

Management of Correctional Data

Follow-up Report
March 2005

Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho Legislature



Report 05-01F

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Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations

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March 2, 2005

Members
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
Idaho Legislature

At your direction, we have completed our follow-up review of data management at the Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole.

The commission and the department have made data management improvements, but some weaknesses still remain. Both agencies have been working to determine the commission's data needs and address them in a new information system currently being developed.

We conclude the department and the commission have sufficient data to evaluate the timeliness of parole release practices, as well as conduct a recidivism study.

We appreciate the cooperation we received from the department and the commission in conducting this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rakesh Mohan".

Rakesh Mohan

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Executive Summary

Management of Correctional Data Follow-up Report

In May 2001, the Office of Performance Evaluations released *Improvements in Data Management Needed at the Commission of Pardons and Parole*, which provided nine recommendations to improve the integration and management of data between the Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole. Subsequent follow-up reports in June 2002 and February 2003 indicated the department and the commission were making progress in implementing a new data management system and working to automate some commission functions.

In 2004, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee asked us to again review the agencies' progress and determine if improvements in data management were sufficient to allow for evaluation of the timeliness of the parole system. At the same time, the committee directed us to review the availability and suitability of the department's data for measuring recidivism.

Data Management Needs Improvement, but Assessing Parole Timeliness Is Possible

Since the 2001 report, the commission, with the help of the department, has taken steps to improve data management practices. Overall, the commission and department have addressed the nine recommendations to some extent. This report centers on the issues related to data management capabilities and integration of data systems.

The commission has automated certain tasks that previously required considerable staff time, and now tracks some key data electronically. In spite of these improvements, data management weaknesses remain. The commission tracks some information about inmates scheduled for parole in a manner that does not allow staff to easily identify inmate status or generate summary information. Commission staff also have to obtain key information by requesting paper files, making phone calls, or manually tracking and calculating data.

The department is currently directing resources toward development of a new data system. Department technology staff have been working with the commission to plan and build a parole component that will meet the commission's data needs.

We conclude from our review that the department and the commission have sufficient data to evaluate the timeliness of parole release practices. The current data system contains inmate information, and the commission keeps an electronic log detailing the status of incarcerated offenders who have been scheduled for parole.

Data for Determining Recidivism Is Available

State correctional systems typically measure the effectiveness of their programs by measuring continued criminal behavior, called recidivism. The department tracks and reports general recidivism rates in a manner that is consistent with other states and published research. In addition, the department reports the effectiveness of its therapeutic community (substance abuse) program by measuring parole revocation, another measure of recidivism. We conclude the department has the necessary data to perform a recidivism study. The Department currently reports recidivism rates, but its method of reporting such information could be improved.

Acknowledgements

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from the Commission of Pardons and Parole and the Department of Correction in completing this review. We also appreciate the input we received from David Hahn of the Division of Financial Management, Richard Burns of Budget and Policy Analysis, and Eric Jensen, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at the University of Idaho.

AJ Burns (project lead) and Chris Shoop of the Office of Performance Evaluations conducted this review. Misti Rutledge and Courtney Haines, interns from Boise State University, also provided assistance. Rachel Johnstone and Paul Headlee performed the quality control review on the project.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and Scope

In January 2001, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee asked us to evaluate the timeliness of parole release practices. This evaluation was delayed because the data management systems of the Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole needed substantial improvement before adequate data would be readily available to complete the evaluation. The Oversight Committee then asked us to review the data management practices at the commission and the department, and make recommendations for improvements that could eventually allow the original study to be completed.

Our May 2001 report, *Improvements in Data Management Needed at the Commission of Pardons and Parole*, made nine recommendations for improving data management practices at the commission and the department. A complete list of recommendations is provided in Appendix A. In general, the recommendations called for:

- Both agencies to work together to develop an integrated electronic data management system, which would allow the commission to access and use department information
- The commission to automate its data management capabilities
- The department to comply with legal requirements for purchasing an offender management data system from the state of Utah

Subsequent follow-up reports in June 2002 and February 2003 indicated the department and commission were making progress in implementing a new data management system and working to automate some functions at the commission. At the time of the 2003 review, the department had followed our recommendations and was taking steps to comply with purchasing requirements for the Utah system.

The Oversight Committee directed us to again review the agencies' progress and determine if the improvements in data management were sufficient to allow for evaluation of the timeliness of the parole system.

We reviewed the department and commission's implementation of our recommendations from the May 2001 report. Both agencies provided written responses describing their progress in implementing the recommendations, which are included at the end of this report in Appendices B and C. In general, we found the department and commission has addressed all of the nine recommendations to some extent.

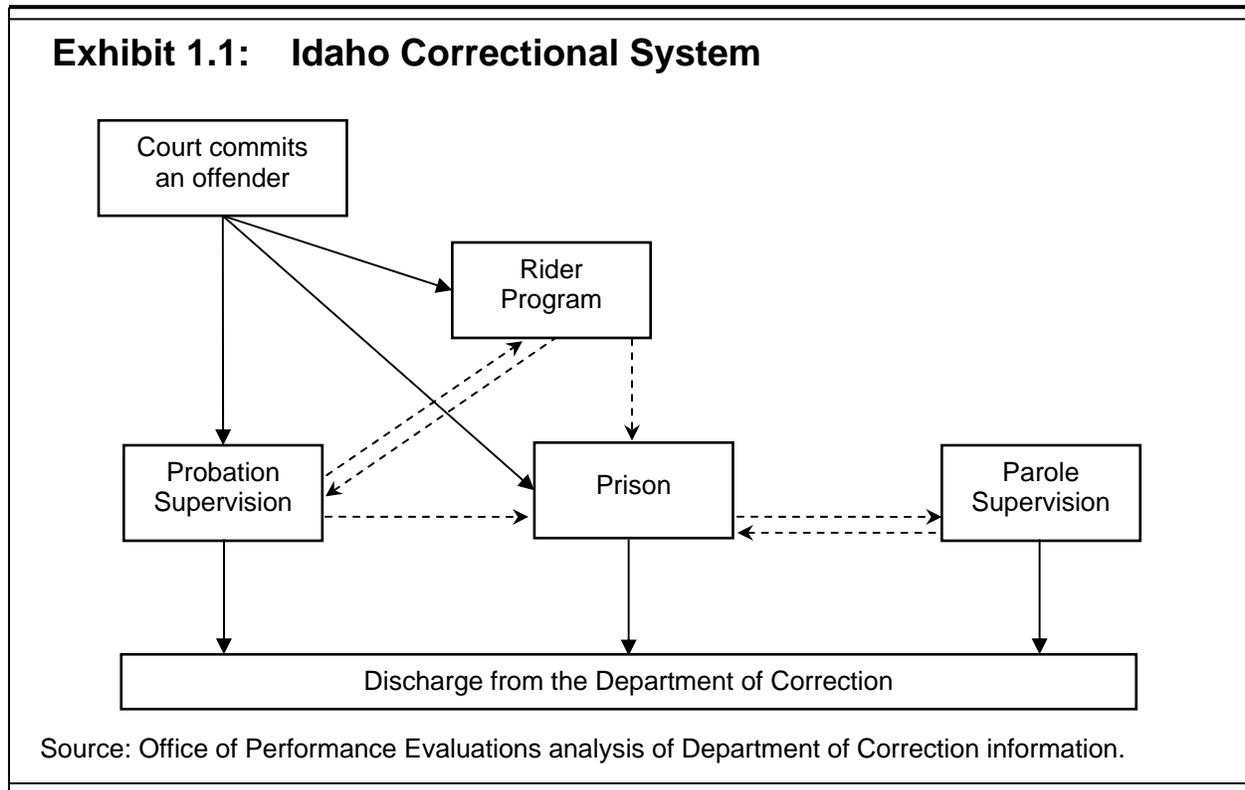
This report focuses on ongoing issues related to integrating the data systems of the department and commission, and automating the commission's data management capabilities. In particular, Chapter 2 focuses on both agencies' progress in these areas and on the suitability of the current data systems to study the timeliness of parole practices.

In June 2004, Legislative Council requested that we review recidivism rates for specific department programs. Because it was not clear if the department had necessary data to perform the study, the Oversight Committee directed us to perform a review of the availability and sufficiency of the department's recidivism data as a part of the data management follow-up. Chapter 3 discusses the results of this review.

To assess the progress made by the department and commission in implementing our recommendations and whether the department has necessary data to do a recidivism study, we spoke with agency officials, reviewed agency data and management reports, interviewed University of Idaho Sociology Professor Eric Jensen, Ph.D., and reviewed pertinent research by other states and criminal justice agencies.

Overview of the Department and the Commission

The department and the commission each have an important and unique role in Idaho's correctional system. The Department of Correction is responsible for the control, direction, and management of state penitentiaries and supervision of adult probation and parole. The Commission of Pardons and Parole functions as a separate agency, charged with fulfilling legal pardons and parole duties, including determining the requirements of parole, granting or denying parole, and revoking parole.



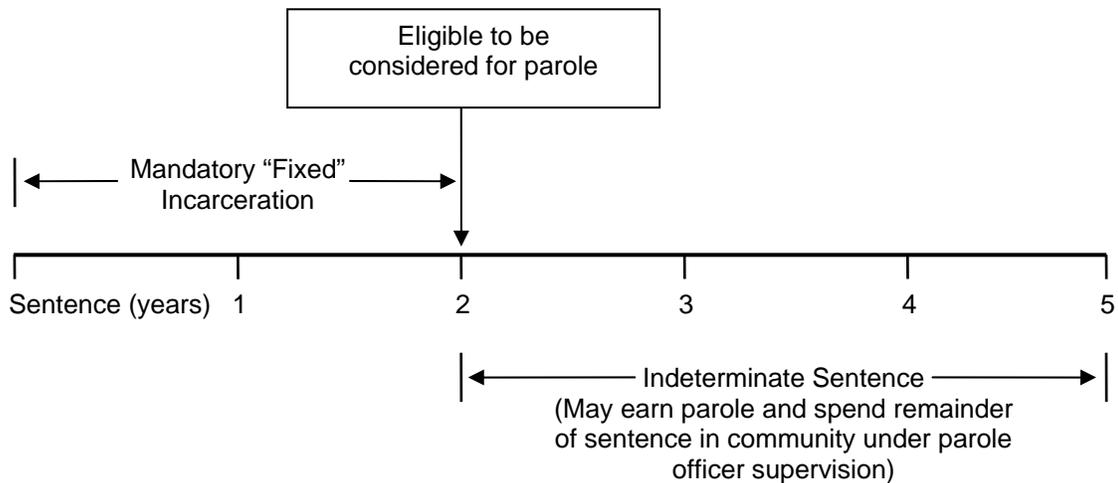
Idaho’s adult correctional system includes the courts, the Department of Correction, and the Commission of Pardons and Parole. When the court sentences an offender to prison, the court has three options:

- Suspend the sentence and place the offender on probation supervision
- Retain court jurisdiction and incarcerate the offender in the short-term “rider” program¹
- Send the offender directly to prison

The court and the commission may move offenders from a less intensive option (probation or the rider program) to another more restrictive option depending on the offender’s behavior, program completion, the amount of time served, or any subsequent criminal activity. Once an offender enters prison, however, the only less restrictive options available are parole supervision or discharge from department custody. Exhibit 1.1 illustrates how offenders may move through the system. At the completion of the offender’s sentence, the offender is discharged from the jurisdiction of the Department of Correction and/or the court.

¹ The rider program is a short-term, 120-day “intensive incarceration” program in which the court retains jurisdiction over the offender. At the end of the 120 days, the court reviews the offender’s progress and determines if the offender should be placed on probation or incarcerated to complete the prison sentence.

Exhibit 1.2: Five-Year Sentence (Two Years “Fixed” Sentence with the Possibility of Parole)



Source: Office of Performance Evaluations analysis of IDAHO CODE §§ 20-219, 222.

As part of the offender’s sentence, the court may stipulate a “fixed” (mandatory) amount of time the offender must serve in prison, and give the offender the opportunity to reduce the remaining “indeterminate” time of incarceration by allowing the offender to qualify for parole. For example, the court may sentence an offender to a total of five years, and require the offender serve a “fixed” two years in prison before the possibility of parole. At the end of the two-year fixed portion of the sentence, the offender is eligible to be considered for parole. Exhibit 1.2 illustrates this example. The date the offender completes the mandatory portion of the sentence is called the parole eligibility date (PED). The parole eligibility date does not guarantee parole, but rather is the earliest opportunity for the offender to be granted parole.

Typically, the Commission of Pardons and Parole schedules a parole hearing six months prior to the parole eligibility date to establish the conditions the offender must fulfill to be granted parole. If the commission decides to tentatively grant parole (once conditions are met), it sets a “tentative parole date” (TPD). To be granted parole, the offender must fulfill the parole requirements and have a detailed parole plan for returning to the community. Once granted parole, the offender is released back to the community under the supervision of a Department of Correction parole officer. Under Idaho law, the offender may be supervised on parole until the end of the full sentence. As the example in Exhibit 1.2 illustrates, the offender could be supervised until the end of the five years.

There is a financial cost to keeping inmates beyond their release or parole date. The department reported it cost the state about \$48 per day (about \$17,500 per

year) to incarcerate an offender in fiscal year 2004. An adequate data management system would track an offender's progress through the parole process and ensure they proceed in a timely manner. Adequate data would allow evaluation of the parole process to determine if parole practices, or other systemic issues such as program availability, are delaying offender release.

Shared Data Management Responsibilities

Because both the department and the commission are managing the same offenders, sharing a single data management system is cost effective and reduces duplication. At the time of our 2001 report, the commission could not efficiently use the department's data systems to monitor an offender's eligibility for parole and subsequent progress.

In calendar year 2004, the commission reported it held approximately 1,900 hearings. The commission must notify inmates of hearing dates and decisions as part of the parole process. At the time of our 2001 report, much of the information used by the commission for inmate notification letters, such as the inmate's offense, sentence, hearing dates, etc., had to be looked up on the computer and then typed into a letter format, printed, and mailed to the inmate.

The 2001 report made recommendations to increase cooperation between the department and the commission. At that time, the department was in the process of acquiring a portion of a new offender data management system from the state of Utah. Since then, the department has installed the "Utah" Offender Management Program (OMP), and subsequently modified it to be web-based and easier to use. The OMP module, however, is only one component of the department's offender data tracking systems.

Currently, the department maintains several databases to track offenders and is in the process of updating its entire data management system. The department is developing a new Corrections Incarceration System (CIS), which would combine the functions of the separate databases into one comprehensive system. The department's information technology staff estimate the new system will also capture and provide ready access to about four times more data than is currently available. The department is currently working with the Office of the Governor to devise a method to fund the final implementation of this system and the quality control functions needed to ensure data integrity.

Chapter 2

Data Management

Since the Office of Performance Evaluations' 2001 report, the Commission of Pardons and Parole has worked internally, and with the Department of Correction, to improve its data management. In spite of the progress, data management issues still exist. The commission and the department have been working together to determine the commission's data needs and integrate them into the new information system the department is currently developing. Nevertheless, we conclude that information needed to assess parole timeliness is currently available.

Original Recommendations

The 2001 report contained four recommendations related to improving the commission's data management. One of these recommendations called for the commission to request authority to hire an information technology professional. The commission reports it requested this position, but did not receive authority. As this chapter discusses, the commission has taken some steps to address the three other recommendations and anticipates the new information system currently being developed by the department will address remaining concerns.

The report contained two additional recommendations calling for the commission to improve communication with the department about technology needs and regularly take part in management technology meetings. The commission and the department have been working together as they direct current resources to develop the new information system.

Department and Commission Have Made Some Data Management Improvements

The commission has worked with the department to make several improvements since concerns about their data management practices were raised in the 2001 report. The commission now tracks certain information in electronic format and has automated some functions that were previously kept or prepared manually—capturing some key information electronically and reducing staff time devoted to tedious tasks.

Specific improvements include:

- Developing an automated report of commission parole decisions
- Developing electronic files to capture information on inmates scheduled for parole and offenders whose parole was revoked
- Automating distribution of hearing notices and commission decisions
- Automating certain components of inmates' hearing meeting minutes

These actions have benefited the commission in several ways. In particular, the commission has been able to:

- Redirect staff time previously spent manually preparing reports of commission decisions
- Eliminate the need to log certain information about inmates in the parole process by hand
- Redirect staff time that previously went into preparing and mailing 300–400 decision notices each month
- Eliminate staff time needed to enter standard information for hearing minutes, reducing the chance for error

Some Data Management Problems Still Exist

Although the commission has worked with department technology staff to improve data management since the release of the 2001 report, particularly in areas that increase efficiency, we identified some continuing weaknesses with data management practices and current data systems. For instance, the commission cannot easily monitor the status of inmates scheduled for parole. In addition, the department and the commission have reported conflicting information to the legislative and executive budget offices about the number of inmates scheduled for parole.

Determining Status of Inmates with Tentative Parole Dates

The commission's method of tracking inmates for whom a tentative parole date has been set requires staff to manually count the data to obtain summary information.¹ Commission staff track these inmates in an electronic spreadsheet, which contained information for 468 inmates as of January 25, 2005. The spreadsheet design and the large number of inmates tracked make it difficult to

¹ Inmates granted parole by the commission are assigned a tentative parole date prior to actual parole release. The tentative date allows for the inmate to be released on that date if all required conditions are met.

determine the status of inmates progressing toward parole. For example, if commission staff wanted to know how many inmates were scheduled for parole and delayed because they were currently completing intervention programs, staff would have to manually scan the spreadsheet and count the applicable inmates. Such counting is not only inefficient, but also increases opportunities for error in compiling summary information.

Monitoring Inmates in Programs

The commission's ability to track the status of inmates who have been required to complete treatment and intervention programs for parole eligibility is limited by the current data systems. In some instances, the completion of the program is the final condition the inmate must meet to be paroled. However, commission officials report they are unable to monitor the program status of inmates electronically because the individual prisons do not consistently track and enter this information. As a result, commission staff must call individual prisons to determine whether the inmate has completed the requirement. The lack of automation in this area consumes commission staff time, increases the chance for error, and may delay the release of an inmate.

Preparing Hearing Officer Reports

Commission hearing officers must request copies of information from department paper files that are not available in current data systems, and re-key this information in order to generate reports. Department files include documents about the inmate's crime or parole violation, court orders, and psychological evaluations or assessments. This information, along with sentencing, disciplinary, program, and other evaluation information collected from the department's data system, is to be included as part of the hearing officer's report to the pardons and parole commissioners. When hearing officers have to request and re-key this information, it is time intensive, creates a greater likelihood of data entry errors, and is duplicative.

Tracking of Certain Hearing Information

Commission management continues to manually track some information about parole hearings that is useful for internal management. For instance, a commission official reports that she is not able to record in the data system which hearings are held in the presence of the commissioners and which are decided by the commission without a hearing in executive session. In addition, the data systems used by the commission do not reflect whether the commissioners adopted the recommendation of the hearing officers.

Exhibit 2.1: Department of Correction Inmates Past Tentative Parole Date, January 2005 ^a

| <u>Current parole plan status</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--|--------------|
| Plan accepted, awaiting date set for release | 3 |
| Awaiting parole officer assignment | 1 |
| Awaiting program completion | 15 |
| Awaiting final acceptance | 25 |
| Parole officer review not complete | 7 |
| Parole officer rejected plan | <u>9</u> |
| TOTAL | 60 |

^a Does not include offenders who have been granted parole pending completion of a required treatment program (referred to as an "open parole date").

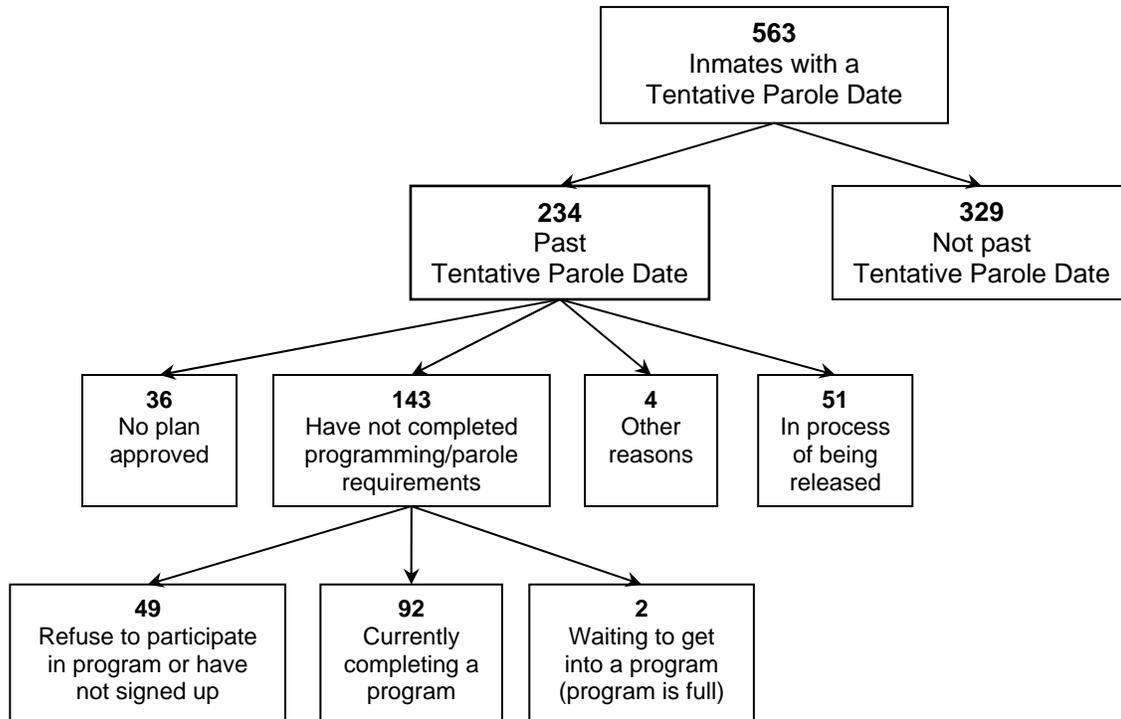
Source: Office of Performance Evaluations analysis of Idaho Department of Correction data.

Reporting Information to Policymakers

The department and commission each track information about the number of inmates scheduled for parole. However, because of differences in the way the numbers are compiled, information provided to analysts at the Division of Financial Management and Budget and Policy Analysis has not been consistent. According to department staff, its numbers vary from the commission's because the department does not include inmates that have been granted an immediate parole date pending the completion of a program. Department staff said they do not find value in tracking such inmates. While each agency may have different information needs, the variations in the numbers can be misleading or confusing to those who receive the information.

The information generated by the department summarizes the number of inmates beyond their scheduled parole date and categorizes the reasons the inmate is still incarcerated. Department staff indicate this information is determined from committee hearing actions and other inmate information obtained through a series of queries of the department's data system. According to department data, as of January 2005, 60 inmates were past their tentative parole date (Exhibit 2.1).

Exhibit 2.2: Commission of Pardons and Parole Status of Inmates with Tentative Parole Date, January 7, 2005



Source: Office of Performance Evaluations analysis of Commission of Pardons and Parole data.

Commission staff use their spreadsheet to track the circumstances of each inmate scheduled for parole and manually summarize the number of inmates who are past their tentative parole date. Exhibit 2.2 shows the commission’s response to our inquiry about the status of currently incarcerated inmates, which indicates 234 inmates are past their tentative parole date.

The commission reported the department recently agreed to use the commission’s data to report to the executive and legislative branches.

New Data System Should Improve Commission’s Management of Information

As discussed in Chapter 1, the department is currently devoting information technology resources to development of a new data system designed to integrate the three separate offender management systems it currently operates. In developing this system, department project staff have been working with commission officials to plan and build a parole module to store commission information and generate useful reports.

The commission's executive director submitted a list of data needs to the project managers, and believes the new data system will provide the commission with adequate and easy-to-use information for management of its responsibilities. For example, the department's project manager reports the new system will be able to track the status of those inmates who have been scheduled for parole, and conceivably would eliminate the need for the commission to maintain a separate spreadsheet to track this information.

Department staff indicated that implementation of this new system could begin in December 2005. They report that adequate implementation of this system will require two additional positions to perform quality control functions over the data.

Data for Assessing Parole Timeliness Is Available

Although management of parole data could be improved, information needed to assess the timeliness of parole is available. Two key dates needed to assess parole timeliness—the parole eligibility date and tentative parole date—are tracked in the department's data system.² As discussed, the commission also tracks inmates with a tentative parole date.

This information from these different sources could be used to identify cases that exceed key parole dates. To assess the reasons why inmates exceed these dates, evaluators could review the department and commission data (such as is shown in Exhibit 2.1 and Exhibit 2.2) indicating the inmates' stages in the parole process, and review individual inmate files and commission history information for a sample of cases. According to department staff, some limitations with aggregate data may arise when doing a historical review of inmates who have already been released, but data should still allow for, at a minimum, examination of a sample of paroled offenders.

² Parole eligibility date refers to the date when an inmate completes the mandatory portion of the sentence and is the earliest opportunity for an inmate to be granted parole. The tentative parole date is the date which the commission sets for an inmate's parole release, provided all requirements have been met.

Chapter 3

Recidivism Data

The Department of Correction reports general recidivism information in a manner that is consistent with other states and published research. The department also measures and reports the effectiveness of its therapeutic community (substance abuse) program by measuring parole revocation, another measure of recidivism. We conclude the department has the necessary data to perform a recidivism study. The Department currently reports recidivism rates, but its method of reporting such information could be improved.

What Is Recidivism?

One of the goals of a correctional system is to eliminate an offender's continued criminal behavior, called recidivism. States track recidivism as a way to measure correctional program effectiveness and estimate potential inmate populations and costs. In practice, there are several ways to measure recidivism. The measure reported depends on its intended use. For example:

- The department may track the number of offenders that return to prison each year to help project the expected prison population and estimate resource needs
- Program managers may want to know the number of offenders who complete a substance abuse program, also successfully complete parole, and are discharged without having their parole revoked
- Lawmakers may want to know if a new program is reducing crime in the community

Measures of recidivism, called recidivism rates, are calculated differently and may require access to slightly different information depending on how the rate is used and defined. Researchers commonly use one of the following indicators to calculate recidivism rates: re-incarceration, re-conviction, re-arrest, or probation/parole violation. The department typically uses re-incarceration and probation/parole violation to calculate recidivism rates. Appendix D lists the indicators used by other states and research organizations.

Recidivism Rates Based on Prison Admissions

One of the most common ways of reporting recidivism is the number of offenders admitted to prison for a new crime who had been previously imprisoned. Correctional departments have ready access to admission information, making it relatively easy to measure. This type of recidivism rate provides limited information about the success of individual programs and does not take into account the number of offenders who succeed and do not return to prison.

Recidivism Rates Based on Prison Releases

Another way to report recidivism is to track the number of offenders that recidivate compared to the total offenders released from prison or a specific program. This type of measure can be used to evaluate treatment program effectiveness. The limitation of this type of rate is that most recidivism occurs within two to three years after release, meaning there is substantial lag time before results can be reported.

Department Reports Recidivism

The department generally reports admissions and release recidivism rates. The recidivism rates in Exhibit 3.1 were reported in the department's annual statistical report for fiscal year 2004.

Offenders Previously Discharged Who Return to Prison

The department reports that 13 percent of the offenders *admitted to prison* in fiscal year 2004 had been previously discharged from prison for a prior crime. As shown in Exhibit 3.1, the department reports 8.5 percent of the offenders *released* (discharged) from department custody between 1996 and 2004 went on to commit a new offense and were again sent to prison. This suggests that nearly 90 percent of the offenders who were discharged during this time did not commit new crimes for which they were returned to prison.

Probation and Parole Revocation as a Recidivism Measure

Probation and parole violations can also be used to gauge recidivism, but are slightly different than other rates because the offenders are still under department supervision in the community and can be returned to prison for committing new crimes *or* for not complying with probation or parole requirements (technical violations).

Exhibit 3.1: Department of Correction Recidivism Rates

| <u>Admission Recidivism Rates FY04</u> | <u>Prison Admissions^a</u> |
|---|--|
| Returned to prison for a new crime | 13% |
| Probation revoked and sent to prison | 35 |
| Parole revoked and sent to prison | 21 |
| TOTAL | 69% |
| | |
| <u>Release Recidivism Rates FY96–FY04</u> | <u>All Prison Releases^b</u> |
| Returned to prison for a new crime | 8.5% |
| Probation revoked and sent to prison | 17 |
| Parole revoked and sent to prison | 39 |

^a Percentages based on all admissions for fiscal year 2004.

^b Percentages are based on different populations and cannot be totaled.

Source: Office of Performance Evaluations analysis of Department of Correction data from *Annual Statistical Report FY04*.

Based on the department’s reported data, 56 percent of the *admissions* to prison in fiscal year 2004 were due to probation and parole revocations. The department does not currently track the specific reasons for probation and parole revocations in its data system. However, a recent manual file review by faculty from Boise State University found half of the probationers and parolees reviewed were revoked for technical violations or misdemeanor crimes, and half for new felony crimes.¹ The report suggests the number of offenders revoked in Idaho is high compared to national figures. A recent study of department prison capacity issues recommended the department track the reasons for probation and parole revocation, and reduce the number of probationers and parolees returned to prison.²

The department’s current data system makes it difficult to determine if the number of probationers and parolees returned to prison is unreasonably high because it does not routinely monitor the reasons for probation and parole revocation. With over half of the fiscal year 2004 admissions resulting from probation and parole revocation, further study in this area is warranted to determine whether revocation rates could be reduced.

¹ R. Marsh and S. Patrick, “Hard Choices,” Boise State University (2004) 18, 20. The results of this study were based on a limited review of 36 randomly selected inmates who had their probation or parole revoked in 2003.

² Idaho Department of Correction, *Program and Capacity Assessment of the Idaho Department of Correction*, Huskey & Associates, Inc. (2004), 30.

Measuring Treatment Program Effectiveness

The purpose of correctional programs is to address the behavioral issues that encourage criminal behavior, thereby reducing recidivism. The department offers three major correctional programs intended to reduce criminal behavior: Cognitive Self-Change (changing criminal thinking patterns), completion of a high school education, and Therapeutic Community. Although the department reports information for all three programs, this report will focus on the Therapeutic Community program.

The department's Therapeutic Community program is an intensive 9 to 12 month substance abuse treatment program offered at four of its institutions.³ A recent literature review conducted for the department by the University of Idaho suggests that therapeutic community programs are effective in reducing recidivism.⁴

The department uses parole violations to measure recidivism for offenders who have participated in therapeutic community programs. Department research shows that over 90 percent of the offenders who are going to violate parole typically do so within two years of release to the community, so recidivism rates (parole violations) are only reported for those offenders who were released at least two years ago. A two- to three-year "lag time" is consistent with other recidivism research performed by other states and organizations.⁵ Taking this lag time into account, fiscal year 2002 is the most recent year for which data is reported. Recidivism rates for the department's therapeutic community program for fiscal years 1999 through 2002 are shown in Exhibit 3.2.

For comparison purposes, the department reports that during the time period of 1999 through 2002, offenders who participated but *did not* complete the Therapeutic Community program had an average recidivism rate of 44 percent.⁶

³ The Pocatello Women's Correctional Center (PWCC) also operates a six-month therapeutic community program.

⁴ E. L. Jensen and G. E. Reed, University of Idaho, *A Review of the Evaluation Research Literature on Selected Correctional Programming: The Final Report* (2002).

⁵ Based on an Office of Performance Evaluations analysis of 11 recidivism studies that reported a follow-up period for the research. Six studies used a three-year follow-up period, and four used a two-year follow-up period.

⁶ The department does not currently track recidivism for the offenders who completed the program, but were not granted parole. However, the high percentage of program completers who are granted parole suggests these numbers of offenders are small.

Exhibit 3.2: Department's Reported Recidivism Rates (Parole Violations) for the Therapeutic Community Program

| <u>Fiscal Year</u> | <u>Offenders Completing the Program</u> | <u>Program Completers Granted Parole</u> | <u>Recidivism Rates of Program Completers</u> |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| 1999 | 97 | 79% | 35% |
| 2000 | 121 | 89 | 48 |
| 2001 | 139 | 96 | 35 |
| 2002 | 172 | <u>97</u> | <u>30</u> |
| AVERAGE | | 91% | 33% |

Source: Office of Performance Evaluations analysis of Department of Correction data.

Department Has Data to Measure Recidivism

The department is generally measuring recidivism in a manner consistent with research reported in the literature for other states and programs. However, differences in individual state programs and varying parole practices make it difficult to compare individual states.

The department has been working with the University of Idaho to perform a long-term study of recidivism rates for each of its major programs. The study is designed to measure the impact of the programs on recidivism, and will examine many of the factors that impact recidivism, such as employment. The project will be based on offenders discharged in 2004, and the final report is not anticipated until 2008.

Future Research and Reporting

Although the University of Idaho study will not be completed for some time, it appears to be fairly comprehensive in its design and should be able to provide important information about overall recidivism rates and the rates for various department programs.

In the shorter term, other research could focus on the reasons for probation and parole revocation to determine if the rate of revocation in Idaho is reasonable. The department should identify several states with similar correctional systems and report these rates to provide lawmakers with a context for understanding Idaho's numbers. Finally, although the department's annual report contains the

information needed to calculate recidivism, much of the information is not readily identifiable. The recidivism section of the annual report should be expanded to include general and program specific information, and should include several years of historical data for comparison purposes.

We conclude the department has the necessary data to perform a recidivism study. The Department currently reports recidivism rates, but its method of reporting such information could be improved.

Appendix A

Original Recommendations

Improvements in Data Management Needed at the Commission of Pardons and Parole, May 2001

1. The Commission of Pardons and Parole should use the unpopulated parole hearing data fields in the Department of Correction's offender information system to store and retrieve data.
2. The Commission of Pardons and Parole should obtain electronic downloads of needed data from the Department of Correction's offender information system.
3. The Commission of Pardons and Parole should hire an information technology professional.
4. The Commission of Pardons and Parole should automate the remaining data it maintains by hand in a manner consistent with downloaded data from the Department of Correction.
5. The Commission of Pardons and Parole should improve participation in the End User Steering Committee and the Management Information System Committee.
6. The Commission of Pardons and Parole and the Department of Correction should improve communication about data needs to allow for improved system integration.
7. The Department of Correction should more fully identify all system-related costs, system capabilities, and related inter-state sharing agreements.
8. The Department of Correction should work closely with the Division of Purchasing to ensure all purchasing requirements are adhered to.
9. The Department of Correction should confirm, through receipt of a Utah Attorney General's opinion, that the state of Utah has full authority to enter into the proposed transaction.

Appendix B

**Commission of Pardons and
Parole's Implementation Report**



STATE OF IDAHO

COMMISSION OF PARDONS AND PAROLE

Dirk Kempthorne
Governor

Olivia Craven
Executive Director

February 2, 2005

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho State Legislature
Boise, Idaho

RE: Improvements in Data Management Needs at
Commission of Pardons and Parole

Dear Director Mohan:

The information contained in this letter and attachments will provide an update to the study started in 2001. I previously sent you a response to questions you asked in a letter dated January 5, 2005.

Recommendations for the Commission of Pardons and Parole
Report: May 2001

- **Use the unpopulated parole hearing data fields in the DOC offender information system to store and retrieve data.**

During this process, and occurring at the same time, IDOC was already looking into a new computer system – the “Utah System”. IDOC worked very hard to create reports and automation of information we were already putting into the computer, such as a report being generated from actions taken. We worked on a project to use some fields to record credit/forfeiture information. IDOC determined this information could not be captured in the current system. This project is being addressed with the new system. Creating some of the things in the current system may not be easily adapted to the new system. (January 2005 Action Taken List Attached)

- **Obtain needed data through electronic downloads from DOC's offender information system.**

IDOC worked with Commission staff for about two years, creating reports and automating “lists” for us. Both departments spent many, many hours each month creating these reports. IDOC was able to provide the following:

- ◆ Action Taken List (This is a list of all reviews/hearings decisions made by the Commission monthly. This list previously had to be typed and could include 300-400 decisions. This automation meant that a report of all of the actions taken was created from inputting the decisions.)
- ◆ Notice to Inmate of Review/Hearing Decision (Each inmate for which a review or hearing is done receives a written notice of the final action. Previously, we had to prepare and mail each notice to each inmate; as stated above, this could be 300-400 notices. We built an automatic notice that would go out from the decision entered to the mail room to be forwarded to the inmate. This meant no staff time on the part of the Commission and meant a much easier process for the IDOC mail room staff.

Also a notice automatically went to the records office at the facility where the inmate was housed to be placed in the central file. This affected IDOC and Commission staff in a positive way.) (Submitted on CD)

- ◆ I take exception to the criticism of the Commission tracking and maintaining information "by hand". Quite frankly, my needs were not being met, and the records had to be kept. Had we not done this, we would not have known if we were operating efficiently. Yes, hand-kept records are very time-consuming, but very necessary if there is no other way. We have developed some excel work sheets to track information, but this not the best way either. We need to be able to input data to receive reports that are needed to track the information. There are many things not available in the current computer system that are very critical. Had I not kept those records by hand, I really wouldn't have been able to give any reasonable information about our operation.

➤ **Hire an information technology professional.**

We did make a request for an information technology position. The legislature did not fund this position. It was suggested that we use one of three positions that were given to the Commission (hearing officer, sentencing specialist, and victim coordinator). I made the decision that those three positions were critical to maintain the hearing process and support the Commission with the most complete information possible.

After the original report, the State went through "lean" times and we experienced holdbacks, which meant doing the same or more with less. As I previously advised, I had to make a decision and hearing officers and support staff were top priority for the Commissioners to make good parole release decisions. Since the original report, the legislature has given the Commission much-needed hearing officer positions and much-needed support staff for the hearing officers. For the past few years, I have been able to hire staff that not only were qualified for the position hired, but also brought a high level of computer technical experience.

➤ **Improve participation in the End User Steering Committee and Management Information System Committee.**

As the offender system is integral for IDOC and the Commission, it is important for both agencies to communicate. I sincerely believe that our participation with the two stated committees was not reflected in the original minutes of meetings, and there were some problems which affected our participation.

- ◆ The End User Steering Committee is made up of employees from all divisions of IDOC and the Commission. We have always participated at a high level in this committee. In fact, I have had two staff members that were chairman of the End User Steering Committee. I believe that we were not vigilant to make certain the meeting minutes reflected our participation at every meeting.
- ◆ We have had some deficiencies with the Management Information Committee. Four years ago when this study began, we attended meetings. However, IDOC combined the Information System meeting along with another management meeting. We often had to wait to get to the technology portion. I will admit that we were frustrated and did not make a full effort to attend. Again, we also noticed that minutes did not always reflect that we were at a meeting. We may not have signed a "being present list" and the names were not reflected in the minutes. As a part of the study, I have informed all of my staff that it is all of our duty to make sure we look at minutes of meetings we attend and make certain it reflects that we were present, and that any testimony given is reflected in the minutes. I have always sent the appropriate person to the meetings. My staff has always been limited, and I cannot possibly attend every meeting involving management.

Update to Data Management Report
May 2001 Report
February 2, 2005

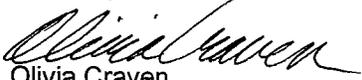
- ◆ We have remained a part of the Management Information Services meetings; however, the last meeting on December 20, 2004 we were not able to attend. I want to assure this committee that both IDOC and the Commission are working together closely.

➤ **Improve communication with DOC about data needs to allow for system integration.**

As previously stated, IDOC and the Commission staff have worked very closely over the last four years to maintain a high quality of working together. In addition to working on needs with the current offender information system, we have been very involved in the integration of the new offender system purchased from Utah. Two of my staff and I went to Utah to view the system and what it could do for us. Utah had not developed the Parole Board portion, so we have been able to work somewhat on the front end of this. We have met with Soni Starr, the project manager and worked through some of the issues with IBM.

I have attached reports of the **Parole Plan process** and the **Hearing Officer process** as requested by A. J. Burns.

Sincerely,


Olivia Craven
Executive Director

Attachments: January 2005 Action Taken List
Parole Plan Process
Parole Hearing Officer Process

jloc.mohan.update.020205

Appendix C

**Department of Correction's
Implementation Report**



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

"Protecting You and Your Community"

DIRK KEMPTHORNE
Governor

THOMAS J. BEAUCLAIR
Director

February 17, 2005

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluation
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0055

RE: Recommendations to Data Management from Office of Performance Evaluations

Dear Rakesh,

In response to your request for the status of recommendations your office made to the Department of Correction, the following actions have been taken on the two areas you specified:

- Improve communication with the Commission of Pardons and Parole about data needs to allow for improved system integration.

For the last several years the Information Technology division has worked closely with the Commission to identify, develop and implement reports and technology solutions to assist them in their daily needs. We have committed one full time programmer to work with the Commission as well as other resources. Some of the reports that we generated specifically for the Commission are Action Taken Letters, Notice of Primary Review, Preliminary Minutes of Hearings and Probation/Parole Violation Type Collection. There are many items in OMP that the Commission can utilize for vital programming information about the offender. They have been involved with the new CIS application project and specifically the new Commission module (one of many modules of the CIS application). Our Project Manager, Soni Starr has worked directly with subject matters experts from the Commission to gather requirements specifically for them. The CIS Project team spent one full day with the Commission's Executive Management and experts demonstrating the Parole Module application with our programming contractor. The purpose of this demonstration is to give the Commission the opportunity to evaluate the application, ask questions, and ensure their requirements were accommodated.

- More fully identify all system-related costs, system capabilities, and related inter-state sharing agreements.

System Related Costs:

1. Initial cost of acquiring Utah's F-track – No cost
2. Programming modifications with contractor – one time cost of \$861,000

3. No additional hardware or software or licensing required.
4. No dependency on vendor.
5. Idaho Corrections and NCOMS have complete ownership of software and code.
6. Idaho will receive all enhancements and modifications from other states at no additional cost.
7. Future request for additional FTE's to provide ongoing support and maintenance.

IT Database Analyst, Senior - 1

IT Systems Integration Analyst – 1

IT Information Systems Tech (Eastern Idaho) – 1

IT Programmer Analyst – 2

Web Developer – 1

Quality Assurance – 2

System Capabilities:

Then new web-based CIS system is a fully comprehensive offender management system that will provide four times the amount of data than we currently have in our offender system. A few of the major modules in CIS are Probation and Parole, OMP, Institutions, Inmate Banking and Parole Commission. All modules are integrated into one comprehensive management system and can be accessed with a click of a button.

Inter-state sharing agreements:

See attached documents for NCOMS agreement and appropriate signatures.

Please let me know if we can provide any further information to you.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Beauclair
Director

Appendix D

Annotated Bibliography

Correctional Association of New York, *A Report of the Public Project of the Correctional Association of New York* (2001).

Recidivism is defined using re-arrest and re-imprisonment rates. Briefly discussed Oregon's therapeutic communities' recidivism rates, which were based on re-arrest rates.

Delaware Statistical Analysis Center, *Sentencing Trends and Correctional Treatment in Delaware* (2002).

Delaware is reported to have one of the most comprehensive therapeutic communities in the United States and measures recidivism using re-arrest rates. Delaware reviewed therapeutic communities in California, which measures return to prison within three years, and Texas, which measures re-incarceration within three years.

De Leon, G., Melnick, G., Thomas, G., Kressel, D., and Wexler, H. K. "Motivation for Treatment in a Prison-Based Therapeutic Community," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 26 (2000): 33–46.

Recidivism is defined as the first re-incarceration based on agency records.

Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, *Correctional Substance Abuse Programs, While Few, Are Reasonably Efficient and Effective* (2004).

Florida's treatment programs show offenders who complete the program are less likely to recidivate (recommitment) within three-years.

Idaho Department of Correction, *A Review of the Evaluation Research Literature on Selected Correctional Programming: The Final Report*, Jensen, E. L. and Reed, G. E. (2002).

This literature review reports recidivism measures used by a variety of states and programs, including from the states of Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio. These states measured recidivism using re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration rates, typically over a period of two to three years.

Marsh, R. and Patrick, S. "Hard Choices." Boise State University (2004).

This report generally discusses recidivism in terms of re-incarceration for new offenses and for probation and parole violations.

Nebraska Legislative Research Division, Performance Audit Section, *Nebraska Board of Parole* (2003).

Recidivism is defined as a new incarceration for a new crime that occurs within three years of release.

United States Sentencing Commission, *Measuring Recidivism: The Criminal History Computation of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines* (2004).

Recidivism is defined as any of the following three events during an offender's initial two years back in the community: re-conviction for a new offense, re-arrest with no conviction disposition information available, or supervision revocation that includes probation or post prison supervision.

Washington State Institute for Public Policy, *The Comparative Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime*, Aos, S., Phipps, P., Barnoski, R., and Lieb, R. (2001).

This cost-benefit analysis study is a comprehensive examination of programs in Washington. This study analyzes long-term recidivism, measuring recidivism rates by re-conviction of offenders.

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