



Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole

2023

Annual Report

Our Mission

To serve the citizens of Louisiana through informed decision-making, thereby promoting public safety, addressing the needs of crime victims, and to facilitate successful reentry for offenders who have appropriately prepared for community supervision.

Our Vision

The Louisiana Board of Pardons & Parole, guided by evidence-based principles, shall:

- Render just determination in regard to parole release and revocations, thereby maximizing the restoration of human potential;
- Ensure crime victims have a voice in the decision-making process;
- Use appropriate Department of Corrections and community resources to facilitate an offender's successful transition from confinement to the community;
- Impose reasonable conditions of release consistent with the goal of structured reintegration of the offender;
- Hold accountable those offenders who violate the conditions of release;
- Foster a positive relationship with all stakeholders;
- Administer the clemency process with recommendation to the Governor fully commensurate with public safety and due consideration;
- Strive to be a continuously learning organization

Our Values

We value Ethics, Integrity, Equity and Innovation.



Sheryl M. Ranatza, Chairman Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole

Sheryl Ranatza retired from the Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections in 2011, after serving over 30 years in DPS&C. She served in a variety of management positions throughout the Department, with her last position being that of Deputy Secretary. Sheryl Ranatza was the first female in Louisiana to achieve the designation of Certified Corrections Executive by the American Correctional Association and is a member of several corrections affiliated organizations. She was appointed as Chairman of the Louisiana Board of Parole in February 2012 and Chairman of the Pardon Board in August 2012 and has continued to serve in that role through the end of 2023.

From the Chairman:

I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report of the Louisiana Board of Pardons and Committee on Parole. This document summarizes a year of determined work by board members and a dedicated staff team. Our commitment to excellence is evident in our handling of over 14,500 parole actions, conducting 970 hearings, and notifying more than 1,600 crime victims of potential release decisions. After analyzing each case thoroughly, we took into account the needs of communities impacted by crime.

Our commitment to transparency is evident through the 295 crime victims who bravely shared their stories during the hearings, ensuring their voices were heard throughout the pardon or parole process. As we present this report, we focus on enhancing public safety while fostering justice and rehabilitation.

We invite you to explore the data. I am confident that you will understand our strong commitment to serving the people of Louisiana.

Sincerely,



Sheryl M. Ranatza, Chairman

14,586
Actions
Processed

166
Revocation
Hearings

338
Applications
Clemency
Reviewed

1,674
Victim
Notifications
Issued

295
Victims
Provided
Testimony

BOARD MEMBERS

TONY MARABELLA, Vice Chairman Pardon & Parole

Tony Marabella is a graduate of LSU, obtaining his Juris Doctorate in 1973 from LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He has participated in all aspects of the Judicial Branch, serving as a Parish Attorney, City Prosecutor, Assistant District Attorney, and an Assistant Public Defender. He began his private practice in 1980 which was devoted almost exclusively to criminal defense. In 2003 he was elected Judge in the 19th JDC and presided over the District's Drug Court for 14 years. He retired from the bench in 2018 he has served as an adjunct faculty member at the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center for the last ten years.



ALVIN ROCHÉ, JR, Pardon & Parole

Mr. Roché served as the director of library services at Southern University Law Center from 1990 until his retirement in August of 2007. Prior to becoming the director of library services, Mr. Roché served a variety of roles in the Southern University System, including associate law librarian and associate professor at the University Library. Mr. Roché received his bachelor of sciences degree in social science-history with a minor in library science from Southern University and a masters of library services from LSU. Mr. Roché serves on the Board of Pardons and Committee on Parole as the victims' advocate.



Bonnie Jackson, Pardon & Parole

Judge Bonnie Jackson earned her Juris Doctorate from the Louisiana State University Law Center in 1978, one of five African American students to graduate from the law school that year. Judge Jackson worked for the East Baton Rouge Parish Public Defender's Office for 14 years. While there she became the Assistant Director, a position she held until the launch of her judgeship campaign. Bonnie Foster Jackson was a judge for Section 1, Division K of the Louisiana 19th Judicial District Court. She served on the bench for 28 years and left office on December 31, 2020.



BOARD MEMBERS

Curtis "Pete" Fremin, Pardon & Parole

Curtis "Pete" Fremin is the former Director of Probation and Parole at the Department of Corrections and has 35 years of experience in Louisiana state government. In the past, he served as President of the Louisiana Probation and Parole Association, a State Representative of the Southern States Correctional Association, elected member of the Louisiana Civil Service Commission, and the Interstate Compact Commissioner for Louisiana. Mr. Fremin is also an LSU alumni and received his Bachelor of Sciences degree in 1983.



Pearl Wise, Parole

Mrs. Wise began her criminal justice career as a probation and parole officer in the Monroe District Office of the Division of Probation & Parole. Her career spanned over 20 years. She served as community resources coordinator for the district and also supervised a unit of probation and parole officers. Mrs. Wise received her master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Louisiana Monroe and is a veteran of the Louisiana National Guard. After her retirement from the Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Governor John Bel Edwards appointed Mrs. Wise to serve as an at-large member of the Committee on Parole.

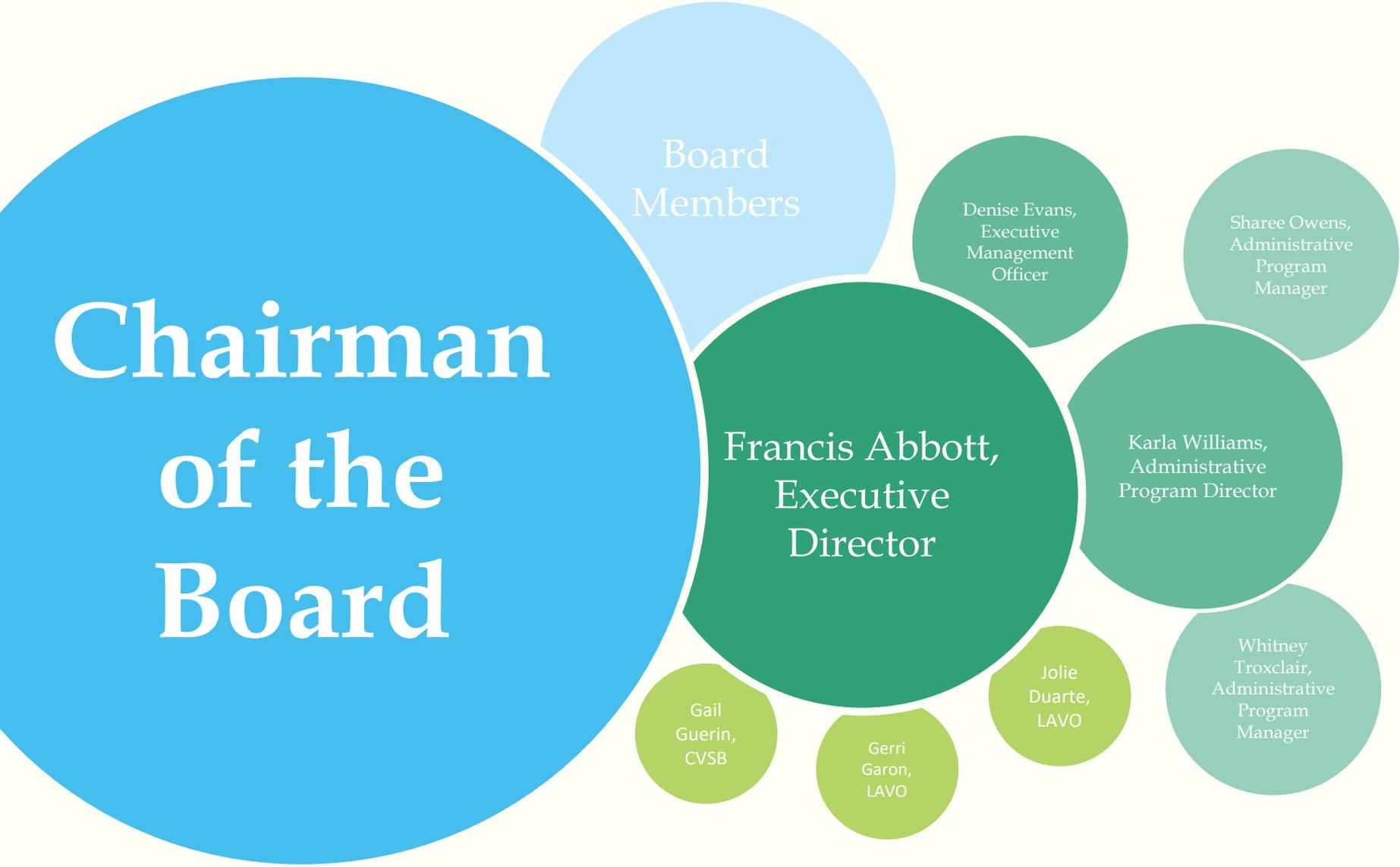


Brennan C. Kelsey, Parole

Mr. Kelsey is a physical therapist with over 20 years of experience, with a private practice in Tangipahoa Parish. Throughout his career, Mr. Kelsey has worked in a variety of settings including mental health outpatient, rehab, and acute care. Mr. Kelsey received a bachelor of science in physical therapy from LSU Medical Center and a master's in general business and healthcare from Southeastern Louisiana University. Mr. Kelsey was appointed by Governor John Bel Edwards to serve as an at-large member of the Committee on Parole.



Board Structure



Continuing Education

Qualifications & Training

As mandated in LARS 15:572.1, Board Members must have a bachelor's degree and at least five years of experience in the field of penology, corrections, law enforcement, sociology, law, education, social work, medicine, psychology or psychiatry, or a combination thereof. If the member does not have at least a bachelor's degree, he or she must have no less than seven years of experience in one of the aforementioned fields.

After their appointment, Board Members are required to participate in at least 40 hours of continuing education as part of our American Correctional Association (ACA) Accreditation. Our team works diligently to provide training opportunities for Board Members and Staff. The Department of Public Safety & Corrections (DPS&C) and the population they serve are often at the center of these training events (pictured from left is Chairman Ranatza, DPS&C Secretary James LeBlanc, and Vice Chairman Marabella). We are constantly searching for emerging trends and the latest research as it relates to public safety and our work as the discretionary releasing authority for the State of Louisiana.

Training topics throughout 2023 included:

2023 Louisiana Legislative Update

DPS&C Mental Health Policy Review

Characteristics of Effective Governing Boards: Board Members

Developing Strong Financial Policies for Local Governments

Understanding Trauma & Trauma Informed Responses for Criminal Justice Professionals



Continue Education Continued

American Correctional Association



The Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole is was recently reaccredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA). This achievement reflects our staff's commitment to their work to support Louisiana's discretionary releasing authority. ACA sets standards that create an environment

that promotes fairness in our processes. These standards help ensure public confidence in our criminal justice system, the rights of incarcerated individuals are preserved, and that procedures are constantly reviewed and updated so that our organization can continue to progress.

ACA hosts training conferences annually which our staff regularly attend. These venues provide an opportunity for professional development in the field of corrections. Administrative Program Director, Karla Williams (left) and Administrative Program Manager, Whitney Troxclair (right) were able to attend the American Correctional Association (ACA) Winter Conference in Orlando, Florida. One of the main focuses during this conference was rehabilitation. The staff was able to attend various workshops furthering their knowledge and were able to take the information they learned back to Louisiana and incorporate into their work. During the conference, they were also able to create business relationships with multiple agencies. With the partnerships they created, Board will be able to utilize the resources from other states to have more successful outcomes.



Denise Evans, Executive Management Officer

Being ACA accredited means being held to a higher standard and no longer mediocre. I put my blood, sweat, and tears into these files and standards because the Louisiana Board of Pardons and Committee on Parole is not mediocre. Our next audit is the Spring of 2024 and I plan on my team shining.



Continue Education Continued

Association of Paroling Authorities International



Board Members and staff are also very active in the Association of Paroling Authorities International (APAI). The benefits of the Board's participation in APAI are invaluable to all of its stakeholders. APAI is a global association dedicated to the accomplishment of public safety and successful offender reentry through training, education, standards of evidence-based research and best practices. This network of professionals from discretionary releasing authorities from

around the world provide peer-based technical assistance and support in collaboration with strategic partners.

APAI held its 2023 Annual Training Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. Pictured from the left are attendees from the Board; Executive Director Abbott, Board Member Wise, Chairman Ranatza and Administrative Program Director Karla Williams. This conference offered training in the overarching theme of *Balancing Hope, Fairness & Accountability for Stronger Communities*.



Executive Director Abbott was nominated for Secretary of APAI and was re-elected at the 2023 Annual Training Conference.

As a result of our membership in this organization and our growing presence as one of the leading paroling authorities in the country, Executive Director Abbott was asked to present at 2023 Hearing and Institutional Parole Summit in San Antonio Texas. This event is the annual training for the Texas Board of Pardons and Parole. David Gutierrez Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles; Executive Director Abbott; Rene Hinojosa, Director, Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Parole Division; Timothy McDonnell, Chief of Staff, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles; Bobby Lumpkin, Director, Texas Department of Criminal Justice- Correctional Institutions Division.



Clemency Process

The Governor may grant reprieves to persons convicted of offenses against the state, and upon recommendation of the Board of Pardons, may commute sentences, pardon those convicted of offenses against the state, and remit fines and forfeitures imposed for such offenses.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the governor shall not grant any pardon to any person unless that person has paid all of the court costs or fees imposed in connection with the conviction of the crime for which the pardon is to be issued.

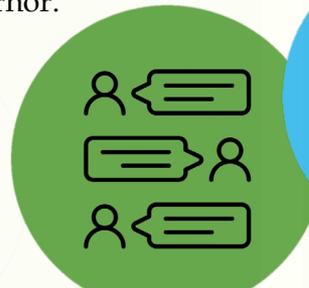
APPLICATION – Applications are submitted. Incarcerated individuals submit programs of completion, disciplinary conduct, and reentry plan. Released individuals submit current employment status and reason for request.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW – Application is granted (hearing scheduled) or denied.

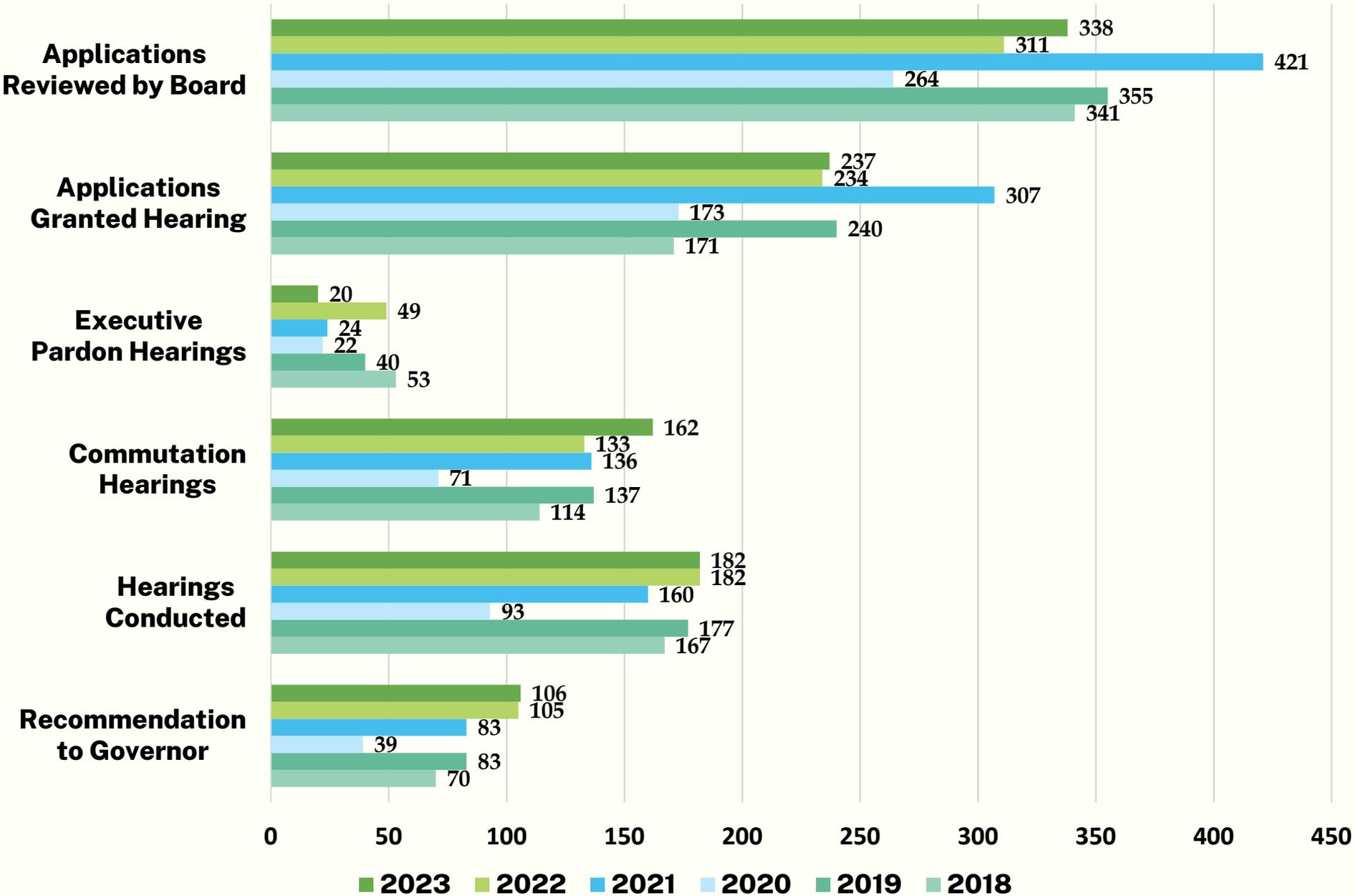
INVESTIGATION – Investigation is ordered. Victims are interviewed by Victim Assistance Coordinators. Input is requested from District Attorney, Judges, and Law Enforcement.

LIVE HEARING – Applicant interviewed. Victim testimony or Victim Impact Statement is considered. District Attorney, Judges, and Law Enforcement participate in the hearing.

OUTCOME – Application is denied or a recommendation is made to the Governor.



Clemency Statistics



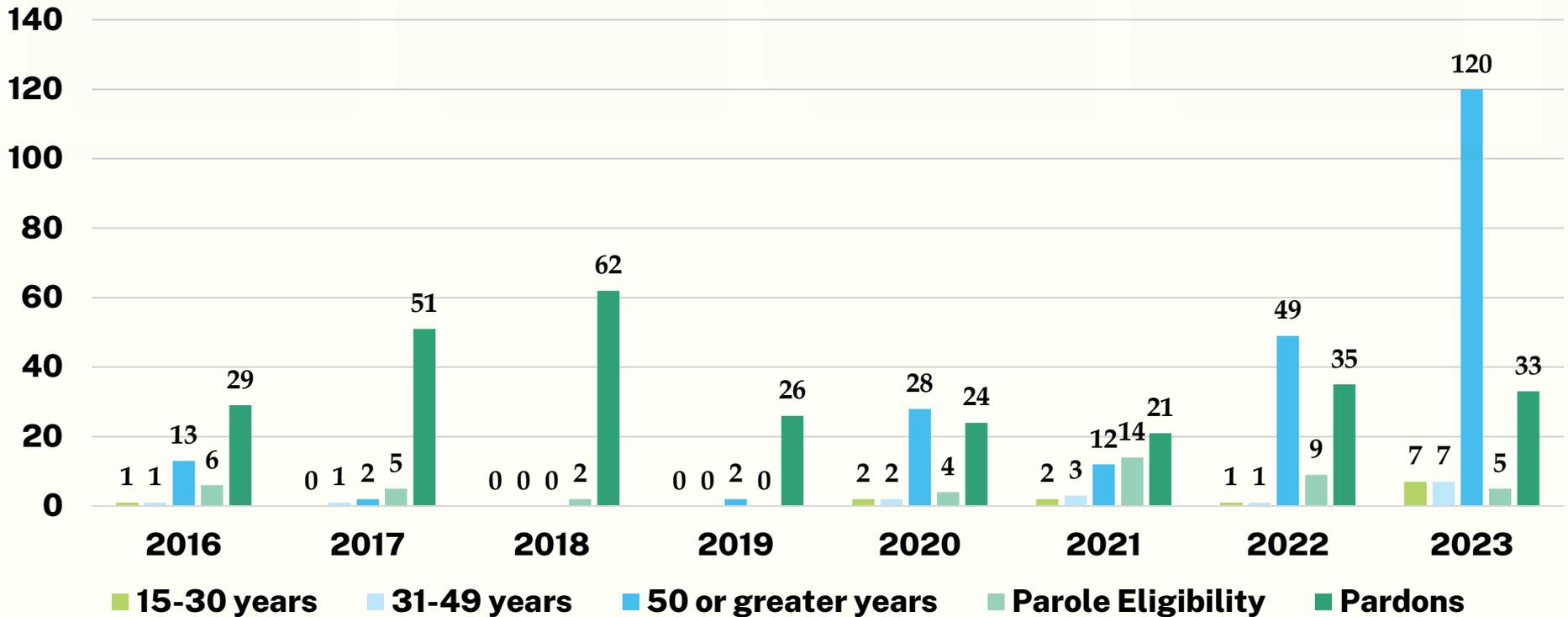
Governor's Actions

Shamyra Washington, Investigative Specialist

I have been working for the Board for almost a year and I can say that I am grateful to have this experience. Having a BA in Criminal Justice and further pursuing my Master's degree, I know this job has helped me tremendously with learning more about my field with real life experiences with the justice system as well as investigative work.



The chart below shows what recommendations Governor Edwards approved for clemency. Pardons restore an applicant's rights after they have completed the sentence imposed by the court. Commutations alter an incarcerated applicant's sentence and provides parole eligibility. The relief in sentence length received by incarcerated applicants is reflected in the year ranges.



Parole Process

The Committee on Parole makes a variety of critical decisions concerning the timing of release, conditions to be imposed, and supervision strategies. Determination of release suitability of eligible offenders is made through decisions that promote fairness, objectivity, and public safety and are responsive to the concerns of victims, members of the community, and other entities within the criminal justice system.



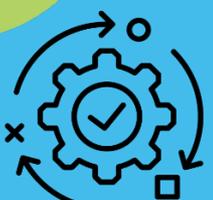
ELIGIBILITY – DPS&C submit statutorily eligible offenders to be considered for parole. This is for an offender's initial hearing only.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW – Subsequent hearings must be requested by the offender. This request is granted (hearing scheduled) or denied.

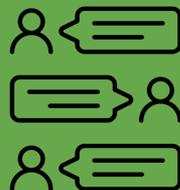


INVESTIGATION – Investigation is ordered. Victims are interviewed by Victim Assistance Coordinators. Input is requested from District Attorney, Judges, and Law Enforcement.

LIVE HEARING – Offender interviewed. Victim testimony or Victim Impact Statement is considered. District Attorney, Judges, and Law Enforcement participate in the hearing.



OUTCOME – Parole denied or Parole Granted with Standard Conditions and may include additional conditions which can be completed prior to or after release.



Parole Numbers

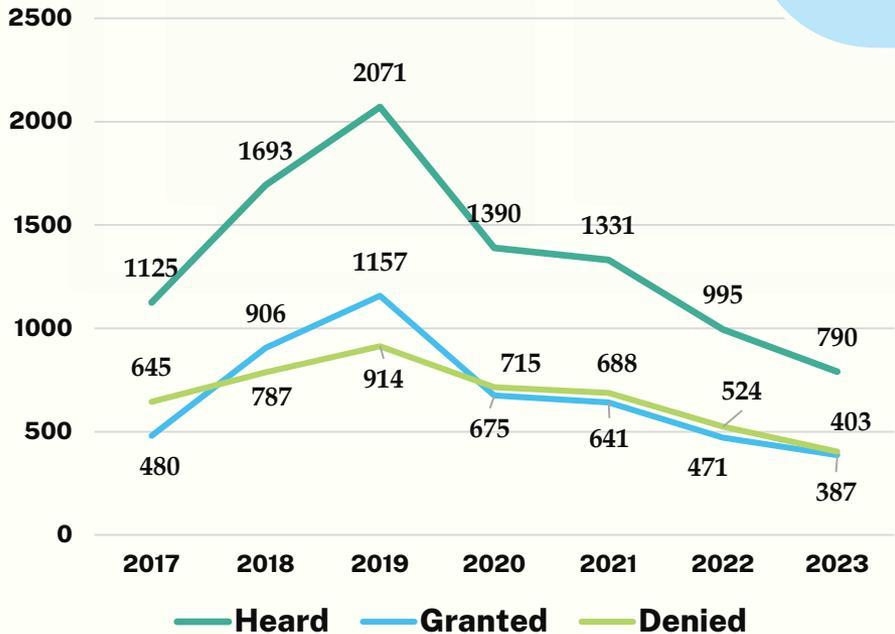
Parole Hearings chart show the number of hearings conducted by year and paroles granted. The increase in parole hearings in 2018 & 2019 is a result of the 2017 Criminal Justice Reform package of legislation. The decrease in hearings in 2022 is due to additional Clemency hearings being conducted. In 2023 we were forced to cancel 53 hearings in response to litigation against the Board.

Conditional Releases chart shows the number of offenders that were required to complete programming prior release on parole. The decrease in 2020 are due to Covid-19 and DPS&C shutting down transfers. We receive updates annually on Certified Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs offered by the DPS&C. These updates help the Board to understand appropriate offender placement based on the needs of the offender.

Markell Lewis, Investigative Specialist
 I believe that I am working with professionals where we can learn from one another. Their drive and motivation encourages me to take on new and challenging opportunities.



Parole Hearings



Conditional Releases

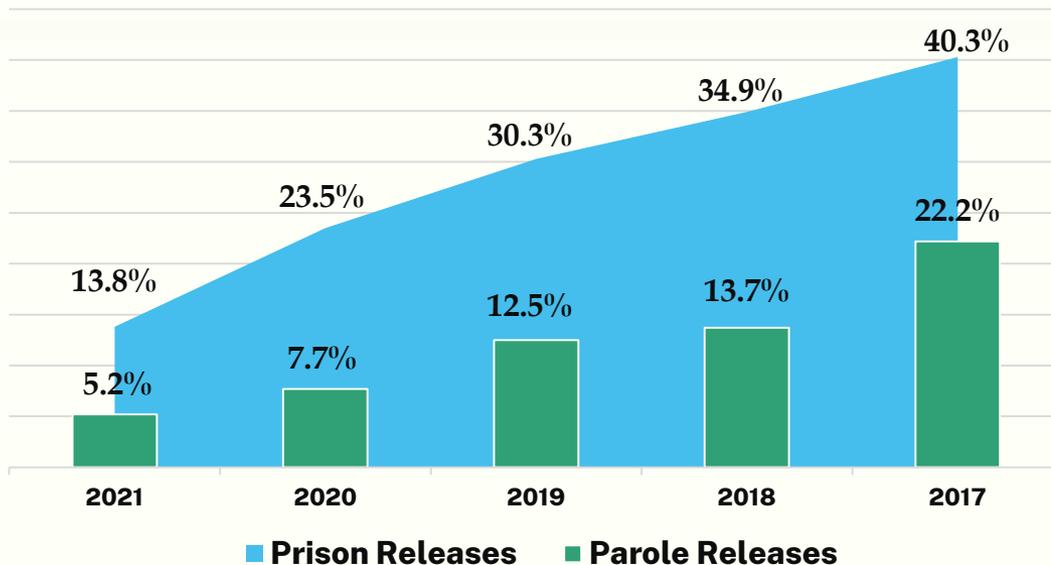


Discretion & Public Safety

Discretionary release is based upon the consideration of unique factors and variables of each offender's case. The Committee determines release suitability of eligible offenders through decisions that promote public safety and are responsive to the concerns of victims, other stakeholder within the law enforcement and other members of the community. The Committee's recidivism rates are a direct result of the use of evidence based practices, the in-depth investigation conducted and the eligibility requirements outlined in LARS 15:574.4 .

5 Year Parole Release Recidivism shows the comparative recidivism rates between parole releases and regular prison releases. The results are significantly better for the parole population.

5 Year Parole Release Recidivism
(DPS&C Briefing Book, 2023)



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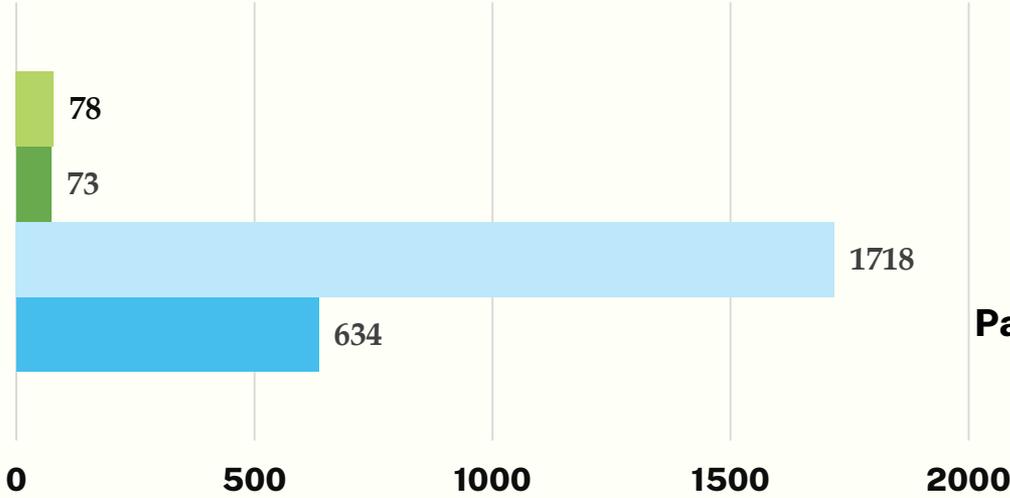
Removed From
Dockets Due to
Disciplinary
Conduct

128

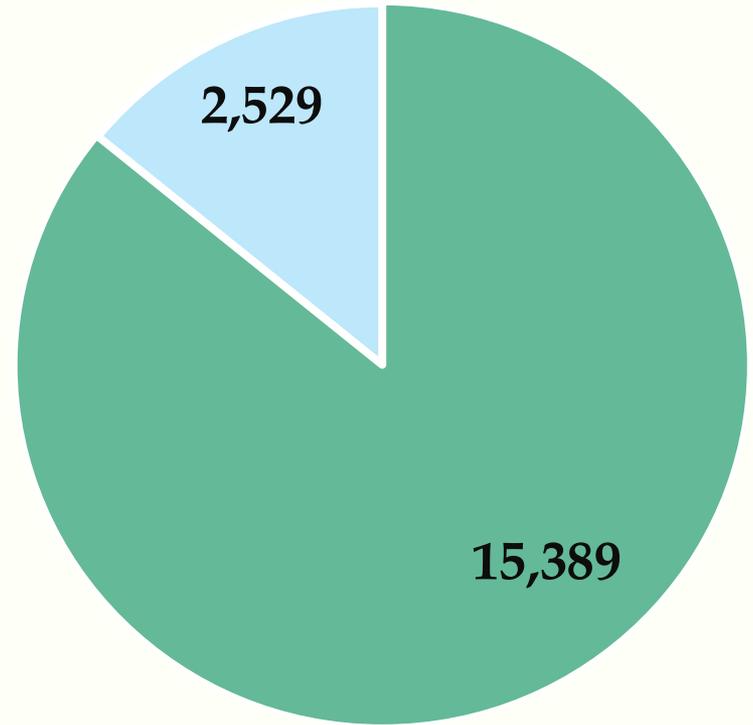
Rehearing
Application
Denied

Supervision Snapshot

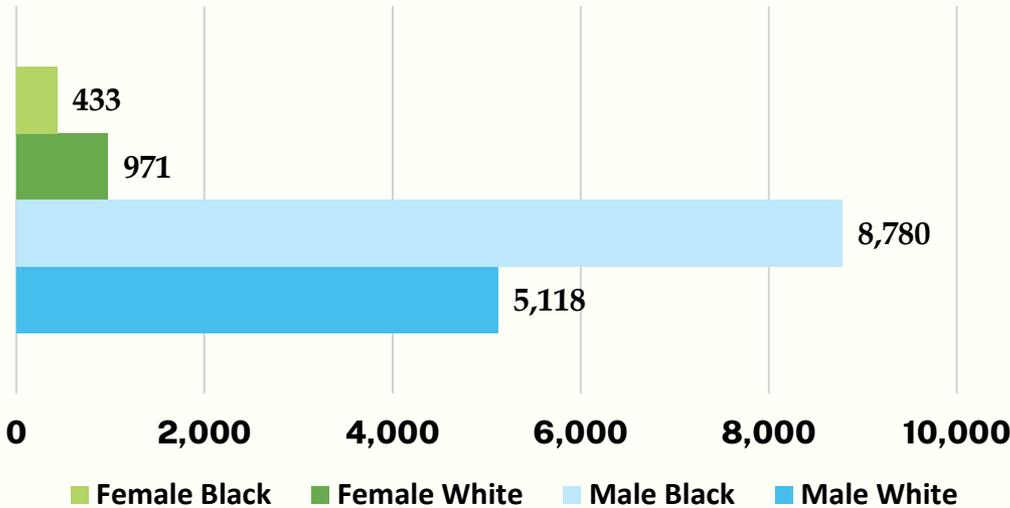
Parole By Race and Sex



Parole vs. Good Time Parole Supervision (GTPS)



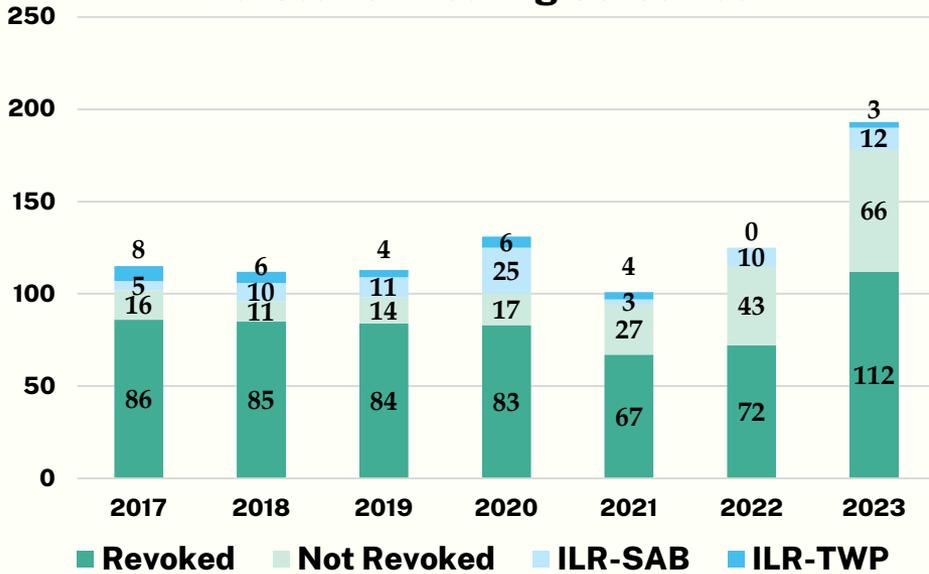
GTPS By Race and Sex



■ GTPS ■ Parole

Supervision Snapshot

Revocation Hearing Outcomes

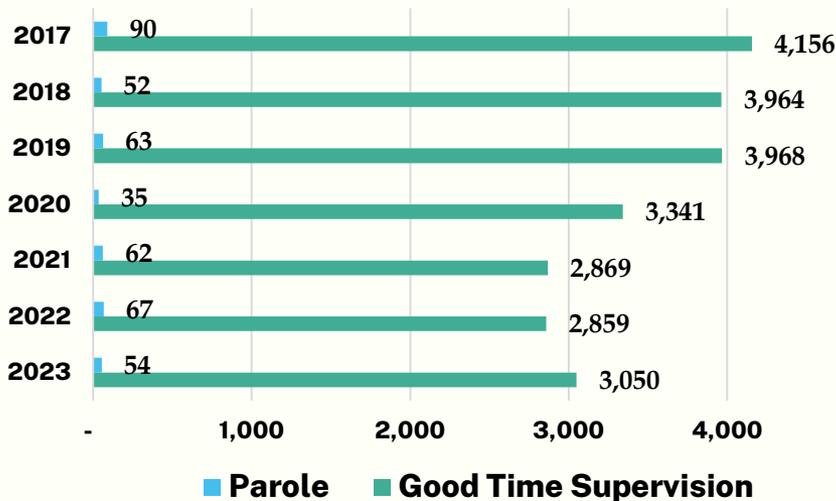


Revocation Hearing Outcomes or other actions ordered In Lieu of Revocation (ILR) such as Substance Abuse Treatment (SAB) or participation in Transitional Work Program (TWP).

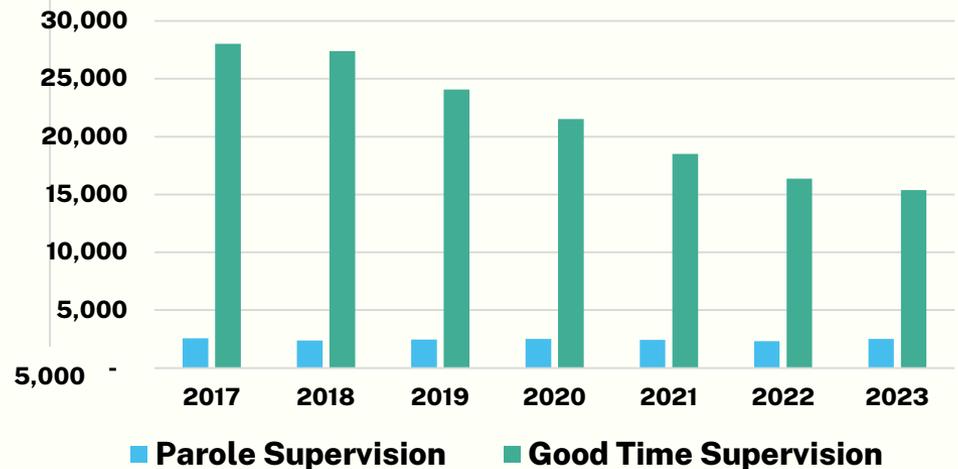
Revocation by Supervision Type shows a decrease in revocations as the use of alternatives to incarceration have increased. These alternatives include administrative sanctions that the parole officer can put in place.

Average number of offenders under jurisdiction of the Board by type of supervision. Parole supervision reflects discretionary releases by the Committee on Parole. Good time supervision reflects mandatory releases via diminution of sentence.

Revocation by Supervision Type



Average Number of Offenders by Supervision Types

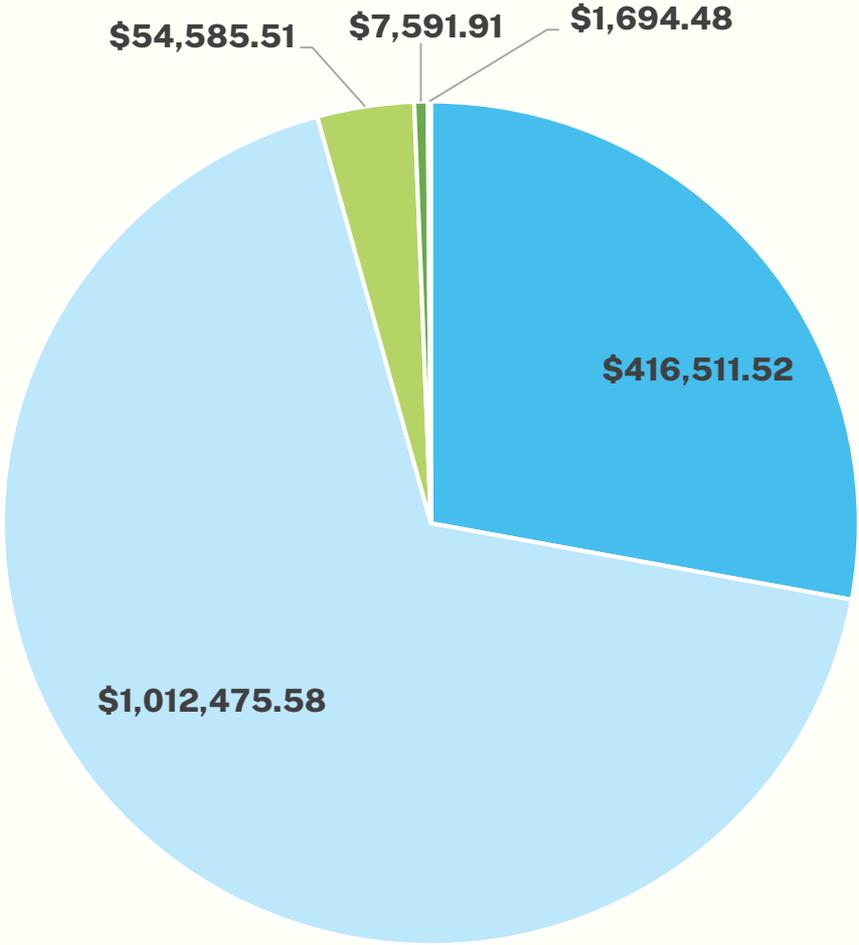


Financials

Board Expenditures

As Outlined in *LARS 15*§574.3, DPS&C shall provide the necessary clerical and administrative personnel, equipment, office space, and facilities for the committee on parole and its members.

Fiscal Year 2022 - 2023



- Board Member Salaries
- Staff Salaries
- Travel
- Office Supplies
- Services

Victim & Survivor Services

Victims of Crime Act



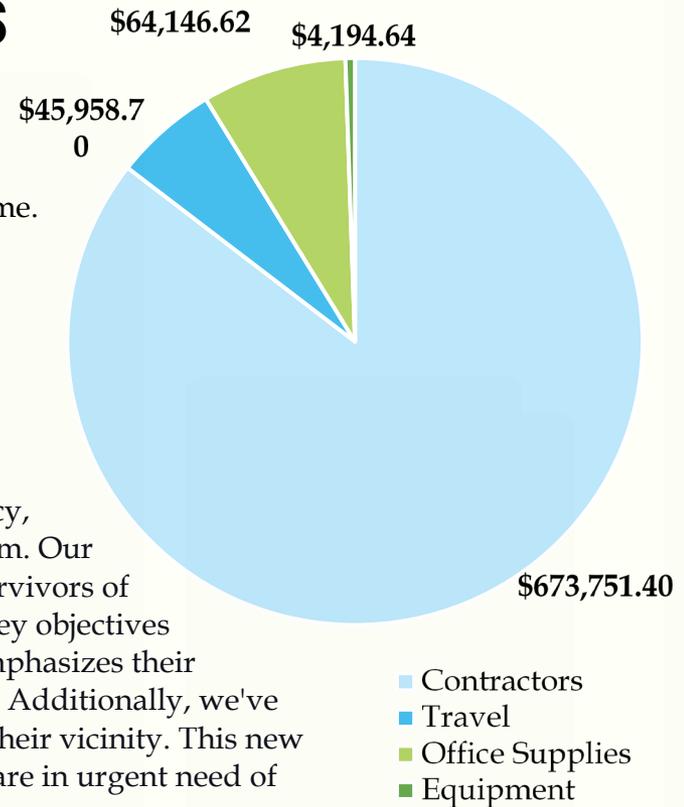
The Victims of Crime Act provides federal support to state and local programs that assist victims of crime. In FY 23 the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement Administration of Criminal Justice (LCLE) administers the Louisiana VOCA funding allocation and provides funds to the Board to provide services directly to victims and survivors

navigating the post-conviction criminal justice system. These funds were utilized throughout 2023 by the Louisiana Victim Outreach Program (LAVO) and our Crime Victims Services Bureau (CVSB). We were able to deliver counseling referrals, advocacy, and survivor-focused events to community members statewide in person and via Zoom. Our team continued to work diligently to provide support and resources to victims and survivors of crime. LAVO has recently updated their branding in order to better align with their key objectives and services. As a result, our message is now more welcoming and relatable, and it emphasizes their mission. This update has made our resource guides more accessible and user-friendly. Additionally, we've added a new feature - an interactive map that allows individuals to locate services in their vicinity. This new feature can be particularly helpful for those who may not be familiar with the area or are in urgent need of assistance.

As we transition into 2024, LAVO continues to focus on supporting victims and survivors and creating a supportive space for service providers across the state to collaborate and address professional wellness within the victim services community.

Rylee Haggard, Investigative Specialist

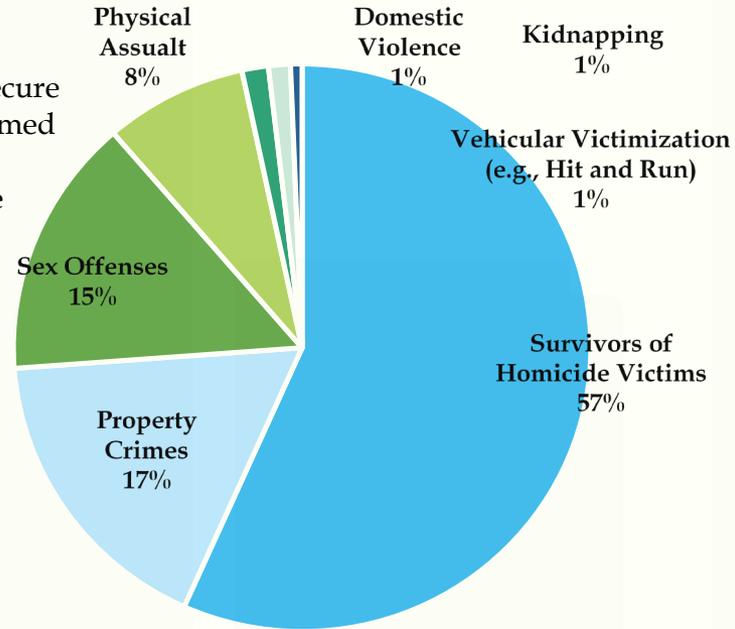
I started working as an intern with LAVO and enjoyed the work we did, which encouraged me to apply with the Board after graduation. I have learned so much about the parole process. I enjoy working for the Board because it teaches me to be more empathetic towards the process and it is rewarding to help people better their lives and move forward in a positive direction after incarceration.



Victim & Survivor Services Continued

Victim Assistance Coordinator

Since its implementation in April 2020, the Victim Assistance Program continues to secure victim impact statements for upcoming pardon and parole hearings in a trauma informed manner. The nine Victims Assistance Coordinators and Program Administrator are stationed around the state and work with each Probation and Parole District to secure comments on all upcoming hearings related to a sex or violent offense. These individuals were integral to our office maintaining open lines of communication with District Attorneys around the state and played a huge role in the planning and executions of our outreach events in New Orleans, Lafayette and Alexandria. We have continued to identify and participate in various trainings with the goal of improving our trauma-informed approach to addressing the needs victims. In calendar year 2023 we provided services to 2,139 victims and survivors, up 5% from 2022 and up 24% from 2021. This chart identifies the seven main victimization types the victims and survivors we provided services to in 2023.



Outreach Events



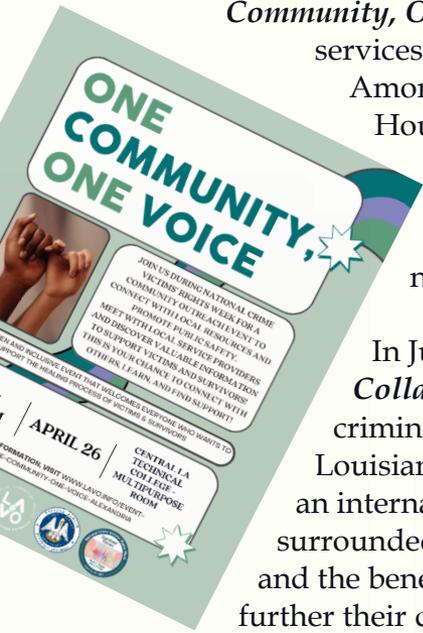
In January 2023, LAVO organized its first outreach event of the year in New Orleans. The *Krewe of Community Connections* event was held in collaboration with the Voices of Victims Support Group, and aimed to connect multiple social service agencies in Greater New Orleans with victims and survivors. The event was attended by several local agencies and service providers such as Crime Survivors NOLA, Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority, Jefferson Parish District Attorney, Committee for A Better New Orleans, Metro Centers for Community Advocacy, National Alliance on Mental Illness New Orleans, Orleans Parish District Attorney, St. Bernard Parish District Attorney Perry M. Nicosia (pictured left), Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office, and River Oaks Hospital. The main objective of the event was to facilitate connections between service providers, individuals in need, and other organizations for future collaborations.



Victim & Survivor Services Continued

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, LAVO, CVSB and the Rapides District Attorney Phillip Terrell's Office hosted *One Community, One Voice*, an outreach and awareness event to inform community members in Alexandria of the support services available in their communities. Various agencies and service providers local to Alexandria participated. Among them were Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response (STAR), United Way of Central Louisiana, Faith House Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Family Justice Center of Central Louisiana, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Louisiana Healthcare Connections, Louisiana State Police Troop E, Probation and Parole, Louisiana Office of Public Health, ViaLink, Alexandria Police, and Central Louisiana Health Education Center. This event allowed service providers to connect with individuals in the community needing their services and with other organizations to further future collaboration efforts.

In June, LAVO produced *Innovating Justice: Strengthening Victim Support Networks through Collaboration & Progress*, a new training event for service providers and individuals working within the criminal justice system across Louisiana. During a day of exciting presentations, attendees heard from the Louisiana Protective Order Registry, Hearts of Hope, Tulane University, and our keynote speaker, Obbie West an international spoken word artist known as an avid sexual abuse prevention advocate. Topics covered surrounded investigations of sexual abuse for adults and children, a crash course on the Protective Order Registry, and the benefits and risks of Title IX to Sex Crimes Investigations. This event was an opportunity for professionals to further their development and a time to create new and strengthen existing relationships to promote inter-agency support.



Trauma-Informed Tuesday

LAVO continued providing training opportunities for service providers nationwide through our Trauma-Informed Tuesday monthly training seminars. We hosted eight live training webinars by Myra Strand, of Strand Squared Solutions, on several vital topics addressing the numerous aspects individuals working within the criminal justice system face. These trainings were able to educate our colleagues on professional wellness and the importance of taking care of ourselves to better care for the people we serve while addressing the delicate areas of our jobs working with victims and survivors. Topics included the Impact of Pornography, Looking for Trauma-Informed Therapy that Works, Self-Regulation and Holistic Care, An Intersectional Understanding of Historical Trauma, Clergy Sexual Abuse Cases, and Neurodiversity and Incarceration. To finish the year, Mrs. Strand visited our offices to provide training to Board and DPS&C staff on maintaining proper wellness and self-regulation for individuals working within the criminal justice system.



Victim & Survivor Services Continued

National Organization of Victim Assistance

In August, Jolie Duarte and Francis Abbott (pictured right) provided training at the National Organization of Victim Assistance's 49th Annual Training Conference in New Orleans. Having been selected from 100s of other applicants, their training, *Providing Victim Services in the Post-Conviction Process*, touched on the growth and progression of LAVO and how to implement a similar organization elsewhere.



Internship Program

LAVO was able to expand its staff with the implementation of an intern program with the Louisiana State University Sociology Department. From January through May, student interns Rylee Haggard and Paige Grow (pictured left) supported our program while learning more about the inner workings of the pardon and parole process. Upon graduation Ms. Haggard started to work full time with the LBPCP.



Victim Impact Listen and Learn Curriculum

The *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* Curriculum is an approved as a certified treatment rehabilitation program within the Department wherein offenders who are eligible for good time credits may earn 90 days. During 2023

CVSB Director Gail Guerin conducted statewide trainings for transition specialists, mental health staff, chaplaincy staff and other corrections professionals. The course continues to grow momentum and interest among corrections professionals and the incarcerated population.



The Accountability Letter Program

The Accountability Letter Program is taught by Transition Specialists to offenders housed in state institutions and local jails. An accountability letter, is a letter written by an offender to the victim(s) of the crime(s) for which the offender has been sentenced, accepting responsibility for the crime, acknowledging the harm caused to the victim, and expressing regret for that harm. CVSB received a total of 159 accountability letters during the 2023 year.

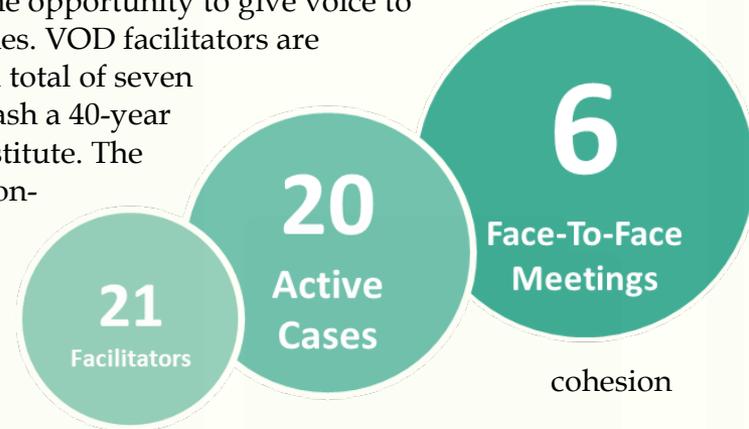
Victim & Survivor Services Continued

Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD)

The Victim Offender Dialogue Program (VOD) provides victims and survivors the opportunity to give voice to their trauma regarding the crime committed against themselves or their loved ones. VOD facilitators are volunteers from a variety of professional backgrounds. The VOD Program held a total of seven trainings combined with case reviews, during 2023. The trainers included Ray Nash a 40-year law enforcement professional who is now the founder of the Police Dynamics Institute. The training provided to the facilitators focused on Inductive Interviewing Skills, a non-linear, non-coercive approach to forensic interviewing for the law enforcement/public safety and mental health professions. Additionally, Stephanie Belgard, a survivor of homicide, presented on the criminal justice system from a victim perspective. Dr. Danna Andrus provided the team with team building and skills.



Long time VOD Facilitator Catalene Theriot was recognized for her work as a victim advocate when she was inducted to the Louisiana Justice Hall of Fame. She started as a VAC in the 16th Judicial District in 2003 and in 2005 became the second trained VOD Facilitator in the State of Louisiana. She later went on to start Voices of Innocent Citizens Empowered (VOICE). This group provides support to victims and survivors of crime and actively lobbies the legislature to ensure the rights of victims are protected.



Gail Guerin, CVSB Program Manager

I have the privilege to manage restorative programs Victim Offender Dialogue, Accountability Letter Program and the Victim Speaker Program to underserved victims of crime. The phenomenal growth, resilience and healing victims experience is inspiring and further reinforces my passion and love for this role.



February 7, 2023 marked the first time a parole panel was convened entirely of African Americans. From left Members P. Wise, A. Roche and B. Jackson



Noteworthy Days in 2023



June 13, 2023 Board Members Fremin, Marabella and Roche conducted live hearings at Dixon Correctional Institution.

September 27, 2023 Board Members Roche, Ranatza and Fremin conducted live hearings at Southeastern Louisiana University.





Contact:

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