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Parole Boards as Critical Stakeholders in Targeting Resources to Enhance Community Safety

Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It

This Action Guide, *Parole Boards as Critical Stakeholders in Targeting Resources to Enhance Community Safety*, designed to assist Parole Boards in strengthening their policies and practices to achieve their central goal of enhancing community safety. It is one in a series of Action Guides developed (and under development) by the [National Parole Resource Center \(NPRC\)](#) and builds upon the NPRC's [Self-Assessment Toolkit for Paroling Authorities](#), an online tool that identifies [ten practice targets](#) paroling authorities should consider implementing to assist them in achieving their safety and risk reduction goals.

Each Action Guide will address a different practice target and provide parole Board members the opportunity to explore each of the targets—explained in the Toolkit—in more depth.¹ It is strongly recommended that parole Boards use the *Toolkit* as a first step before using this Action Guide—or any of the Guides in the series. The *Toolkit* reviews all of the practice targets, their basis in the research, and engages the user – through a series of questions – in a process of considering broadly how they see their own Board's current practices in each area. The Action Guides then support the Board in moving toward significant practice improvements in each area.

Specifically, this Action Guide on ***Parole Boards as Critical Stakeholders in Targeting Resources to Achieve Community Safety*** is intended to assist Parole Board chairs, members, and staff to:

- Use the information and insights gained as a result of using the NPRC [Self-Assessment Toolkit](#) for Paroling Authorities;
- Consider how their decisionmaking practices can be part of a strategy for enhancing public safety and the efficient use of resources;
- Develop a common understanding of the Board's current policies and practices with respect to conditions of confinement;
- Review and analyze the evidence and "best practices" with respect to setting conditions and identify the greatest challenges they want to address; and
- Consider what changes the Board would like to make and how to best plan and implement those changes.

This guide is presented in sections to facilitate its use:

- **Tab 1: [Goals of this Guide and How to Use It](#).**
- **Tab 2: [Background and Context](#)** provides an introduction and sets the context regarding how Boards have traditionally approached these issues, and how some of that perspective is changing.
- **Tab 3: [Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions](#)** provides a brief overview of the empirical research on effective correctional practices and how those lessons provide guidance to paroling authorities about how they might shape their decisionmaking policy to target the use of resources aimed at increasing community safety and reducing offender risk. It also addresses some of the challenges parole Boards might expect to encounter as they move toward implementing this approach.
- **Tab 4: [Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement](#)** details seven steps, highlighted in a graphic "roadmap," that Boards can take to develop and implement change strategies to improve current policies and practices as they shape the targeting of resources. The steps include a set of questions that, if answered accurately, will give Boards a snapshot of current aspects of their practices in this area. This section also provides examples of specific actions that Boards can take in order to have a more strategic role in the use of resources in their correctional system. The section includes a sample action plan format and tools to guide Parole Boards through a process of revisiting/updating goals they hope to accomplish, and defining/implementing changes they conclude and agree must be made in policy and/or practice. It offers considerations for defining and measuring progress toward success, and using measurement feedback to continue strengthening practice going forward.
- **Tab 5: [Suggests a Plan to Measure Performance and offers methods for defining and measuring progress success, and revising practices as necessary.](#)**
- **Tab 6: [References/Endnotes](#)** provides documentation of the literature and research upon which this Action Guide is based.
- **Tab 7: [Links](#)** lists helpful resources used by the NPRC in assembling this Action Guide and which are recommended for those wanting to supplement their knowledge on this topic. The listings in this tab provide links to web-based resources.

Specifically, this Action Guide, when used effectively by a Board committed to improving public safety, will enable that Board to implement policies and practices to minimize requirements on low risk offenders, and target resources to criminogenic needs of medium and high risk offenders.

¹ The complete Action Guide Series will include: Use of Sound, Actuarial Assessments of Risk and Needs; Use of Evidence-based Decisionmaking Tools, Pr Guidelines; Paroling Authorities: The Importance of Developing Meaningful Partnerships; Parole Boards as Critical Stakeholders in Targeting Resources to E Community Safety; Release Considerations with Low Risk Offenders; The Parole Interview as an Opportunity to Enhance Motivation to Change; A Strategic , Setting Parole Conditions; and A Strategic Approach to Responding to Parole Violations.

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