

Brandon Shaffer, Chairperson

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Colorado Board of Parole

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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 6, 2014
To: Members of the Joint Budget Committee
From: Brandon Shaffer, Colorado Board of Parole, Chairperson
Subj.: Colorado Board of Parole Annual Report to the Joint Budget Committee

I. Introduction:

This memorandum is presented to the Joint Budget Committee of the Colorado General Assembly. The memorandum is divided into three parts: (1) Parole Board Operations, (2) Appropriations FY 2010-14, and (3) FY 2014-15 Budget Request.

II. Parole Board Operations

Parole Board. The Colorado Board of Parole ("Parole Board" or "Board") consists of seven members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Board members serve three-year terms at the will of the Governor. Board members may be reappointed for more than one term.

Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson is the administrative head of the Parole Board. It is his or her responsibility to enforce the rules and regulations of the Board, and to assure that parole hearings are scheduled and conducted properly. The Vice Chairperson assumes these responsibilities in the absence of the Chairperson. Brandon Shaffer was designated Chairperson on July 15, 2013. Rebecca Oakes was designated Vice-Chairperson the same day.

Mission. The mission of the Parole Board is to increase public safety by critical evaluation, through the utilization of evidence-based practices, of inmate potential for successful reintegration to society. The Board determines parole suitability through the process of setting conditions of parole and assists the parolee by helping to create an atmosphere for a successful reintegration and return to the community. (Colorado Board of Parole Strategic Plan, 2013-2014; created in accordance with the SMART Government Act, section 2-7-201, C.R.S. (2013))

Office. The Parole Board office is located at 1600 W. 24th Street, Building 54, Pueblo, Colorado. Remote offices are also provided for Board members at the Division of Adult Parole located at 940 Broadway Street, Denver, Colorado.

Staffing. The Parole Board is supported by seven staff-people. The Board support staff is structured as follows:

Office Manager, Pueblo (1 FTE)
 Scheduler/Admin, Pueblo (1 FTE)
 Revocation Unit, Pueblo (3 FTE)
 Application Unit, Pueblo (2 FTE)

During 2013, the Board also utilized several contract employees, including: (a) three Administrative Hearing Officers to conduct revocation hearings pursuant to 17-2-202.5, C.R.S. (2013); (b) a defense attorney to represent parolees who are not competent to represent themselves during revocation hearings; (c) a Release Hearing Officer to conduct application interviews pursuant to section 17-2-202.5, C.R.S. (2013); (d) a contract attorney in Denver to help prepare the Board's revised Rules and Regulations; and (e) two temp-workers in Pueblo to help scan files for the Board's automation project.

Hearings. There are primarily three types of hearings conducted by the Parole Board: (1) application interviews, (2) rescission hearings, and (3) revocation hearings. From January – November, 2013, the Parole Board conducted **18,067** application interviews, **473** rescission hearings, and **8,352** revocation hearings.

III. Appropriations to the Parole Board 2010-14

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Personal Services	\$1,348,408 (17.5 FTE)	\$1,197,526 (12.5 FTE)	\$1,197,526 (13.5 FTE)	\$1,197,526 (13.5 FTE)
Operating Expenses	\$101,545	\$99,545	\$104,890	\$104,890
Contract Services	\$152,000	\$228,637	\$288,437	\$272,437
Total	\$1,601,953	\$1,525,708	\$1,590,853	\$1,574,853

IV. Parole Board Budget Request 2014-15

Cost and FTE. Total Request is for an additional 3.6 FTE; a General Fund increase of \$261,277 over current Parole Board funding. The request annualizes to \$256,857 and 4.0 FTE in FY 2015-16.

Link to Operations. The Analysis of Colorado State Board of Parole Decisions: FY 2013 Report, prepared by the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, provides the following insight to the magnitude of changes in parole over the past several decades:

In 1990 when the Board was expanded from five to seven members, the combined average daily population of inmates and parolees of the Department of Corrections (DOC) was 9,453 and by FY 2013 this combined total had grown to 32,757, representing an increase of roughly 245% in the offenders for whom the Board may conduct hearings in a given year. In recent years, the Board has conducted between 25,000 and 30,000 hearings and reviews of various types per year.

The Parole Board has increased its utilization of contract hearing officers to help accommodate the expanded workload; however, a corresponding increase in support staff has not occurred.

Problem/Opportunity. Due to the statewide budget shortfall over the past few years, the Parole Board support staff was reduced from 10.5 to 6.5 FTE in FY 2010-11, a 38% decrease in support staff. This has created an overload on current staff. Additionally, the Board currently lacks the resources to fully incorporate data analysis into the Parole Board's decision making process or to refine evidence-based practices for successful offender reintegration.

Proposed Solution.

- Hire a Parole Board Administrator to oversee all administrative and ministerial functions of the Board, and serve as primary liaison between the Board Chairperson and the Department of Corrections.
- Hire a seasoned Data Analyst to track all parole Board decisions, recidivism, recommitments for new crimes, relationships between discretionary and mandatory parole, and new crimes committed to improve decision making and potentially lead to lower recidivism of discretionary releases.
- Hire two additional administrative staff to support the Parole Board operations in Denver.