

## **The Board of Pardons and Parole**

### **Update on Progress on the Findings of the Audit**

April 27, 2016

The Office of the Legislative Auditor General completed an audit of the Board. The auditors spent over three months in the Board offices observing the process, interviewing inmates, and auditing hundreds of files. The audit recommended changes in strategic planning, decision making, and efficiency. You can find a complete copy of the audit at [http://le.utah.gov/audit/16\\_01rpt.pdf](http://le.utah.gov/audit/16_01rpt.pdf)

#### **Strategic Planning**

The audit recommended the Board create a strategic plan to implement the Ten Best Practice Targets from the National Parole Resource Center (NPRC) <http://nationalparoleresourcecenter.org/toolkit2/ten-practice-targets.php>. The plan will include performance measures that are reported to the public.

The Board met with NPRC and has a follow-up meeting scheduled. The Board will be hiring a Deputy Director to facilitate the strategic planning process. The Board is also engaging with stakeholders to create the alliances needed to reach the Ten Best Practice Targets.

#### **Electronic Records**

One of the biggest recommendations was to improve the Board's record keeping system. The Board currently relies on a paper filing system. Each offender has a paper file the Board reviews in order to make a decision. Without an electronic record system the Board lacks the ability to track key performance measures.

The Governor's Office of Management and Budget is working with the Board to improve current practices and design an electronic records system. The Board expects to have a proposal by the end of the year.

#### **Structured Decision Making**

Many parole boards use structured decision making models. Structured decision making provides a better understanding of how decisions are made. Well designed tools increase the effectiveness of parole decisions. Structured decision making also increases fairness, consistency, and transparency.

The Board is examining models from other states as well as seeking input from interested parties.

The audit also recommended improving the 'rationale sheet' the Board gives to inmates with the Board's decision. The Board drafted new rationale sheets for original hearings and parole violation hearings. As a pilot the Board is trying the new rationale sheets and seeking input from interested parties.

## **Efficiency**

The audit recommended improving efficiency in pardon hearings and decision making for less serious offenses.

Currently a pardon hearing requires five Board members. The Board could improve efficiency by having fewer Board members required to hear low level convictions. The Board is seeking a rule change to allow this to occur.

The audit noted the Board is relatively consistent in paroling less serious offenses under guideline and recommended the Board explore a streamlined process to grant parole for this group.

The Board moved up the scheduling of original parole hearings in order to allow inmates a potential release date that takes into account the earned time program and sentencing guidelines.