



State of New Jersey

NEW JERSEY STATE PAROLE BOARD

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Budget Testimony FY 16

Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee

April 9, 2015

The New Jersey State Parole Board is committed to promoting public safety and fostering the successful rehabilitation of offenders by implementing policies that result in effective parole case management for the 15,324 offenders, including 7,031 sex offenders under supervision. With responsible parole decision making and the successful and sustainable reintegration of offenders into society by utilizing evidence based practices, the State Parole Board continues to seek improvement in the lives of our offenders, their families, their communities, as well as decrease recidivism. We strive to develop and maintain partnerships with local, state and federal law enforcement, as well as, community based organizations, in furtherance of our joint missions of promoting public safety and successful and sustainable offender reentry into the communities we serve.

As part of last year's testimony, I spoke about the review performed by the Office of Legislative Services audit team and expressed confidence that the corrective measures implemented by the State Parole Board would effectively address the concerns identified by the audit team. During the week of January 22, 2015, the Office of Legislative Services audit staff conducted a review of the State Parole Board for compliance regarding their recommendations. I am pleased to advise the committee that the audit staff determined that the corrective measures implemented by the State Parole Board rendered our agency in compliance with previous concerns expressed by the audit team. Simultaneously, the State Parole Board continued to develop an integrated Management Information System used to track Division of Parole activities. The implementation of this technology has resulted in a significant improvement in complying with supervision standards.

The State Parole Board's Veterans Reentry Initiative, now in its fourth year, continues to partner with multiple federal, state, county and local agencies to meet the service needs of veterans who have served our country and have become involved in the criminal justice system.

The Veterans Reentry Initiative focuses on providing diversion alternatives in collaboration with County Prosecutor's Offices, as well as post incarceration services for veteran offenders in the treatment of mental health, substance abuse, Post Traumatic Stress, and traumatic brain injuries.

In an effort to reduce the number of homeless veterans in our communities, this initiative provides housing resources for veterans through our statewide network of collaborative partners. Approximately 1,600 offenders presently under NJ parole supervision have previous military service, however not all are eligible for direct US Veteran Administration assistance.

The State Parole Board would like to specifically thank the NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA), for providing eligible veteran parolees access to their residential Veterans Haven North and Veterans Haven South programs. In addition, the State Parole Board's Veteran Offender Reentry Hotline has received and processed over 250 service assistance requests for veterans involved in the criminal justice system.

The State Parole Board has continued our partnership with the NJ American Legion and the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development in hosting "Hiring Our Heroes" employment fairs and "Regional Veteran Resource and Opportunity" events. As a result, the State Parole Board received the American Legion Overall Employment and Economics Award in 2014.

The State Parole Board received grant funding totaling \$380,319.00 through the Second Chance Act grant. The implementation of the "Second Chance Act Adult Offender Reentry Program for Planning and Demonstration Projects" grant, currently operational within Union County through the end of Fiscal Year 2015 is an example of a successful county social service partnership with faith based entities and community partners, specifically the Urban League of Union County, in providing aid to parolees returning to their home communities. The State Parole Board and our Union County partners will be submitting an application under a new grant to help Union County maintain this initiative.

The State Parole Board and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, working together in the Parolee Employment Placement Program, have expanded our long standing partnership by allowing Labor and Workforce Development to provide additional geographic areas to be served under new or amended contracts. By leveraging resources, the State Parole Board and Labor and Workforce Development has increased the potential for parolees to successfully transition into the job market and find employment. The contracts, administered by Labor and Workforce Development, are outcome based with compensation tied to performance objectives. A three year recidivism study will be conducted at the end of 2015.

The State Parole Board recently received grant funding totaling \$211,000.00 administered through the Division of Criminal Justice. Working collaboratively with the New Jersey State Police, this funding will be utilized to automate the real-time population of the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Supervised Release File with data for all 15,000 plus parolees currently under supervision within the State Parole Board's case management system. Once fully operational, any law enforcement contact within the United States with any parolee under State Parole Board supervision resulting in an NCIC inquiry, will notify the inquiring law enforcement officer of the supervision status of the parolee, as well as, other identifying details. Simultaneously, an automatic real-time alert will be sent to the supervising parole officer regarding the law enforcement inquiry.

In closing, the State Parole Board will continue to seek federal and state grant opportunities collaboratively with partnering law enforcement and state agencies, as well as maximize technologies in its implementation of evidence based best practices in the field of community supervision. These innovative efforts further promote public safety and improve the quality of community based programs to provide every available opportunity for successful offender reintegration.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions at this time.