

- **Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It**
- **Background and Context**
- **Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Parole's Role in Targeting of Resources**
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
- **Develop a Plan to Measure Performance**
- **Sample Documents**
- **References/Endnotes**
- **Links**
- **Acknowledgments**

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*, is 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 guide that identifies [ten practice targets](#) paroling authorities should consider implementing to assist them in achieving their public safety and risk reduction goals.

Each Action Guide will address a different practice target and provide parole Board members the opportunity to consider 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 a 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 Public 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 wise use of resources;
- Develop a common understanding of the Board's current policies and practices with respect to condition setting;
- Review and analyze the evidence and "best practices" with respect to setting conditions and identify the gaps and 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](#)

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

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.

minimize requirements on low risk offenders, and target resources to criminogenic needs of medium and high risk offenders.

- *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 key aspects of their practices in this area. This section also provides examples of specific actions that Boards have taken 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 the 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 toward 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 direct links to web-based resources.

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

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[Background and Context](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Parole's Role in Targeting of Resources
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Background and Context

Traditional Approach to Release Decisionmaking

Parole Boards with significant release decisionmaking authority typically place a heavy emphasis on voting on individual cases. Statutory language guides many Boards regarding the factors to be considered, often including items such as the severity of the crime, the likelihood that an offender can remain crime-free if released, and requirements for an approved residence if release were to be granted. Some Boards have Developed release guidelines—advisory in nature—which specify in more detail the factors to be considered, perhaps even the amount of time a typical offender with a specific combination of factors might have served in the past, and other considerations, such as the presence or absence of institutional misconduct. Given the rules of a specific Board, decisions are made as a result of a certain number of votes by individual Board members, or hearing examiners. The result is, for the most part, practice that is very case specific, is driven by the voting discretion of individual Board members, and that relies, in very general ways, on the effectiveness of individual professional judgment.

Given the emerging research on "evidence-based practice" and a focus on the significant numbers of offenders reentering from prison to the community, Parole Boards are becoming more active in using some of the practices emerging from that research in an attempt to reduce the risk of recidivism. These practices include the use of empirically based assessments of risk and needs and attempts to link offenders with correctional programming that would reduce their risk of re-offense.

An Evolving Role for Parole in a Criminal Justice System Moving Toward Evidence-Based Practice

Paroling authorities are well positioned to assist the criminal justice system to target its resources toward risk reduction and recidivism reduction goals and to make significant impacts on community safety. By building on their unique role and broad discretion, Parole Boards can significantly strengthen system-wide efforts to be more effective in supporting community safety and the wise use of resources. Other Action Guides in this series address, in more detail, strategies for Parole Boards to consider in strengthening their partnerships with other stakeholders around targeting. The Guides also advise on other aspects of good parole practice, including the use of empirically based risk and need assessments, the role of condition setting, and responding to parole violations as part of this larger targeting strategy. This action guide will focus on how the basic role of parole in release decisionmaking can be strengthened to support a system-wide, strategic approach to targeting resources for community safety.

< [Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It](#)

[Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Parole's Role in Targeting of Resources](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Parole's Role in Targeting of Resources

Understanding the Research

New research is providing lessons about how the criminal justice system in the United States can reduce recidivism, prevent crime and victimization, and better utilize precious public resources. This research, in brief, concludes that targeted treatment and supervision can be instrumental in changing offender behavior and reducing risk and recidivism; but that the "right" intervention must be directed to the "right" offender—at a time and at an intensity tailored to have the greatest impact (Andrews 2007; Andrews and Bonta 2007; Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2006; Andrews and Dowden 2007; Andrews, Dowden, and Gendreau 1999; Bonta 2007; Dowden 1998; Gendreau, Goggin, and Little 1996; Lipsey and Cullen 2007). Another fundamental principle of this new body of knowledge is that all components of the justice system can benefit from working collaboratively to target new, more effective solutions to the offenders for whom they share responsibility. Paroling authorities, in particular, are well and uniquely positioned to assist the criminal justice system to target its resources toward risk reduction and recidivism reduction goals and to make significant impacts on community safety.

Why Focus on Medium and High Risk Offenders?

Matching Intensity of Intervention to Risk Level Reduces Recidivism

Research demonstrates that the likelihood of reoffense can be diminished if the level of intervention (defined as both monitoring and treatment) is matched to the assessed level of risk. This is commonly referred to as the "risk principle" (Andrews 2007; Andrews and Bonta 2007; Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith 2006; Andrews and Dowden 2007; Andrews, Dowden, and Gendreau 1999; Bonta 2007; Dowden 1998; Gendreau, Goggin, and Little 1996; Lipsey and Cullen 2007). Research further demonstrates that the best outcomes with the low-risk population are achieved by low levels of intervention; in fact, some research demonstrates that an overreliance on supervision or the delivery of intense treatment services to the low-risk population can actually increase their likelihood of reoffending (Andrews and Bonta 2007; Cullen and Gendreau 2000; Gendreau et al. 2001; Lowenkamp, Latessa, and Holsinger 2006).

Policy and Practice Implications for Paroling Authorities

- Provide high-intensity services to high-risk offenders and less to moderate-risk offenders.
- Provide minimal intervention to the low-risk population.
- Engage in collaborative discussions with stakeholders who are responsible for providing services to inmates and parolees (e.g., corrections agency staff, service providers) to develop an agreement to prioritize and target treatment services to moderate- and high-risk offenders.

Source: Carter, Madeline (2011). Evidence-Based Policy, Practice, and Decisionmaking: Implications for Paroling Authorities. <http://static.nicic.gov/Library/024198.pdf>. last accessed September 6, 2013.

In essence, the criminal justice system is continuing to move from a primary strategy of custody and control—with major goals focused on punishment, incapacitation, and deterrence—to one that includes deliberate efforts to change offender behavior to reduce their risk. These efforts are focused on changing an offender's inclination to commit crimes in the future and, if successful, promise greater long-term impacts on community safety. This is not to say that custody and control—particularly, maintaining safe and secure correctional systems—are less important. Rather, they are now viewed as being on par with a new emphasis on risk reduction. At the same time, there is a recognition that, for the long-term protection of the community, sentencing and corrections should be using the lessons of research to shape practices that reduce offenders' likelihood of committing crimes and victimizing their fellow citizens in the future. In light of the harsh fiscal realities of the day, both goals must be pursued through the wise and efficient use of public resources.

Potential Impacts of Release Decisionmaking

Paroling authorities typically exercise their decisionmaking responsibilities at critical "pressure points," including the decision to grant parole release. It may be appropriate to conceive of Parole Boards' authority in this matter as one that guides the timing and conditions of release rather than to release or not to release. This is the case because, even if a Board declines to parole, every offender, unless he/she has a sentence of life without parole, will be released from prison at some point at the end of their sentence or at a mandatory release date. If parole Boards do decide to grant parole, however, this can potentially:

- Offer an incentive to motivate higher risk individuals to participate successfully in interventions to reduce their risk while incarcerated and prepare them for potential parole and release to the community.
- Release an offender from prison at a time when he or she has been held accountable, has met the requirements for proportionate punishment, and represents minimal risk of reoffending (either because he or she was assessed as low risk at admission or because the offender has participated in programming that has effectively lowered his or her risk to the public).
- Influence the movement of those individuals who are reliably assessed as presenting a low risk to public safety out of institutions and into the community where they can receive interventions in a setting where those interventions are less costly and more effective. This can free costly institutional bed space for offenders who require secure custody in order to protect the public.
- Refrain from allocating resources in ways that have proven ineffective—e.g., mandating treatment and longer custody beyond the requirements of proportionate punishment—for individuals at low-risk to reoffend.

These are precisely the opportunities that many paroling authorities around the nation have before them. For parole to take advantage of these opportunities, however, a number of critical ingredients are necessary, including: the availability of good assessment and other decisionmaking tools, the availability of effective correctional and community programs, and the willingness of key partners—institutional corrections and community supervision—to collaborate on individual cases.

Another key choice that Parole Boards can make is whether to engage in this targeting effort in the context of decisions

about individual cases, or whether to expand that targeting effort to working with system partners to influence and encourage the development and targeting of resources on a system-wide basis, through collaborative partnerships to agree on targeting strategies, encourage the development of such resources, and track progress over time. A companion *Action Guide—The Importance of Developing Meaningful Partnerships*, provides helpful information and tools for Boards who wish to focus on strategies to encourage partnerships—important vehicles for system-wide targeting of resources.

An important dimension of this aspect of parole decisionmaking is the procedural "timing" of parole consideration. Paroling authorities can further leverage the impact of their release decisionmaking by considering how their own procedures, and the timing of parole consideration, can affect the substantive outcomes of their work. For most offenders who may someday be eligible for parole, eligibility comes at a particular point in time—after some percentage of a sentence has been served or after some mandatory minimum has expired. Offenders cannot be released before that date, and can be released at any time after that date, with the granting of parole by the paroling authority.

Over the years, and across states, different approaches to the timing of parole consideration have been used. The pressures of growing prison populations have encouraged states to ensure that parole consideration occurs just before or just after an eligibility date, so that if the decision is made to parole an offender, release can take place as quickly as possible. Some states have taken to scheduling parole considerations months prior to eligibility to allow for planning and so as not to delay release.

Paroling authorities, however, now operate in a "reentry context" where the conventional wisdom is that planning for reentry should begin at admission to prison—or even before sentencing. By scheduling parole consideration early in the period of incarceration, paroling authorities can participate more strategically in the management of individual cases and the system as a whole. Armed with good assessments, the paroling authority can focus early on medium- and high-risk offenders, setting expectations for what programs they should complete to address their risk to reoffend. Setting and clearly communicating these expectations allows the offender, institutional case managers, and program staff to understand the incentive offered by favorable parole consideration. This can also allow more time for moving offenders to appropriate housing for participation in those programs the paroling authority considers essential for a particular individual.

Clearly, while such an approach would have impact upon individual cases and how a Parole Board might make their decision, it will be important to address the systemic changes that would need to be made, and would allow for what might call a "systemic approach to targeting of resources."

Data also suggest that early scheduling of consideration for parole may, itself, serve as an incentive for offenders to "cooperate" in preparations that could lead to parole. In Wyoming, where 40 percent of parole-eligible inmates waive parole consideration, a study of those inmates indicated that the less time remaining on an inmate's sentence, the more likely the inmate was to waive a parole hearing in favor of finishing his or her sentence in prison. In 2008, in an effort to entice more inmates to parole and reduce minor infraction threshold revocations, the Board implemented legislative action that enables awards of good time credits to parolees and imposes intermediate interventions.

Source: *Study of Wyoming Parole Revocations 2005-2009*:
Produced for the Bureau of Justice Statistics and Justice Research
and Statistics Association Multi-State Study,
<http://www.irsa.org/projects/wyoming-parole-revocation.pdf>, last
accessed September 19, 2013.

< [Background and Context](#)

[Moving Toward Implementing
Practice Improvements and
Performance Measurement](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
 - Step 1
 - Step 2
 - Step 3
 - Step 4
 - Step 5
 - Step 6
 - Step 7
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

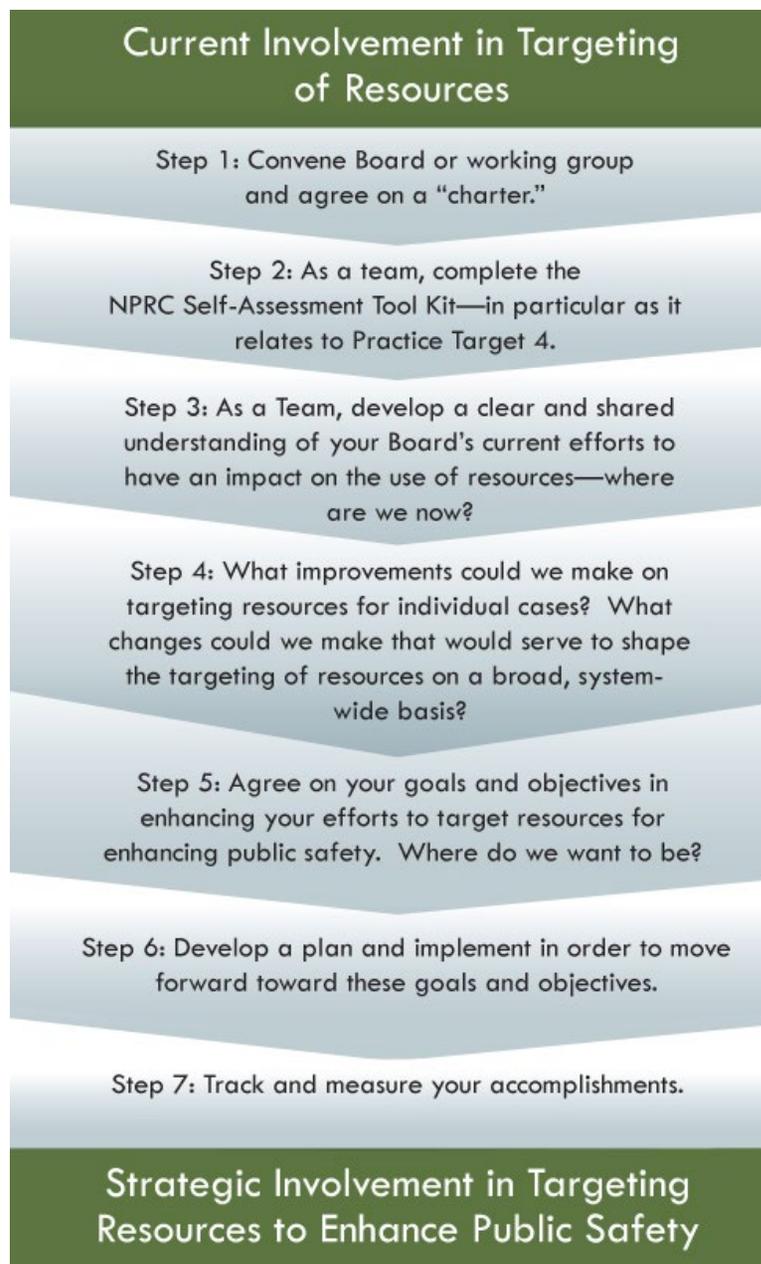
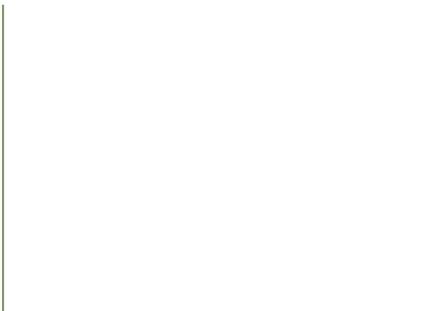
Parole Boards as Critical Stakeholders in Targeting Resources to Enhance Community Safety

Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement

If a Board determines they want to undertake an effort to play a more strategic role in the targeting of resources to reduce risk, recidivism and enhance public safety, the seven step process outlined below is recommended as a way of moving forward. Undertaking this process, as a team, will encourage the development of a shared understanding of the current efforts to target resources, provide an opportunity to revisit shared goals and values, and build a commitment to implement agreed-upon changes.

The remainder of this section moves through these steps to assist parole Boards in exploring current understanding of the research, to explore existing policy/practice, assess whether opportunities for change exist, and plan for desired change. Regardless of whether Boards are engaging this process as a full body, sub-committee, or working group, it will be important to move through this process as a team. A team-based approach provides a strong basis for developing a clear, shared understanding of the current situation in which to examine what changes will strengthen their practice. A "roadmap" that illustrates the steps recommended and provides a way to navigate to a description of each step:

Graphic Roadmap to Guide a Review and Strengthening of a Parole Board's Involvement in Targeting Resources to Enhance Public Safety



< [Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Parole's Role in Targeting of Resources](#)

[Step 1: Convene Board or working group and agree on a charter.](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions

- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Step 7

- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 1: Convene Board or working group and agree on a charter.

A first step in the process is for the Board to agree on who will be involved in the work of clarifying how our current practices serve to target resources—and where they fall short, reviewing our goals, reviewing information from the research, and identifying ways in which the Board can strengthen its practices. Members should be identified and a clear statement of the team's purpose, specific activities and outcomes, and ground rules should be established. This will include basic agreements on how often the team will meet, how its progress will be documented, and what the timeline for completion is expected to be. Roles on the team should also be specified—including a chair, a record keeper, and any subcommittees. It is strongly recommended that a facilitator—an individual other than the chair—who would be charged with moving the team through its agendas during working sessions, be identified.

< [Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement](#)

[Step 2: As a team, complete the NPRC Self-Assessment Tool Kit.](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
 - Step 1
 - Step 2
 - Step 3
 - Step 4
 - Step 5
 - Step 6
 - Step 7
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 2: As a team, complete the NPRC Self-Assessment Tool Kit.

Parole Boards focusing on how they are involved in targeting resources may have already moved through the activities advised in the National Parole Resource Center's [Paroling Authority Self-Assessment Toolkit](#). If not, they are encouraged to avail themselves of this opportunity to give all Board members a common frame of reference, introduce the NPRC's "Practice Targets," and examine how a Board's practices can be described in relation to those targets. An important part of developing an effective change strategy is to understand, clearly, all aspects of current practice. The *Toolkit* provides a framework for a Board to develop such a shared understanding—from a "big picture" point of view. For purposes of this Action Guide, it will be important to focus in particular on Practice Target 4, regarding how paroling authorities can use their influence and leverage to target institutional and community resources to mid and high risk offenders to address their criminogenic needs.

< [Step 1: Convene Board or working group and agree on a charter.](#)

[Step 3: Review the evidence-based practice research on targeting of resources based on risk, need, and responsivity.](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
 - Step 1
 - Step 2
 - Step 3
 - Step 4
 - Step 5
 - Step 6
 - Step 7
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 3: Review the evidence-based practice research on the targeting of resources based on risk, need, and responsivity.

Charge a subcommittee or small working group with examining the correctional literature on evidence-based approaches to targeting resources, "what works" with different types of offenders (e.g., high risk vs. low risk, special populations of offenders) and how that would play out with individuals eligible for parole. Share the information from this review with the larger group as a way to inform your discussions and make determinations about changes to your own practice that might be advisable. See the [Links](#) section of this document for other resources this topic.

< [Step 2: As a team, complete the NPRC Self-Assessment Tool Kit.](#)

[Step 4: Develop a shared understanding the degree to which your Board's current practices serve to target resources.](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
 - Step 1
 - Step 2
 - Step 3
 - Step 4
 - Step 5
 - Step 6
 - Step 7
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 4: Develop a shared understanding of your Board's current condition setting practice.

Once a Board has used the Toolkit to develop a "big picture" understanding of their practice, they are then in a better position to delve more deeply into specific issues—such as policy and practice regarding how they are contributing to effective targeting resources on an individual case level—and on a system level. [Click here](#) for a sample working session agenda for the Board that can be used for Steps 3-5 of this guide (the agenda is an example of a one day session but can easily be divided into multiple workgroup sessions.)

By taking the steps outlined here, a Board has an opportunity to review the degree to which current practices serve to effectively target resources—both for individual cases, and on a system-wide basis. The goal of this step is to generate a clear understanding of just what constitutes current policy and practice, what forms the basis for that policy and practice (e.g., statute, regulation, past practice, etc.), and what is known about outcomes. A Board following this process is encouraged to add to or adapt the following suggested questions—with the goal of clarifying a sound, shared understanding of policy and practice. Questions to be explored, that will begin to generate a system-wide understanding of this practice, include:

With respect to the impact the Board has on targeting of resources through their release decisionmaking philosophy, policies and practices:

- Are the expectations that the Board has in individual cases about what an offender must accomplish to be considered a likely candidate for parole communicated to individual offenders? If so, how? If so, when in relation to a parole eligibility or potential release date?
- Are these expectations communicated to the Department of Corrections in individual cases? If so, how? If so, again, when in relation to a parole eligibility or potential release date?
- Are these expectations defined by individual Board members on a case-by-case basis? Has the Board agreed on an explicit strategy or framework for defining these expectations?
- Do the principles of risk, need, and responsivity guide the definition of these expectations? If so, how? If not, would the Board be open to such an approach?
- Explore with institutional staff such questions as: What are the ways in which they respond to the expectations articulated by the Board? If such expectations are not now communicated, would this be helpful to institutional staff? Would institutional staff be able to respond by shaping the case management of an inmate?
- How often are offenders denied parole because of a failure to meet specific expectations of the Board (for program participation, etc.?)
- Does the availability and accessibility of effective, evidence-based programming impact the ability of the Board

to assist in targeting these resources?

- Does the Board have an understanding that offenders assessed as low risk will warrant a different approach in terms of required expectations prior to parole? (An Action Guide on the implications of low risk offenders will be available in early 2014.)

The Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole has outlined their expectations for program participation by level of risk and need. An analysis of the Board's decisionmaking policy—commissioned by the Board itself—reported that the Board's "protocol" for determining whether a case was, at first review, categorized as "likely to parole," (provided they had no serious, institutional misconduct within the last year), included:

- Violent offenders at any risk level, who had compliance with required programs;
- Non-violent offenders, at high risk level, who had compliance with required programs;
- Low and medium risk level, non-violent offenders, without regard to program compliance.

(Parole release in Pennsylvania, and everywhere in the United States where it is authorized, is considered a grace or privilege, rather than a right. In designing its decisional instrument, the Board was careful to specify that the tool is advisory in nature and was not intended to create an expectation or right to parole, or a liberty interest, in any instance. In keeping with that principle, then, the Board's decisional instrument identifies the basic factors in a case that provide initial guidance to the Board as to how its articulated principles would rate a case as likely or unlikely to parole.)

[< Step 3: Review the evidence-based practice research on targeting of resources based on risk, need, and responsivity.](#)

[Step 5: Consider how your Board's goals regarding community safety and the wise use of resources could be enhanced by efforts to target resources on the case level and on the system level, then develop a shared statement of your purpose in this area.](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
 - Step 1
 - Step 2
 - Step 3
 - Step 4
 - Step 5**
 - Step 6
 - Step 7
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 5: Consider how your Board's goals regarding community safety and the wise use of resources could be enhanced by efforts to target resources on the case level and on the system level, then develop a shared statement of your purpose in this area.

After Boards have engaged in the exercise of reviewing their own practice, they should come to a conclusion and develop a shared [vision](#) of what role targeting of resources can play in helping them achieve their mission—and what they will put in place to allow them to target resources more effectively at the case level and the system level. With these goals in mind and having assembled good, descriptive information about current practice and evidence-based research in this area, Boards should consider the following:

- Is it appropriate to make changes in our practices?
- Is it appropriate to consider a specific policy or routine practice that will shape what resources will be deployed in a specific case, and how resources will be deployed/targeted system wide—in collaboration with our institutional corrections partners? If so, how might your Board do this?
- How might your Board change how they establish expectations on specific cases regarding what resources are appropriate and essential to prepare an individual for parole? If the purpose is to assure that the practices link medium and high-risk offenders to interventions that would address their criminogenic needs—how can we accomplish this?

Boards should convene a series of sessions to discuss and resolve the following:

- Are there some current standard expectations that could be eliminated without violating statutory expectations of the Board, and that would have no appreciable impact on public safety?
- Do Board members have the "authority" to eliminate some expectations—in particular for low risk offenders?
- Are current methods for expressing the Board's expectations effective and strategic?
 - With respect to communications to offenders?
 - With respect to communication to the Department of Corrections?
- Do these processes and methods tend to place more expectations on offenders than might reasonably be needed? [Click here](#) for a link to the NPRC Action Guide on Setting Parole Conditions to Achieve Public Safety for more information about fashioning conditions based on an individual's risk and criminogenic needs.
- How could these processes be adapted to generate a more "strategic" set of expectations, tailored by risk and need?

[< Step 4: Develop a shared understanding of the degree to which your Board's current practices serve to target resources.](#)

[Step 6: Develop a Strategy to Implement Changes in How the Board Contributes to Targeting of Resources. >](#)

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**
 - Step 1
 - Step 2
 - Step 3
 - Step 4
 - Step 5
 - Step 6
 - Step 7
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 6: Develop a Strategy to Implement Changes in How the Board Contributes to Targeting of Resources

As part of the sessions undertaken in Step 5, or a separate working session, develop a list of changes that the Board, as a whole, feels should be made in how they target resources—through the communication of expectations in individual cases, and through their joint work with corrections partners on system-level strategies.

After the Board has identified desired key changes to policy and practice—and has articulated the potential challenges of the implementation of these strategies—be sure to identify strategies that the Board will pursue in gaining buy in from key stakeholders and the mechanism(s) that will be used to move forward (e.g., committees, staff support, training, routine Board meetings, etc.) with this work.

Develop an "action plan" to implement agreed upon changes to the Board's policy and practice regarding the setting of conditions. [Click here](#) for a sample of what an action plan might look like.

[< Step 5: Consider how your Board's goals regarding community safety and the wise use of resources could be enhanced by efforts to target resources on the case level and on the system level, then develop a shared statement of your purpose in this area.](#)

[Step 7: Plan to measure performance. >](#)

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- **Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement**

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Step 7

- **Develop a Plan to Measure Performance**
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Step 7: Plan to Measure Performance

A performance measurement plan involves developing the capacity to measure progress toward desired outcomes, continually tracking progress, and using information for improvement. Management of change—whether it is about condition setting, or any other aspect of the Board’s work—requires:

- Feedback loops to determine whether the change has actually been implemented.
- Tracking certain data and information to determine whether the change is having the desired outcomes.

Feedback loops exist through regular review of offender files and staff discussions. In terms of monitoring performance, feedback loops begin with a review of the policies adopted, and changes in practice that have been implemented.

[< Step 6: Develop a strategy to implement changes to condition setting policy and practice.](#)

[Develop a Plan to Measure Performance >](#)

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- **Develop a Plan to Measure Performance**
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Develop a Plan to Measure Performance

A performance measurement plan should start with the basics (e.g., "What did we say we were going to do and why?"). Responding to this question after a review of corresponding practices can help start the plan. The purpose of these practices is to contribute, in some way, to the performance of the agency overall. The routine collection of information on these practices—which resources are targeted toward which offenders, in what numbers, across time—sets the stage for monitoring changes. One strategy is to form a performance management team or subcommittee to review policies and practices and report back on divergence or adherence. The team would be responsible for reviewing program elements and making recommendations for the implementation, monitoring, re-evaluating, and reporting of performance activities. Data helpful to determining whether the changes experienced are desired changes include regular and timely screenings for criminogenic risk, types of cases under consideration for the most intensively targeted resources, and program success and revocation rates for medium and high risk offenders in particular. A "checklist" for measuring progress toward completing the action plan is critical. Performance measures must be clear and specific to improving practice regarding targeting. [Click here](#) for a draft performance management checklist.

< [Step 7: Plan to measure performance.](#)

[Sample Documents](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- Develop a Plan to Measure Performance
- **Sample Documents**
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

Sample Documents

Below is a list of all of the sample documents that teams can use in their work to advance effective condition setting practice in their jurisdictions. Click on the respective links below to access each of these documents, which can be adapted to meet the needs of specific Boards.

[Sample Vision Statement](#)

[Sample Agenda](#)

[Sample Action Plan](#)

[Sample Charter](#)

[Sample Performance Measurement Checklist](#)

[< Develop a Plan to Measure Performance](#)

[References/Endnotes >](#)

Sample Vision Statement for Targeting Resources to Enhance Community Safety

A Vision for Targeting Resources to Reduce Recidivism

The Vision of the [name of state paroling authority] is that its decisionmaking authority in individual cases—and its strategic planning in collaboration with other criminal justice stakeholders—assures the availability and effective use of public resources to enhance community safety and reduces the likelihood of future victimization. In collaboration with its criminal justice partners, the (name of state paroling authority) will use the possibility of parole release as an incentive for high and medium risk offenders to participate in risk reduction programming tailored to their criminogenic needs, and its condition setting authority to link high and medium risk offenders to appropriate risk reduction interventions in the community. Although it does not directly control treatment interventions, the [name of state paroling authority] collaborates with institutional and community partners to assure the availability and effective use of these important resources, according to the principles emerging from strong empirical research.

Date

Sample Agenda for State X's Working Group Meeting on Strategies for Effective Targeting of Resources on a Case and System Level

Participants

Participants for this session should include Parole Board members, representatives from executive parole staff, a sample of correctional institutions staff (custody, programs and assessment staff) and parole staff who will be responsible for collecting performance measurement or other quantitative information.

Goals of This Session

The Board and other participants will develop:

- An understanding of Board practices/policies that have an impact on how program resources are utilized; and
- A proposed list of changes that the Board, as a whole, feels should be made in this approach.

Proposed Agenda

8:30 a.m. Call to order, introductions of all key staff

8:45 a.m. How does our current release decisionmaking policy and practice serve to target resources in individual cases?

- How would we articulate our “philosophy” on setting of pre-conditions of parole release? Does it serve to target resources on a risk/need/responsivity basis? Do we routinely set expectations based on level of assessed risk and criminogenic need?
- Do we clearly articulate expectations for what offenders must do/accomplish before they will be considered good candidates for parole? When and how is this communicated?
- Is this communicated consistently and effectively?
- Is this communicated on a broader level to DOC staff involved in assessment, and in case management/programming within institutions?
- Does the timing of our case reviews and hearings allow sufficient time for offenders and the DOC to adjust case plans, housing assignments, etc. to be tailored to address the Board’s expectations?

10:00 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. How does our current release decisionmaking policy and practice—and our dialogue and partnership with DOC serve to help target resources on a system-wide basis?

- Are there efforts underway to define “common ground” around expectations for requirements prior to a positive parole release decision?
- Have there been open communications about targeting institutional resources by risk/need/responsivity
- Is there a clear understanding among parole Board members as to what programs are available and what types of criminogenic needs they are designed to address?

11:15 a.m. Defining the challenges associated with our current practice

- What impact does how we are doing business now on his dimension have:
 - On offenders?
 - On the availability and impact of the resources we currently have available to us?

- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Break
- 1:00 p.m. Reviewing the science: what do we know about evidence-based practices in this area?
- What are the potential benefits of a more effective approach to targeting of resources?
 - What are some of the challenges we might face in addressing them?
- 1:30 p.m. Brainstorm a list of potential changes in current policy/practice
- For individual cases
 - What would a more “targeted” approach look like
 - What would we have to change in order to achieve that more targeted approach?
 - Information
 - Training
 - Agreements
 - System-wide
 - What would a more “targeted” approach look like
 - What would we have to change in order to achieve that more targeted approach?
 - Information
 - Training
 - Agreements
- 2:30 p.m. What buy in (from staff, legislature, etc.) would need to be acquired in support of this effort? What outreach would the team need to do in order to educate others about the evidence-based practice in this area?
- 3:00 p.m. Break
- 3:15 p.m. Next steps—in order to move forward from current practice to the potential changes discussed and agreed to earlier, what are next steps that should be completed before the next meeting of this group
- Finalizing list of changes upon which the group has agreed to move
 - Establishing subcommittee to work on each change, or on clusters of change
 - Work planning on encouraging staff buy in and how to secure statutory changes
 - Establishing performance measurement subcommittee
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn

**Sample Action Plan for Implementing Changes in Targeting
Resources to Enhance Community Safety**

To implement an action plan for making changes in how your Board deploys its decisionmaking authority to enhance the targeting of resources to enhance community safety, begin by answering the following questions:

- “Is our current decisionmaking policy and practice (regarding release, setting conditions, responding to violations) deliberately designed to create incentives for individual offenders to participate in appropriate risk reduction programming?” If so, explore how well this is working—in each area of decisionmaking, and identify barriers and opportunities that your paroling authority might be facing. If our decisionmaking policy and practice are not designed specifically to create incentives, explore some ways in which it might be changed to operate in this way. Determine the changes that will be necessary to become more effective in targeting resources to enhance community safety.
- “Do we have active partnerships in place with institutional corrections and with parole supervision to explore how to collaborate in ways to more effectively use resources to reduce risk? If so, how can they be re-engaged? If not, how might we begin to discuss how to move forward?”

For each change under consideration, determine:

- What needs to be done to start implementing changes?
- Is the issue at hand a short- or long-term issue? A short-term issue can be handled within six months and without additional resources or statewide legislation. A long-term issue requires more investment of resources, statutory changes or work over a longer period of time.

GOAL: _____

OBJECTIVE: _____

Short-Term Issue (Example)	Indicate three things that need to occur in the next 30 days	Individual(s) Responsible	Due Date
Develop a clear understanding of the current situation in terms of level of participation in appropriate programming, availability/accessibility issues, and how the decisionmaking of the Board could create incentives and encourage such participation.	Schedule a Board or work group/ subcommittee meeting to explore how decisionmaking practices might focus on the goal of creating incentives for offenders to participate in risk reduction programming appropriate to their level of risk and criminogenic needs.	Parole Chair	12/01/2013
	Develop a presentation for the meeting that summarizes the principles emerging from the research on evidence-based practice.	Department research staff	12/01/2013
	Request descriptions of all prison-based programs and provide to the work group/ subcommittee reviewing resources to enhance community safety and a briefing on the challenges to assuring that offenders participate in such programming relevant to their risks and needs.	Director of institutional services	12/01/2013

Long-Term Issue (Example)	Indicate three critical changes that need to occur in the next six months in order to make substantial progress on the issue (e.g., resources, institutional policy changes, Parole Board practice/policy changes required).	Individual(s) Responsible	Critical First Steps to be Taken	Due Date
Develop a vision of how policy/practice change could better target resources, define specific changes necessary to achieve this, and engage stakeholders responsible in a process of developing a shared vision/mission and policy/ practice changes.	Case information prepared for and considered by the parole decisionmakers highlights risk and needs information.	Subcommittee/work group members TBD	Case information is reorganized to prominently display assessments of risk and needs, along with programming recommended specifically to address those criminogenic needs of mid and high risk offenders.	4/1/14
	Scheduling of parole hearings will be recast to occur early during the period of incarceration so that expectations can be clarified.	Parole Board in partnership with institutional case management staff	Subcommittee member from parole to schedule initial meeting with key institutional and parole authority members to discuss logistics/necessary changes in policy and practice.	4/1/14
	Institutional case management will prioritize movement of parole eligible offenders to prison bed space where appropriate programming is accessible, and in a time frame that allows completion and release at earliest parole eligibility.	Institutional case management staff	Subcommittee member from parole to schedule initial meeting with key institutional and parole authority members to discuss logistics/necessary changes in policy and practice.	4/1/14

Sample Vision Statement for Targeting Resources to Enhance Community Safety

A Vision for Targeting Resources to Reduce Recidivism

The Vision of the [name of state paroling authority] is that its decisionmaking authority in individual cases—and its strategic planning in collaboration with other criminal justice stakeholders—assures the availability and effective use of public resources to enhance community safety and reduces the likelihood of future victimization. In collaboration with its criminal justice partners, the (name of state paroling authority) will use the possibility of parole release as an incentive for high and medium risk offenders to participate in risk reduction programming tailored to their criminogenic needs, and its condition setting authority to link high and medium risk offenders to appropriate risk reduction interventions in the community. Although it does not directly control treatment interventions, the [name of state paroling authority] collaborates with institutional and community partners to assure the availability and effective use of these important resources, according to the principles emerging from strong empirical research.

Date

Sample Performance Measures Checklist

A performance measurement workgroup should be formed to address potential changes in order to support changes in targeting resources to medium and high risk offenders. There are a number of ways in which a carefully constructed performance measurement system will prove useful. Performance information provides for:

- An objective way to account for activities and accomplishments over time;
- A method to quantify the cost/benefit of investments and allocate additional resources (or reallocate resources) as may be appropriate;
- An opportunity to identify and intervene with implementation problems (or potential problems) that can impede goal achievement if not addressed in a timely fashion; and
- Objective and specific data that can be used to report performance to staff as a means to further engage and motivate external stakeholders (e.g., funders, other vested parties) as a means to demonstrate the benefit of investments.²

Information about the following indicators should be collected in order to provide quantitative support and to track the impact of any changes that are made with respect to condition setting. Boards should first document:

- Changes in Board practices regarding communication of expectations for program participation and other achievements defined as necessary for achieving favorable parole consideration;
- Methods by which these expectations are communicated to individual offenders and to institutional staff;
- Modifications to services provided and to the profile of offenders receiving such services—evidence of targeting of resources by risk and need;
- Reduction in the number/percent of low risk offenders receiving intensive services.

After the changes in targeting resources to medium and high risk offenders are implemented, collect outcome information about these offenders (categorized by assessed risk level) over a discrete period of time that includes but is not limited to:

- Number/percent of medium/high offenders receiving more targeted/intense interventions;
- Program compliance (e.g. failure or success rates) of offenders receiving these services;
- Percentage of medium/high risk offenders successfully completing parole in the current month/year/quarter (comparison of successful completions with the previous year/quarter);
- Number of medium/high risk parole violators returned to prison for new offenses and/or technical violations;
- Percentage of medium/high risk parolees revoked;
- Number of new offenses over time by medium/high risk offenders on parole; and
- Number/percent of medium/high risk offenders who are violation free (e.g., after one year on supervision).

Performance Management is a system of:

- ✓ Regularly measuring the results (outcomes) of initiatives,
- ✓ Using this information to increase efficiency and effectiveness in approaches or service delivery,
- ✓ Reporting important indicators of program operations and results.

² Source: Center for Effective Public Policy (2009). *Measuring the Impact of Reentry Efforts*, www.cepp.com/documents/Measuring%20the%20Impact.pdf, last accessed September 6, 2013.

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- Sample Documents
- **References/Endnotes**
- Links
- Acknowledgments

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

References/Endnotes

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< [Sample Documents](#)

[Links](#) >

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- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- **Links**
- Acknowledgments

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

Links

The following organizations, websites and publications provide supplemental information for parole boards that should prove useful to boards undertaking this work.

The [Center for Effective Public Policy \(CEPP\)](#) manages the [National Parole Resource Center](#), which has developed, among other resources, a series of five papers on parole entitled Parole Essentials: Practical Guides for Parole Leaders that address the specific challenges of paroling authorities. Each paper can be accessed below:

- [*Core Competencies: A Resource for Parole Board Chairs, Members, and Executive Staff*](#)
- [*Evidence-Based Policy, Practice, and Decisionmaking: Implications for Paroling Authorities*](#)
- [*Paroling Authorities' Strategic Planning and Management for Results*](#)
- [*Special Challenges Facing Parole*](#)
- [*The Future of Parole as a Key Partner in Assuring Public Safety*](#)

The [Association of Paroling Authorities International \(APAI\)](#) originated in the early 1970s at the urging of international parole colleagues with a strong interest in best practices and current issues surrounding conditional release, reentry into the community and public safety. Despite different parole legislation, policies and regulations, members – individuals and organizations from 38 countries – share the fundamental value in the belief of a person's ability to change and the conviction that gradual, supervised reintegration into our communities is an effective protection of public safety.

The [National Institute of Corrections \(NIC\)](#) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons. NIC also provides leadership to influence correctional policies, practices, and operations nationwide in areas of emerging interest and concern to correctional executives and practitioners as well as public policymakers. This is accomplished through the provision training, technical assistance, and policy/program development assistance to federal, state, and local corrections agencies. A key resource, the Robert J. Kutak Memorial Library, houses a specialized collection of corrections-related materials. The focus of the collection is on unpublished, operationally-oriented resources developed by correctional agencies for use by practitioners in the field.

< [References/Endnotes](#)

[Acknowledgments](#) >

- Goals of this Guide, and How to Use It
- Background and Context
- Understanding the Evidence and Its Implications for Setting Parole Conditions
- Moving Toward Implementing Practice Improvements and Performance Measurement
- Sample Documents
- References/Endnotes
- Links
- **Acknowledgments**

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

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< [Links](#)