

Parole and Probation

Mission

To provide supervision of paroled and probationary offenders in a manner that allows for the protection of the public and the successful reintegration of the offender into society.

Summary of Activities

The **Department of Correction** (DOC) employs 75 parole officers and casework managers to supervise over 6,000 adult and juvenile offenders who have been released from a state correctional facility. Parole officers ensure that offenders meet the requirements necessary for successful reintegration into society.

The DOC has recently participated in several program enhancements aimed at improving supervision of paroled offenders. In July of 1999, baseline drug testing for parolees was initiated at local parole districts.

In addition to random, follow-up, and probable cause drug tests, offenders are now tested for substance abuse during the first week of their supervision. In 1999, a total of 6,415 drug tests were administered to paroled offenders. From 1999 to the present, there has been a reduction in positive test rates. It is believed that the baseline testing has been a major reason for this reduction. The DOC is working to develop treatment and intervention alternatives for offenders with substance abuse problems. All local parole districts have at least one component of a “Zero Tolerance Program” in place. This program combines electronic monitoring, day reporting, and residential placement as a sanction for drug use while on parole. In conjunction with these measures, parole staff are working closely with community-based substance abuse treatment providers to provide education, counseling and support for offenders who are willing to take steps to overcome their addiction.

Indiana Parolees	
Men	4,818
Women	449
Boys	794
Girls	249

The DOC is implementing a Sex Offender Management Plan, to identify offenders in need of enhanced supervision and mandatory sex offender treatment. The DOC has also concentrated on enhancing staff expertise in supervising sex offenders. One parole agent is presently being trained in administering and interpreting polygraph tests. These tests will be critical in measuring offender compliance with the stipulations of parole supervision. The DOC is also developing collaborative projects with other agencies in corrections and the criminal justice system. These include over two years of participation in the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership sponsored by the United States Attorney’s Office. In addition to the sharing of intelligence information, this project has led to probation and parole curfew and compliance sweeps where participating agencies and law enforcement visit offenders at their residence during evening hours.

While parole officers are employed by the state, probation officers are county employees who supervise offenders who have not been remanded to state correctional facilities, because of alternative sentencing or incarceration in local jails. The **Indiana Judicial Center** assists the local courts in developing and improving probation services. It conducts testing and certification of probation officers, and sets statewide standards for the operation of probation services. The Center conducts education and training programs for probation officers, and administers the interstate compact regarding the transfer of probationers in and out of Indiana.

External Factors

Indiana’s parole system is challenged by the continued increase in the number of offenders on parole. During the past five years, the number of paroled adult offenders has increased significantly, with little adjustment in the number of field employees. The average caseload for parole officers has increased from sixty to eighty offenders. Many officers are now supervising over one hundred offenders. The DOC and public overall have stressed offender accountability as a means of enhancing public safety. Duties such as drug testing, use of electronic monitoring, and closer supervision of sex offenders have all become significant factors in a parole officer’s workday. The probation system is also experiencing increased caseloads, as more judges sentence offenders to “split sentences”, in which the first part of the sentence is served in a state facility, and the second part consists of probation, instead of parole.

Evaluation and Accomplishments

Despite large caseloads, the DOC has been able to enhance the level of supervision required of offenders and develop measures to implement appropriate sanctions when violations occur. Increased emphasis on drug testing and intervention resulted in a 4% reduction in positive drug tests by paroled offenders. During the past year, a total of 474 offenders participated in the Zero Tolerance Program. This was an increase of 6% from the previous year.

The Indiana Parole Board is in the process of implementing special stipulations for sex offenders that will be applied to approximately 400 offenders on parole supervision. These stipulations have been studied by the Judicial Center, which is considering implementing similar standards for local probation departments.

The Judicial Center provided probation officers with 31 days of instruction last year; total attendance was 2,813. The Center facilitated the transfer of 3,354 probationers out of state and 2,821 probationers into the state. Safety and security training for probation officers was expanded to include judicial officers and other courthouse employees. The Center helped direct and coordinate a national conference on gangs that drew 750 attendees.

Plans for the Biennium

During the past two years, the number of technical parole violators returned to custody has contributed to the overall population growth for the DOC. Many of these offenders remain in DOC facilities for a relatively brief period of time before being continued or reinstated to parole by the Indiana Parole Board. Because of these time constraints, it is difficult for the offenders to take advantage of DOC programs that could help them make a better adjustment when they are again released. Several states have implemented development of Technical Parole Violation Centers as a means of providing intermediate sanctions for paroled offenders and providing them with programming designed to address their behavior, such as cognitive programs and alcohol and drug abuse education. Implementing such a program for Indiana would be a significant enhancement of intermediate sanctions, and would also keep this population from returning to secure confinement in larger institutions.

The DOC plans to review the feasibility of using one of the existing Level 1 facilities for this purpose. Since it would not require additional staff or major renovation, the funding could be primarily supported by the existing budget of the targeted facility.

