are invited to provide written or verbal input to the Board, but do not appear with inmates present. Hearings are held with DOC case managers and inmates present. Board members vote to approve or deny release, with at least two concurring votes needed for a decision. The Board may order special conditions of parole, which may include placement in

one the three community residential facilities. If parole is approved, field staff investigate the release plan and report findings back to the Board. If the plan is approved, the Board issues a final order for release.

Inmate Release Process

DOC prison case managers coordinate arrangements for the inmate's release. If being released from a DOC facility, the offender receives a ticket for bus transportation to the instate release destination and \$7 for each meal in transit. No other "gate money" is provided. A change of civilian clothing is also made available if needed. If inmates are on medications, a two-week supply is usually provided. Most inmates being released from Wyoming prisons are placed on parole supervision and are required to immediately report to a DOC field office. Length of parole supervision averages between 2 to 3 years.