

An Evolving Field

*Findings from the 2008
Parole Practices Survey*

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Foreword

The supervision of individuals released from prison (parole supervision) should be the last formal contact an individual involved with the criminal justice system encounters. It also should be the final opportunity the system has to teach and instill the prosocial attitudes and behaviors and the skills necessary for individuals on parole to succeed in the community. For parole supervision to be truly and successfully the last criminal justice process a person released from prison experiences, our parole systems must be dedicated to and be well versed in practices that show the greatest promise for success of that individual and for long-term community safety. To date, the well-publicized results are disappointing. Too many people are returning to prison.

Why can't this vexing problem be fixed? Why does our system fail to effectively reduce crime and victimization? Why can't we stop the persistent flow of people re-entering our prisons? Certainly a lack of resources, growing caseloads, ever-expanding workloads, legislated practices and policies that are hastily conceived and contrary to research, and a workforce often not schooled in or oriented to effective intervention strategies have suppressed progress toward making parole supervision a triumphant last encounter. Nevertheless, these challenging (individually) and sometimes overwhelming (in total) adversities do not fully explain or excuse the lack of success in this supposed final encounter. None of the aforementioned obstacles, individually or collectively, can or should thwart a parole supervision agency from instituting practices and policies that promise greater success. There is hope to address the field's lack of accomplishment for positive outcomes with parole supervision.

In 2008, the Urban Institute published *Putting Public Safety First: 13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes*. This baker's dozen primer on practices and policies was created by an august group of practitioners and researchers who brought some of the best thinking, experience, and data to the table for inclusion in the document. The document was widely distributed and generally embraced by leaders in the field of parole (and probation). The strategies presented are all practical strategies that, with varying amounts of effort, can be implemented incrementally (some to a lesser or

greater degree). However, until *An Evolving Field* became available, the degree to which the field as a whole had embraced or implemented these strategies has been unknown. In short, is the field headed in the right direction and, if so, how far down the road has it gone?

An Evolving Field gives the field, policymakers and the public a bird's-eye view of the current state of parole supervision in the United States as it relates to how the "13 Strategies" are reflected in practices. Though the report was unable to drill down into verifiable implementation of these strategies or the quality of their implementation, it is nonetheless instructive and provides optimism that the field is heading in a direction aimed at improvement and success. Many offices report that they are using many of the strategies at least some of the time.

A caveat—this optimistic assessment is no reason to claim victory. Few agencies are attempting to implement all of the 13 Strategies. There are still many challenges and issues to overcome. Many field offices do not believe they are receiving the resources or support necessary to effectively implement many of the strategies. There are knowledge and skill gaps to be filled throughout the parole system. There are archaic mandates and policies to be addressed or overturned. There are public perceptions of a failed process fueled by less than flattering portrayals on television dramas and real cases gone wrong that must be altered to gain the public's confidence and, accordingly, their support (political, emotional, and financial).

But none of these aforementioned challenges should be an excuse for the field not to pursue implementing all of the 13 Strategies. The onus for this implementation falls on the shoulders of all involved with the parole process—line staff, supervisors, administrators, releasing authorities, community service providers, and policymakers. Leadership and dedication to the strategies and a successful parole supervision process must emerge from all levels of involvement. This report should give hope to all that parole is heading in the right direction while also serving as a report card on what is left to be implemented and accomplished.

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oversaw the work of three temporary research assistants. Ms. Johnson managed this process with considerable skill and grace and played a critical role in seeing this project through to completion. Julie Samuels provided guidance and support during the writing of this report.

Laura Winterfield helped conceive the project and oversaw the design of the survey instrument. Sadly, Laura recently passed away. She is missed, as a colleague and as a friend.



Executive Summary

Parole supervision has been a somewhat overlooked field in recent years, even as the difficult challenges of prisoner reentry have attracted increasing attention.¹ Yet parole supervision is intimately connected to reentry. Most of those released from prison will be placed under parole supervision, and more than half will be reincarcerated within three years. Parole supervision can and should play an important role in facilitating the transition from prison to community, effecting positive behavioral change, and increasing public safety. To achieve these goals, however, parole agencies must systematically adopt the practices and policies that have been demonstrated to work.

To help move the field in that direction, the Urban Institute and its partners identified strategies for effective parole supervision. Those strategies, which emphasize evidence-based and best practices, were outlined in *Putting Public Safety First: 13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes* (2008),² a document that summarizes decades of research and learning in the field. Based on a comprehensive

¹ Due to changes in correctional and sentencing policy, the term *parole* is no longer used universally to define a period of community supervision following a release from prison. In the interest of simplicity, this report uses the term *parole supervision* to refer to all systems of postprison supervision. Similarly, the term *parolees* is used to refer to the individuals supervised.

² Throughout the remainder of this report, these strategies, as defined in *Putting Public Safety First*, will be referred to as the “13 Strategies.” *Putting Public Safety First* is available at <http://www.urban.org/publications/411800.html>.

review of existing research and the collective best thinking of a group of leading experts, the 13 Strategies provide a blueprint for the transformation of parole supervision. They address organizational and case-management policies and practices that cover virtually every aspect of supervision practice.

To examine more closely the current state of parole supervision, the Urban Institute conducted a survey of parole supervision field offices to assess the extent to which the 13 Strategies were reflected in current practice around the country. A survey was sent to 1,550 parole supervision field offices in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Responses were received from 751 offices, a return rate of 49 percent. Responding offices were representative in geographic distribution, jurisdiction size and population, and local crime rates.

The survey covered characteristics of the field offices, backgrounds of the administrators, organizational climate and culture, collaboration, training, use and support of evidence-based practices (EBPs), and supervision policies and practices as they relate to the 13 Strategies.

The survey results and analysis include a number of key findings:

- *Reported use of and emphasis on evidence-based practices is widespread in parole.* Many offices report employing EBPs and emphasizing their use. While more detail on how EBPs are being implemented would be desirable, the results suggest that a consensus on the value of the general concept is emerging.
- *Many offices do not believe they are receiving the support they need to implement EBPs.* Slightly more than half of respondents indicated that the management of their agency is supportive of EBPs, and less than half reported getting the training, financial, and staff resources necessary to implement them effectively.
- *There is considerable uncertainty on what evidence-based practice means in parole.* No fewer than 15 percent of respondents answered “unsure” to every question involving EBPs. Thus, while the importance of EBPs is acknowledged in many parole supervision agencies, a number of parole practitioners remain unclear on the precise meaning of the term and which specific practices meet the definition.
- *Parole office culture matters.* Our analysis found that offices whose respondents characterized their offices positively on our six measures of office culture were also more likely to be employing the 13 Strategies identified in *Putting Public Safety First*.
- *Administrators with backgrounds in the social service professions are more likely to adopt EBPs and the 13 Strategies.* Experience in human service fields was correlated with implementation of EBPs and the 13 Strategies. Regardless of background, administrators who emphasize collaboration are more likely to have implemented EBPs and the strategies. These findings suggest that the field should emphasize interdisciplinary approaches and diversify its workforce to include more people with a background in the social and behavioral sciences.

- *Risk and need assessment and sanctioning grids have become common tools.* Our results show that more than half the respondents report that their parole office is using a sanctioning grid to determine responses to parole violations, and nearly two-thirds report always using risk or needs assessment instruments. These instruments are key tools in any administrator's toolkit and help ensure that major decisions are made based on evidence of what is effective. The prevalence of their use is very encouraging.
- *Rural and urban offices approach parole supervision and the implementation of the 13 Strategies differently.* Parole offices in less populated areas appear to emphasize interpersonal approaches such as balancing treatment and surveillance goals, whereas parole offices in more populous areas are more likely to report using organizational-level practices such as tracking recidivism rates. These differences may be a reflection of differences in the environments in which these offices operate, parole administrators' view of their agency's mission, or differences in organizational and community-based resources.
- *Parole supervision agencies are moving in the direction of the 13 Strategies.* Despite the fact that very few jurisdictions have implemented all 13 strategies identified in *Putting Public Safety First*, the field appears to be moving in that direction. On everything from tailoring conditions of supervision to place-based supervision, reported rates of use are encouraging. For most of the strategies, at least half the responding offices report using them "most of the time" or "always."

The survey findings have a number of implications for parole practitioners who are interested in advancing the 13 Strategies in their agencies. They must commit to the implementation of all the strategies. They should also build on the increasingly common organizational-level best practices such as risk and needs assessment and sanctioning grids and on case-management practices such as involving parolees in the supervision process, providing incentives and rewards, and engaging informal social controls.

In addition, executive leadership in parole supervision must champion the 13 Strategies. Administrators must facilitate that implementation throughout the organization and commit to its sustained practice. Most important, line staff must be brought on board so they will embrace the strategies and use them in their daily work with parolees. Once the strategies are implemented, they must be embedded in the organization through staff training, hiring and promotion of staff, and the development of an organizational culture that supports approaches to behavioral change and evidence-based practice. Finally, as more and more agencies begin to implement the strategies, it will be critical for the field to measure their implementation and evaluate their effectiveness in reducing recidivism.

Introduction

Parole supervision matters. Much has been written about prisoner reentry and the cost of failing to reintegrate the hundreds of thousands of people who are released from prison each year. The role of parole supervision, which is intimately connected to prisoner reentry and the maintenance of public safety, has often been lost in that discussion. Yet the majority of prison releases, over 500,000 annually, are to parole supervision; just over 824,000 individuals were under parole supervision at the end of 2007 (Glaze and Bonczar 2008).

Parole supervision can, and should, be an integral part of delivering public safety for the community at large. In facilitating the transition from prison to community, parole supervision agencies can help parolees become productive citizens and reduce the harm they might cause by returning to crime, substance abuse, and other problematic behaviors. And they do return to those behaviors. More than two-thirds of those released from prison will be arrested, and more than half will be reincarcerated within three years (Langan and Levin 2002). To make matters worse, those who are released to parole supervision typically fare no better than those released without supervision (Solomon, Kachnowski, and Bhati 2005). Unable or unwilling to desist from crime, stay sober, secure a job, or find stable housing, many parolees will be returned to prison, at a tremendous cost to society.

Most states have not invested sufficiently in parole supervision or in the agencies that are responsible for protecting the general public and supervising individuals released

from prison. Incarceration costs nearly 10 times as much as community supervision, and the vast majority of corrections spending is devoted to prisons (Pew Center on the States 2009). Similarly, legislators, policymakers, and the media tend to pay greater attention to institutional corrections than to community supervision. Meanwhile, parole agencies are struggling to cope with increasingly large caseloads and limited financial and human resources.

In this environment, implementing even a modicum of change might seem daunting. Yet among those who practice and study parole supervision a consensus is emerging that the field must adopt new approaches if it is to accomplish its mission of protecting public safety and rehabilitating offenders. Specifically, there is broad agreement that the field should move toward models of behavioral change, including the adoption of evidence-based practices and other best practices. (See box 1 for a discussion of the distinction between EBPs and best practices.)

13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes

In recent years, innovative and forward-thinking parole practitioners have begun to rethink and reform the way parole supervision is practiced in the United States. They have come to believe that parole supervision agencies should be striving to achieve positive behavioral change as a means to increase long-term public safety. They also believe that parole agencies should combine treatment and behavioral change interventions with surveillance and monitoring, because surveillance and monitoring have repeatedly been shown to have little or no impact on recidivism unless joined with such interventions (National Research Council 2007). This balanced approach draws on a growing body of research evidence as well as decades of learning in the field and represents the collective “best thinking” of a group of leading experts on parole supervision.

In collaboration with a group of leading practitioners, policymakers, and academics in the field of parole, the Urban Institute and its partners identified 13 strategies for effective community supervision. These strategies, consisting of both EBPs and best practices that help reduce recidivism, reflect this emerging expert consensus. Divided into organizational and case-management strategies in *Putting Public Safety First: 13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes* (Solomon et al. 2008), these practices have the potential for improving reentry outcomes, reducing recidivism, and transforming the practice of parole supervision:

Organizational Strategies

1. Define success as recidivism reduction and measure performance
2. Tailor conditions of supervision
3. Focus resources on moderate and high-risk parolees
4. Front-load supervision resources

Box 1. EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND BEST PRACTICES: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

This report discusses findings on the use of both EBPs and best practices in current parole supervision. Both EBPs and best practices are contained among the 13 Strategies. These terms are often used interchangeably in the practitioner literature and discourse in community corrections, but there are important differences between them. To avoid contributing to this confusion, we describe these differences below.

Evidence-Based Practices

In the survey of parole practices, EBPs were defined as “practices that have been supported and verified by research to achieve desirable outcomes.” This definition is consistent with several other definitions in the corrections literature such as “those initiatives, programs, or actions that research has shown to be effective” (Reentry Policy Council 2005) or “programs or practices that have proven to be successful through empirical research and have produced consistently positive results” (Yoon and Nickel, 2008). These are reasonably straightforward concepts—pairing a focus on intended outcomes with verification through empirical research—although there are varying standards of rigor for what qualifies as “research.” In the context of the 13 Strategies, the primary outcome of interest is recidivism.

In 2004, the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI), through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Corrections, released the Integrated Model that identifies eight principles of effective community supervision that met their standard of being evidence-based (Bogue et al. 2004):

1. Assess actuarial risks and needs
2. Enhance intrinsic motivation
3. Target interventions
 - a. *Risk principle*: Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher-risk offenders
 - b. *Need principle*: Target interventions to criminogenic needs
 - c. *Responsivity principle*: Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs
 - d. *Dosage*: Structure 40–70 percent of high-risk offenders’ time for three to nine months
 - e. *Treatment*: Integrate treatment into the full sentence or sanction requirements
4. Skill train with directed practice (use cognitive behavioral treatment methods)
5. Increase positive reinforcement
6. Engage ongoing support in natural communities
7. Measure relevant processes and practices
8. Provide measurement feedback

Best Practices

A quick comparison will show that many of the 13 Strategies are based on the principles of evidence-based practice. The remainder would be more accurately termed “best practices.” These practices—designed to augment the evidence-based strategies described by Bogue and colleagues—represent the consensus on sound practice of leading practitioners and researchers in the field.

Bogue et al. (2004, 2) compare best practices to EBPs by saying that “best practices do not necessarily imply attention to outcomes, evidence, or measurable standards. Best practices are

Box 1. (CONTINUED)

often based on the collective experience and wisdom of the field rather than scientifically tested knowledge.” EBPs represent a subset of best practices that have been validated through the research process. A broad commitment to EBPs entails not only adopting practices that have been proven through research but also subjecting best practices and innovative approaches to rigorous empirical examination. In the future, those of the 13 Strategies that are not among EBPs should be subjected to careful evaluation to determine their effectiveness. As this is done, they will either join the ranks of EBPs or be classified as ineffective practices that should be abandoned.

5. Implement earned discharge
6. Implement place-based supervision
7. Engage partners to expand intervention capacities

Case-Management Strategies

8. Assess criminogenic risk and need factors
9. Develop and implement supervision case plans that balance surveillance and treatment
10. Involve parolees to enhance their engagement in assessment, case planning, and supervision
11. Engage informal social controls to facilitate community reintegration
12. Incorporate incentives and rewards into the supervision process
13. Employ graduated problem-solving responses to violations of parole conditions in a swift and certain manner

The Parole Practices Survey

The parole practices survey was designed to document the state of practice at the field office level and determine the extent to which parole practitioners are using EBPs and the 13 Strategies, and identify the organizational factors that might play a role in determining their use. The survey, administered to the field offices, contained questions on office structure, emphasis on EBPs, mission, collaboration, culture and climate, training and resources, responses to parole violations, and supervision policies and practices (see Appendix A for the full survey instrument). The results, detailed in this report, provide valuable insight into how parole is currently practiced and the degree to which practice is consistent with the 13 Strategies.³

³For more information on the strategies and the research evidence supporting them, readers should refer to *Putting Public Safety First* (<http://www.urban.org/publications/411800.html>).

2

Methodology

The survey of parole practices was sent to 1,540 parole supervision field offices⁴ in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in September 2008. It was addressed to the parole administrator in each office, and we requested one response per office.⁵

Sample

To identify which parole supervision agencies fit the criteria for inclusion in this survey, we used the American Correctional Association's *2008–2009 Probation and Parole Directory*, a directory of field offices in the United States. Each field office that had not responded to the survey after two weeks was contacted at least once during the data collection process to encourage its participation. Ultimately, nearly half the sample—751 field offices⁶—completed and returned the survey. As described below, the responding offices were generally representative of the full sample in geography, city size, and crime rate. To add detail to these responses, we made follow-up calls to a selection of responding offices that reported using specific parole practices. Examples from these follow-up calls are presented along with the results on the 13 Strategies.

⁴ Of an identified universe of 1,550 field offices.

⁵ *Parole administrator* is used as a catch-all term for survey respondents who are responsible for field office operations. The actual job title of respondents varied from state to state.

⁶ In a few instances, regional parole offices responded to the survey for multiple field offices. Details are available on request from the authors.

Who Responded to the Survey?

We received responses from 751 parole field offices in 49 states. In 26 states, at least 50 percent of the field offices responded. And in nine states (Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Missouri, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Virginia) more than three-quarters of the field offices responded. Only offices in the District of Columbia and Rhode Island did not respond to the survey. Combined, these two jurisdictions contain a total of 10 parole field offices, less than 1 percent of the overall sample. Other states with response rates below 25 percent were Alabama, Florida, Minnesota, Mississippi, Texas, and Utah.

The total number of parole field offices relative to population varies greatly from state to state, so that some states with few parole offices had a low number of responses but a high response rate, and vice versa. For example, although we received only four responses from Florida but 17 from Minnesota, the states had roughly the same response rate. Figure 2.1 shows the parole field offices that responded to the survey and those that did not. Appendix B gives the state-by-state response rates.

Field offices were categorized according to the size of the city in which they were located. Offices in cities with a population of 250,000 or more were categorized as large cities, cities with populations between 50,000 and 249,999 were categorized as

FIGURE 1. RESPONSES TO THE 2008 PAROLE PRACTICES SURVEY

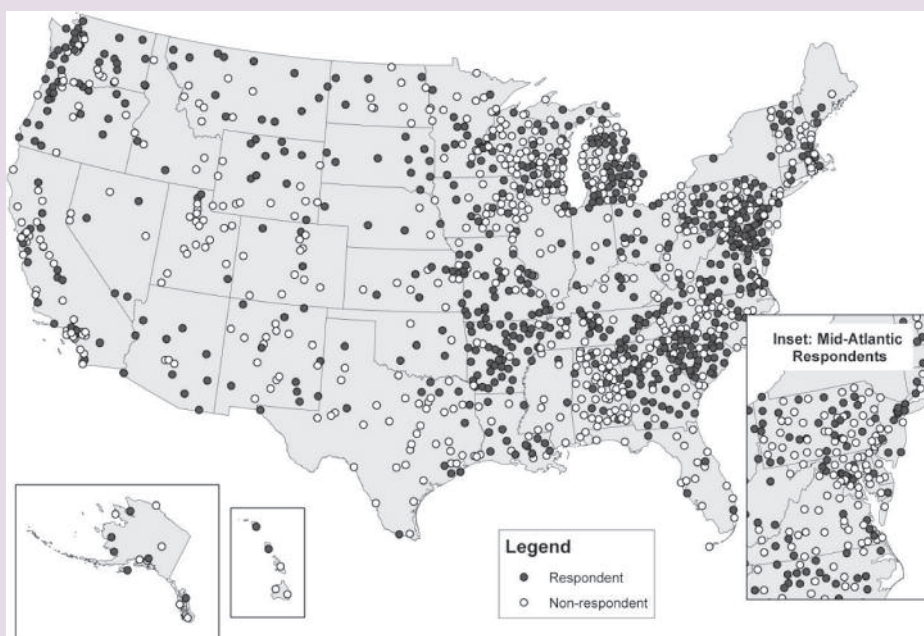


TABLE 2.1 Rate of Response to the 2008 Parole Practices Survey by Place Size and Crime Rate (number and percent)

	Respondents		Total Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Large city	84	11	204	13
Midsized city	151	20	337	22
Small town or city	240	32	473	31
Rural	276	37	526	34
Total	751	100	1,540	100
High crime rate	189	25	387	25
Medium crime rate	390	52	770	50
Low crime rate	172	23	383	25
Total	751	100	1,540	100

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

midsized cities, cities with populations between 10,000 and 49,999 were categorized as small towns or cities, and any office in an area with a population of less than 10,000 was categorized as rural. While the catchment area of parole offices was not known, the size of the city in which the field office was located served as a reasonable proxy. Variations in results by place size, and the policy implications of those variations, are discussed in box 2.

Using the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report data, field offices were classified as located in a city with a high, medium, or low crime rate based on whether they fell into the upper 25 percent, middle 50 percent, or lower 25 percent of crime rates. As shown in table 2.1, the responding offices are representative of the sample as a whole in place size and crime rate.

Analyzing the Survey Results

The majority of the findings presented in this report are the result of extensive descriptive analyses, supplemented by multivariate regression analyses.⁷ The results of these regression analyses, which provide additional statistical support for the findings, are presented throughout the report when statistically significant.⁸

⁷ Regression analysis is a statistical technique that allows for the identification of relationships between variables (such as parole office culture and the use of incentives) while controlling for the effects of other factors, such as place size and crime rate.

⁸ A more detailed description of the survey methodology and all analyses are available from the authors upon request.

3

National Portrait of Parole Practice

Responses to the survey yield a wealth of information about current parole supervision practices in the United States. This report summarizes the responses to that survey and the results of our analysis and provides a national portrait of parole practices. It is in many ways a snapshot of a field in flux—one that expresses a commitment to evidence-based practices and a variety of innovative principles but that supports and implements them unevenly. Yet for all the unevenness, parole practice in the United States appears to have begun moving in a new direction.

This chapter begins by laying out the structural and environmental attributes of the responding offices, such as the background of administrators, degree of collaboration, and office culture.⁹ Many of these factors are related to the extent to which parole offices report practices in accord with the 13 Strategies, discussed later in this chapter.

⁹ The survey included questions (1a-1f) that asked respondents how many parolees were supervised, how many parole officers were employed full and part time by the office, and how many offices were under the jurisdiction of that respondent. The answers for these items were inconsistent, and for at least some offices it was clear that probationers were being included in the counts. To address this issue and include this information in the regression analysis, we developed ratios of supervisees to offices and officers, with the assumption that such ratios would be more comparable across respondents than the raw reported numbers. Those ratios were then used in the regression analyses.

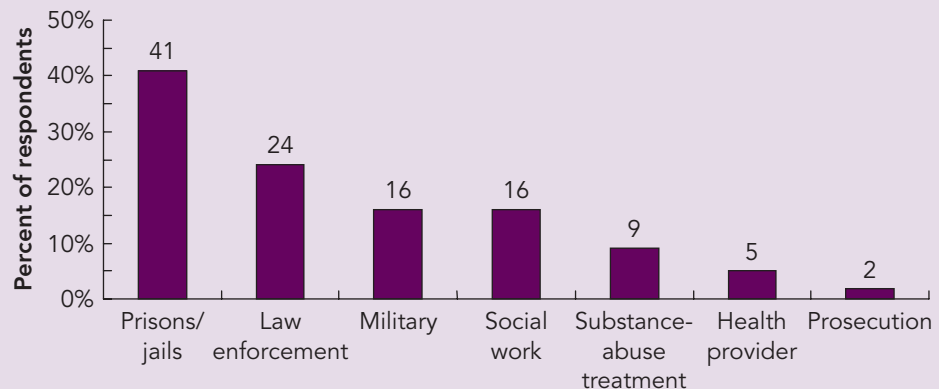
Administrator Background

Parole administrators reported having worked in a variety of criminal justice and social service professions, in addition to parole or probation. The most common type of experience cited was in paramilitary “command and control” organizations such as institutional corrections and law enforcement, as well as the military. Experience in social service professions (social work and substance-abuse treatment, for example) was reported by a smaller proportion of respondents (see figure 3.1).

This question is significant because administrators with backgrounds in social work, public health, and other behavioral sciences were more likely to report that their offices used practices such as front-loading resources and motivational interviewing, holding other attributes of their offices constant. Conversely, our analysis found that administrators reporting a background in institutional corrections were less likely to report that parolee treatment needs are incorporated into supervision requirements and activities. Such a background is common, as parole supervision is part of the Department of Corrections in many states and serves as a natural career path for staff in the institutional correctional field. A recent study of California parole revealed that 83 percent of parole agents had worked in California correctional institutions (Grattet et al. 2009).

Parole administrators also reported having significant tenure in their current organizations and longevity in the parole field, with 60 percent having had more than 15 years

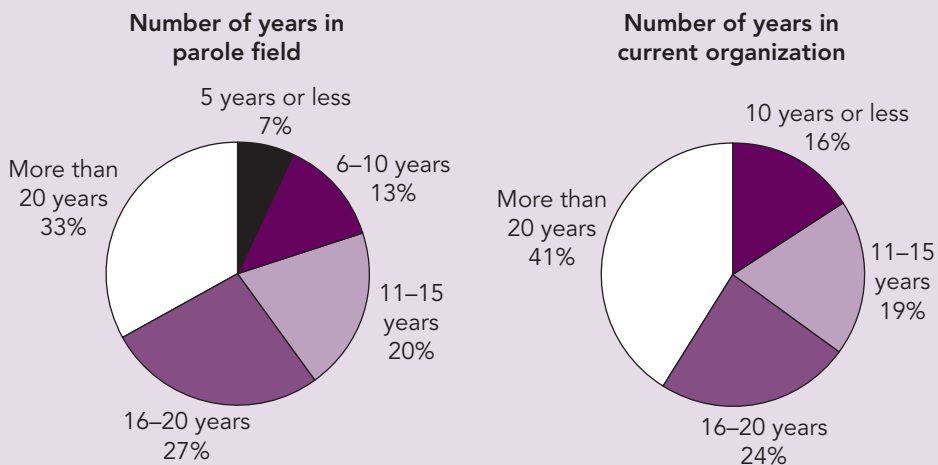
FIGURE 3.1. PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF PAROLE OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS



Professional backgrounds other than probation or parole

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive.

FIGURE 3.2. TENURE OF PAROLE ADMINISTRATORS

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

of experience in the parole field and 65 percent having had more than 15 years of experience with their current organization (see figure 3.2). This longevity likely reflects the fact that many parole systems are governed by civil service rules. Under those rules, advancement is often related to length of service, and lateral entry into a supervisory or management position from outside the organization is uncommon.

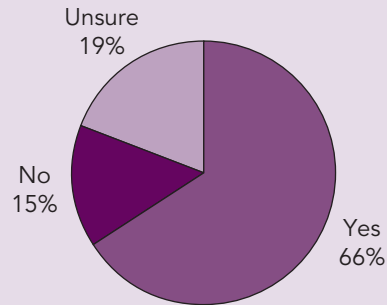
Office Use of Evidence-Based Practices

One of the most encouraging findings from the survey is the number of offices that reported employing EBPs. As figure 3.3 indicates, 66 percent of responding offices report employing those practices. Moreover, 48 percent of offices report placing either "very great" or "great" emphasis on them (see figure 3.4).

Complicating this picture slightly is the high proportion of offices (19 percent) that reported uncertainty over whether they were employing EBPs, a result replicated (17 percent) when the question asked about the degree of emphasis placed on EBPs. Together, these findings suggest that while the concept of evidence-based practices has become common in the discourse within the parole field, parole leadership has a great deal more to do in explaining this concept and articulating the benefits of such an approach to parole supervision.

Those administrators who reported using EBPs were asked to specify examples. In response, they cited a wide range of practices. The use of risk and need assessment

FIGURE 3.3. PAROLE OFFICES REPORTING USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

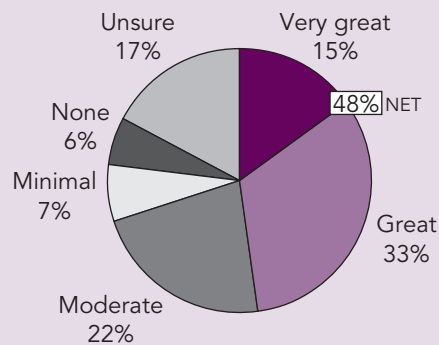


Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

was by far the most frequently cited, followed by motivational interviewing; provision of treatment and services in areas such as substance abuse, employment, and housing; cognitive-behavioral interventions; and the use of graduated sanctions, remedial sanctions, or decision-making matrices to determine responses to parole violations.

Depending on how they are operationalized, most of the practices that respondents listed as examples are consistent with the eight evidence-based principles of effective

FIGURE 3.4. DEGREE OF EMPHASIS PAROLE OFFICES PLACE ON EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

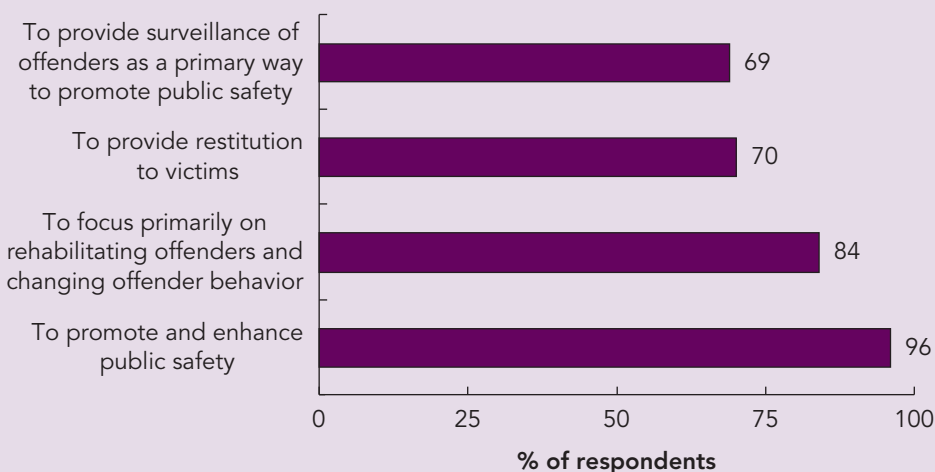
community supervision discussed in box 1. Several responses, however, such as drug and alcohol testing and the use of other surveillance practices, are not in and of themselves evidence-based practices related to reducing recidivism.

Administrator Perceptions of the Agency Mission

Critical to understanding the context in which parole supervision agencies operate is an understanding of how parole administrators view their agency’s mission. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents believe that promoting public safety is a primary mission of their office (see figure 3.5). That being said, more than four out of five respondents also believe that rehabilitating offenders and changing their behavior is a primary mission—more than those who believe surveillance or victim restitution is a primary mission.

In fact, nearly half the respondents (46 percent) chose all four missions, suggesting that parole administrators see multiple elements to the mission of their agencies. This view no doubt reflects the history of parole (and probation), which were both founded in the 19th century with an emphasis on providing offenders with supervision in the community and with assistance and services designed to help them change their patterns of criminal behavior. While the degree of emphasis on those two broad functions has varied over time, the field continues to reflect this dual focus.

FIGURE 3.5. PAROLE ADMINISTRATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR AGENCY’S PRIMARY MISSION



Source: Authors’ calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Culture and Climate

The culture of a field office is a key contributing factor to the way parole supervision is conducted. Schein (2004, 17) defines culture as

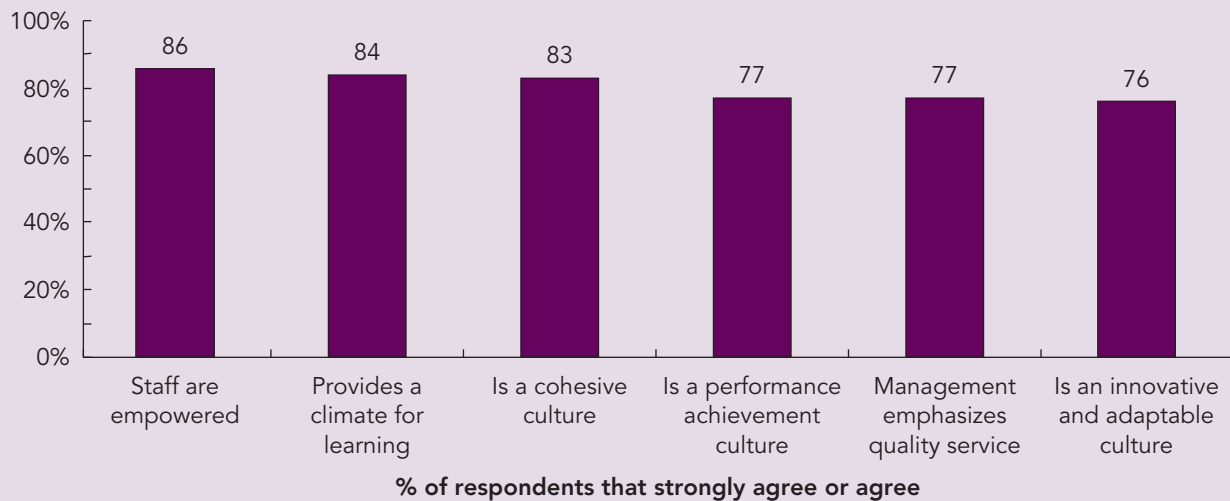
a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

A less formal way to describe culture is “the way we do things around here.” In either case, culture is a powerful force that defines acceptable and expected behavior within an organization.

It is encouraging that most administrators report having a strong office culture. More than four out of five respondents believe that their staff is empowered, that their office provides a climate for learning, and that it has a cohesive culture (see figure 3.6). Likewise, more than three out of four believe that management emphasizes quality service, that the culture is based on performance achievement, and that theirs is an innovative and adaptable culture.

These perceptions of culture and climate are positively associated with the implementation of the 13 Strategies and the use of evidence-based practices, controlling for

FIGURE 3.6. PERCEPTIONS OF PAROLE OFFICE CULTURE AND CLIMATE



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

other aspects of responding offices. Specifically, administrators who report having a positive culture and climate are also more likely to report greater use of risk and need assessments, motivational interviewing, and incorporating parolee treatment needs and input into the development of supervision case plans. While the causal link, if any, is unclear from these results (it could be that implementing evidence-based practices is beneficial to office culture, not that positive office culture facilitates the implementation of these practices), it stands to reason that more innovative, cohesive, and achievement-oriented office cultures would implement more promising parole practices. Interestingly, perceptions of office culture and climate vary by place size. These differences are described in box 2.

Training and Resources to Support Evidence-Based Practices

Implementing evidence-based practices, like any organizational change, requires leadership, resources, and training support. Yet many field offices report that they are not receiving the training and support they need to implement them (see table 3.3). Slightly more than half the respondents believe they are receiving adequate support from agency management and slightly less than half the training required to implement EBPs. With regard to financial support and staffing levels, nearly three out of four report not having the financial support or staffing they need. Not surprisingly, the analysis showed a relationship between these four measures and the use of EBPs and the 13 Strategies, controlling for other office attributes. Specifically, the four measures were significantly associated with a greater likelihood of incorporating parolee treatment needs into supervision requirements and activities, engaging parolees in the development of supervision case plans, involving significant individuals in parolees' lives, and using motivational interviewing.

Research and experience are increasingly showing that successful organizational change requires both an effective model and an effectively led and managed change process. The fact that a large percentage of respondents report being unsure about whether they are receiving the support they need is further evidence that many parole administrators continue to be unclear on the meaning of EBPs.

Local administrators who may be interested in implementing new approaches such as EBPs may find that they are limited in what they can do on their own. Organizational supports are crucial to the broad and sustained adoption of such practices. As such, the survey response data suggest that while there may be a good deal of discussion of EBPs and other best practices such as the 13 Strategies at the state level, the extent of follow-up with regard to leadership commitment, training, and resources is not sufficient.

These findings also suggest that leadership at the highest levels of the organization must provide greater support for change and other efforts to adopt EBPs. The implementation of EBPs requires more from leadership than additional or reallocated resources. Training opportunities for both administrators and line staff in particular are

Box 2. VARIATIONS IN PAROLE SUPERVISION PRACTICE BY PLACE SIZE

Although throughout this report we have presented results in the aggregate to paint a national portrait of parole supervision practice, our analysis shows how place size can significantly affect the conduct of supervision in the parole offices. Administrators in rural areas, for example, appear to place less emphasis on EBPs than their counterparts in large and midsize cities. More than half the respondents in large and midsize cities report placing great emphasis on those practices, but only one-third of respondents in rural offices say the same (table 3.1). To some extent, this difference may be explained by the fact that a much higher percentage of rural respondents remain unclear on the meaning of evidence-based practices; more than 75 percent of respondents who report being unsure whether their office employs them were from small town or rural offices.

TABLE 3.1. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Great or Very Great Emphasis on Evidence-Based Practice by Place Size			
	Great emphasis	Very great emphasis	Total
Large city	29	25	54
Midsize city	34	20	54
Small town or city	37	13	50
Rural	24	9	33

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

Despite the fact that rural administrators indicate placing less emphasis on EBPs, parole administrators in rural and small town offices report that their work environments are more conducive to behavioral change interventions and approaches than their urban counterparts. On each of six measures related to office culture and climate, rural and small town offices were more likely to report conditions that the analysis found to be positively associated with implementing EBPs and the 13 Strategies related to parolee engagement and community outreach (see table 3.2). Perhaps for this reason, offices in rural areas are more likely to report developing supervision plans that balance surveillance with treatment, involving the parolee in the development of supervision goals and case plans, and employing motivational interviewing, controlling for other attributes of responding parole offices.

A common thread in those practices is that they are all interpersonal approaches to working with parolees. By contrast, the regression analysis found that offices in large cities are more likely to have implemented organizational-level practices such as assessment of risk and need factors, place-based supervision, tailoring conditions of supervision, and tracking recidivism rates of former parolees. Large city offices are also more likely to use surveillance-oriented sanctions such as the loss of privileges, electronic monitoring, and day reporting. They are less likely to rely on restorative sanctions such as apologies and community service than are offices in small town or rural areas. These results reinforce earlier findings that showed administrators in rural offices as almost twice as likely as administrators in large cities to see restitution to victims as a primary mission of their office.

BOX 2. (CONTINUED)

TABLE 3.2. Respondents' Perceptions of Parole Office Culture and Climate by Place Size
(% of respondents who strongly agree or agree)

	Large city	Mid-size city	Small town/city	Rural
Climate for learning	73	82	86	86
Is a cohesive culture	62	81	84	89
Is a performance achievement culture	63	77	83	77
Is an innovative and adaptable culture	68	73	78	79
Management emphasizes quality service	63	76	78	82
Staff are empowered	77	88	85	88

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

critical to any change effort and could also address the uncertainty around EBPs. In effect, the successful implementation of organizational change requires direct, sustained involvement by top leadership.

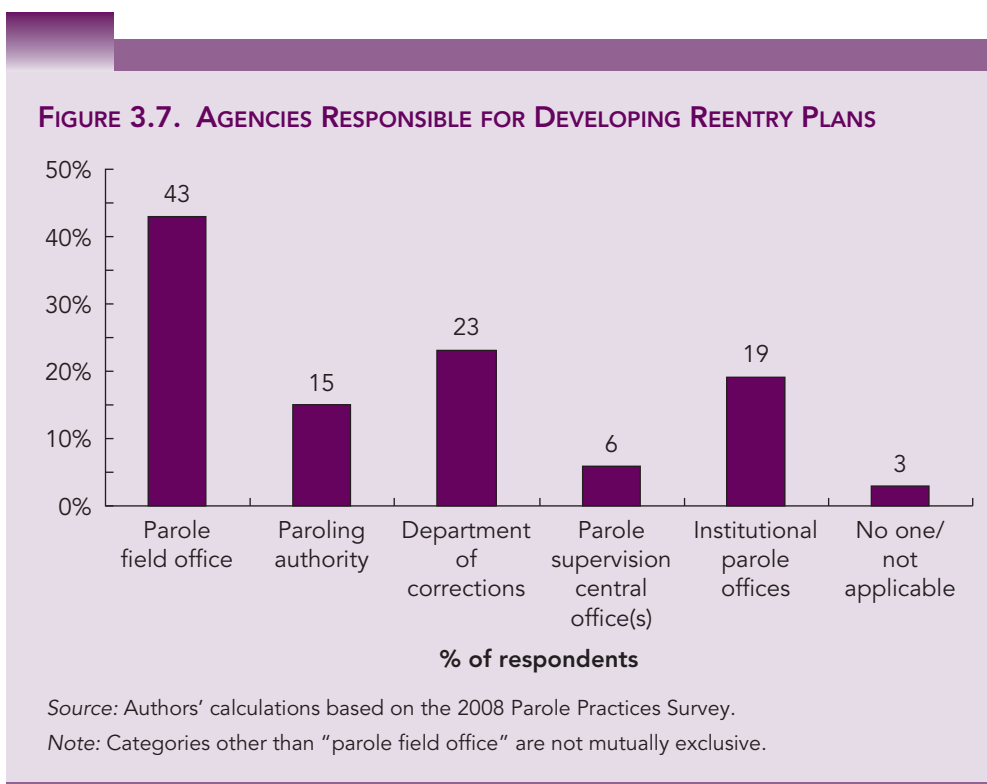
Shared Responsibility for Release Plans and Setting Conditions

For parole supervision agencies to have the greatest impact on parolee behavior, they need to play an appropriate role in setting the terms of parolee accountability by developing reentry case plans and setting or modifying conditions of parole. Yet fewer

TABLE 3.3. Respondents' Views on the Adequacy of the Training and Resources to Support Evidence-Based Practices (percent)

	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Unsure
Financial support	30	38	9	23
Staffing levels	25	49	7	19
Training opportunities	47	26	7	20
Support from agency management	55	16	8	21

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.



than half the respondents report that they are responsible for developing reentry plans, while just over half are responsible for setting and modifying conditions of supervision.

Figure 3.7 lists the types of agencies or entities, including the field offices themselves, that respondents indicated are responsible for developing reentry plans before release.¹⁰ Because multiple agencies can, and should, be involved in reentry case planning, these responses are not mutually exclusive. For example, an administrator in Minnesota described how his office collaborates with prison caseworkers to develop reentry plans six months before release. The prison caseworker first develops a rudimentary plan, and the field office then enhances it by adding information about employment offers, the parolee’s housing situation, and treatment needs.

The responsibility for setting and modifying conditions of supervision is much more limited. According to respondents, the paroling authority is the only agency very likely to have or share that responsibility with the responding supervision field office. Specifically, approximately four out of 10 respondents report that the paroling author-

¹⁰ Respondents were instructed to specify agencies other than the parole field office only if the field office is not responsible for developing reentry plans.

ity has the power to set or modify conditions of supervision. None of the other agencies listed on the survey (department of corrections, courts, and parole supervision central offices) were chosen by more than 5 percent of respondents.

Practices Consistent with the 13 Strategies

As previously described, the survey of parole practices sought to assess the extent to which practices consistent with the 13 Strategies are currently being employed in the field offices. The following section presents the survey findings related to each of the 13 Strategies as well as additional interpretations of the results. Results relative to the use of incentives and availability of earned discharge are discussed in a single section.

Defining Success as Reducing Recidivism and Measuring Performance

To improve public safety outcomes, parole administrators should define success as reducing recidivism and measuring the agency's performance in meeting that goal. Unlike process measures such as the number of contacts between parole officers and parolees that look at activities rather than outcomes, reducing recidivism as a goal provides agencies with a clear focus on behavioral change in addition to holding parolees accountable.

The vast majority of respondents (93 percent) report that their office has the goal of reducing recidivism among parolees (see table 3.4). While that goal is important, it is just as important to measure agency, officer, and parolee performance consistently against this standard. To that end, parole agencies should develop systems for collecting and tracking data on recidivism rates.

A smaller majority (75 percent) indicated that the recidivism rates of parolees currently under supervision are tracked. Not surprisingly, only 13 percent indicated that the recidivism rates of former parolees are tracked. Tracking the rates of both current and former parolees provides the most complete picture of the agency's performance. In addition, given that nearly half the field offices reported not knowing whether the recidivism rates of former parolees were tracked, it is likely that the states or regions

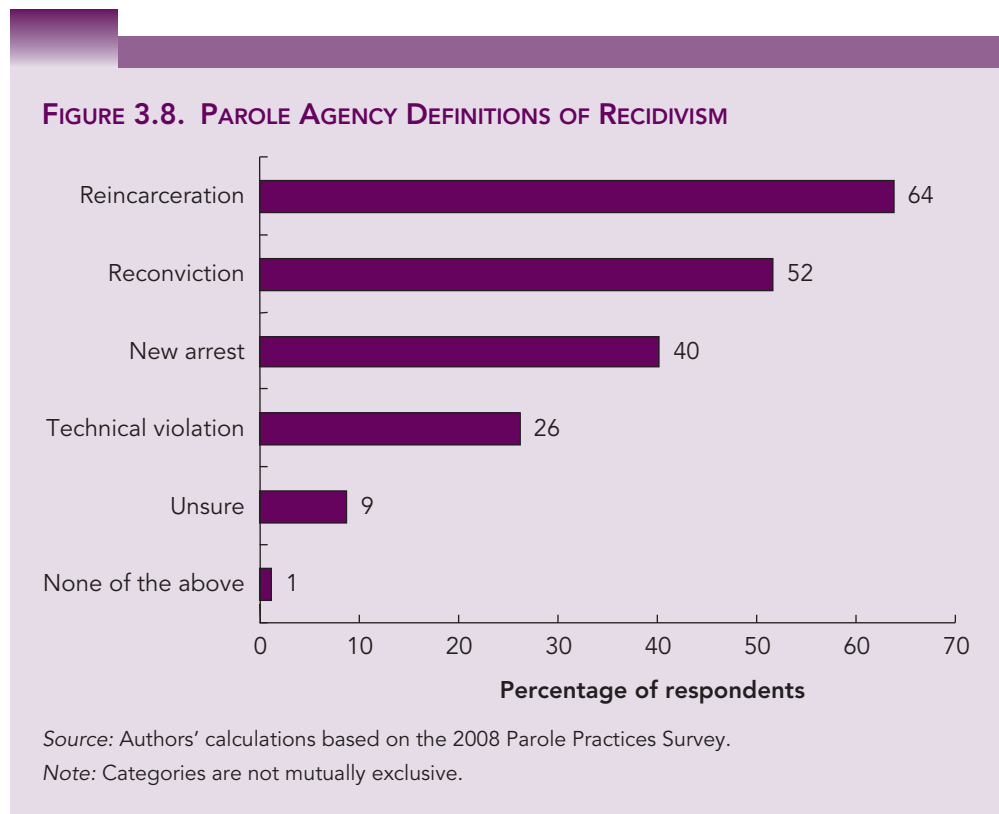
	Yes	No	Unsure
Office has the goal of reducing recidivism among parolees	93	5	2
Office tracks recidivism rates of current parolees	75	10	15
Office tracks recidivism rates of former parolees	13	39	48

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

often gather those data and may not share with field administrators. If parole administrators are unsure whether their office is tracking recidivism rates, they are not emphasizing its importance to their line officers. That uncertainty can, in turn, reduce expectations for line staff and parolees themselves.

Some field offices report defining success as reducing recidivism and measuring their success against that standard. A respondent in Indiana, for example, described how a “monthly report card” is kept by the agency that allows both line officers and leadership to track their success. Using the report card, officers can track critical information in addition to recidivism, such as risk level, number of technical violations, sanctions employed, employment rates, and more. The state of Oregon uses a similar system, and posts its data online in a user-friendly format. According to one respondent, this “data warehouse” allows users to track agency performance on a wide range of measures, including, but not limited to, recidivism rates.

Responding offices reported a variety of agency definitions of recidivism (see figure 3.8). Reincarceration was the most commonly cited definition, with reconviction also reported by the majority of respondents. There is no universally accepted measure of recidivism, and each of the definitions can be a valuable indicator of agency success. As such, it may make sense for agencies to track more than one measure, as many offices are clearly doing.



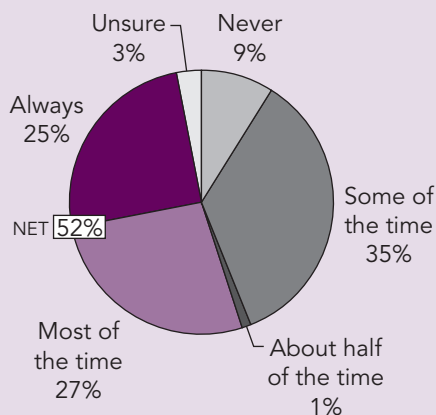
Tailoring the Conditions of Supervision

Conditions of parole supervision are most effective in contributing to behavioral change and averting recidivism when they are realistic (parolees are capable of complying with them all), relevant (all are related to the parolee's criminogenic risk and need factors), and research based (supported by evidence of effectiveness) (Wicklund 2005). According to respondents, more than half of field offices are tailoring conditions of supervision for individual parolees most of the time or always (see figure 3.9). Based on follow-up conversations, however, many offices are tailoring conditions by *adding* special conditions to the existing list of standard conditions. This practice does not result in conditions tailored to individual parolees but rather in a larger set of conditions that may be less realistic for some and less relevant to others. A preferred approach would be to start with a small number of standard conditions that apply to all parolees and then add conditions based on risk and criminogenic factors.

Focusing Resources on Moderate and High-Risk Parolees

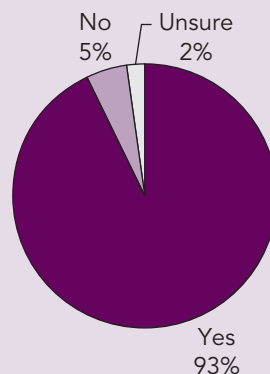
Using empirically validated risk and need assessments, parole supervision agencies can identify high-risk parolees and focus on the population most likely to reoffend. By strategically targeting resources on those who pose the greatest risk to society, parole administrators can maximize the impact of scarce resources and dramatically improve public safety. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents (93 percent) report focusing additional supervision resources on those identified as high risk (see figure 3.10). It

FIGURE 3.9. PERCENTAGE OF FIELD OFFICES THAT TAILOR CONDITIONS OF PAROLE SUPERVISION



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

FIGURE 3.10. PERCENTAGE OF FIELD OFFICES THAT FOCUS ON HIGH-RISK PAROLEES



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

should be noted, however, that respondents were not asked how they allocate those supervision resources or the nature of their focus.

According to the principles of evidence-based practice developed by the Crime and Justice Institute and endorsed by NIC, "successfully addressing [high-risk offenders] requires smaller caseloads, the application of well-developed case plans, and placement of parolees into sufficiently intense cognitive-behavioral interventions that target their criminogenic needs" (Bogue et al. 2004). Unfortunately, because respondents were asked if they focus on high-risk offenders in contrast to applying equal amounts of resources to all parolees regardless of risk—a strategy not likely to be employed by many offices—the results do not allow us to draw many conclusions.

Furthermore, as the proportion of respondents who indicated that they assess for risk and need and develop case plans that balance treatment and supervision is well below 93 percent, it seems reasonable to conclude that parole offices are not focusing on higher-risk parolees in a manner consistent with the 13 Strategies. Follow-up calls produced examples heavily weighted toward surveillance: increased contacts between agent and parolee, more frequent drug and alcohol testing, and reliance on electronic monitoring were mentioned in calls with administrators in multiple states.

An example of focusing resources other than surveillance on high-risk parolees came from a respondent in Oregon, who described assessing risk to reoffend, motivation to change, and treatment needs. In his office, moderate-to-high-risk parolees with a low degree of motivation to change participate in cognitive-behavioral interventions. Once an assessment of their motivation indicates their readiness to change, they are

referred to programming to address other criminogenic needs, such as substance abuse treatment or anger management classes.

Front-loading Supervision Resources

Given the challenges that individuals face upon release, the first few hours, days, and weeks on parole are especially critical to a parolee's success (Ball, Weisberg, and Dansky 2009). In fact, arrests and parole violations are nearly twice as likely in the first month of parole as in the 15th month (Rosenfeld, Wallman, and Fornango 2005). By front-loading resources at the time of release, parole offices can provide a bridge of interventions and case-management strategies that effectively address parolees' criminogenic risk and need factors. "In-reach" efforts designed to build the relationship between parolee and parole officer or between parolee and service provider before release further strengthens this approach.¹¹

The front-loading of resources should focus on the immediate and very practical issues that confront released individuals—a place to live, a job, financial support, transportation, continuation of treatment services, and, if needed, medications. Meeting those needs quickly and efficiently would reduce the stress on the parolee as well as the related risk of relapse and reoffending.

Four out of five respondents report making an effort to concentrate resources at the time of release and during the first few days and weeks after release (see figure 3.11). Although it is not possible to determine from the survey results whether field offices are simply front-loading surveillance, as opposed to treatment and services, these results are encouraging. Concentrating both the number and type of supervision resources strategically at the time of release will dramatically reduce the risk that a parolee will commit a new crime.

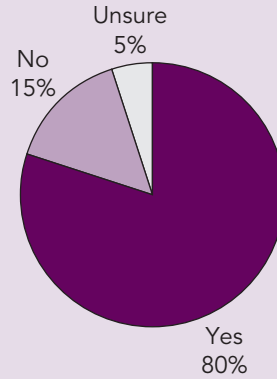
For example, a respondent in South Dakota described a process by which aftercare appointments are set before release for all parolees with a history of substance abuse or mental health treatment needs; treatment groups are established for sex offenders before release as well. In addition, the assessment of risk and need determines the intensity of treatment, and the prison sends a summary of treatments received in the correctional institution to the provider.

Incorporating Incentives and Rewards into the Supervision Process and Implementing Earned Discharge

Parolees, like most people, respond to incentives and rewards. Examples of incentives in the parole supervision context include verbal accolades, awarding certificates of

¹¹ *In-reach* refers to the practice of bringing supervision agents, service providers, and other individuals with whom a prisoner should have a relationship in the community into the institution to begin planning for and building that relationship before release.

FIGURE 3.11. WHETHER THE PAROLE OFFICE MAKES AN EFFORT TO FRONT-LOAD RESOURCES



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

“It’s easy to catch a parolee doing something wrong. We want to catch those things they’re doing right and let them know that they’re doing well.”

— GARNETT TATE, CHIEF PAROLE OFFICER, JEFFERSON, GEORGIA

achievement, reducing reporting requirements, reducing or waiving supervision fees, and eliminating conditions of supervision. When applied consistently, these “carrots” can be a powerful impetus for a parolee to stay sober, keep a job, or pay victim restitution.

More than two-thirds of respondents report providing incentives to parolees, and more than half report offering early discharge as an incentive. The range of incentives cited by respondents included reduced reporting requirements, lower supervision levels, certificates of achievement, letters of support, travel permits, and permission to mentor other parolees.

Although the use of some incentives, such as early parole discharge, may be subject to policy limitations, many incentives require nothing more than acknowledging success and can be implemented at any time. As table 3.5 indicates, respondents were more likely to cite incentives related to reduction in parolee responsibilities, such as fewer reporting requirements and reduced levels of supervision, than incentives such as benefits or positive reinforcement. While the reduction of parolee responsibilities and the possibility of earned discharge may be powerful motivators, smaller incentives can be applied immediately and more regularly to reinforce positive behavior.

As part of the national Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment Studies program, offices in six states participated in one such incentive program—Step’n Out. A respondent in Connecticut described the participation of three parole officers in the pilot program

TABLE 3.5. Incentives for Parolee Compliance		
	Number	Percent
Does your office provide incentives?		
Yes	531	71
No	193	26
Unsure	17	2
Does your office allow earned discharge?		
Yes	383	51
No	336	45
Unsure	18	2
Examples of incentives cited		
Reduced reporting/contacts	171	23
Lower supervision levels	123	16
Positive reinforcement	53	7
Incentives with monetary value (bus passes, food vouchers, etc.)	15	2

Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

Note: Not all offices indicating that they provide incentives cited examples.

and how incentives—such as movie passes or gift certificates—enhanced parolee engagement. These positive reinforcements were used to encourage parolees to make progress toward agreed upon goals such as applying for jobs or staying sober. The program included software that prompted officers to use appropriate rewards for parolee behaviors. The design of this program reflects research suggesting that positive reinforcement, acknowledgment of successes, and simple rewards effect positive behavioral change more than sanctions or negative reinforcement. The system of rewards, however, did not become general practice in the office because of resource constraints.

In addition to monetary incentives, parole officers in the Connecticut field office also provided incentives for positive behavior by calling parolees' families to let them know when the parolee was doing well and incorporating regular verbal compliments into interactions between parole officers and parolees. And unlike incentives such as reduced reporting or early discharge, which require that field offices be allowed to set or modify conditions of supervision, any office can use these powerful and effective day-to-day incentives.

Assigning Neighborhood-Based Supervision

In a system of neighborhood- or place-based supervision, parole administrators assign officers caseloads that correspond geographically to where high concentrations of

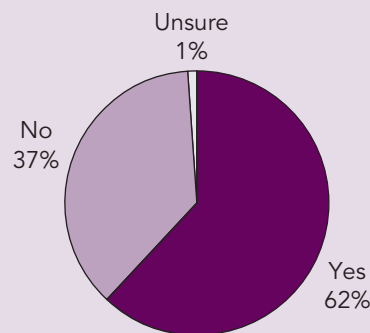
parolees reside. Preferably, parole officers are assigned to satellite offices physically located in the community so that they can become familiar with local resources and high-risk areas, increase communication with community-based organizations, and engage informal social controls. By eliminating costly and time-consuming travel for parole officers, place-based supervision is also an effective and efficient use of scarce parole resources. In such an arrangement, parole officers typically work nontraditional hours (evenings and weekends) in neighborhood-based offices that are open at times other than usual business hours.

Such strategies also reduce travel problems for parolees. Appointments for parolees can be scheduled during nonwork hours and thereby reduce workplace stress. Because many parolees have lost their driving privileges or lack ready access to a vehicle—and may live in an area with limited or no public transit resources—locating the parole office in or near the neighborhoods where parolees reside increases the likelihood that parolees will keep their appointments and maintain regular contact.

It is important to note that placed-based supervision may mean something very different for rural offices from that in more densely-populated areas, where it is likely to be synonymous with neighborhood-based supervision. Great distances often lie between parolee residences, making face-to-face contact difficult and expensive. Perhaps as a result, rural respondents were nearly 20 percentage points less likely to report using neighborhood-based supervision.

According to respondents, nearly two-thirds of field offices are assigning officers to specific geographic areas (see figure 3.12). What the survey results do not make clear, however, is whether field offices are embedding officers in the community to increase

FIGURE 3.12. PERCENTAGE OF PAROLE OFFICES THAT ASSIGN OFFICERS TO SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC AREAS



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

community engagement or merely to increase operational efficiency. Ideally, place-based supervision accomplishes both goals. A respondent in Wisconsin, for instance, described how dividing caseloads geographically enhanced collaboration with law enforcement (including neighborhood supervision with community policing officers), local government agencies and services, and neighborhood organizations. Because they are located in the community, parole officers are able to participate in neighborhood events, speak directly to employers, and develop relationships with community leaders.

Engaging Partners to Expand Capacity for Intervention

One of the most important steps that a parole supervisory agency can take to improve reintegration outcomes is to develop sustainable relationships and networks with the many organizational stakeholders involved in the reentry process (law enforcement, service providers, paroling or releasing authority). In addition to reducing duplication of efforts and efficiently allocating resources, coordinating and collaborating with law enforcement and service providers act as “force multipliers” by leveraging existing resources and allowing parole officers to do more to build relationships, engage informal social networks, and effect behavioral change.

Administrators overwhelmingly report that collaboration is important to achieving their mission. Nearly four out of five respondents state that interagency collaboration is “very important,” and more than half believe the same about collaboration with community members (see table 3.6). This finding is significant because administrators who believe collaboration is important to achieving their agency’s mission are more likely to emphasize evidence-based practices and to have implemented the 13 Strategies, controlling for other field office attributes. Specifically, administrators who believe collaboration is important are more likely to incorporate the parolee’s treatment needs into supervision case plans, to engage the parolee in the development of supervision goals and case plans, to involve significant others in the development of case plans, and to assess criminogenic risks and need factors.

Respondents to the parole survey report high levels of interaction with law enforcement and service providers: more than three-quarters report interacting at least weekly. As shown in figure 3.13, much smaller numbers report interact-

“Our mission emphasizes utilizing community agencies to reintegrate offenders into the community. We utilize and depend on outside treatment agencies. We can’t possibly do everything ourselves; our meetings with offenders play a minimal role in helping to rehabilitate or reintegrate them. We need domestic violence shelters, food pantries, Goodwill, and education and housing agencies. We need to use them as resources. If we don’t have those resources the offender will be stuck in the same situation.”

—ALLISON BIGGS, SUPERVISOR,
KENTUCKY’S 15TH PAROLE DISTRICT

TABLE 3.6. Percentage of Respondents Who Believe That Collaboration Is Important to Achieving the Agency’s Mission

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Interagency collaboration and partnerships	80	16	4	0
Collaboration with community members	58	31	10	1

Source: Authors’ calculations based on results of the parole survey

ing frequently with the paroling or releasing authority. This difference may be explained by the different nature and purposes of those interactions. Paroling and releasing authorities typically have a smaller role in the daily conduct of supervision. Their efforts are generally concentrated on the release decision and the setting of supervision conditions—and only later if parolee noncompliance results in a parole revocation proceeding or other formal sanction.

Interestingly, the frequency of interactions appears to be related to the satisfaction level of parole administrators. According to survey results, parole administrators are

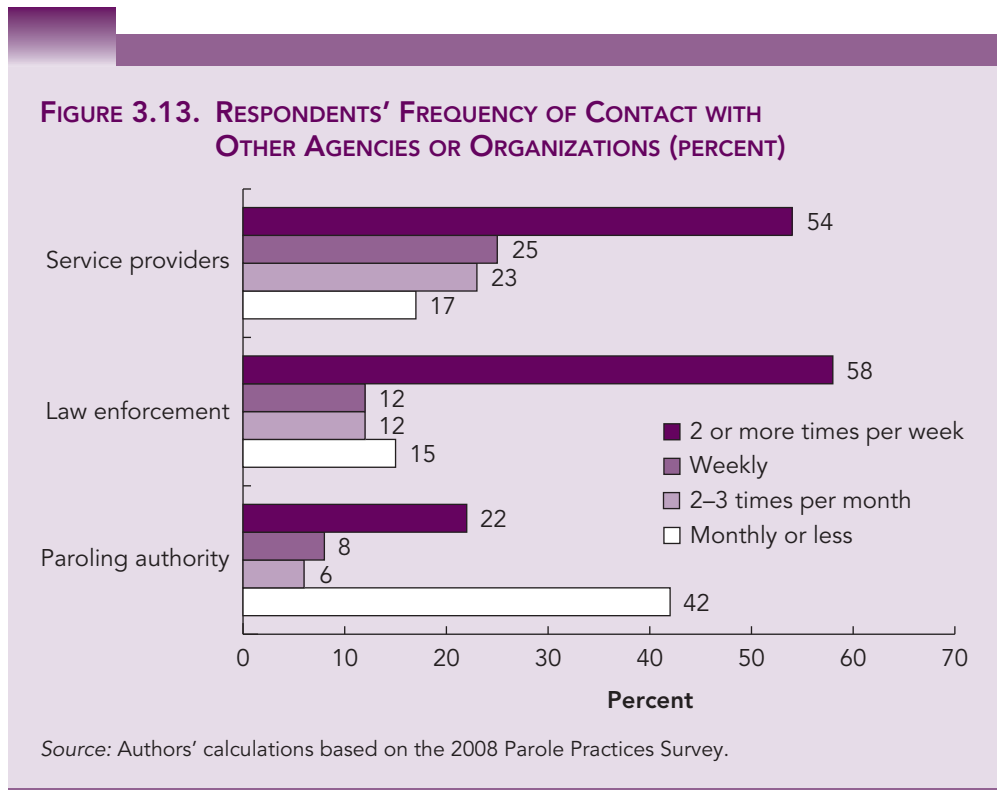
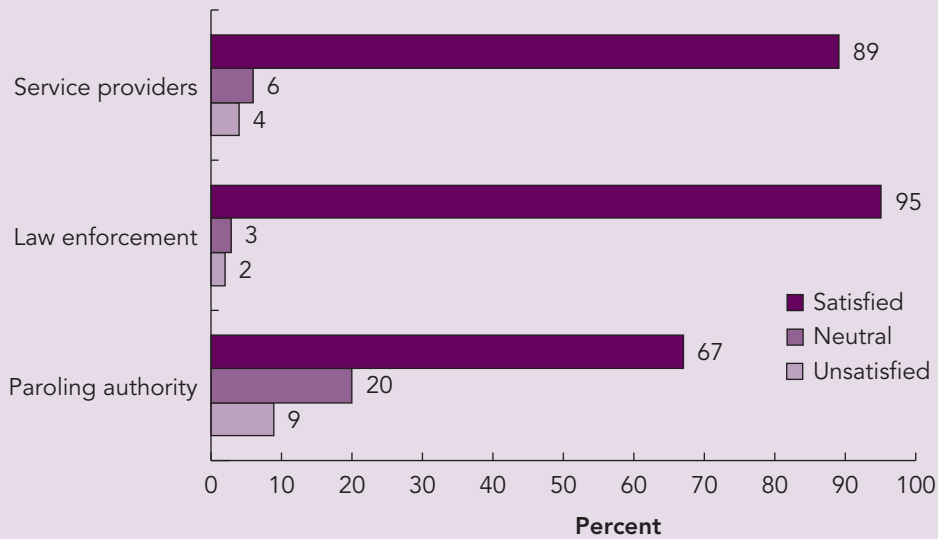


FIGURE 3.14. RESPONDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH OTHER AGENCIES OR ORGANIZATIONS



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

either “somewhat satisfied” or “satisfied” with the paroling or releasing authority, law enforcement, and service providers in the same order as the frequency of their interactions (see figure 3.14). The level of satisfaction for each of these categories is high, however, and the level of dissatisfaction is low.

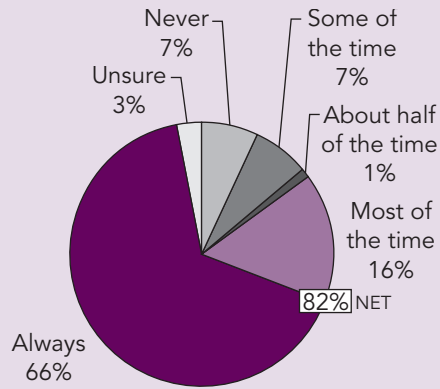
Assessing Criminogenic Risk and Need Factors

To allocate supervision resources effectively and efficiently to protect public safety, parole supervision agencies should be assessing parolees’ criminogenic risk and need factors. Criminogenic risk factors are parolee attributes associated with the probability of reoffending, while criminogenic need factors are parolee problems that, if left unaddressed, are likely to lead to reoffending. Needs in this context are dynamic factors that can be changed, while risk factors can be dynamic (such as a lack of job skills or criminal peer group) or static and unchangeable (such as age at first conviction or criminal history). In some jurisdictions, these tools will complement institutional assessments; in others, they will be the

“The risk and need assessment conducted by our agency is a more realistic picture of how they’re doing in the community, the ‘real world’ so to speak, than the assessment in the institution. Having that fresh perspective is important for assessing their risks and needs.”

—JAMES LYTTON HAAS, DIRECTOR
RICE COUNTY, MINNESOTA
COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

FIGURE 3.15. RESPONDENTS' USE OF INSTRUMENTS TO ASSESS CRIMINOGENIC RISK OR NEED FACTORS



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

first step in differentiating parolees by risk and identifying treatment needs and interventions aimed at behavioral change. Most important, risk and need assessments must play an integral role in the development of supervision case plans. The supervision strategy and plan should work to mitigate and reduce criminogenic factors identified by the risk and need assessment.

A strong majority of respondents report using an instrument to assess risk or need factors (see figure 3.15). One caveat to this finding is that the survey did not differentiate between assessing for risk and assessing for both risk and need. This shortcoming is significant, given the importance of assessing both risk and need to determine the most effective interventions for preventing recidivism for individual parolees.

Respondents who indicated that they were using such assessments were asked to indicate which instrument they currently use and whether that instrument had been empirically validated.¹² According to respondents, the instrument used most in the field offices is the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) or one of the associated instruments (LS/Case Management Inventory or LSI-Short Version). Nearly one-fifth of respondents reported using one of these instruments. Other frequently cited instruments included COMPAS (Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions), the risk and need assessment instruments developed by the state of Wisconsin, and other locally developed instruments.

¹² The term *empirically validated* refers to the process of testing the instrument on the population that it will be used to assess to determine its effectiveness in predicting risk and identifying need. This process is critical and should involve technical experts who can confirm the validity and reliability of the results.

A review of the responses for a perspective on statewide use showed that the LSI-R or one of the associated instruments is used in almost half the states (45 percent). Locally developed instruments are used in a quarter (27 percent) of the states, and responses that were mixed, unclear, or indicated that multiple instruments were used represented 18 percent of the states. The COMPAS is used in three states (including California and Michigan), while the Wisconsin instruments are used in Wisconsin and two other states.

Whether parole agencies use an existing instrument or develop one of their own is less important than that they use a reliable tool that is validated for their parolee population and any relevant subpopulations (such as sex offenders for sex offender-specific assessments) and that assesses both risk and need. For example, the LSI-R and COMPAS instruments integrate both risk and need factors into one instrument. The Wisconsin model has two separate instruments, which makes it easy to use the risk assessment alone. This is in fact what happened in many agencies that adopted the Wisconsin model during the 1980s. Because of the emphasis on surveillance and enforcement in parole, risk assessment was emphasized, and the need assessment was often eliminated.

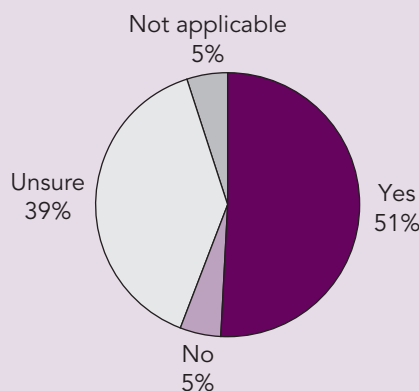
In a follow-up conversation, a respondent from a field office in Montana described using a state-designed instrument to assess both risk and need. According to the respondent, every parolee is assessed and given both a risk and need score, with the needs score subdivided into categories such as education, substance abuse, and mental health. The supervision case plan is tailored to reflect those needs, and referrals for services are made accordingly. The risk score is used to determine the level of monitoring and surveillance. Parolees supervised at one of the three highest supervision levels are reassessed every six months to capture changes in risk and need and to adjust the case plan and supervision level accordingly.

On the question of whether the instrument has been empirically validated, however, the results were somewhat less encouraging. While just more than half the respondents report having validated their assessment instrument, more than one-third (39 percent) report being “unsure” about whether the instrument had been empirically validated (see figure 3.16). While the validation of assessment instruments is the responsibility of the agency, it is critically important that field office administrators have a full understanding of the value of using a validated instrument. The high degree of uncertainty over whether instruments have been validated, however, suggests gaps in that understanding.

Developing and Implementing Case Plans That Balance Surveillance with Treatment

Armed with assessment information on parolee criminogenic risk and need factors, parole officers should develop individualized case plans that balance surveillance priorities with treatment and intervention needs. This approach, shown to be more effective at reducing recidivism than surveillance alone, allows parole agencies to tailor conditions of supervision according to each parolee’s unique situation. Unlike a one-size-fits-all approach, this strategy considers both the parolee’s risk of reoffending and the interventions that are most likely to change his or her behavior in the long run.

FIGURE 3.16. RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF WHETHER THE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT HAS BEEN VALIDATED



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

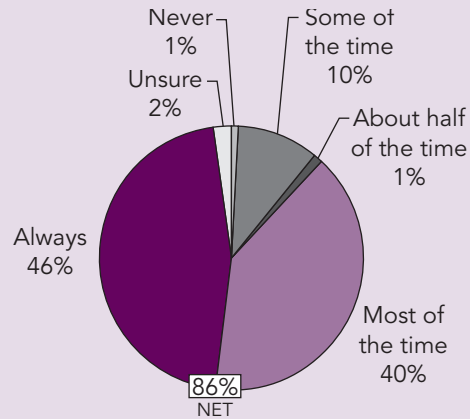
Asked whether “supervision requirements and activities routinely incorporate the parolee’s treatment needs as well as surveillance and enforcement priorities,” the vast majority of respondents said that this was the case either most of the time or always (see figure 3.17). An administrator in Maryland described how a case plan derived from that state’s assessment process is intended to drive supervision, including ensuring that parolees’ treatment needs are addressed. These plans, which include conditions of supervision, can be revised at any time according to changing circumstances, whether positive or negative.

Enhancing Parolees’ Engagement in Assessment, Case Planning, and Supervision

By involving parolees in the development of their own supervision goals and case plans, parole officers are more likely to strike an appropriate balance between surveillance priorities and treatment needs, increase parolee engagement in the supervision process, and develop the buy-in crucial for success. Ideally, this effort entails bringing parolees into every stage of the process, clearly communicating mandatory supervision conditions, identifying additional goals and treatment needs using both assessment information and parolee input, and incorporating parolee input and feedback when developing and modifying supervision case plans. Our survey results, however, indicate that fewer than half the field offices report involving parolees in the development of supervision goals and case planning either always or most of the time (see figure 3.18). More than half report involving the parolee only some of the time, or never.

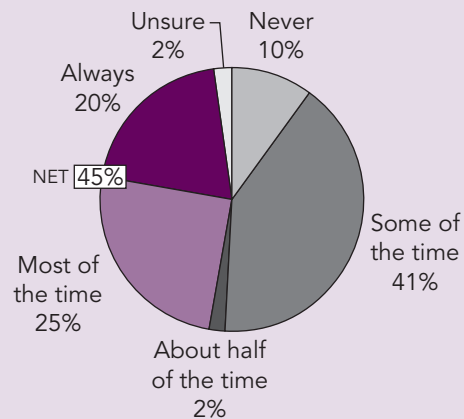
Motivational interviewing is one of the techniques that parole officers use to build trust with parolees. This approach to behavioral management emphasizes the relationship

FIGURE 3.17. WHETHER PAROLE OFFICES DEVELOP PLANS THAT BALANCE SUPERVISION WITH TREATMENT



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

FIGURE 3.18. WHETHER FIELD OFFICES INVOLVE PAROLEES IN DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISION GOALS AND CASE PLANS



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

“The parolee has to play a role. We have to remember that many of these offenders don’t know any other way. If they’re used to people not doing anything for them, to not receiving help, to not being able to accomplish their goals, than they’re not going to buy in. If they don’t buy in then it’s not their plan, it’s my plan, and they’re not going to do it. But if you use motivational interviewing, open-ended questions, you can get them to the point where they need to be and then it’s their idea. And once you help them start achieving their goals, everything else that pours out of them will be positive.”

— YVETTE SALINAS, SUPERVISOR
FROM GARY, INDIANA

between the parolee and the parole officer and engaging the parolee to determine motivating factors, goals, and obstacles. If parole officers apply motivational interviewing techniques properly and consistently to parolee interactions, they will be engaging in active listening and problem solving rather than simply running through a checklist of “dos and don’ts.” This approach develops parolee buy in, which will ultimately lead to improved supervision outcomes. Yet this valuable and low-cost tactic appears to be overlooked, with just over a quarter of responding offices reporting using it most of the time or always (see figure 3.19). In addition, a fairly high proportion of respondents (13 percent) were unsure whether their office was using motivational interviewing.

According to administrators who use these techniques, they are invaluable for enhancing parolee engagement and self-efficacy. A respondent in Georgia, for example, described how parole officers based in that office rely on active listening to develop parolee motivation and commitment. Through these two-way conversations, officers are able to identify a parolee’s goals and tailor conditions of supervision accordingly. For example, if a parolee mentions wanting to own a home, the parole officer helps the parolee identify the steps that it would take to accomplish that goal, works with the parolee to integrate those steps into the supervision case plan, and customizes future interactions around that goal.

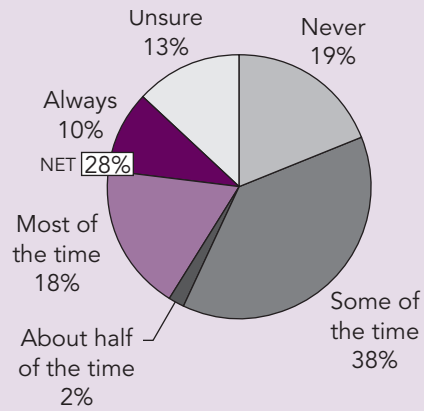
Engaging Informal Social Controls to Facilitate Community Reintegration

Family members, social networks, employers, and other informal relationships provide critical support for many parolees and are an invaluable source of information for the parole officer who knows how to use them. Chief among these important relationships are the spouses, partners, families, and significant others of parolees. It appears that rather than taking advantage of these natural partners, most parole field

offices are not engaging them in the development of supervision goals and achieving positive outcomes. Only a third of respondents report involving significant others in the development of supervision goals always or most of the time (see figure 3.20).

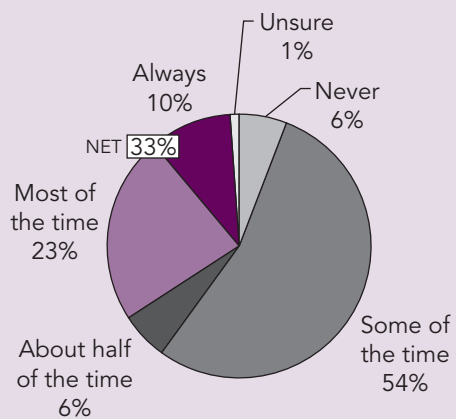
Respondents contacted during our follow-up who are engaging family members and significant others find it helpful and speak to its efficacy. For example, an administrator in Kentucky described beginning the process of consulting with spouses, partners, and others involved in the parolee’s life prerelease and continuing it throughout the

FIGURE 3.19. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING WITH PAROLEES



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

FIGURE 3.20. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ENGAGING INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROLS



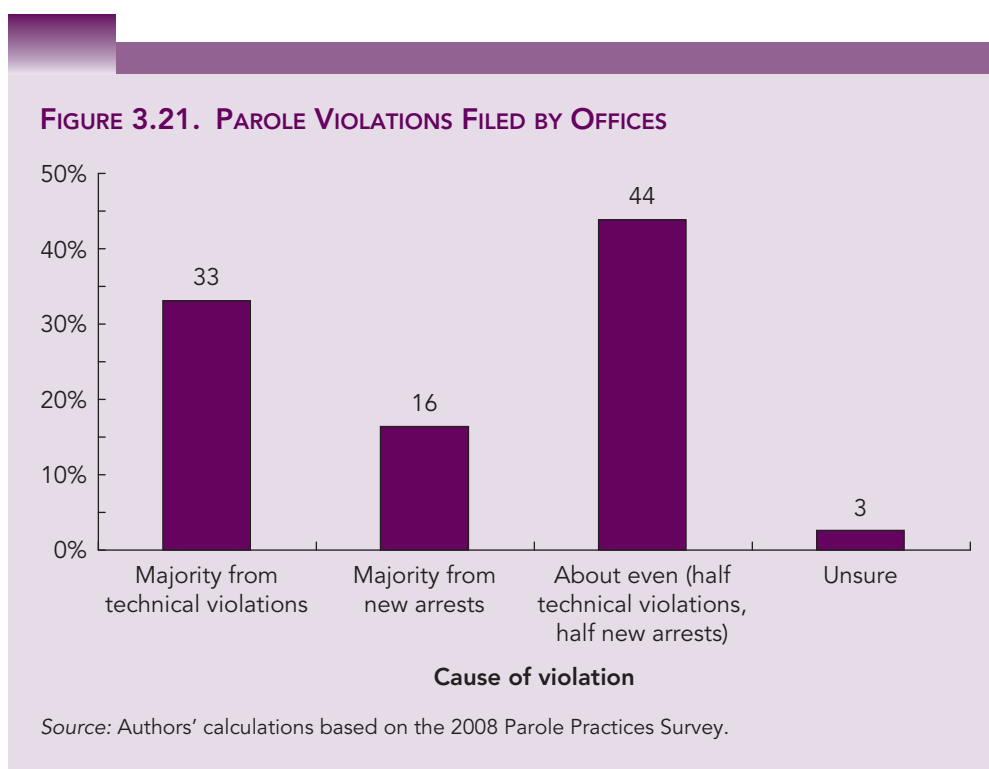
Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

parolee’s time under supervision. The prerelease contact is critical because it ensures that the family is willing to support and help the parolee abide by supervision conditions. This commitment allows the parole officer to create a more realistic case plan and opens the lines of communication between the officer and the people who interact with the parolee daily: the very people who may reach out to the officer when problems arise and can help inform case management and supervision strategies.

Employing Appropriate Responses to Violations of Parole Conditions

Sole reliance on incarceration as a response to technical violations has dramatic effects on the size of the prison population. As of 2007, more than a third of prison admissions were for violations of parole (West and Sabol 2008). While sometimes a reincarceration is a necessary response to serious or repeated violations of parole conditions, returning parolees to custody disrupts the reintegration process and ignores research showing that many parole violators can be managed in the community without compromising public safety (Martin, Van Dine, and Fialkoff 2009).

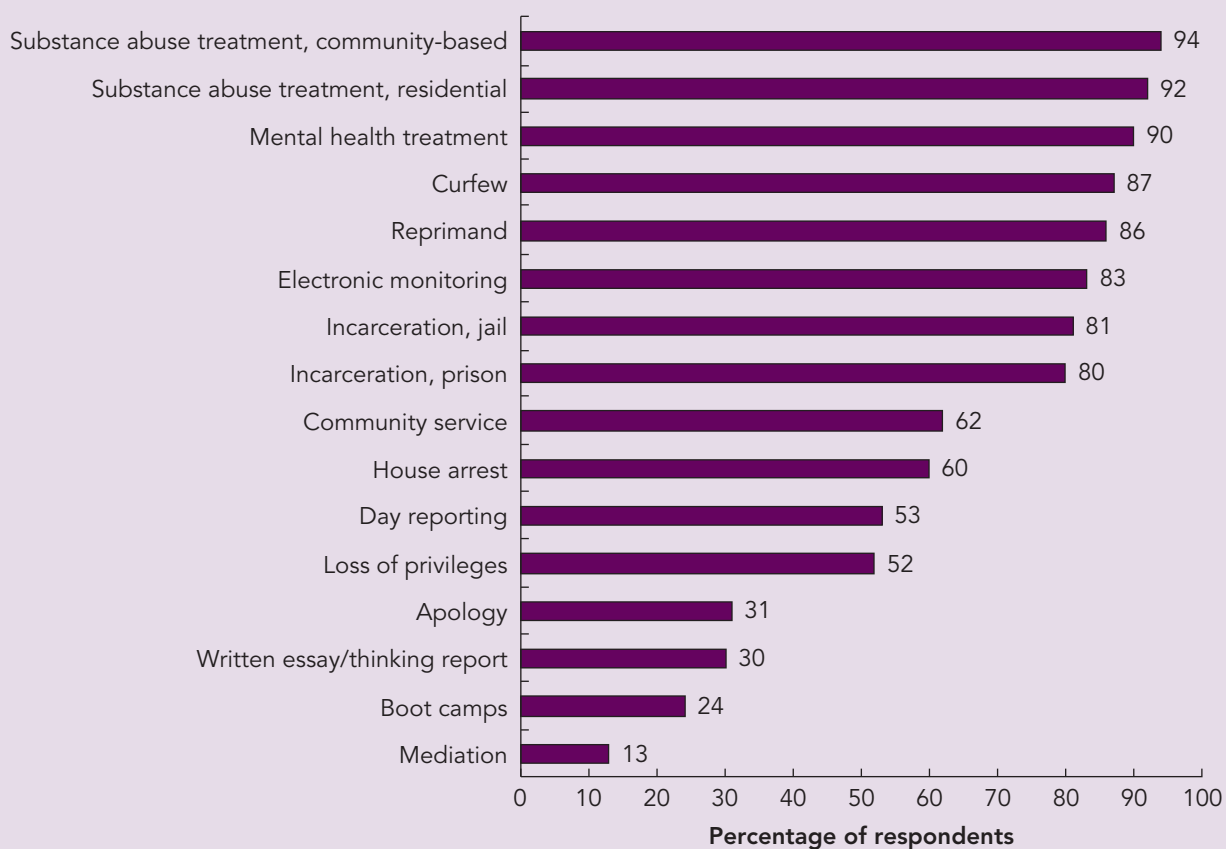
More than three out of four survey respondents report that either half or a majority of parole violations filed in their office result from technical violations of conditions of parole (see figure 3.21). While these findings do not make it clear what percentage of violations lead to revocation, they suggest a high volume of technical violations. Officers should have a menu of appropriate sanctions to respond to them, beyond return to custody.



Ideally, parole officers should employ graduated responses to violations of parole and apply sanctions that are both proportional to the seriousness of the violation and, in the process, address the cause. Considering that sending offenders back to prison costs nearly 20 times as much as supervising them in the community (Pew Center on the States 2009), parole administrators should apply the range of available sanctions. Returns to custody, the most expensive and severe available sanction, should be deployed strategically—when public safety is at risk or when the parolee fails to respond to other sanctions.

In response to technical violations, parole administrators report using a wide range of sanctions (figure 3.22). And while a clear majority of parole administrators report either jail or prison as an available sanction in response to technical violations, neither was

FIGURE 3.22. AVAILABLE SANCTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS OF PAROLE



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive.

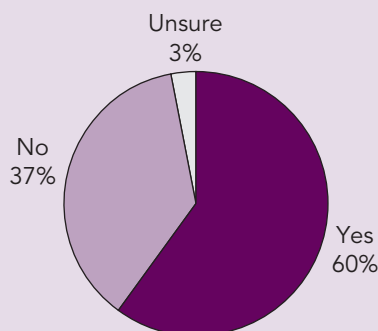
among the top five most likely responses. In fact, more administrators reported using substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and other community-based sanctions in response to technical violations than reported using reincarceration. These results suggest that while parole administrators still rely on incarceration as a response to technical violations, they have a much broader repertoire of sanctions available to them.

Parole administrators can ensure that sanctions are being applied consistently by requiring parole officers to use sanctioning grids or guidelines to determine appropriate sanctions. These guidelines should reflect the agency's goals of reducing recidivism and reserving costly returns to prison for the most serious violations. According to respondents, this practice has become common in the parole field, with nearly two-thirds of field offices using sanctioning grids or guidelines to determine appropriate responses (see figure 3.23).

This process was described by one administrator in Georgia as a progressive continuum. Along this continuum lies a range of available sanctions from verbal warnings for less-serious violations to short-term incarceration for more-serious offenses. The administrator stressed the importance of employing a wide range of sanctions, from electronic monitoring to a parole detention center, before pursuing revocation. Perhaps most important, these sanctions are applied consistently and swiftly. According to the administrator, "The real key to all of the sanctions is that they're immediate."

This sentiment was echoed by an administrator in Oregon, who said, "What matters is not so much the sanction as the ability to do it swiftly and consistently." According

FIGURE 3.23. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS USING SANCTIONING GRIDS OR GUIDELINES



Source: Authors' calculations based on the 2008 Parole Practices Survey.

TABLE 3.7. Party Responsible for Determining Sanctions for Parole Infractions according to Respondents

	Number	Percent
Parole officer with office supervisor	600	80
Paroling authority	133	18
Parole officer alone	100	13
Higher-ranking supervisor	77	10

Source: Authors' calculations based on results of the parole survey.

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive.

to the respondent, field offices in Oregon have been using the same sanctioning matrix for nearly 20 years, which provides a list of appropriate sanctions based on the parolee's level of supervision and the severity of the violation; and officers have the discretion to choose from among them.

Parole administrators should be working with parole officers to determine appropriate sanctions for violations. Based on our analysis, having parole administrators work with parole officers to determine sanctions is positively associated with implementing the 13 Strategies. In fact, offices that take this approach are more than 13 percent more likely to have implemented the strategies than offices where this is not the case. And, encouragingly, 80 percent of respondents report that the parole officer determines appropriate sanctions with the help of the office supervisor (see table 3.7).

BOX 3. EXEMPLAR: THE JEFFERSON FIELD OFFICE, GEORGIA

What does parole supervision look like in a field office that has implemented all 13 Strategies highlighted in this report? This question is difficult to answer since very few states or jurisdictions have implemented them all. In fact, fewer than 20 respondents report having implemented all of them. Indeed, while the best practices identified in *Putting Public Safety First* reflect an emerging consensus among parole practitioners, the field as a whole is just beginning to adopt behavioral change models of supervision.

In Georgia, there was a high level of adoption across field offices and one office in particular that exemplified the approach outlined in *Putting Public Safety First*—Jefferson, Georgia. Garnett Tate, chief parole officer in Jefferson, recognizes the transformational effect of EBPs and has implemented many of the strategies. From tailoring conditions of supervision to focusing on high-risk parolees, the field office in Jefferson is ahead of the curve.

(continued)

Box 3. (CONTINUED)

Underlining the approach in Jefferson is a commitment to effecting behavioral change and improving reintegration outcomes for ex-offenders. To accomplish this goal, administrators and line officers work collaboratively to effect behavioral change and encourage prosocial behavior using EBPs and other practices among the 13 Strategies. Specifically, parole officers engage parolees in the development of supervision case plans using techniques such as motivational interviewing and tailor conditions of supervision based on parolees' unique criminogenic risk and need factors. Officers are encouraged to use incentives such as certificates of achievement as well as earned early discharge. These "success reinforcers" improve the relationship between the parolee and the parole officer and develop parolee buy in. As a result, the Jefferson field office consistently ranks among the state's top 10 completion rates. In Tate's words, "We still keep public safety in mind but we can accomplish that mission by working with parolees to address their weaknesses and issues. We don't want to revoke someone because they failed a drug test; the key to helping them succeed is a measured response."

To implement many of the 13 Strategies, parole administrators need the support of state leadership. In Georgia, parole supervision is the responsibility of the State Board of Pardons and Parole. Again from Tate, "I credit our parole board . . . they are willing to give us the tools we need to get our job done." Among the ways in which the Board of Pardons and Parole supports

"To have them buy into conditions you have to listen to the parolee, find out what their needs are, learn what their expectations are, what their goals are, find out what they've done wrong in the past and what they can do different this time. It's important to have a two-way conversation and a dialogue rather than just simply give them a list of conditions."

— GARNETT TATE, CHIEF PAROLE OFFICER,
JEFFERSON, GEORGIA

the adoption of EBPs and other best practices such as the 13 Strategies is providing field offices with a clear and focused mission, an effective case management system, an agency-wide focus on performance management, a supportive organizational culture, and a high degree of alignment across those elements. According to Danny Hunter, director of field services for the board, the state embraces a balanced approach to supervision, blending monitoring and enforcement with assistance, interventions, and treatment.

The Jefferson field office is successful in large part because it is able to harness available technologies to achieve its mission. Succinctly put by Chief Parole Officer Tate, "Our casebook is a laptop." According to Tate, every field office in the state of Georgia is part of a statewide database that tracks officer and agency success rates and other performance measures. This system increases transparency and accountability and allows administrators and line officers to evaluate themselves against their peers. In addition, the state uses a "high profile indicator" that alerts parole officers when a parolee has changed addresses, lost a job, or failed a drug test. Information on these dynamic

Box 3. (CONTINUED)

risk factors flows top-down as well as bottom-up; parole officers are required to enter every parolee interaction into the database. Using this system, parole officers are able to intervene and prevent parole violations from occurring.

According to Hunter, the automated case management system also allows staff in the State Board of Pardons and Parole to conduct in-house research on Georgia parolees. This local focus enhances the power of the research by connecting it directly to the Georgia parolee population, and it helps officers learn what strategies and approaches are effective with their parolees. Parole officers use the system for their routine case management and record keeping, so the link between their work activities, parolee characteristics and behavior, and the outcomes achieved is direct and visible. The system is easy to use and transparent, allowing all staff real-time access that enables them to see what is happening locally, regionally, and statewide.

Perhaps the most important factor in whether a field office has implemented the 13 Strategies is culture and climate. The culture of the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles is mission driven and outcome focused. All staff are expected to be familiar with, review, and use outcome data to help them manage their caseloads, their field offices, their regions, and the agency as a whole. It is a culture of self-examination, greatly facilitated by the easy access to performance information throughout the agency. The focus on performance leads staff to explore and adopt best practices and EBPs because these will help them and the agency as a whole achieve better outcomes. Director Hunter noted that the culture reflects a high degree of “ownership and responsibility for accomplishing the agency mission” among the staff.

This commitment is reflected in the Jefferson field office where Chief Parole Officer Tate promotes learning by emphasizing listening, innovation, and cohesiveness—all of which were shown to be associated with the implementation of best practices in our analysis. According to Tate, “We utilize staff meetings to present best practices so that officers that are underperforming can listen and learn. Maybe this will open their eyes and help them think outside of the box. We can learn from everyone if we’re willing to listen. We have to be open to new approaches.” To effect real change, leadership must be willing to embrace change. Leaders such as Garnett Tate recognize this fact, clearly communicate the organization’s mission, and position their agency to succeed. In the words of Tate, “After you do these things for so long, it’s automatic. You know when a parolee walks in that’s when the relationship begins.”

Each of the elements described above, on its own, is an important component of an evidence-based approach to supervision. The elements gain real power, however, when they are in alignment, supporting one another and building synergy from the interactions between them. The Georgia board has aligned these critical factors and is realizing substantial gains in agency performance as a result. Not surprisingly, then, according to the results of the survey, field offices in Georgia report employing the 13 Strategies at a significantly higher rate than the national average.



4

Conclusion

The results of the 2008 Parole Practice Survey are a reminder that there is no national parole practice: rather practices vary across and even within states when it comes to community supervision. The portrait of parole practice contained in this report provides insight into the current state of the parole field and some of the organizational factors that appear to account for the variation within it. There are both good news and indications of much work yet to be done. The good news is that reported use of and emphasis on evidence-based practice is widespread in parole. In particular, risk and needs assessments and sanctioning grids have become common tools of the trade in parole supervision. Despite the fact that very few jurisdictions have implemented all 13 Strategies identified in *Putting Public Safety First*, the field appears to be moving in that direction. On everything from tailoring conditions of supervision to place-based supervision, reported rates of use are encouraging.

At the same time, some of the results suggest that enthusiasm for these findings needs to be tempered. Many parole administrators believe that they do not receive the support they need to implement evidence-based practices, with less than half the respondents reporting that they get the training or the financial and staff resources necessary. Many respondents also expressed considerable uncertainty over what EBPs mean in parole.

Findings from our analysis of the survey results shed light on some of the organizational factors that affect the adoption of EBPs and the 13 Strategies. The culture of parole offices matters, with more innovative, cohesive, and achievement-oriented office cultures more likely to adopt EBPs and practices consistent with the 13 Strategies. The professional background of parole administrators matters, with those having experience in social services, public health, and other behavioral sciences more likely to adopt such practices. Finally, rural and urban offices approach parole supervision and the implementation of the strategies differently, with rural offices more likely to emphasize interpersonal approaches such as balancing treatment and surveillance goals.

A note of interpretative caution is also necessary regarding these results. While it seems clear that the overall field of parole supervision is increasingly likely to reflect EBPs and the 13 Strategies, it is difficult to ascertain from these results how ingrained these practices are in day-to-day parole operations. While some of the practices covered in the survey are concrete (such as the use of instruments for the assessment for risk and need factors), others are more akin to principles (such as balancing supervision and surveillance with enforcement priorities). Risk and need assessments have been part of parole supervision practice in many jurisdictions for almost three decades, giving parole administrators and officers greater familiarity along with the concrete and visible nature of the assessments. Balancing priorities in supervision not only is less tangible than adopting and using an instrument for risk and need assessment but also represents a philosophical approach to supervision that parole practitioners have only recently begun to embrace.

The ambiguity surrounding the implementation of the practices is significant; many offices report using the 13 Strategies or EBPs “most of the time” or “some of the time.” And while many parole officers have valid reasons for varying the application of practices across parolees (such as assessed risk or family situation), many also have less valid reasons, such as the personal preferences. These caveats do not undermine the conclusions in this report but indicate that this analysis is a starting point, not an ending point, in the understanding of current parole practice.

Implications for Practice

The survey findings have a number of implications for parole practitioners who are interested in advancing the 13 Strategies in their agencies:

- *Executive-level leadership of parole supervision must champion the 13 Strategies.* The 13 Strategies have the potential for transforming parole supervision if leadership commits to their principles and to their effective implementation. The importance of active, involved leadership cannot be overstated. Leaders at all levels of parole supervision agencies must “walk the talk” and demonstrate their commitment to change through deeds, as well as words.

- *Training and education of staff must be a priority.* The 13 Strategies require changes in the understanding and conduct of parole supervision. Leaders at all levels of the organization should focus human and financial resources on training staff in the implementation and use of the 13 Strategies. Staff at all levels should be given adequate time to learn, practice, and master a range of new skills.
- *Leaders must work to build positive organizational cultures that foster the adoption and institutionalization of the 13 Strategies.* Leadership at all levels of parole supervision should work to build positive cultures that emphasize behavior-change approaches and evidence-based practice.
- *Implementation efforts must go beyond the increasingly common organizational-level best practices such as risk and need assessment and sanctioning grids to include case-management practices.* Both case-management and organizational elements are essential to a behavioral change model of parole supervision. Case-management practices such as involving parolees in the supervision process, providing incentives and rewards, and engaging informal social controls hold some of the greatest potential for motivating parolees and effecting change in their behavior.
- *Parole supervision agencies must identify, assess, hire, and promote staff—particularly supervisors and managers—who believe in the core mission and balanced approach to supervision.* Implementation of best practices will be easier if the workforce supports the model embodied in the 13 Strategies. In part, hiring staff with backgrounds in human service fields will help institutionalize best practices.
- *Agencies should measure their performance relative to the 13 Strategies.* As more and more agencies begin to implement the strategies, it will be critical for the field to evaluate their effectiveness relative to reducing recidivism. It will also be necessary to measure implementation of the strategies to determine that they are being put into practice.
- *Line staff and administrators in the field offices should commit to principles embodied in the 13 Strategies and their sustained practice.* Leadership at the state level frequently changes, and, as a result, staff in the field offices, which turn over less often, must be committed to implementing and sustaining change. Line staff and administrators should work to build organizational cultures that will last through changes in regional and state leadership.

The 13 Strategies form the building blocks of an approach to parole supervision that balances surveillance and treatment, builds and sustains parolee engagement in behavioral change, and strategically allocates scarce resources. While the survey results highlighted in this report suggest that much work remains to be done in bringing parole supervision, as actually practiced, in line with the 13 Strategies, there is considerable ground for optimism. The results make it clear that the field is further along in its implementation of the strategies than previously thought, and it appears that the principles of a supervision model of behavioral change are beginning to spread throughout the parole field.

Indeed, it appears that parole supervision has entered a period of change. The survey results reveal that a transition has begun in the field offices away from a sole reliance on monitoring and surveillance toward a growing, albeit uneven, commitment to evidence-based practice and the 13 Strategies. Interestingly, this change seems to be occurring somewhat out of view but alongside and probably drawing from a much larger national conversation about prisoner reentry and the importance of embracing research-driven strategies that support behavioral change, desistance from crime, and reduction of recidivism. If nothing else, these results indicate that many of the concepts in *Putting Public Safety First* and the principles of effective intervention are beginning to take root across the country.

The next step is the hard work of implementation: that is, ensuring that the 13 Strategies and other EBPs are being implemented with fidelity to their design, that parole staff are trained to use them and supported and reinforced in doing so, and that performance is rigorously measured. As these practices are supported, sustained, and spread, parole can continue moving toward a full realization of its mission to deliver public safety and change the behavior of parolees.



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Appendix A

Parole Practices Survey Form

RETURN
TO

The Urban Institute
Justice Policy Center
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Fax: 202-659-8985

2008 REGIONAL PAROLE SURVEY

In correspondence about this survey, please refer to the number at the top left of the address label. (Below, please correct any error in contact information.)

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

What is your full name? _____

What is the title of your position? _____

Organizationally, who does your office report to? [check all that apply]

- Governor/Chief Executive
- Other Executive Agency Director
- Commissioner/Director of Corrections or Parole
- Deputy Director of Corrections or Parole
- Chair of Paroling Authority
- Administrative Judge/Judiciary
- Other (specify) _____

ADMINISTRATORS' BACKGROUND

Have you worked in any of the following organizations or work settings? (check all that apply)

- Prisons/jails
- Law enforcement
- Prosecution
- Substance abuse treatment
- Probation/parole
- Military
- Health provider
- Social work
- Other (specify) _____

How long have you been employed in your current organization? _____

How long have you been employed in the parole field? _____

This survey was prepared under grant 2005-RE-CX-K148 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

1. Structure/Leadership of Office

[questions relate to the office(s) or facilities that you are directly responsible for]

Size of office

- 1a. How many full-time parole officers are currently employed under this office? _____
- 1b. How many part-time parole officers are currently employed under this office? _____
- 1c. How many parole field/satellite/district offices are under your jurisdiction? _____
- 1d. How many custodial facilities (where parolees are detained) are under your jurisdiction? _____
- 1e. How many parolees are supervised by the office(s) in your jurisdiction? _____
- 1f. How many new people does the office(s) under your jurisdiction receive on average each month? _____

Administrators' use of EBPs

1g. Does your office employ evidence-based practices (EBP)? [EBPs are practices that have been supported and verified by research to achieve desirable outcomes.]

- Yes No Unsure

If yes, please briefly describe which EBPs your office employs and how they are used.

1h. How much emphasis does your office place on promoting EBPs?

- No emphasis Minimal Moderate
 Great Very great Unsure

1i. How much do you agree with the following statement?

My office always uses evidence-based methods of supervision

- Strongly disagree Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree Agree
 Strongly agree Unsure

2. Administrator Perceptions of the Agency

Mission

How much do you agree that the following statements reflect a **PRIMARY** mission of your office?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Unsure
2a. Promotes and enhances public safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2b. Provides surveillance of offenders as a primary way to promote public safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2c. Focuses primarily on rehabilitating offenders and changing offender behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2d. Provides restitution to victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Collaboration

2e. In achieving your mission, how important is successful interagency collaboration and partnerships?

- Very important Important Somewhat important Not important Unsure

2f. In achieving your mission, how important is collaboration with community members?

- Very important Important Somewhat important Not important Unsure

3. Culture and Climate

How much do you agree with the following statements regarding the culture and climate of your office?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Unsure
3a. Provides a climate for learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3b. Is a cohesive culture (e.g., most staff have the same perception of 'how we do business')	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3c. Is a performance achievement culture (e.g., there are common, tangible expectations about goals and benchmarks we aim to achieve)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3d. Is an innovative and adaptable culture (e.g., staff are encouraged to explore new, possibly more effective ways of doing business)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3e. Management emphasizes quality service provision (e.g., supervisors focus more on providing appropriate services than on simply number of contacts per client)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3f. Staff are empowered (e.g., staff feel that they can approach their supervisors with ideas and concerns)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Training and Resources to Support EBPs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>4a. Are you receiving the financial support you need to employ EBPs (i.e., training, technology, consultant support)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p>4b. Do you have the staffing levels you need to employ EBPs?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> | <p>4c. Do you have training development opportunities you need to employ EBPs?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p>4d. Are you receiving support from your agency management to employ EBPs?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> |
|--|---|

5. Interaction with Other Agencies

Contact with Other Resources

	Never	Monthly or less	2 to 3 times a month	Weekly	2 or more times a week	Unsure
5a. How often do you interact with the paroling authority (e.g., releasing authority)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5b. How often do you interact with law enforcement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5c. How often do you interact with service providers (e.g., workforce development agencies, local businesses, housing, substance abuse, mental health, and victims)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Satisfaction with Agencies and Resources

	Unsatisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Not applicable
5d. How satisfied are you with your relationship with the paroling authority?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5e. How satisfied are you with your relationship with law enforcement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5f. How satisfied are you with your relationship with service providers and community resources (e.g., local businesses, housing, substance abuse, mental health, and victims)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Supervision Policies and Practices

Developing Release Plans

6a. Is your office responsible for developing reentry plans before release?

- Yes No Unsure

If not, who has the authority?

- Paroling authority
 Department of Corrections (DOC)
 Parole supervision central office(s)
 Institutional parole offices
 Other (specify) _____
 No one/not applicable

Setting and Modifying Conditions

6b. Is your office responsible for setting and modifying conditions of supervision?

- Yes No Unsure

If not, who has the authority?

- Paroling authority
 Department of Corrections (DOC)
 Parole supervision central office(s)
 Other (specify) _____

6c. What types of monitoring does your office provide? (check all that apply)

- Home visits
 Worksite visits
 Telephone monitoring
 In-person office visits
 Electronic monitoring and/or global positioning systems
 Kiosk supervision
 Other (specify) _____

Tailoring Conditions of Supervision

6d. Does your office tailor conditions of parole supervision for individual parolees?

- Never Some of the time
 About half of the time Most of the time
 Always Unsure

Frontloading Resources

6e. Does your office make an effort to concentrate resources and supervision for parolees at the time of release and during the first few days and weeks after release?

- Yes No Unsure

Providing Incentive-Oriented Parole

6f. Does your office provide incentives (for example, reduced reporting requirements or awarding certificates of achievement) for meeting case-specific goals of supervision, such as keeping a job or staying sober?

- Yes No Unsure

Please provide example(s): _____

6g. Does your office allow parolees to earn their way off parole (early discharge) for meeting case-specific goals?

- Yes No Unsure

Assessing Criminogenic Risk and Need Factors

6h. Are you currently using any instrument(s) to assess criminogenic risks or need factors of parolees?

- Never Some of the time
 About half of the time Most of the time
 Always Unsure

If yes, which assessment instrument(s) is used? _____

6i. Has the instrument been empirically validated?

- Yes No Unsure Not applicable

If yes, when and how has it been validated? _____

Focusing on High-Risk Offenders

6j. Does your office focus additional supervision resources on those who are identified as high risk (in contrast to equal amounts of resources dedicated to all parolees regardless of risk level)?

- Yes No Unsure

Developing Plans that Balance Supervision and Treatment

6k. Do supervision requirements and activities routinely incorporate the parolee's treatment needs as well as surveillance and enforcement priorities?

- Never Some of the time
 About half of the time Most of the time
 Always Unsure

Supervising Parolees to Enhance Their Engagement

6l. Does the parolee play a role in the development of supervision goals and case plans?

- Never Some of the time
 About half of the time Most of the time
 Always Unsure

6m. Does your office use Motivational Interviewing?

- Never Some of the time
 About half of the time Most of the time
 Always Unsure

Engaging Informal Social Controls

6n. Do parole officers in your office involve significant others in the parolee's life and community to assist the parolee in developing supervision goals and achieving positive outcomes?

- Never Some of the time
 About half of the time Most of the time
 Always Unsure

Assigning Neighborhood-Based Supervision

6o. Does your office assign officers to specific geographic areas and/or satellite offices physically located in the neighborhood where parolees reside?
 Yes No Unsure

Defining Success as Recidivism Reduction and Measuring Performance

6p. Does your office have the goal of reducing recidivism among parolees?
 Yes No Unsure

6q. How does your agency define recidivism? (Check all that apply)

- Technical violation
- New arrest
- Reconviction
- Re-incarceration
- Other (specify) _____
- None of the above
- Unsure

6r. Does your agency track recidivism rates of parolees under supervision?

- Yes No Unsure Not applicable

6s. Does your agency track recidivism rates of former parolees no longer under active supervision?

- Yes No Unsure Not applicable

If yes, for how long after discharge from parole? _____

7. Policies and Practices in Response to Infractions

7a. Which of the following best describes the parole violations filed by your office? (Check one)

- The majority result from technical violations (TVs)
- The majority result from new arrests
- It is about even (half TVs, half new arrests)
- Unsure

Available sanctions to respond to technical violations (not including parole violations for new crimes that are not characterized as TVs)

7b. Does your office use the following sanction?

7c. If yes, how frequently? (Check one)

Yes	No	Unsure	Sanction	Rarely	Occasionally	Often
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apology (written or verbal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Written essay/ thinking report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mediation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of privileges (driving, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Curfew	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reprimand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	House arrest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boot camps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incarceration–jail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incarceration–prison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substance abuse treatment–residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substance abuse treatment–community-based	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Day reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other sanction (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7d. In your office, are sanctioning grids or guidelines used to determine appropriate sanctions?

- Yes No Unsure

7e. In your office, who is responsible for determining appropriate sanctions for infractions?

- Parole officer alone
- Paroling authority
- Parole officer with office supervisor
- Higher-ranking supervisor
- Other (specify) _____

Thank you for participating in this survey. We will also be conducting brief telephone interviews with select field offices. If you are willing to participate in a brief phone call to discuss current practices in your office, please check here.

We appreciate your time and will be sure to send you a report with the findings in a few months.

Appendix B

Parole Field Office Sample by State

State	Respondents		Total Sample	
	Offices	Percent of total	Offices	Percent of total
Alaska	7	0.9	13	0.8
Alabama	13	1.7	62	4.0
Arizona	15	2.0	18	1.2
Arkansas	44	5.9	48	3.1
California	60	8.0	164	10.6
Colorado	5	0.7	19	1.2
Connecticut	2	0.3	4	0.3
Delaware	5	0.7	5	0.3
District of Columbia	0	0.0	1	0.1
Florida	4	0.5	20	1.3
Georgia	35	4.7	49	3.2
Hawaii	3	0.4	5	0.3
Idaho	3	0.4	7	0.5
Illinois	11	1.5	26	1.7
Indiana	6	0.8	8	0.5
Iowa	11	1.5	37	2.4
Kansas	8	1.1	18	1.2
Kentucky	10	1.3	19	1.2
Louisiana	13	1.7	20	1.3
Maine	3	0.4	4	0.3
Maryland	24	3.2	40	2.6

State	Respondents		Total Sample	
	Offices	Percent of total	Offices	Percent of total
Massachusetts	5	0.7	8	0.5
Michigan	46	6.1	85	5.5
Minnesota	17	2.3	78	5.0
Mississippi	2	0.3	10	0.6
Missouri	42	5.6	55	3.5
Montana	14	1.9	22	1.4
North Carolina	13	1.7	45	2.9
North Dakota	4	0.5	14	0.9
Nebraska	5	0.7	7	0.5
Nevada	4	0.5	9	0.6
New Hampshire	4	0.5	11	0.7
New Jersey	4	0.5	11	0.7
New Mexico	11	1.5	27	1.7
New York	7	0.9	15	1.0
Ohio	10	1.3	19	1.2
Oklahoma	4	0.5	6	0.4
Oregon	22	2.9	31	2.0
Pennsylvania	44	5.9	74	4.8
Rhode Island	0	0.0	9	0.6
South Carolina	37	4.9	46	3.0
South Dakota	10	1.3	10	0.6
Tennessee	29	3.9	41	2.6
Texas	15	2.0	65	4.2
Utah	5	0.7	23	1.5
Vermont	5	0.7	12	0.8
Virginia	33	4.4	42	2.7
Washington	29	3.9	50	3.2
West Virginia	4	0.5	16	1.0
Wisconsin	34	4.5	99	6.4
Wyoming	10	1.3	23	1.5
Total	751	100	1550	100



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