



STATE OF TENNESSEE

# Agency Strategic Plans

Executive Branch

Volume 1  
Five-Year Strategic Plans

A Report to  
Governor Bill Haslam and the General Assembly

September 2012

*The following BOP report is excerpted  
from a larger state report that includes information  
on all Tennessee state government agencies.*

*Only BOP specific information is listed here.*

## **Board of Parole**

In FY 2012, the Board of Probation and Parole was restructured by legislation to become the Tennessee Board of Parole (BOP). Supervision of adult offenders and the Community Corrections programs were transferred to the Department of Correction. The reorganization became effective on July 1, 2012.

The Board of Parole contributes to public safety by managing the orderly release of adult offenders in such a manner as to promote lawful behavior and minimize risk to the general public. The agency's primary functions are to conduct hearings to determine if an offender is to be released, stipulate the conditions of release, conduct revocation hearings on noncompliance to determine if an offender should be returned to incarceration, or if an offender should be referred to an alternative sanction and remain in the community under supervision, and provide support services to victims. During the parole process, the agency provides administrative support to the Parole Board through operations-file management and certificate issuance. In addition to the board's primary functions, the board also conducts executive clemency hearings and makes non-binding recommendations to the Governor.

The Board of Parole is an independent state board comprised of seven members appointed by the Governor in staggered six year terms. The board is responsible for determining which offenders will be granted parole and subsequently released from incarceration to community-based supervision. The board members and parole hearings officers conduct both on-site parole hearings at state penal institutions and local jails as well as hearings via video conferencing. There are 18 parole hearings officers strategically located across the state supporting the board's parole hearing mission. Hearings officers are appointed by the chairman of the board and make non-binding recommendations to the board members. Board members may adopt, modify or reject hearing recommendations made by parole hearing officers.

The Victim Services Division (VSD) is a major component of the Board of Parole and is governed by Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) 40-28-503 – 505. The VSD is responsible for educating and supporting victims (including survivors and family members) on the parole process, providing notice of hearings pursuant to statute, and addressing any immediate public safety concerns. All parole hearings are open to the public, to victims and their proponents, as well as to offender families and supporters. Anyone may attend to testify in opposition or support of the offender's release. VSD is comprised of 18 victim coordinators statewide in addition to a state director and victim liaison.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Board of Parole is to minimize public risk and promote lawful behavior by the prudent, orderly release of adult offenders.

## Goals

1. By FY 2017, the Board of Parole will decrease the number of days to send notification of the final decision to the offender to 5 days.
2. By FY 2017, the Board of Parole will decrease the number of days to finalize a parole decision to 7 days.

### Goal 1

By FY 2017, the Board of Parole will decrease the number of days to send notification of the final decision to the offender to 5 days.

#### Strategies for Achieving Goal 1

1. Create a database of contacts needed for a system to generate and send notifications electronically.
2. Migrate the maximum number of manual notifications to electronic notifications as soon as possible.
3. Send notifications by electronic means whenever possible.

#### Performance Measure

1. Average number of days to send notification of the final decision to the offender.

FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
24	17	13	9	7	5

### Goal 2

By FY 2017, the Board of Parole will decrease the number of days to finalize a parole decision to 7 days.

#### Strategies for Achieving Goal 2

1. Continue to reduce the number of paper files of offenders eligible for parole by scanning them into a paperless system.
2. Reduce the number of days for file transmittal as well as the costs of mailing files by increasing the number of files transmitted electronically.

## Performance Measure

1. Average number of days to finalize a parole decision after the parole hearing.

FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
13	12	10	9	8	7

## Additional Agency Information

### Statutory and Constitutional Objectives

Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA), Title 40, Part 28, establishes the Tennessee Board of Parole (BOP) and defines the agency's responsibilities related to parole hearings. The board decides which eligible felony offenders will be granted parole and released from incarceration. Administrative duties of the board include setting criteria for granting, denying, and revoking parole; developing a strategic plan, annual budget and staffing plans; and policies and procedures (TCA 40-28-104).

The Governor has designated responsibilities to the BOP for reviewing all clemency requests. Using criteria established by the Governor, the BOP hears clemency matters and submits non-binding recommendations for consideration by the Governor.

### Obstacles to Meeting Objectives and Delivering Services and Means of Overcoming Obstacles

**Obstacle 1** – Steady increases in prison and jail populations have presented the Board of Parole with obstacles relative to service delivery. During fiscal year 1999-2000 there were 7,398 parole offenders compared to 12,429 during fiscal year 2010-2011. This represents a 68% increase. Additionally, in fiscal year 1999-2000 there were a total of 15,732 hearings compared to 16,690 during fiscal year 2010-2011. This represents a 6% increase.

BOP will continue to make the hearing process more efficient by reducing the decision making time and utilizing best-practices guidelines. BOP will also seize opportunities to leverage technology in the parole hearing process to maximize efficiency while evaluating appropriate resource requirements to meet increasing demand.

### Means of Maximizing Federal and Other Non-State Sources of Revenue

The Board of Parole's only source of income is state appropriations. BOP currently does not anticipate receiving any funds from outside resources, including the federal government.

## **Means of Avoiding Unnecessary Costs and Expenditures**

The Board of Parole regularly assesses operations to ensure the necessity of costs and expenditures. Through internal inspections and reviews, activity monitoring, technological advancements, and collaborative committees, BOP strives to meet agency objectives using available resources efficiently. By continuing to convert files of parole eligible offenders into electronic format, BOP will, in the long term, save substantial costs in time, shipping, and file handling. Additionally, by speeding up the decision making process of hearings, the state will save funds in incarceration costs.

## **Future Challenges and Opportunities**

Recent research efforts have provided the field with much needed information about how to increase public safety by helping offenders be successful in the community. This research indicates that certain programs and intervention strategies, when applied to a variety of offender populations, reliably produce sustained reductions in recidivism. The research shows that recidivism decreases when high-risk offenders successfully complete high-intensity treatment that addresses their criminogenic needs (factors that contribute to criminal behavior) and actually increases if low-risk offenders are assigned to high-intensity treatment. Criminogenic factors include: substance abuse, mental health, anti-social peers and relationships, anti-social behaviors, and low self-control. Research also indicates that traditional punishments for offenders (such as jail, restitution, home confinement, and intensive supervision) and inappropriate treatment programs are likely to have an adverse effect on recidivism.