

BOARD OF PARDONS & COMMITTEE ON PAROLE

PAROLE IN LOUISIANA

The Louisiana Committee on Parole, a committee within the Louisiana Board of Pardons, is responsible for granting parole and is the sole authority to do so. The Committee is composed of seven members, appointed by the Governor of Louisiana and confirmed by the Senate.

Parole in Louisiana allows an individual to serve the final part of their sentence in the community under the supervision of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Division of Probation and Parole. The individual must meet specific conditions to qualify for this privilege, and any violation of these restrictions could result in immediate re-imprisonment.

Once an individual is committed to the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, their sentence is calculated, and if they are eligible for parole consideration, they are provided with a parole eligibility date. All calculations for parole eligibility are computed by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. If an individual has a dispute with their sentence, it must be resolved through the court. The Department of Public Safety and Corrections is responsible for recalculating any misrepresented pre-confinement (jail) credits.

The Louisiana Committee on Parole can meet with an individual as early as 9 months before their parole eligibility date to hold a public hearing, during which a decision is made regarding the inmate's parole opportunity. Being considered for parole does not guarantee that parole will be granted. Eligibility indicates the inmate has met all requirements to qualify for a hearing. The Committee alone decides if the inmate is adequately prepared for supervised release.

Planning for Parole

Individuals should begin planning for their tentative parole date as soon as they are incarcerated. They should evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, focusing on their strengths and working to improve their weaknesses. By addressing issues such as a bad temper or addiction through therapy, rehabilitation, and hard work while incarcerated, an inmate can improve their chances of impressing the Committee as a low risk to society when it is time for parole consideration. In addition to personal assessments, individuals should also explore educational and vocational training opportunities. Gaining stable employment upon release will boost an inmate's chances of successfully completing the parole supervision period. Many inmates earn their GEDs or other qualifications while incarcerated, which can help in obtaining such employment. The inmate should also plan where they will live upon release, whether it is their previous home, a new residence, the home of family or friends, or possibly a halfway house or residential facility. Developing a solid release plan demonstrates an inmate's readiness for community supervision.

Pre-Parole Investigation

Before conducting a parole interview, Committee staff will request detailed reports and information from the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Probation and Parole Offices, and, if necessary, from professional staff such as physicians or psychologists. These sources include arrest and court records, pre-sentence investigations, existing psychological evaluations, and reports from any treatment programs the individual has attended. Prison records, such as work and conduct reports, as well as educational and rehabilitative programming, are also considered. Community feedback on an inmate's early release, including but not limited to input from sentencing judges, judicial and law enforcement officials, and victims, is also taken into account. The Committee reviews the pre-parole investigation information for a penological purpose and will disclose only information permitted by state law.

Parole Hearing

When the Committee convenes, they consider extensive evidence. The meetings, known as parole panel hearings, are open to the public under Louisiana's open meetings laws. This allows others, including the victim and their family, to attend. Louisiana also considers the victim's statement during the process.

Along with the inmate's own release plan, the Committee will also thoroughly review the inmate's record. This record will include the number of disciplinary reports received during incarceration, their prison work history, and their criminal background. The Committee will pay close attention to rehabilitative, educational, or counseling programs the inmate has participated in during their time in prison. These programs can show a willingness and desire to change and improve.

The inmate will appear before the panel, where oral testimony is taken from the inmate and other interested parties. The Committee's decision will be announced verbally at the end of the hearing, and a written disposition will be provided to the inmate immediately afterward.

Victim Participation

Victims or witnesses who wish to participate and provide testimony to the Committee panel are encouraged to do so. Every effort is made to notify known and registered victims of the inmate's scheduled hearing.

Misconduct While Incarcerated

Individuals should understand that misconduct significantly harms parole prospects. The Committee views ongoing misconduct as a pattern of behavior that hinders smooth reintegration into society. The general belief is that an inmate who misbehaves under strict supervision is unlikely to behave well with little or no supervision. For example, if an inmate convicted of a violent crime continues to commit violent acts while incarcerated, the likelihood of reoffending after release is quite high. The Committee aims to protect the public by ensuring that reintegration is successful and only granting parole to those unlikely to reoffend through criminal activity. Many inmates find it hard to adapt to prison life and tend to accumulate misconduct early in their sentences. Therefore, the Committee considers both the timing and frequency of misconduct. Each case is reviewed individually, and efforts to correct undesirable behavior later in the sentence may outweigh earlier failures.

Rescission

Parole can be rescinded prior to release if there is misconduct or new evidence and information that was not available during the initial hearing. In such cases, the Committee has the authority to revoke the inmate's parole, and the inmate may be scheduled for a subsequent hearing before a parole panel.

Parole Supervision

An individual's parole is subject to all rules and conditions set by the Committee, and violating these may lead to revocation and re-imprisonment for the remainder of their sentence. These rules and conditions are provided in writing and are part of an agreement signed by the parolee. Additionally, a parolee must pay a supervisory fee each month while under supervision. The Committee has the authority to reduce, waive, or suspend this fee if paying it causes financial hardship for the parolee. The Committee may also impose additional special conditions, which must be approved and reasonably related to the inmate's crime, rehabilitation, and public safety. These special conditions should not be vague or unrealistic. After parole is granted, the parolee will be assigned a parole officer and given a list of requirements and restrictions established by the Committee. Violating these stipulations can likely result in returning to prison. To succeed on parole, maintaining open and

honest communication with the parole officer is essential, especially to address problems early and obtain appropriate referrals before supervision conditions are violated. Common reasons for parole revocation include domestic abuse, drug or alcohol use, weapon possession, or involvement in criminal activity. Ultimately, the parolee must comply with all directives from the Committee until their sentence is completed.

Warrant for Arrest

When an individual under parole supervision is suspected of violating a condition of their release, the Committee may issue a warrant for the parolee's arrest.

Preliminary Hearing

In most cases, an arrested parolee is given a preliminary hearing within a reasonable time at or near the location of the alleged violation. This hearing is conducted by a parole officer and a hearing officer. The purpose of the hearing is to determine whether there is probable cause to believe the individual has violated one or more parole conditions or whether the parolee should be held in custody until the Committee's decision on revocation. If probable cause is established, the Committee will set a date for a formal revocation hearing. The parolee may waive the right to a final revocation hearing by the Committee, but doing so constitutes an admission of the violations listed in the report of violation.

Revocation Hearing

A parolee may request a continuance of a formal revocation hearing for a substantial reason. The parolee may be represented by counsel and have witnesses whose testimony relates only to the violation charges. The purpose of the full hearing is to make a final decision on whether there is a violation of parole conditions and if the violation warrants returning the parolee to custody (revocation of parole). If a parolee admits to the violation, they can waive the right to a hearing before the Committee. In doing so, a parole panel will make a final decision based on the record.



Please direct questions or inquiries to:

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