

# GEORGIA BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES

## ANNUAL REPORT FY 2021



**#1 Paroling  
Authority  
in the Nation**

**Brian Kemp**, Governor

**Terry E. Barnard**, Chairman

**Jacqueline Bunn, Esq.**, Vice Chair

**Brian Owens**, Member

**David J. Herring**, Member

**Meg Heap**, Member



## INSIDE

Mission, Vision, Values	2
Organizational Chart	3
FY 2021 Highlights	4
Chairman's Letter	9
The Five Member Parole Board	10
Parole Board Members	12
Executive Leadership	17
Executive Director's Letter	18
Clemency & Parole Consideration	19
Field Services	27
Georgia Office of Victim Services	31
Human Resources & Training	33
Budget & Fiscal Services	34

## The Agency is guided by the 4E's

**Engaging** Stakeholders

**Educating** the Community

**Encouraging** Active Participation

**Enhancing** Operations

We are enhancing  
public safety

## OUR MISSION

To serve the citizens of Georgia by exercising the constitutional authority of executive clemency through informed decision-making, thereby ensuring public safety, protecting victims' rights, and providing offenders with opportunities for positive change.

## OUR VISION

To be the nation's most effective and efficient executive clemency authority by:

- ▶ Making informed, scientific, data-driven clemency decisions based in constitutional authority and guided by applicable state law
- ▶ Preparing offenders for positive change through the imposition of practical and constructive pre and post release conditions
- ▶ Protecting the public and creating safer communities by holding accountable those offenders who violate the conditions of release
- ▶ Ensuring crime victims have a voice in the post-conviction criminal justice process
- ▶ Fostering partnerships and positive relationships with all stakeholders
- ▶ Engaging, educating, and encouraging the active participation of all stakeholders in the clemency decision-making process
- ▶ Striving to be a continuously learning public safety organization

## OUR VALUES

We value Ethics, Integrity, Equity and Innovation.





# Organization

## THE BOARD

**Terry E. Barnard**, *Chairman*  
**Jacqueline Bunn, Esq.**, *Vice Chair*  
**Brian Owens**, *Member*  
**David J. Herring**, *Member*  
**Meg Heap**, *Member*

## LEGAL SERVICES

La'Quandra Smith

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Christopher L. Barnett

## DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rita Rocker

## CLEMENCY DIRECTOR

Chris Barnett

## VICTIM SERVICES DIRECTOR

Rita Rocker

## FIELD SERVICES DIRECTOR

Felecia Holloway

*Communications*  
Steve Hayes

*Budget & Fiscal*  
Kristen Kinney

*Human Resources*  
Eris McKennon

*Internal Affairs  
& Training*  
Chris Kimner

*Mental Health  
& EAP*  
Connie Lerner

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Kim Patton-Johnson

### CAU MANAGER

Crystal Moon

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Lisa Copeland

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Keir Chapple

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Alan Smith

INVESTIGATIONS  
PARDON  
ADMIN.

HE'S  
GPEDS

VICTIM  
SERVICE  
SPECIALIST

PROGRAM  
COORDINATORS

GCIC  
INTERSTATE  
ADMIN.  
STAFF  
SCANNING/  
IMAGING

DOM'S  
VIOLATIONS/  
SANCTION  
EXTRADITIONS



# Highlights from FY 2021

“Serving as chairman of this respected Board is no small thing and I consider it an honor that the members have again asked me to serve.”

– Terry E. Barnard,  
Chair



“I am honored to have been elected to this leadership role. I look forward to moving forward in a very positive way. We have an exceptional board right now, and I think we are going to serve the citizens of Georgia quite well.”

– Jacqueline Bunn, Esq.,  
Vice Chair



## Effective Leadership

During FY 2021, the five-member Parole Board elected FY22 leadership. Terry Barnard was again elected by his colleagues to serve as chairman. He is now serving his seventh one-year term as chairman and upon completion he will become the third longest serving chair in Georgia Parole Board history. Chairman Barnard has been a Board Member since 2010 having received two full-term appointments.

Jacqueline Bunn was elected to serve as vice chair of the Parole Board. Bunn is the first female to serve in a Board leadership role since 2010. Bunn was appointed to the Board in 2016, receiving a full appointment later that year.

Chairman Barnard and Vice Chair Bunn will serve in the leadership roles through June 30, 2022.

Read more about the Board Members beginning on page 12.

## New Board Member Appointment

In FY21, Governor Brian Kemp made his first appointment to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles. Former Chatham County District Attorney Meg Heap was appointed to the five-member Parole Board. Heap's appointment was effective January 19, 2021. Heap was sworn-in by Governor Kemp on February 2, 2021, to serve a seven-year term on the Parole Board.

Board Member Meg Heap's bio is on page 16.



## Providing Victim Services in a Pandemic

The pandemic did not stop the delivery of services to crime victims by the State Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Georgia Office of Victim Services during FY21. Through in-person events, online presentations and as a result of a comprehensive notification process, victims continued to be informed of their rights and were provided parole status information on offenders.

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles celebrated the 40th anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW), April 18-24, 2021, with several events. The Georgia Office of Victim Services conducted victim-centered events providing information about available services to crime victims.

The Georgia Office of Victim Services participated in a Crime Victims Homicide Memorial event sponsored by the Crime Victims Advocacy Council (CVAC) in Decatur. The event included a victim's rights panel discussion and a candlelight vigil.

In other activities, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Georgia Office of Victim Services presented information to MADD of Georgia during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The presentation was a live online event.

Also, during NCVRW, victim services information was provided inside the Floyd Veterans Memorial Building in Atlanta at an informational table hosted by the Georgia Office of Victim Services.

The office presented to an international group sharing Georgia victim service information with members of the Association of Paroling Authorities International Conference during FY21.

Victim service information was also delivered to victims through a presentation to the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia (PAC). Victim-Witness Assistance offices across Georgia will be able to use the information provided through the online presentation made by the Georgia Office of Victim Services to support and educate crime victims locally.

The Georgia Office of Victim Services registered more than 1,500 additional crime victims in FY21 to receive parole and victim service notifications regarding offenders. Learn more about the services provided to registered crime victims at [pap.georgia.gov](http://pap.georgia.gov) and later in this report.

*“Crime victims certainly can count on being heard by the Georgia Parole Board as a result of the hard-working staff we have in the Georgia Office of Victim Services.”*

– David Herring, Parole Board Member

*“The MADD Georgia Victim Services Team is so grateful to the Georgia Parole Board and the Georgia Office of Victim Services for partnering with us to present these resources.”*

– Michelle Burns, Victim Services Specialist, MADD of Southeast and Coastal Georgia

*“Georgia’s system of assisting crime victims and ensuring they are a part of the parole process is comprehensive and effective. We are thankful Georgia provided such an important and informative presentation for all of our attendees, both in person and virtual, to see.*

– Ashley Koonce, APAI Executive Director

*“PAC understands that the need for providing victim services does not end at the conclusion of a criminal trial. We are extremely proud of our partnership with the Parole Board.”*

– Dr. Rita Davis-Cannon, PAC Director of Victim Services

continued ►

“The Board agrees that we can better engage and educate the public about the Parole Board by making these meetings available to more people.”

— Chris Barnett,  
Executive Director of Parole

## OUR VISION

To be the nation's most effective and efficient executive clemency authority by:

- ▶ Making informed, scientific, data-driven clemency decisions based in constitutional authority and guided by applicable state law
- ▶ Preparing offenders for positive change through the imposition of practical and constructive pre and post release conditions
- ▶ Protecting the public and creating safer communities by holding accountable those offenders who violate the conditions of release
- ▶ Ensuring crime victims have a voice in the post-conviction criminal justice process
- ▶ Fostering partnerships and positive relationships with all stakeholders
- ▶ Engaging, educating, and encouraging the active participation of all stakeholders in the clemency decision-making process
- ▶ Striving to be a continuously learning public safety organization



## More Public Access to the Board of Pardons and Paroles

In FY21, the monthly Parole Board meetings went virtual. Utilizing Facebook as the platform the agency began live streaming the meetings allowing increased access to the agency's activities in real time. Due to the pandemic, regular in-person attendance at the meetings in 2020 and 2021 was not possible. Although not eliminated, public access had to be severely restricted until the last quarter of FY21. The Board conducted its first restriction-free meeting in June. The Board reviews and updates policies and procedures and receives operational updates at the monthly meetings. Parole cases are not considered and parole decisions are not a part of the monthly meetings. The Board Members consider and make clemency decisions electronically. The meeting videos are available on <https://www.facebook.com/GAParoleBoard> and [www.pap.georgia.gov](http://www.pap.georgia.gov).

## Guidelines Update

In FY21, the Board amended two Board Rules. The amendments included raising the crime severity levels for certain crimes. As of July 2021, the Board has increased the crime severity level for a conviction of the following attempted offenses: attempted aggravated child molestation, attempted armed robbery, attempted kidnapping, attempted aggravated sexual battery and attempted aggravated sodomy, from crime severity level VII to crime severity level VIII. Other crime severity levels were also changed. The current Crime Severity Levels are available at <https://pap.georgia.gov/parole-consideration/parole-consideration-eligibility-guidelines>.

## New Agency Vision Statement

In FY21, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles introduced a new vision statement. The vision statement describes the broad scope of constitutionally authorized decision making as well as agency activities and future goals in order to enhance public safety for all Georgians. The new vision statement more closely defines the agency's goals and objectives. Changes were finalized to the agency vision statement in January of 2021.





## Pardon Process Highlighted during Monthly Board Meeting

Evidence of how the Parole Board's clemency process can benefit a person and public safety was on display at the August 2020 monthly Board meeting. Christopher Sheffield, a former offender, received a pardon granted by the Board after giving remarks at the public meeting. Sheffield spoke to the Board about his life, including a pro football career, addiction, prison, receiving parole, and recovery. Sheffield told the Board that the clemency process works in Georgia. Following his presentation, Sheffield received his pardon that he had previously applied for but had not yet been notified of the Board's decision.

The video of the August Parole Board meeting is available on the State Board of Pardons and Paroles' website, and you can read more about the parole and pardon processes at [www.pap.ga.gov](http://www.pap.ga.gov).

### **The 4E's are our operational guidelines: Engaging Stakeholders, Educating the Community, Encouraging Active Participation and Enhancing Operations**

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles met challenges presented by the pandemic in FY21 in order to ensure continued engagement with its stakeholders. Online and in-person meetings were conducted with partners and stakeholders in order to engage stakeholders, educate communities about the parole process, encourage active participation in the parole process and enhance agency operations. By achieving the 4E's, public safety is enhanced. Everyone is a stakeholder in the parole process, the public, law enforcement, victims, prosecutors, judges, community leaders and inmates. All provide necessary information to the Parole Board to ensure informed clemency decisions.

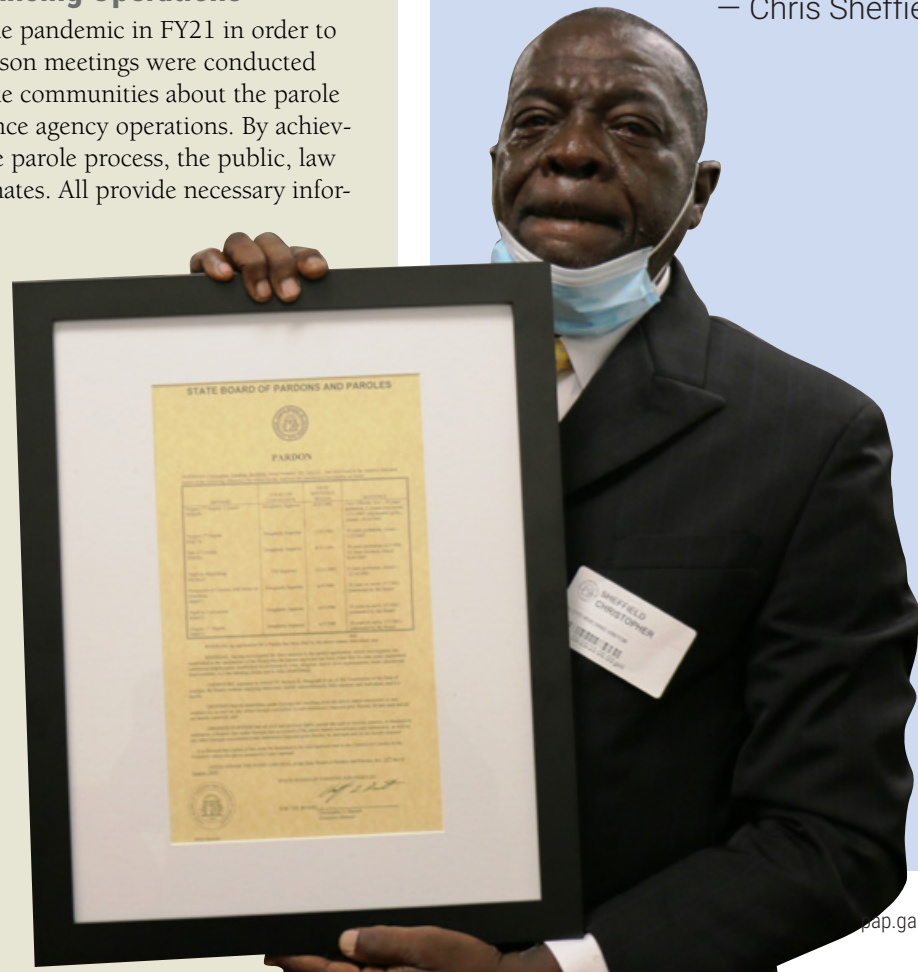
Parole Board Chairman Terry Barnard and clemency staff attended the Georgia Prison Wardens' Association Conference in FY21.

**“**Our state's wardens have a most difficult but important job. Their responsibility for the care and custody of the state's inmate population cannot be overstated. The Parole Board Members certainly value the contributions made to public safety by these men and women.”

— Terry Barnard, Board Chairman

**“**If you had not given me the opportunity to change my life in 1997, then I would have spent the remainder of that ten-year sentence in that institution and God knows where I would be today . . . The work that you do is relevant and the system (parole) that you have created is effective. From my life experience, it works.”

— Chris Sheffield





## Georgia Parole Board recognized as a leading paroling authority

During FY21, the Georgia Parole Board was asked to participate with an international group to discuss parole successes and challenges. Executive Director of Parole Chris Barnett participated in the Association of Paroling Authorities International (APAI) group discussion. The goal is to share information to benefit all APAI member states and countries in order to enhance public safety.

Parole Board leadership met with LaGrange community leaders to include Mayor Jim Thornton, Police Chief Lou Dekmar and District Attorney Herb Cranford to discuss ways to partner to enhance public safety.

*“By engaging stakeholders in the parole process and the Board’s operations and communicating with our local and state leaders, we are enhancing public safety.”*

— Chris Barnett, Executive Director of Parole

Although prison access was limited in FY21, the offender population was engaged as Board Members and staff spoke with inmates at the Metro Reentry Facility and the Atlanta Transitional Center. The information Board Members and Clemency staff receive adds to the comprehensive case information reviewed by the Board Members during parole considerations.

The Parole Board notifies and solicits information from the state’s prosecutors throughout the parole decision making process in order to ensure the best parole decisions. The notifications and solicitations are made according to statute and the Board has additional notifications and solicitations that it makes according to Board policy. Early in 2021, Executive Director Chris Barnett and staff began meeting with new prosecutors, elected to office in FY21.

*“We want all district attorneys to fully understand Georgia’s parole process so they may take an active role by providing information as the Board considers parole eligible offenders.”*

— Chris Barnett, Executive Director of Parole







On behalf of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles it is my privilege to present the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Annual Report. As Chairman of the Georgia Parole Board, it has been an honor to serve on this Board since 2010. This Board has constitutional authority to determine clemency actions that enhance public safety by providing relief to incarcerated offenders who are ready to leave their prison walls behind and become successful community contributors.

This annual report includes information regarding how the Parole Board makes decisions and how the decisions enhance public safety. You can read about how during FY21, three out of four offenders successfully completed parole in Georgia. The 73% parole success rate in Georgia is among national leaders in parole and remains well above the national parole success rate average. This success is the result of an informed Parole Board that makes parole decisions based on public safety.

Despite an entire year in a pandemic, this agency continues to serve the public and in many ways, we have improved service to Georgians. We have a tremendous leadership group managing the operations of this agency. Our Clemency, Field Services and Victim Services units again performed exceptionally well during the fiscal year. The five-member Board is informed when making parole and pardon decisions because of our committed Clemency Division staff. Likewise, if an offender has violated the terms of release, the Board is confident that the information provided by the Field staff will lead to the best decision for both the offender and the community. Our Georgia Office of Victim Services continues to be nationally recognized for serving crime victims and ensuring this Parole Board has necessary victim information in the file before the decision is made on parole for the offender.

Parole decisions are about public safety. We are proud of the effort of our agency staff and the work that goes into every parole decision. The parole outcome however doesn't hinge completely on the parole decision. The parole success rate can also be attributed to those three of four individuals who put in the work to be successful. The successful offenders are the ones that invest in themselves, both inside prison through program completions and once outside they apply what they've learned and have the desire to leave their criminal past behind.

FY21 was full of challenges yet your Parole Board was able to improve public safety through informed, scientific, data-driven decisions and more transparency was brought to that process. Our monthly board meetings inform the public about our processes, policies and procedures. The Board is proud that more of our stakeholders were able to be brought into the process in FY21 as meetings were made available live on the internet. It's important that stakeholders know they have a role and can also contribute to public safety. We know, for example, that the family and friends of the offender are interested in learning how they can support and encourage parole success.

The Georgia Parole Board is always looking for ways to improve and operationally our team is continuously working on advances. An example is our sex offender risk assessment instrument, an additional tool that gives the Board more information when determining possible parole for the offender. It is a tool developed for Georgia and another advancement that puts our Board among the leading paroling authorities nationwide.

We are all stakeholders in the decisions made by this Board and on behalf of this agency I thank you for taking the time to review this report and become a stakeholder in Georgia's parole process. As we move forward, we are committed to our mission of making executive clemency decisions, thereby ensuring public safety, protecting victim rights, and providing offenders with opportunities for positive change.

## Letter

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

To: The Honorable Brian Kemp, Governor,  
Members of the General Assembly, and  
Citizens of the State of Georgia



Terry E. Barnard,  
*Chairman, State Board of Pardons and Paroles*



# FY21

**59,354** Clemency votes

**16,255** inmate cases considered

**73%** of parolees successfully completed parole



## The Five Member Parole Board



The Georgia Constitution provides that Parole Board Members are to be appointed by the Governor to seven-year staggered terms, subject to confirmation by the State Senate. Board Members are full-time state employees from various professions including criminal justice and private business. In 1943, the Board was established through a constitutional amendment and consisted of three members. In 1973, as the prison population rose to 9,000, the Constitution was amended to increase the Board to five members. Today, with an inmate population at approximately 50,000, the Board still consists of five voting members.

The Board is the sole authority in the state to make informed decisions regarding which state inmates should be paroled, thereby ensuring that the state's prison beds are dedicated to the offenders who have committed the most serious crimes. In Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), the Board Members made a total of 59,354 votes. This total represents all Board decisions requiring a vote and multiple decisions for each offender case during the fiscal year. This total does not reflect the total number of inmate cases considered for parole. The total number of individual inmate cases (eligible offenders) considered during the fiscal year was 16,255. This

is the total number of parole eligible offenders requiring a Board decision during the fiscal year regarding whether to grant or deny parole.

The Board released from prison a total of 8,634 offenders in FY21. Georgia's percentage of parolees successfully completing parole in FY21 was 73%. The national average was estimated to be approximately 60%.

The Board's authority includes granting paroles, pardons, and commutations including death sentences. Deciding whether to grant an offender parole is the primary responsibility of the Board. Parole hearings are not held. How-





# 8,634

offenders released by parole  
from Georgia prisons in FY21

ever, each offender entering the Georgia prison system is interviewed by parole staff. The Board also actively solicits input and accepts pleas for and protests against clemency throughout the consideration process. Information from community stakeholders, including victims, the public and criminal justice partners is considered by the Board. The Board Members have discretion to determine who receives clemency.

### Guidelines are applied to cases excluding offenders serving life

In most cases, the Board's Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System is applied which includes a time-to-serve recommendation. Board Members review the comprehensive case file of each offender and each member individually makes a parole decision. Although the guidelines are not applied to life sentence reviews, the Board maintains a comprehensive parole file in each case and the members review each case thoroughly before voting to grant or deny parole. The Board's decision process is evidence-based, scientific and data-driven.

### Death Sentences

The review of death sentences is a responsibility of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board is the only entity in Georgia with the constitutional authority to commute a death sentence. The Governor does not have this authority in Georgia. Board Members conduct a clemency meeting for the condemned inmate after which they may commute a death sentence to life with or without the possibility of parole, issue a stay or deny clemency.

### Monthly Board Meetings

The Board conducts monthly Parole Board Meetings at which policy changes are considered and operational updates are provided. Offender cases are not discussed and parole decisions are not made at the monthly Board Meetings. Learn more about the clemency process beginning on page 19.

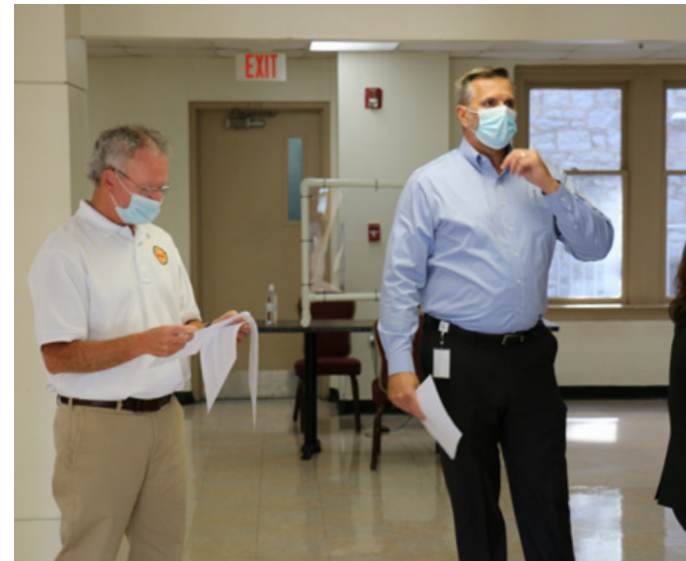
## Constitution and History

### Checks and Balances

Georgia's Constitution provides for three branches of government to serve as checks and balances on the power of government over the offender. The legislative branch sets the minimum and maximum range of the prison sentence, the judicial branch sentences the offender within that range, and the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, as a part of the executive branch, manages the finite resource of state prison beds by considering eligible offenders and making parole grants in the interest of public safety.

### History of Parole in Georgia

Parole came to Georgia in 1908 when the General Assembly voted to give the Prison Commission authority to implement a system of "parole or conditional pardons." Parole could be granted upon the approval of the full Commission and the Governor. The Commission had power to issue warrants and arrest parole violators. In 1938, the Commission was given broader powers to grant paroles without the approval of the Governor and without limitation on its authority, "save the welfare of the State." However, the Commission remained hampered by a shortage of funds. Then in the early 1940s there were serious questions raised about the handling of pardons. The General Assembly passed legislation and it was signed into law in February of 1943, creating the State Board of Pardons and Paroles as an independent agency to administer executive clemency. In August of 1943, Georgia voters ratified, by a ratio of four and a half to one, a landmark amendment to the State Constitution establishing the State Board of Pardons and Paroles as an independent agency authorized to grant paroles, pardons, reprieves, commute sentences, including death sentences, and remove disabilities imposed by law.







## Terry E. Barnard, Chairman

Terry E. Barnard serves as Chairman of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles for Fiscal Year 2022. Mr. Barnard is serving his seventh one-year term as Chairman. As Parole Board Chairman, Mr. Barnard also serves on the Board of Community Supervision. The board has regulatory oversight of the Department of Community Supervision which is responsible for the supervision of felony offenders on probation and parole in Georgia.

Under Mr. Barnard's leadership as Chairman, enhancements to the parole consideration process have been made including increasing notifications to prosecutors regarding pending Board decisions in order to solicit additional case information. Access to the Board and the decision-making process has increased for victims and the Board continues to revise its

Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System to ensure best practices in parole decision making.

Mr. Barnard, a former State Representative, served nearly sixteen years in the Georgia House of Representatives. The Coastal Georgia lawmaker served as a member of several key House Committees, including the State Institutions and Property Committee, where he served as the Chairman for six years. Mr. Barnard's legislative experience and knowledge of the Georgia Department of Corrections continues to serve the Board and the citizens of Georgia. In 1995-1996, Mr. Barnard guided through the Georgia House the framework for the State Sex Offender Registry and Sexual Offender Registration Review Board.

Mr. Barnard is a native of Tattnall County and lives in McIntosh County. He is a graduate of Atlantic Community College and has a strong background in business and more than eighteen years of experience in the financial industry. He served as Vice President and Manager of First Citizens Bank of Reidsville and as a Regional Marketing Director for Green Tree Acceptance, a national mortgage lender. He is involved in a local Baptist Church and takes part in many community events and activities.





## Jacqueline Bunn, Esq., Vice Chair

Jacqueline Bunn was elected to serve as Vice Chair of the Parole Board for FY 2022. Ms. Bunn was appointed to complete an unexpired term on the State Board of Pardons and Paroles in July of 2016, by Governor Deal. She was reappointed to a full seven-year term in December of 2016. In August of 2018, Ms. Bunn received an appointment to the State Commission on Family Violence. The commission works to educate and raise awareness about family violence in Georgia and evaluates the need for additional state services. Ms. Bunn also serves as a member of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, serving as the Chair of the Victims Compensation Board. As Vice Chair of the Parole Board, Ms. Bunn also serves on the Board of Community Supervision.

Ms. Bunn started her career with the State of Georgia in 1997, as an Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights Section for the Georgia Department of Law. She handled hundreds of cases involving the Department of Corrections and the State Board of Pardons and Paroles in state and federal courts, from the trial level through the appellate process, to the United States Supreme Court. From 2006 to 2013, she served as Deputy Director of the Legal Services Unit of the Georgia Department of Public Safety. In July of 2013, Ms. Bunn was appointed by Governor Deal to serve as the Executive Director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). Her extensive experience directly related to Georgia's criminal justice system was a tremendous asset in this role and resulted in numerous government efficiencies and innovations for the agency.

Ms. Bunn is a member of the Georgia Bar Association and the New Jersey Bar Association and currently serves on the State Bar of Georgia's Promoting Inclusion in the Profession Committee. In 2019, she received the Georgia Bar's Thomas R. Burnside, Jr. Excellence in Bar Leadership Award.

In FY21, Ms. Bunn received the Marquis Who's Who "Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award." Ms. Bunn is a member of the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA). In 2021, Ms. Bunn received the GABWA Foundation's Barbara A. Harris Award for Service to the Community. During her presidential year, GABWA received the prestigious President's Cup, the highest award given to a local bar association by the State Bar. Ms. Bunn is also a member of the Henry Toll Fellowship Program Class of 2016.

Ms. Bunn is a native Georgian. She completed both her undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism, with general honors, and her law degree on full academic scholarships from the University of Georgia. She is licensed to practice law in all of the state and federal courts in Georgia and New Jersey. She has worked in private law firms in Atlanta, Georgia, Westfield, New Jersey, and Princeton, New Jersey.







## Brian Owens, Member

Brian Owens was appointed to the Board on February 1, 2015, by Governor Nathan Deal. He previously served three one-year terms as Vice Chairman of the Board.

The former Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Corrections began his career as a parole officer in 1993. He was later promoted to assistant chief parole officer and chief parole officer. In 1999, Mr. Owens joined the Georgia Department of Corrections. He began his career at the department as Director of the Office of Planning and Analysis and was later promoted to Executive Assistant and then to Assistant Commissioner. On January 8, 2009, Mr. Owens was sworn in as Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Corrections by Governor Sonny Perdue. He was reappointed Commissioner by Governor Deal in January of 2011. Mr. Owens earned his bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Georgia.







## David J. Herring, Member

David J. Herring was appointed to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles on August 1, 2018, by Governor Deal.

Mr. Herring joined the Georgia Department of Public Safety in 1994 as a state trooper and has served the State of Georgia for over twenty-six years. During his tenure with the Department of Public Safety, Mr. Herring served as team security for the University of Georgia Football Program, served as member of the State of Georgia S.W.A.T. Team and prior to his Board appointment, as a Lt. Colonel managing security details for the offices of Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House and Chief Justice.

Mr. Herring received the Governor's Public Safety Award for Heroism in 2001 and was recognized by the Gainesville Kiwanis Club as Trooper of the Year in 2004. He is a member of the 2014 Leadership Georgia Class.

Mr. Herring graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in Public Administration. Mr. Herring and his wife reside in Hall County and are members of their local church.





## Meg Heap, Member

Meg Heap was appointed to the Parole Board by Governor Brian Kemp effective January 19, 2021. Mrs. Heap is the former District Attorney for Georgia's Eastern Judicial Circuit.

Mrs. Heap began her career as a Volunteer Coordinator and Victim Advocate with the Victim-Witness Assistance Program in the Savannah District Attorney's Office. This position ignited a lifelong passion of working with crime victims and senior citizens.

After graduating from law school, Mrs. Heap went on to serve the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit as an Assistant District Attorney where she prosecuted felonies in Superior and Juvenile Court and handled civil condemnation.

In 1995, Mrs. Heap began work as an Assistant District Attorney in Chatham County handling State Court Division misdemeanor cases, moving to Superior Court to handle felony cases in 1997. At the end of 2005, she was assigned to elder and disabled adult abuse cases, becoming the first such prosecutor in the state. She served as Chief Assistant District Attorney from 2009 to the fall of 2010 before briefly leaving the office for private practice.

In 2012, Mrs. Heap was elected District Attorney for the Eastern Judicial Circuit (Chatham County) where she served two terms.

Mrs. Heap is the immediate past president of the District Attorneys' Association of Georgia and was named the 2019 District Attorney of the Year. She serves on the Georgia State Bar Code Revision Commission and the Georgia State Judicial Nominating Commission. She previously served on the Executive Committee for Duffie Stone, the 2019-2020 President of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) and served as the Chairman of the Best Practices Committee for the NDAA.

Meg Heap is from Savannah and is a graduate of St. Vincent's Academy. She graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Georgia Southern University and obtained her Juris Doctorate from Mercer University.







### Christopher Barnett Executive Director of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles Director, Clemency Division

Executive Director Christopher Barnett was appointed to the position in August of 2015 after serving as Interim Director and guiding the Board through a significant reorganization as parole supervision transitioned to the new Department of Community Supervision. Since August of 2020, Executive Director Barnett has directed the day-to-day operations of the agency's Clemency Division.

Director Barnett's focus remains on strengthening professional relationships with community stakeholders and criminal justice partners and he continues to inform Georgians about the parole consideration process. Director Barnett joined the Georgia Parole Board in 2003 as a parole officer in the Marietta Parole District. Promotions to senior parole officer, assistant chief parole officer, field operations officer, senior field operations officer and statewide program manager followed. In May of 2013, he was promoted to regional director, supervising all operations and parole districts within the Northeast Region. Mr. Barnett is a native of Hinesville, Georgia. He has a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a Master of Public Administration from Georgia Southern University.



### Rita Rocker Deputy Executive Director Director, Georgia Office of Victim Services

Rita Rocker was appointed Deputy Executive Director on June 1, 2015. She has served as the Director of the Georgia Office of Victim Services since September of 2020.

Ms. Rocker began her career in 1989 as an accounting clerk with the Engineering Unit of the Georgia Department of Corrections. She then worked in the Food & Farm Unit, before being promoted to unit manager of the Property/Inventory & Audits Unit. In 1997, Ms. Rocker transferred to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles as an operations auditor with responsibilities to examine each of the Board's primary operations identifying areas for improvement. Her success resulted in a promotion to unit manager. In 2010, she was promoted to Director of Government Relations, leading the Board through several legislative cycles as criminal justice reforms were implemented in Georgia.

Ms. Rocker graduated from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance. She later attended the Georgia Law Enforcement Command College at Columbus State University earning a Master of Public Administration.





# Letter

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Chris Barnett  
*Executive Director,  
 State Board of Pardons and Paroles*

Once again it was my honor to serve this agency as Executive Director in FY21. Without a doubt, I believe this is the best agency in state government. The evidence is there showing that despite the pandemic our agency enhanced public safety in FY21. Operationally we improved resulting in a more efficient agency and our five-member Board continues to be the best-informed decision-making body among paroling authorities nationwide!

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles' operations are guided by our 4Es: Engaging Stakeholders, Educating the Community, Encouraging Active Participation in the Parole Process, and Enhancing Operations. At the end of the day, if we've accomplished our 4Es, we have improved public safety.

The challenges of the pandemic were met head on by our agency staff in FY21, despite many staff teleworking full-time and other staff working increased teleworking hours. We have continuously leveraged technology, people and processes to ensure our limited resources are directed toward improving public safety. Ensuring the Board Members have the necessary tools, information and therefore the confidence to vote cases, is essential to public safety.

Each of the Board's divisions and support offices pulled together in FY21 to reach agency goals. However, without the support of our Parole Board Members our success could not have been realized. The leadership provided by the five-member Board provided the catalyst for our Clemency, Field Services and Victim Services divisions to overall improve service delivery to Georgia's citizens. Our Georgia Office of Victim Services for example, under the leadership of Deputy Executive Director Rita Rocker, increased service delivery even during a pandemic. Internet-based presentations were delivered to partners MADD of Georgia and the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia to name just a couple. As restrictions loosened, in-person presentations aimed at benefiting crime victims were conducted during National Crime Victims' Rights Week and at the Association of Paroling Authorities International Conference.

Continued engagement of our law enforcement partners was also important in FY21. The easy choice was to curtail activities. However, that wouldn't result in improved public safety. Instead, we did not allow obstacles to reduce that engagement. We continued engagement with the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Georgia Sheriffs' Association, the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia and many others. We also ensured new stakeholders were involved. We met with newly elected prosecutors in FY21 to ensure these stakeholders became partners in ensuring the best parole decisions by providing the Board with the most current available information regarding the offenders.

Although operationally we were made to adapt, we continued the engagement of our stakeholders by leveraging technology such as use of more online meetings and presentations. The pandemic restricted public access to our monthly Board meetings, yet we made them available live to the public via Facebook. This opened the Board's meeting through the engagement of many more of our citizens than any previous public meeting. As a result, we are educating the public about the parole process and encouraging their active participation. The Board's operations and processes are more transparent than ever before.

In FY21, the State Board of Pardons and Paroles adapted in order to continue exceptional services to our stakeholders, and we will continue in order to do our part in making Georgia the number one state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family.



In Georgia, clemency encompasses the parole decision making process. Clemency also pertains to the granting or denying of pardons and restoration of civil and political rights by the Parole Board. The Parole Board holds the sole constitutional authority to grant executive clemency to a condemned inmate. In Georgia, no inmate is entitled to parole, however by law; most are eligible for consideration and therefore must be considered by the Parole Board. As a result of data-driven parole decisions, Georgia's scientific parole consideration process keeps the public safe and assists the Department of Corrections in keeping the finite number of prison beds dedicated for the most serious offenders. The annual estimated cost avoidance to the state, due to offenders being under parole supervision as opposed to housing them in a state prison, was more than \$404,993,000 for FY21.

### Parole Consideration and Decisions

Parole Board Members independently reach their decisions after reviewing a comprehensive electronic case file on the eligible offender. The file gener-



ally includes investigative reports, reports from the Department of Corrections, the offender's criminal history, circumstances of current offenses, information from the district attorney, victims, and other stakeholders. The Clemency Division provides a thorough assessment and a recommended number of months-to-serve based upon the application of the Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System, if applicable. (Information contained in the parole case file can be found on page 21 of this report.) Eligible inmates are automatically considered for parole. Three of the five Board Members must agree on a decision. In FY21, there were 11,767 offender files initiated for consideration by the Clemency Division. For more information about parole eligibility and the Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System visit: [www.pap.georgia.gov](http://www.pap.georgia.gov).

### GPEDS Electronic Case Management

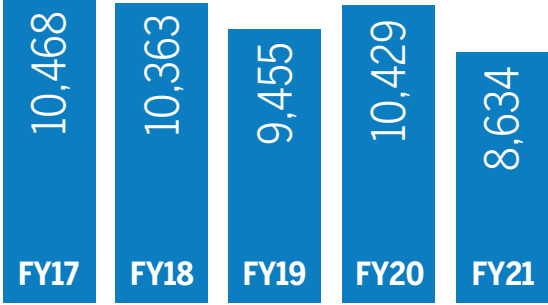
The process of preparing a case for consideration by the Board is completed electronically in GPEDS (Georgia Parole Evidence-based Data System). GPEDS is effective and efficient allowing Board Members to access the offender's case material and make clemency decisions electronically. The Parole Board has eliminated the production of paper files and continues imaging remaining paper files.

The agency has completed the process of submitting life-sentenced inmate cases to the Board electronically. By eliminating paper files on these cases and submitting them electronically, the Clemency Division's process is more efficient. Now all parole eligible inmate cases in Georgia may be voted electronically by the Board. GPEDS has significantly improved the agency's business processes. The electronic case file is established in GPEDS after the sentence package is electronically received from the Department of Corrections. Electronic notifications

# Clemency/Parole Consideration

**Parole releases decreased during FY21, as did prison admissions. During FY21, the Parole Board released 8,634 offenders from prison. This total represented 1,795 fewer parole board initiated releases from the previous fiscal year.**

### FY17-FY21 PAROLE RELEASES





trigger actions moving the case toward a Board decision. GPEDS generates notifications to judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement regarding clemency actions pending on parole eligible offender cases. Notifications are also generated to wardens and inmates regarding Board decisions. In FY21, 28,009 notifications (all types) were generated by GPEDS. Please see additional information regarding statutory and other notifications made by the Board later in this report. There were 3,561 preconditions to parole imposed by the Board on inmates during the fiscal year.

### The Parole Consideration Process

After the agency receives an offender's sentencing information electronically from the Department of Corrections, parole investigators collect details of conviction offenses, interview inmates for personal history statements and complete post sentence investigations. For cases other than a life sentence, hearing examiners review all of the information contained in the investigations conducted by parole investigators. In order to make equitable recommendations to the Board Members, hearing examiners process and prepare rating summaries utiliz-



ing the agency's Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System. Following the hearing examiner's review, the cases and recommendations are electronically forwarded to the Board Members for consideration. Board Members then individually consider each case and vote electronically. The members may agree with the time-to-serve recommendation provided by the Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System, or they may deviate from the recommendation by increasing or decreasing the number of months to be served before parole is granted. The Board also has the authority to deny parole.

### Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System

When considering parole for those offenders who will become statutorily eligible for parole consideration and who are serving less than a life sentence, the Board reviews a recommendation of months, or a percentage of the sentence, to serve. This recommendation is obtained from the Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System or the guidelines. The guidelines account for the severity of the crime and the offender's risk to reoffend. The offender's risk to reoffend is determined by weighted factors concerning the offender's criminal and social history that the Board has found to have value in predicting the probability of further criminal behavior.

Changes to the guidelines were approved by the Parole Board during the fiscal year to take effect July 1, 2021. The Board increased the crime severity levels (CSL) for several offenses. Several offenses were raised from a level seven CSL to a level eight. Other CSL changes were made. The higher the crime severity level, the more serious the offense and the likely result is a recommendation for the offender to serve a longer period of time prior to parole. The guidelines take into account statewide sentencing averages and parole decisions by previous boards. More information regarding the Board's application of the current Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System can be found at <https://pap>.





[georgia.gov/parole-consideration/parole-consideration-eligibility-guidelines](http://georgia.gov/parole-consideration/parole-consideration-eligibility-guidelines).

### **Tentative Parole Months (excludes inmates serving life with parole eligibility)**

After receiving the case from the hearing examiner, a Tentative Parole Month (TPM) is set when three of the five Board Members agree on a specific amount of time that the offender should serve

before being granted parole. Inmates receive written notification of the Board's decision. The Tentative Parole Month or "tentative grant" can be rescinded at any time. The TPM is not a release date or a final parole release decision. An inmate's TPM status is available on the agency's website. The Inmate TPM Lookup (Offender/Inmate Parole Status) link is located on the home page at [www.pap.georgia.gov](http://www.pap.georgia.gov).

## What information is considered when determining who gets paroled?

In a guidelines case, the recommendation is derived from application of the Parole Decision Guidelines Rating System regarding the time the offender should serve prior to parole or if the offender should be denied parole and serve the entire prison sentence. The Board considers the recommendation and decides whether to agree. Because the Board has constitutional authority and discretion to determine parole, the following is information that may be in the parole file that the Board Members can consider when determining if an eligible inmate receives parole:

- ▶ Aggravating circumstances
- ▶ Victim impact statements
- ▶ Prosecutor/judicial statements
- ▶ Legal investigations including details and circumstances of the crime(s)
- ▶ The parole guidelines recommendation, if applicable
- ▶ Inmate progress reports

- ▶ Inmate interviews
- ▶ Program completions/failures
- ▶ Prison conduct
- ▶ Inmate disciplinary reports
- ▶ Amount of the prison sentence served
- ▶ Inmate's mental health status and progress
- ▶ If probation is to be served after confinement
- ▶ Offender's age at the crime commit date
- ▶ Prior parole considerations
- ▶ Number of prior arrests
- ▶ Number of prior felonies
- ▶ Prior revocations
- ▶ Prior incarcerations
- ▶ Personal history statement
- ▶ Parole release plan

**Many documents in the parole file on the offender are public.** They may include (if applicable to the offender) but are not limited to:

- ▶ Sentencing documents
- ▶ Notifications to the offender regarding the Board's decision

- ▶ Notice of consideration for parole prior to serving one-third of the sentence (only if applicable)
- ▶ Notice of the final decision to parole
- ▶ Correspondence sent by the Board in response to an offender's correspondence or in response to correspondence sent on behalf of the offender
- ▶ Parole certificate
- ▶ Notice of the preliminary revocation hearing
- ▶ The preliminary hearing summary
- ▶ The waiver of the preliminary revocation hearing
- ▶ Notice of the final revocation hearing
- ▶ The waiver of the final revocation hearing
- ▶ Revocation orders
- ▶ The public portion of the revocation hearing recording
- ▶ Court production orders
- ▶ Detainers
- ▶ Subpoenas
- ▶ Board arrest warrants

- ▶ The certificate of discharge from parole
- ▶ The pardon order
- ▶ Restoration of political and civil rights order
- ▶ Commutation order
- ▶ Board orders in death penalty cases

**Documents protected by Georgia law from public disclosure** include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Victim correspondence
- ▶ The offender's medical information
- ▶ GCIC/NCIC reports
- ▶ The hearing examiner's executive summary of the offender's case
- ▶ The Board ballot
- ▶ The offender's residence plan verification
- ▶ Correspondence to the Board including from those opposing parole for the offender
- ▶ Parole investigations
- ▶ Pardon application
- ▶ Petition for commutation of a death sentence



## Georgia Department of Corrections' Performance Incentive Credit (PIC) Program

The Georgia Department of Corrections operates an inmate Performance Incentive Credit (PIC) program. By completing rehabilitative programming while incarcerated, state inmates can work toward an earlier possible parole release. The Parole Board determines which parole eligible inmates who have earned PIC may be allowed an earlier release on parole. The PIC program prepares offenders for success after release and assists the state in better utilization of prison beds at a cost savings to taxpayers. Inmates deemed eligible by the Department of Corrections for the PIC program may have their TPM (Tentative Parole Month) advanced a few months by completing educational, vocational, and treatment programs and work details during their incarceration. The Parole Board Members have discretion to determine if an inmate who has earned PIC through program completions will have his/her established TPM moved to an earlier date. If the Board grants earned PIC to an inmate, the TPM is updated and the process toward a final release decision continues. In FY21, the Parole Board Members granted 36,257 PIC or PIC points to state inmates who had earned them by completing specific programming and work details. Each PIC point equals one month that a TPM can be changed to an earlier date.

## Final Review Process

As the TPM approaches, the hearing examiner will conduct a final review of the offender's case file. The final review determines if there is any reason a release date should not be set. Parole could be delayed or denied as a result of the offender not completing required programming, prison misconduct, or because of detainers, warrants or new sentences. A release date that is set can be rescinded at any time prior to the release.

## Statutory and Board Notifications

The parole consideration process in Georgia allows for correspondence about the case to be sent to the Board at any time during the offender's incarceration up to the point of a parole release. The Board solicits information by sending notifications throughout the process to stakeholders including victims, judges, and prosecutors. Registered victims of a crime are given notification at the time the Board is considering a parole release, allowing for a period for the victim to send the Board information about the case. (O.C.G.A. § 17-17-13) Registered crime victims may also use an automated system to call and receive an offender status update. (Review GA-V.I.P. at <https://pap.georgia.gov/victim-information-program-vip>)

The state's prosecutors routinely provide information to the Board regarding cases. During the post-sentence investigation conducted by parole investigators, the judge and the district attorney can provide information and their view of the case.

To ensure the Board has current information about cases, the Board sends a notification to judges and district attorneys six months prior to specific offenders becoming parole eligible. This notification is sent regarding "serious felony" cases. The Board sends the "second solicitation/notification" to the judge and district attorney informing them that the Board is preparing the case for statutory parole consideration and is requesting information about the case. In FY21, 1,876 of these case notifications or second solicitations/notifications were sent to judges and prosecutors. These notifications are sent regarding offenders convicted of serious felonies. The offenses included in this notification process can be found at <https://pap.georgia.gov/parole-consideration/parole-process-georgia>.

As a result of legislation enacted in 2017, the Parole Board notifies the district attorney if an offender convicted of a serious violent felony is being considered for parole release. This notification is



made at a minimum of 90-days prior to the final decision to parole. Those serious violent felonies are murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, aggravated child molestation, aggravated sodomy, and aggravated sexual battery. The Board, according to the statute, also gives the offender being considered an opportunity to submit information. This additional notification allows for another opportunity for the Parole Board Members to receive additional information or current community views regarding the scheduled parole for the offender. In FY21, the Board sent 90-day notifications in 218 cases. (O.C.G.A. § 17-10-6.1.) & (O.C.G.A. § 42-9-43(c)(1))

Judges, district attorneys, sheriffs (of the county of residence prior to arrest and the county of conviction) and registered victims also receive a 72-hour statutory notification that the offender is about to be paroled. The Board may receive information about the case during this period. (O.C.G.A. § 42-9-47)

The Clemency Division, in addition, sends the 72-hour notification in “serious violent felony” cases to the district attorney and sheriff of the county where the offender is being released to, if different from the county of conviction.

If released on parole, parole certificates are forwarded to the clerks of court for each docket the inmate received parole.

### Life Sentence Parole Considerations for inmates who are parole eligible according to state law

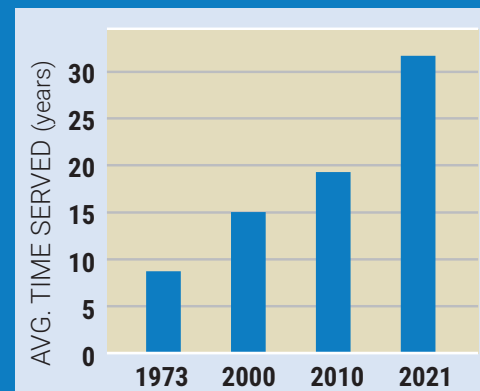
Inmates serving a life sentence are considered when they become eligible under Georgia law (see State Law and Life Sentences). Unlike other offenders, the Board’s guidelines are not used and a TPM is not the result of the Board’s decision. The Board’s decision is either to grant or deny parole. If parole is denied to an inmate serving life, the Board, by policy, will reconsider the case again at least once every eight years. The duration between consid-

erations is a decision made by the Board. Inmates serving life who have been denied parole and have a scheduled reconsideration date may receive expedited parole reviews if the Board receives new information that warrants an earlier review. A parole eligible inmate serving a life sentence who receives a “grant” parole decision may be required to complete a Department of Corrections’ work release program as a precondition to parole.

### Pardon Administration Unit

The Parole Board’s pardon application and deci-

### Life Sentence Time Served for Serious Violent Felonies – Parole Eligible Offenders



In 1973, life-sentenced inmates convicted of serious violent felonies served less than nine years in prison, on average, before being released from prison. By the year 2000, the average had risen to more than 15 years. By 2010, the average time served on a life sentence was nearly 20 years and in FY 2021, the average time served was 32 years.

### State Law and Life Sentences

Since 1995, there have been two statutory changes pertaining to serious violent felonies that determine the minimum amount of the sentence to be served to become parole eligible for offenders sentenced to life with parole eligibility. If a crime considered to be a “seven deadly sin” was committed prior to 1995, the offender is eligible after seven years. In 1995, offenders committing these crimes became eligible after serving 14 years. If the crime is committed after July 1, 2006, the offender is eligible for parole after serving 30 years.

### FY 2021 Parole Decisions for Parole Eligible Inmates Serving Life Sentences for a Serious Violent Felony

**201 GRANTED**

**1,508 DENIED**





## Pardons Granted FY21

Applications received  
(all types – pardons and RR) **1,391**

Pardons granted without  
firearms being restored **138**

Pardons granted with  
firearms being restored **297**

Restorations of civil and  
political rights **80**

Restorations of civil and political  
rights with firearms restored **15**

Total applications granted (inc.  
applications filed in previous year) **530**

sion-making process includes thorough pardon investigations and provides the most comprehensive information available to assist the Board in making quality pardon decisions. A pardon does not expunge, remove, or erase crimes from a person's criminal record. A pardon is an order of official forgiveness and may be granted to individuals who have maintained a good reputation in their community and have remained crime free for a required period of years following the completion of their sentence(s), to include parole or probation.

The pardon process is continuously reviewed to ensure informed decisions are the result. The current application requires applicants to provide information including their version of criminal offenses, justification for why they should be considered for a pardon, including a description of how they have contributed to their community. Applicants seeking a pardon for offenses requiring registration on Georgia's Sex Offender Registry must be crime free for ten years following the completion of all sentences, as opposed to five years for all other conviction types. As a part of

the application process, these applicants must also provide a current copy of their most recent risk level evaluation as assigned by the Sexual Offender Registration Review Board (SORRB), provide a psychosexual evaluation, and submit to a disclosure polygraph.

A state law adopted in 2015 created a notification process informing registered victims and prosecutors, in specific cases, when an offender is seeking a pardon. This allows victims and prosecutors the opportunity to send the Board information about the case. The Parole Board exceeds the statutory requirements and sends these notifications regarding all applications received. During FY21, the Parole Board sent 860 notifications to district attorneys regarding ex-offenders applying for pardons.

In FY21, 1,391 pardon and restoration of rights applications were received and 530 were granted (all types). There were 628 more applications received during the fiscal year compared to the previous year.

## Clemency (Parole and Criminal) Investigators

Parole investigators conduct and complete investigations collecting information about the offender's conviction offenses. The process includes interviewing inmates for personal history statements and completing post sentence investigations. Sixty-one (61) investigators work in the Clemency Division. Forty-three (43) investigators are assigned to the field and predominantly complete post sentence investigations and profiles for all offenders sentenced by Georgia courts. Nine (9) investigators are assigned to work within the prisons to conduct personal history statements on inmates during the diagnostic process at which time they will interview inmates.

The Board has nine (9) P.O.S.T. (Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council)





certified criminal investigators who conduct face-to-face interviews of inmates serving a life sentence with the possibility of parole and these investigators interview all former offenders who are applying for restoration of civil and political rights, a pardon, or a pardon with firearm restoration. These investigators utilize their experience and interviewing techniques to collect necessary information required by the Board Members to make decisions in these cases. In FY21, the clemency investigators completed 22,413 investigations for the Parole Board.

### Critical Analysis Unit

The mission of the Critical Analysis Unit (CAU) is to investigate, prepare and submit specialized parole eligible cases to the Board for consideration and to support the operations of the Clemency Division through comprehensive audits, analysis and continuous training and development.

Analyzing, understanding, and providing information to the Board regarding crime trends and criminal behaviors is important to the Board in order to make an informed decision regarding a release. CAU personnel are on call 24-hours a day, seven days a week, assisting the Clemency Division with operations and response to critical incidents and major investigations involving parole eligible offenders housed in the Georgia Department of Corrections. This unit collaborates with the Georgia

Department of Corrections regarding Security Threat Groups (STG), gang offenders, offenders with Immigration and Customs detainers and those offenders who are classified with medical requirements in order to provide Parole Board Members with critical case information prior to the parole decision.

The Clemency Division is tasked with preparing cases for the Board to consider. The first step in processing cases for consideration is referred to as initializing the case. This includes reviewing the sentencing package for completeness, determining consideration type and requesting legal investigations. In FY21, 11,767 cases were initialized.

In FY21, the Board considered 16,255 cases for releases or future tentative parole months.

- 1,772 life sentenced cases
- 11,580 guideline cases
- 2,903 short sentence cases

CAU hearing examiners are tasked monthly to monitor final reviews. In FY21, 10,160 final reviews were completed.

CAU randomly audits cases to ensure accuracy before submitting the cases to the Board. For FY21, audits revealed the following:

- 98.9% Accuracy in rating on Risk Levels
- 96.8% Accuracy in rating on CSL (crime severity levels)
- 11 cases were required to be resubmitted to the Board following CAU audits.

### FY21 CLEMENCY ACTIONS

<b>Parole Certificates</b>	<b>6,199</b>
<b>Out-of-State Parole Orders</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Conditional Transfers</b>	<b>981</b>
<b>Out-of-State Conditional Transfers</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Supervised Reprieves</b>	<b>804</b>
<b>Out-of-State Supervised Reprieves</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Commutations</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Medical Reprieves</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Out-of-State ICE Orders</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Total Prison Releases by Parole</b>	<b>8,634</b>
<b>Total Discharges from Parole</b>	<b>7,507</b>
<b>Total Guidelines Decisions</b>	<b>11,580</b>
<b>Life Sentence Cases Denied</b>	<b>1,547</b>
<b>Life Sentence Cases Granted</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Total Life Sentence Case Decisions</b>	<b>1,772</b>
<b>Restoration of Civil and Political Rights Granted</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Pardon Grants</b>	<b>435</b>
<b>Total Pardons &amp; Restorations Granted</b>	<b>530</b>



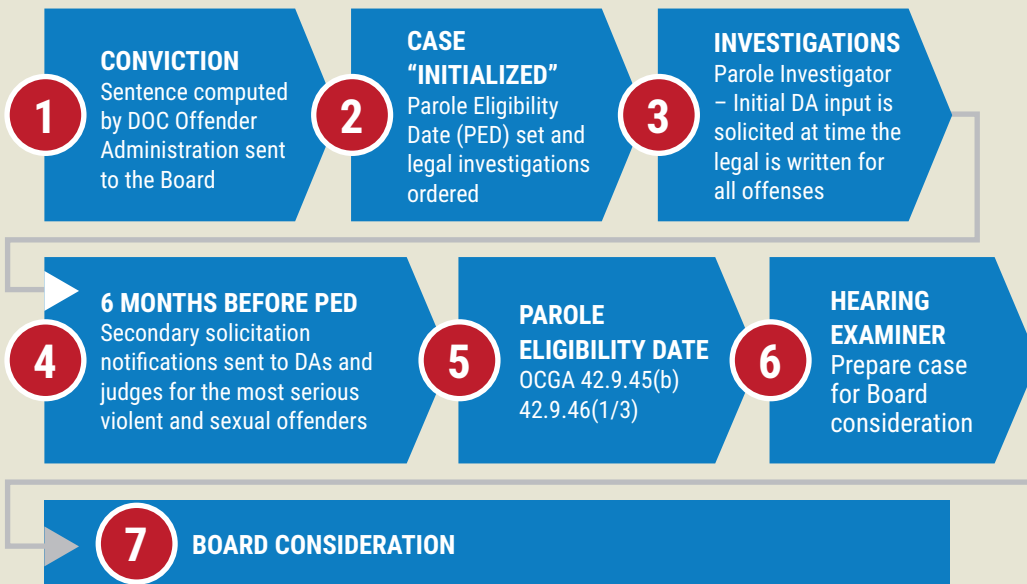
### THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS UNIT'S RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- 1 Managing the operational plan for the Clemency Division's intelligence functions, including the mission, goals, and objectives, as a guide to submitting cases to the Board.**
- 2 Researching and analyzing data to develop forecasts, estimates and models to support recommendations.**
- 3 Developing and coordinating proficiency training and audits in the various units within the Clemency Division to maintain effective and efficient operations.**

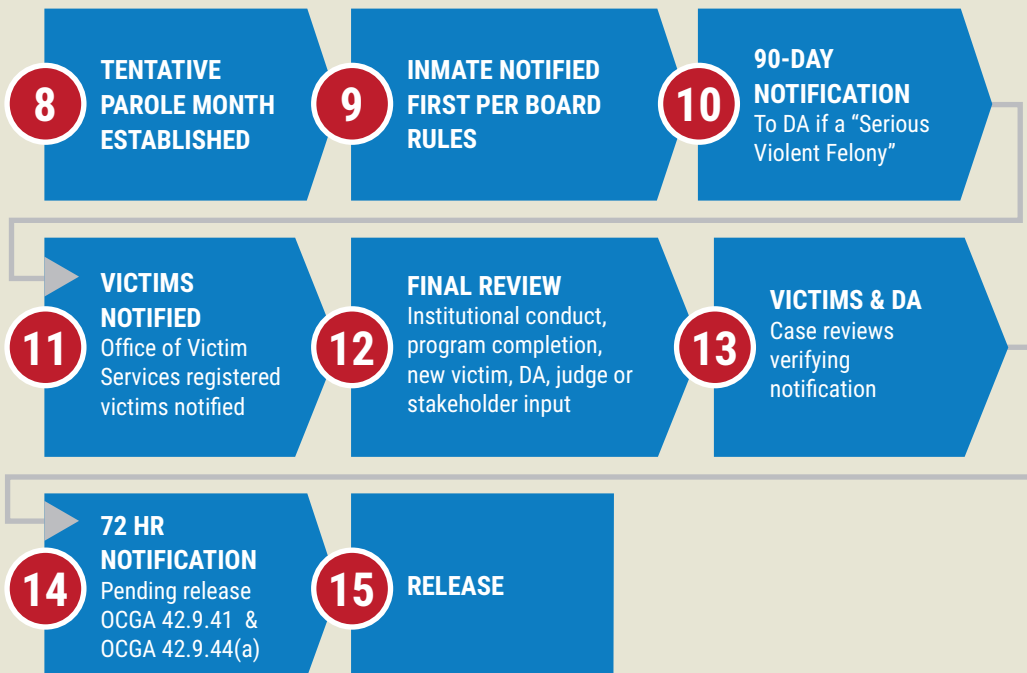




## PAROLE PROCESS PRE-DECISION



## PAROLE PROCESS POST-DECISION





# Field Services Division

The mission of the Field Services Division is to effectively and efficiently manage the processes related to Parole Violations, Commutations, and the Interstate Compact. The Field Services Division ensures that violations of parole conditions by offenders are quickly addressed. If necessary, the offender's parole is revoked, and the offender is returned to prison. In addition, if a parolee meets specific requirements, a request for commutation can be submitted to the Board. The district operations managers facilitate the revocation, commutation, and Interstate Compact processes for the Board. The Field Services Division comprises four units: the Scanning and Imaging Unit, the Warrant/GCIC Entry Unit, the Violations/Commutations Unit, and the Interstate Compact Unit.

## FY21 Parole Population

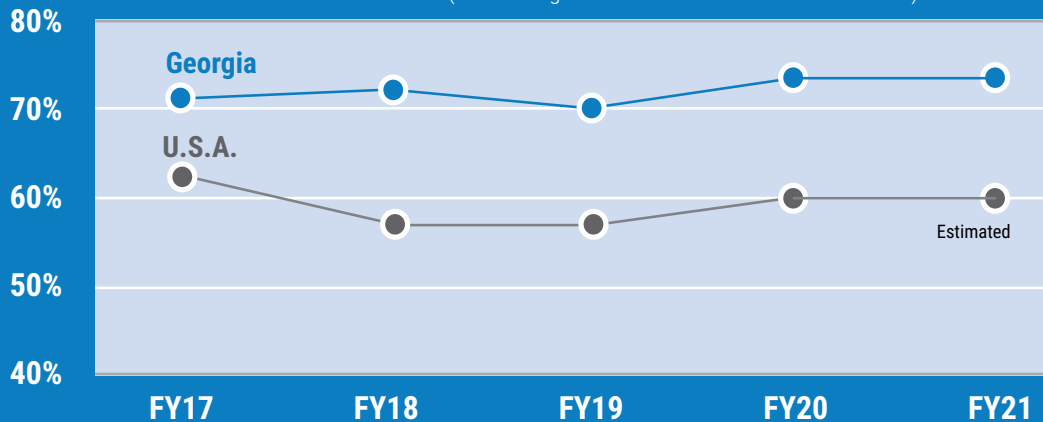
During Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), the population of offenders on parole under community supervision decreased from 21,069 on July 1, 2020, to 19,828 on June 30, 2021. The number of offenders discharged from parole was 7,507. The percentage

of successful parole completion was 73% for the fiscal year. The cumulative number of offenders under parole supervision during the fiscal year was 30,166. Offenders released on parole are supervised by the Georgia Department of Community Supervision.

## Parole Violations

The Parole Board enhances public safety by quickly responding to offenders who violate the conditions of their parole. Violations of parole consist of new criminal charges (felony and misdemeanor) and technical violations related to failing to follow the conditions of their parole. The offenders who violate the terms of their release may have their parole revoked and be returned to prison. When a violation occurs, the supervising officer generates a report detailing the delinquent behavior. Upon receipt of the report, the district operations manager conducts a thorough case investigation to determine what action the Board should take in the best interest of public safety. The recommendation to the Board could be treatment referral up to revocation of parole.

**PAROLE COMPLETION RATES** (National figures from Bureau of Justice Statistics)





## Parole Revocations FY17-FY21

FY17	2,681
FY18	2,525
FY19	2,720
FY20	2,199
FY21	2,373

## Warrants/GCIC

State law authorizes the Parole Board Members to issue warrants for the arrest of alleged parole violators. Upon notification that an offender has violated the conditions of release, the district operations manager reviews the violations and the case history to determine if a Board Warrant should be issued to immediately place the offender into custody. In FY21, a total of 6,490 warrants were issued by the Parole Board. If the offender cannot be immediately located, the Parole Board Warrant is then placed in the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) system or the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system. Both systems are connected to the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) database that is used by law enforcement agencies for wanted person entry. In FY21, the GCIC Unit en-

tered 3,624 warrants into the GCIC/NCIC system. By accessing the system, law enforcement agencies know if an offender should be taken into custody.

## Revocations & Parole Revocation Hearings

During FY21, the Board revoked 2,373 parole violators returning offenders to prison to serve their sentences in confinement. The number revoked increased by 174 from the previous fiscal year. Of the FY21 total number of revocations, less than 1% of those revoked, were revoked based on technical violations which include, but not limited to; drug use, curfew violations, or failure to pay fines and fees. Revocation can occur during a Parole Revocation Hearing, when the offender signs a waiver to a revocation hearing, or automatic revocation if the conditions exist according to O.C.G.A. § 42-9-51. The appropriate recommendations and enforcement of intermediate sanctions, such as treatment referral, administrative hearings, electronic monitoring, GPS monitoring, day reporting centers and parole detention centers results in the low percentage of technical parole violators being revoked and returned to prison. The purpose of intermediate sanctions is to bring the offenders who are not a threat to public safety back into compliance with their parole conditions. Upon the establishment of probable cause, Parole Revocation Hearings are held to address violations of parole. Parole Board Members conducted 352 final revocation hearings during FY21. Each hearing is presided over by an individual Board Member who hears the evidence in the case and makes a recommendation to the full Board to either revoke parole and return the offender to prison or continue parole and community supervision. Most offenders facing parole revocation proceedings admit their parole violations and sign a waiver to be returned to prison eliminating a final hearing. The district operations managers are responsible for scheduling and managing the Parole Revocation Hearing process. Parole Revocation



Hearings are conducted from the Board's central office in Atlanta via video conferencing or in person at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson. For video conference hearings, the offender, the officer of record and the Board Member may be in different locations. Use of this technology has reduced travel costs for all three agencies involved in the process, the Parole Board, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Community Supervision.

## Commutations

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles may grant other forms of clemency to meet special needs of the criminal justice system. The Parole Board has the authority to commute an offender's sentence to time served. This includes offenders serving parole. Offenders serving parole may petition to have their prison sentences commuted by the Board. Senate Bill 174, passed in 2017, included a provision requiring the Board to consider commuting the sentences of specific offenders serving a split sentence who have successfully completed twelve (12) consecutive months of parole supervision (O.C.G.A. § 42-8-21). Under provisions of the legislation, offenders must have probation to serve following the prison portion of their sentence. The district operations managers conduct a thorough investigation of cases meeting the criteria for consideration by the Board. During FY 2021, the Parole Board considered 1,287 cases for commutation under SB174 and commuted 33 cases that met the strict criteria of the Board. Under SB174, the prison/parole portion of the sentence ends and the case transfers to probation supervision.

## District Operations Managers

The district operations manager thoroughly investigates alleged parole violations and commutation requests and determines what appropriate actions are to be recommended to the Board in the interest of public safety. This may include that a

Board Warrant be issued to take an offender into custody or a request for additional investigative information. The district operations managers are assigned to the ten (10) Judicial Districts in the state of Georgia and are an integral link between the Board and the Department of Community Supervision (DCS), as it relates to parole violators and commutations. District operations managers are P.O.S.T. certified officers and P.O.S.T. certified general and or firearm instructors. In addition to managing the parole violations, revocation, and commutation process, they provide training to other law enforcement and perform Board security and special law enforcement details. They are required to annually complete twenty (20) hours of P.O.S.T. training which includes weapons requalification.

## Interstate Compact

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles, in FY21, was a member of the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS). ICAOS is responsible for creating and upholding the rules of the Commission. ICAOS comprises





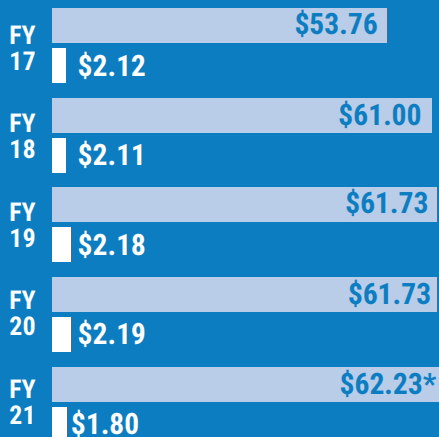
## Cost Avoidance

The graph below for FY17-FY21 shows cost of incarceration versus cost of supervision, per day, for State of Georgia.

### Cost per day

■ Incarceration

■ Parole



\* Most recent Ga. Dept. of Corrections' cost per day

## FY21 Fiscal Year Cost Avoidance \$404 MILLION

The fiscal year cost avoidance is calculated based on the FY21 cost per day to incarcerate a state inmate in Georgia (\$62.23\*) compared to the community supervision cost per day (\$1.80). In FY21, the annual cost avoidance to the prison system as a result of offenders serving their sentence on parole is calculated at more than \$404 million.

**FY20 \$399 million**

**FY19 \$433 million**

**FY18 \$450 million**

**FY17 \$377 million**

\* Most recent Ga. Dept. of Corrections' cost per day

all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. The State Board of Pardons and Paroles' Interstate Compact Unit is responsible for processing the transfer of all Georgia inmates paroled to an out-of-state residence. In addition, the unit responded to violations, conducted probable cause hearings, handled extraditions, and addressed victim issues relating to these cases. During FY21, the unit released 348 offenders to out-of-state supervision. As of June 30, 2021, there were 2,323 Georgia offenders under active parole supervision in Compact states and 1,430 other Compact state offenders on parole supervision in Georgia. Another responsibility of the unit is to release foreign national offenders to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees. Via the ICE Rapid REPAT (Removal of Eligible Parolees Accepted for Transfer) Program, 89 foreign national offenders were released to ICE for deportation at an estimated cost avoidance of \$4,999,308.00.

## Scanning and Imaging

The Scanning and Imaging Unit has an integral role in the Parole Board's transition to a paperless environment. During FY21, 24,047 documents

were scanned into the case management systems (Portal, GPEDS and TRIM system) utilized by the Board to make parole decisions. This unit images offender documents that are generated daily, to include correspondence, revocation documents and victim notifications. There were 301 active lifer offender parole files scanned and 2,226 archived files imaged during the fiscal year. There are approximately 153,921 archived files remaining to be imaged. Upon completion, all of the Parole Board's files will be accessible electronically.

## New Direction Recovery Program

The New Direction Recovery Program located at the Treutlen Probation Detention Center is an intensive addiction program for parolees who are both higher risk and higher need offenders who were not successful in community-based treatment and supervision. The Parole Board utilizes the program as an alternative to revocation for some offenders. For FY21, 57 parolees were referred to the program. As of June 30, 2021, 43 parolees had graduated from the program during the fiscal year and were returned to parole supervision. Some graduates were enrolled during the previous fiscal year.





# Georgia Office of Victim Services

The Georgia Office of Victim Services (GOVS) delivers post-conviction victim services in Georgia. The office is the service delivery source of post-conviction notifications for all registered crime victims in Georgia.

The Georgia Office of Victim Services ensures the registered crime victim's voice is heard throughout the parole process. The office represents three state agencies which are the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Community Supervision. This office serves registered crime victims regarding offenders in prison or under community supervision. The office provides victims with updates pertaining to the parole status of the offender and notifies registered victims if an offender is being considered for parole and if the offender is released from confinement. This office operates the Georgia Victim Information Program or GA-V.I.P. This is a 24-hour automated information system which provides crime victims and their families with access to information about the offender. The office corresponds with victims and receives information directly from crime victims. In FY21, 7,640 phone calls from victims were handled by staff, 18,052 outgoing correspondences were sent to victims in response to concerns and 6,282 correspondences were received from victims and filed with the office.

## Georgia Victim Information Program – GA-V.I.P.

GA-V.I.P. is a 24-hour automated information system providing registered crime victims and/or their family members, with access to information about their offender. By completing a victim impact statement or crime victim notification request form, victims can be registered with GA-V.I.P. The forms can be completed online at [www.pap.georgia.gov](http://www.pap.georgia.gov) or forms can be requested by calling 404-651-6668

or 1-800-593-9474. Upon registering, victims are issued a PIN (Personal Identification Number). When accessing the system (1-800-593-9474), victims can learn the status of the offender. Also, through GA-V.I.P., registered victims receive information on a prison release after the inmate completes the court ordered term of incarceration (end of sentence), or if the inmate is placed on community supervision. For FY21, there were 1,562 new GA-V.I.P. registrants and 4,900 phone calls from victims were logged into the system. The system made 920 calls to victims.

## Victim Offender Dialogue

The Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) program provides an opportunity for victims of violent crime to have a safe, structured, one-on-one meeting with the offender who committed the crime. The program allows the victim and offender to discuss the crime and its impact on the victim. VOD can only be initiated by the victim. Additionally, the offender must agree to participate, and must acknowledge his/her role in the crime and that he/she will not receive special consideration by the Board for participating. VOD requires a lengthy preparation process which involves both the victim and the offender working separately with a trained facilitator. In FY21, Victim Offender Dialogue sessions were paused due to the pandemic.

## Victim Support Partners

Victim Support Partners (VSPs) is a statewide network of crime victims who are registered with the Georgia Office of Victim Services. This group consists of eleven (11) victim-volunteers who give their time to assist, guide, and comfort other crime victims during the post-conviction process. They also participate in

## GEORGIA OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES FY21 BY THE NUMBERS

7,640  
telephone calls handled

18,052  
pieces of correspondence sent

6,282  
pieces of correspondence received





community events involving the Georgia Office of Victim Services. This program was paused during FY21 because of the pandemic.

### Victims Visitors' Days

Victims Visitors' Day (VVD) is a partnership between GOVS, and District Attorneys' Victim Witness Assistance Programs throughout the state. VVD provides a unique opportunity for crime victims to meet face-to-face in a confidential setting to discuss their case with Parole Board Members and leadership from each of the agencies that GOVS represents: the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, Department of Corrections, and Department of Community Supervision. Crime victims can voice the impact of the crime, receive information concerning the status of the offender and can register to receive future notifications regarding the status of the case. Since the program's beginning in 2006, the Georgia Office of Victim Services has hosted 31 separate events with 22 different judicial circuits,

serving 4,135 crime victims including family members. Due to the pandemic, VVD was paused for the fiscal year.

### FY 2021 Victim-Centered Events

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the Georgia Office of Victim Services delivered additional services to crime victims in FY21. During National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) in April, victim service information was presented to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) of Georgia via an online presentation and the staff participated in the Crime Victims Advocacy Council Homicide Memorial Event in Decatur, Georgia. GOVS also provided victim service information by hosting an in-person event at the Floyd Veterans Memorial Building during NCVRW. Victim service presentations during FY21 were also delivered to the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia and at the Association of Paroling Authorities International Conference. Domestic Violence victims received donations in June.





# Human Resources & Training

## Recruiting and Retaining Staff During a Global Health Emergency

During the Covid Pandemic of FY21, the HR Team created and implemented a virtual New Employee Orientation to ensure a successful candidate experience during the onboarding process for new employees. HR managed to attract and engage a robust pool of candidates, resulting in the onboarding of 8 full-time new hires, and 2 part-time new hires during this period.

## FY21 Key Accomplishments

- Creation of a Virtual New Employee Orientation
- Creation of Manager Supervisor Website
- Creation of Employee Website

## Engaging Employees During a Pandemic while Keeping their Safety a Priority

Employee engagement is important to the overall success of the agency and has reduced turnover, increased productivity, and morale. During FY21,

the agency hosted the first virtual Townhall Employee Engagement Event to stay connected with our individual teams.

## Office of Training FY21

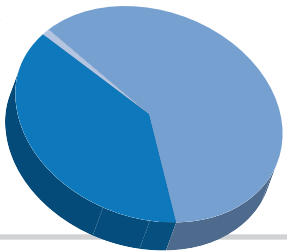
All agency employees must complete in-service training on an annual basis. Sworn staff must complete a minimum of 20 hours annually which includes mandatory firearms requalification, use of deadly force and De-escalation and Community Policing training. Non-sworn staff must complete a minimum of eight hours of training annually. Both sworn and non-sworn staff must complete Unlawful Harassment and Professionalism, and Ethics training each year as a part of their training hours and any other training as prescribed by law. In FY21, due to COVID-19 complications, most of the training delivered by the training office was via virtual media.



Full-time Employees .....	171
Female .....	143
Male .....	28

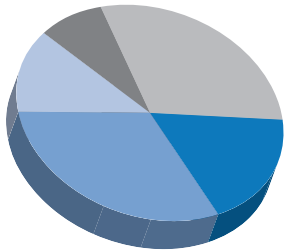
### Staff by race/ethnicity

Asian	2
Black	103
White	66



### Staff by age groups

20-29	15
30-39	31
40-49	50
50-59	53
60 Plus	22

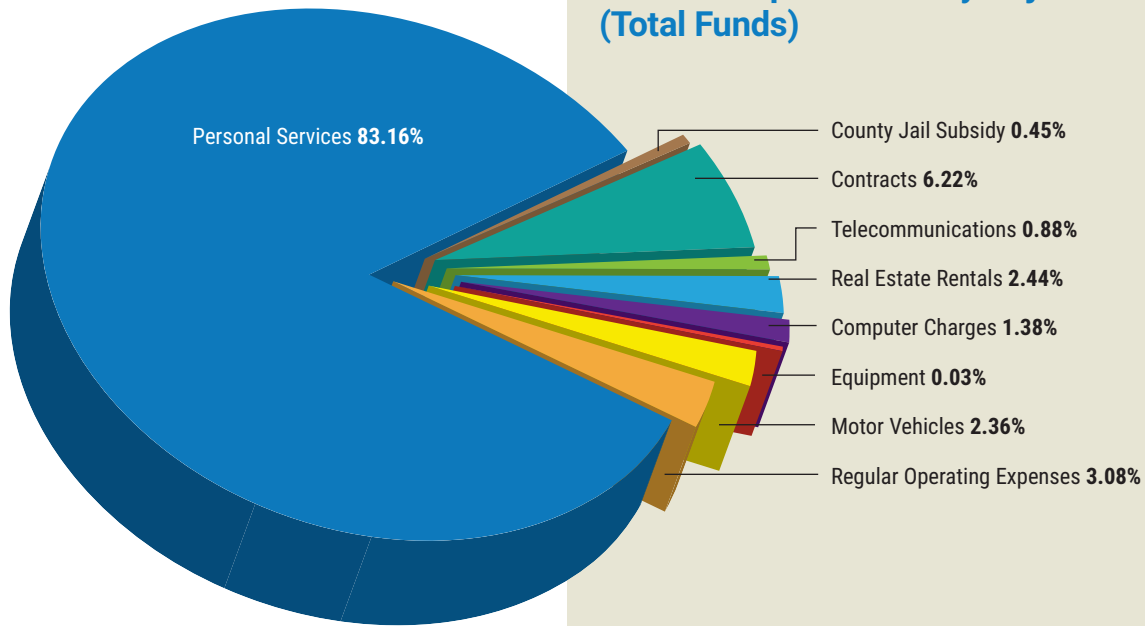


## Training hours taken by staff

Sworn staff	2,306
Non-sworn staff	901

Training hours delivered  
by Parole Training Office 218

# Budget



Personal Services	\$14,306,211
Regular Operating Expenses	\$530,222
Motor Vehicles	\$406,038
Equipment	\$5,521
Computer Charges	\$237,675
Real Estate Rentals	\$419,926
Telecommunications	\$150,452
Contracts	\$1,070,433
County Jail Subsidy	\$77,505
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES FY21</b>	<b>\$17,203,983</b>

## FY 2021 Budget & Expenditures by Program (Total Funds)

Program	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2021 Expenditures	% of Total Budget
Board Administration	2,139,936	2,097,649	12.39%
Clemency Decisions	14,492,670	14,484,169	83.88%
Victim Services	645,351	622,165	3.73%
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>17,277,957</b>	<b>17,203,983</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## FY21 Budget Highlights

- Funds to provide a one-time \$1,000 salary supplement to full-time state employees with salaries less than \$80,000
- One-time funds to purchase and equip 16 vehicles to replace leased vehicles

## FY 2021 Expenditures by Fund Type (Total Funds)

Fund Type	FY 2021
State Funds	17,039,373
Federal Funds	102,717
Other Funds	61,893
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>17,203,983</b>







State Board of  
Pardons and Paroles

# ANNUAL REPORT FY2021

2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S.E.  
Suite 458, East Tower  
Atlanta, GA 30334-4909

404.657.9450  
[www.pap.georgia.gov](http://www.pap.georgia.gov)

