



# Annual Report

FY 2009

## The Road to Success



State Board  
Of  
Pardons and Paroles



*GEORGIA PAROLE: Nationally Recognized as a Leading Paroling Authority*



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**The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Governor  
Members of the Georgia General Assembly  
Citizens of the State of Georgia**

**On behalf of the five members of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, I am pleased to present our FY2009 Annual Report. Throughout these difficult economic times, we have maintained focus on our mission of enhancing public safety and thus we have some positive results and achievements to highlight. Our agency contributes to the statewide goal of a Safer Georgia by making informed parole decisions and successfully transitioning offenders from prison into our communities.**

**The State Board of Pardons and Paroles implements evidence based practices and the highest professional standards. As a result, we are very proud to have achieved State Law Enforcement Certification awarded by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and attained Accreditation by the American Correctional Association.**

**Our ultimate measure of success is the percentage of successful parole completions. In FY09, we achieved our highest successful completion rate in recorded history. Of our parolees, 66% percent successfully completed parole, as compared to the national rate, which is just 45%. Many factors go into our success such as risk instruments, programs, services, and tools such as drug testing and electronic monitoring. However, the primary reason for the success lies with the fine men and women who make up this agency. Clemency staff work to ensure that the Board has all the facts needed to make and carry out informed decisions. Field staff work directly with parolees as they reintegrate from prison using expert supervision strategies. Administrative staff provide the support functions needed to carry out the agency's mission.**

**Along with the Board Members, agency staff work as a strong, unified team to ensure public safety is our highest priority. Please review this annual report, which highlights the results of hard work and dedication.**

**We are honored to serve you and committed to making the best use of agency resources. We adhere to the principles of transparency, accountability and performance management. Our supervision strategies and results have led the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles to be considered a national model for effective community supervision of offenders.**

**Respectfully,**



**L. Gale Buckner**

# The Road to Success

## *Our Mission*

To enhance public safety by making informed parole decisions and successfully transitioning offenders back into the community.

## *Our Vision*

A parole system that leads to a safe Georgia.

## *Our Core Values*

We value Ethics, Integrity, Fairness and Honesty.



# THE PAROLE BOARD

Georgia's Constitution provides for three branches of government to serve as checks and balances on the power of government over the individual. The legislative branch sets the minimum and maximum range of the prison sentence, the judicial branch sentences the offender within that range, and the Parole Board, as part of the executive branch, serves as a check and balance on the other two branches, while managing the finite resource of state prison beds.

The State Board of Pardons and Paroles is the **only** entity in the state with the constitutional authority to grant executive clemency. The Parole Board makes informed decisions on which inmates are deserving of parole, thereby ensuring that hard prison beds are dedicated to the offenders who have committed the most serious crimes.

The Board's core mission is to manage prisoner reentry. Parole Officers skillfully and carefully reintegrate offenders into the community under strict supervision. Without the influence of parole's intense supervision, more offenders would return to Georgia prisons, creating a costly cycle of increasing recidivism.



Pictured from left to right: Board Member Garland R. Hunt, Vice Chairman Robert Keller, Chair L. Gale Buckner, Board Member Milton E. "Buddy" Nix, and Board Member James E. Donald

Board Members lead very active careers. In addition to making decisions regarding the release of every eligible offender entering prison, they presided over 423 revocation hearings in FY09.

## BOARD MEMBERS

In 1943, the Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation to create the State Board of Pardons and Paroles as an independent agency to administer executive clemency, grant paroles, pardons, reprieves, commute sentences (including death sentences), remit sentences and remove disabilities imposed by law.

The Georgia Constitution provides that Parole Board Members are to be appointed by the Governor to serve seven-year staggered terms, subject to confirmation by the State Senate. Originally, the Board had only three members. In 1973, when the prison population reached 9,000 inmates, the Constitution was amended to expand the Parole Board to five members.

The Board still stands at five members, although the prison population has risen to 54,000 inmates. Parole Board Members come from a variety of backgrounds, including law enforcement, public policy, corrections, legal affairs and ministry.



**Chair L. Gale Buckner**, of Chatsworth, Georgia, was appointed to the Board in January 2005 by Governor Sonny Perdue. In May 2006, she was elected Vice Chair of the Parole Board and in May 2008, she was elected Chair.

Chair Buckner leads the statewide effort for crime victims and their families to meet one-on-one with Parole Board Members. She was instrumental in the Parole Board's re-accreditation with the American Correctional Association and the attainment of State Law Enforcement Certification by the Georgia Association of the Chiefs of Police. This solidifies the agency's commitment to the implementation of policies, procedures and best practices essential for professional, effective and efficient law enforcement operations.

Chair Buckner received her Bachelor of Science degree from Georgia State University, and her Master of Public Administration from Brenau University. She began her law enforcement career with the Chatsworth Police Department as a Communications Officer, rising to the level of Sergeant.

In 1981, she began her career at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) as an Undercover Operative, and specialized in corruption and white-collar crime cases, earning the Director's Award for Outstanding Investigations in 1984.

Chair Buckner also served as GBI's Director of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. In that position, Chair Buckner spearheaded the successful passage of the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act and coordinated legislative activities with the Georgia General Assembly, while maintaining relationships with law enforcement liaisons in the White House, the United States Department of Justice and Congressional delegates and their staff to support or oppose passage of legislation and appropriations.

In 2000, Chair Buckner was appointed Executive Director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Office of the Governor, where she coordinated policy and legislative initiatives regarding offender reentry and victims' services.

Chair Buckner is a graduate of the 169th session of the FBI National Academy. In 2007, she received the Dr. Lois Higgins-Grote Heritage Award from the International Association of Women Police, of which she is a Past-President. She was a 2003 delegate to Israel with the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange, and currently serves on their Board of Directors.

Her vast experience in the criminal justice field affords her a unique vantage, which enhances the implementation of the mission and vision of the Board.

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**Vice Chair Robert E. Keller**, of Clayton County, was appointed to the Board by Governor Sonny Perdue on January 3, 2007, and elected Vice Chair of the Parole Board in May 2008.

Vice Chair Keller served as Executive Counsel to the Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia, and is the former chairman of that organization. Before joining the Prosecuting Attorneys Council, he served as the Assistant District Attorney of Clayton County from 1972-1974. He maintained a private practice from 1974-1977. Vice Chair Keller served as the District Attorney of Clayton County from 1977-2004, during those years he was voted District Attorney of the Year in 1987 and 2001.

Vice Chair Keller served as a member of the Georgia Board of Public Safety, the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Judicial Retirement System, the Georgia Code Revision Plan Committee, and the Commission to Assess Crime Laboratory Needs into the 21st Century. He also served as Vice Chair of the Governor's Commission on Certainty in Sentencing. In addition, Vice Keller was a 2009 delegate to Israel with the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange. Vice Chair Keller earned a bachelor's degree from Birmingham Southern College and a law degree from Emory Law School.

Vice Chair Keller brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice system, and his reputation and credibility among the judiciary and prosecutors is highly admired.



**Milton E. "Buddy" Nix, Jr.**, of Conyers, was appointed to the Board in June 2002 to fill an interim term, and was then appointed to a full seven year term in December 2002 during the only bipartisan swearing in ceremony in Board history. He served as Board Chairman from 2002 to 2006.

A graduate of the University of Georgia, Mr. Nix began his law enforcement career as a Special Agent of the United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations. He served from 1964 to 1970, completing a one year tour of duty in Vietnam.

Following his military service, Mr. Nix began a 23 year career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a Special Agent. He served tours of duty in Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee and FBI Headquarters. He completed his FBI career in 1993 in Houston, Texas, where he supervised a squad responsible for international terrorism, general property and bank robbery investigations.

In 1993, Mr. Nix was appointed Director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) by Governor Zell Miller. During his tenure at GBI, Mr. Nix led a major expansion of the GBI State Crime Lab system and the creation of Georgia's DNA database of convicted felons.

Mr. Nix is a member of the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, Society of Former Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agents, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc., where he was named Chief of the Year in 1998. He is also a 1999 graduate of the FBI National Executive Institute.

**Garland R. Hunt, Esq.**, of Alpharetta, was appointed to the Parole Board in January 2004, and one month later, Board Members elected him to Vice-Chairman of the Parole Board. He served as Board Chairman from 2006 to 2008.

After attending undergraduate and law school at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Mr. Hunt served as a staff attorney for the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit. Prior to becoming a Member of the Parole Board, Mr. Hunt owned a consulting company and served as General Counsel and Executive Vice-President of the Fellowship of International Churches.

Mr. Hunt was President of the 2004 Class of the Coverdell Leadership Institute, a 2006 graduate of Leadership Georgia, and named to Who's Who in Black Atlanta. He was appointed in 2004 as a member of the Governor's Commission on Family Violence.

Mr. Hunt is currently the Vice President of the Association of Paroling Authorities International and previously served as the Chairman of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. He has been a guest speaker for various organizations and was presented the key to the city of Dalton, Georgia, in 2008. In 2008, he received the President's Award from the Association of Paroling Authorities International. In 2009, he received the Ben Baer Award for outstanding work nationally in the field of parole.

An ordained minister, Mr. Hunt is the co-pastor of The Father's House in Norcross, Georgia. His background in ministry and law bring a unique set of skills to the Parole Board.



**Major General (R) James E. Donald**, of Dekalb County, was appointed to the Board by Governor Sonny Perdue on January 8, 2009.

The former Commissioner of the Department of Corrections was the driving force behind groundbreaking transformations in one of the State's largest departments. As Commissioner, General Donald oversaw the fifth largest prison system in the nation, some 200,000 felons in prison or on probation, 15,000 employees, of whom 10,000 are sworn peace officers, and an annual budget of more than \$1.2 billion.

General Donald's commitment to Governor Perdue's vision of a safer, healthier, better educated and best-managed Georgia has resulted in several revolutionary initiatives. Under his leadership, relocation of the Corrections Headquarters and its Training Academy to Tift Campus in Forsyth, Georgia, began. This decision will save Georgia taxpayers \$4 million annually. Additionally, his decisions to realign and reduce staff positions in the central office, combine many facilities and probation support functions, and transform medical support practices are estimated to have saved taxpayers over \$16 million annually.

Also, General Donald opened and began operating seven new 200-bed Pre-Release Centers, 10 new Faith and Character-based dormitories, six new "non-resident" Day Reporting Centers, and added over 2,000 new beds for transition centers or work release programs.

Prior to his appointment as the Commissioner of Corrections in 2004, General Donald retired as a Major General of the United States Army Forces Command. He earned the Bronze Star for his bold leadership as a Task Force Commander with the 101st Airborne "Screaming Eagles" during Gulf War I. He also served as Deputy Commanding General, U. S. Army Pacific, Assistant Division Commander to the 25th Infantry Division, and Director of Operations/J3 U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii.

General Donald is a native of Jackson, Mississippi, and a graduate of the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and History. He earned his Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Missouri. He is an avid supporter of his church and community activities and serves as a member of several government and civic boards.

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# Exceptional Results

## Sound Practices

- Making release decisions based upon factors that have been empirically proven to predict an offender's likelihood to commit a new crime.
- Supporting victims of crime by providing them a voice in the criminal justice system and providing information regarding the system.
- Breaking the cycle of drug dependency and crime through evidence based programs and supervision strategies.
- Supporting offenders in making the changes necessary in their lives to become self-sufficient and law-abiding members of society.

## Professional Service Delivery

- Parole officers must have a four year college degree and complete a rigorous eight week training program.
- Parole officers are required to be certified as law enforcement officers by the Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Council.
- The American Correctional Association (ACA) has re-accredited the Board's Field Operations Division, re-affirming the high standards set by the Board and agency executives for supervision.
- The agency attained State Law Enforcement Certification by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police.

# Informed Decision Making

The Parole Board incorporates information from many sources into its decisions. The sidebar lists the most common documents that Board Members review in the course of independently considering and voting on each offender case.

During this fiscal year, board staff created **21,520** new offender files and completed **54,157** investigations on behalf of the board.

Board Members completed a total of **75,245** individual votes on offender cases and imposed a total of **40,102** pre-release conditions on offenders. By Board action **12,938** offenders were released to parole supervision.

## THE CASE FILE OF AN OFFENDER

**Drug Reports**  
**Personal History**  
**Sentencing Reports**  
**Criminal History**  
**Legal Investigation**  
**Parole Review Summary**  
**Victim Impact Statements**  
**Employment History**  
**Prison Diagnostic Summary**  
**Social Investigations**

## Sound Decision Practices

Board members begin by reviewing a comprehensive case file on each offender. The file generally includes investigative reports, correctional reports, a summary of the offender's criminal history, circumstances of current offense(s) and a recommended number of months to serve based upon the application of the Parole Decision Guidelines.

The severity of the crime(s) are broken into eight policy groups or levels.

A number of factors that have been identified and weighted through the empirical analysis of thousands of Georgia cases are evaluated and a success score is generated.

These factors are combined with the crime severity level for the offense on the GRID matrix to determine a recommended number of months to serve specific to the case. These guidelines serve as a recommendation only and are not binding on the Board's decision.

A parole decision is made when a majority of the Board Members' individual votes agree on the number of months that an offender will serve in prison.

More detailed information regarding cases eligible for consideration, the parole guidelines, and the parole consideration process is available on our web site at [www.pap.state.ga.us](http://www.pap.state.ga.us)

## Looking Ahead

The Board will implement a computerized decision support application, the Clemency Online Navigation System (CONS), in December of 2010.

This system will provide additional data that will be analyzed to continue improving information available to Board Members for decision making in the future.

***Government has many responsibilities, one of those is to consider and grant executive clemency when appropriate. For government to show mercy in a carefully measured way takes courage. The purpose is often misunderstood.***

## Re-Entry Partnership Housing Program

The Reentry Partnership Housing (RPH) Program provides housing to convicted felons who remain in prison after the Parole Board has authorized their release due solely to having no residential options.

The RPH program funds housing units that are approved for parolee placement and provides short term financial assistance to help stabilize the parolees' reentry process, so that they can remain crime free.

- A total of **793** parolees have been placed since the program's inception in April 2006.
- The Parole Board has approved 28 Reentry Partnership Housing providers.
- **\$1,097,600** has been spent for inmate housing.

**Total cost spent to incarcerate 788 inmates, past their parole release month to Reentry Partnership Housing Program release date**  
**\$8,609,927**

**Cost Saving Based on Reentry Partnership Housing Program**  
**\$7,512,327**



Total number of Problem Residence Inmates  
FY09-FY10

## Other Community Housing Resources

The Parole Board carefully and strategically works with nursing home facilities for those offenders who qualify for disability benefits. Currently 45 parolees are residing in nursing home facilities. This also provides a considerable cost saving to the Department of Corrections, as these offenders are some of the most costly to incarcerate.

Through the Transitional Housing for Offender Reentry (THOR) there are an additional 133 approved residential providers. Many of these residential providers offer treatment services to parolees, supporting their efforts to become law-abiding, self-sufficient, and free from substance abuse.

Parole Board employees have frequent contact with staff in these facilities, and are able to assist with any issues that may arise prior to the parolee arriving at the facility or after the parolee arrives.

# Parole Supervision in Our Communities is...

## Active

The career of a parole officer is not for someone who likes to spend a great deal of time indoors. Effective supervision and exceptional results demand that the supervision happens where offenders live and work - in our communities.

By visiting parolees at their homes, on the job, at counseling and treatment programs and other locations in our communities, parole officers effectively monitor their activities.



Georgia's parole officers made face to face contact with offenders in our communities 447,234 times this year.

## Evidence Based

The Parole Board has accumulated more than ten years of electronic supervision records containing millions of entries on tens of thousands of released offenders. These records have been analyzed by agency research staff, contracted researchers and several universities. These studies have consistently identified four primary areas that have a proven impact on a released offender's success or failure in the community.

The four areas identified as having a significant impact on success are:

- **Continuity of Employment**
- **Drug testing results**
- **Attendance in treatment programs**
- **Residence stability**

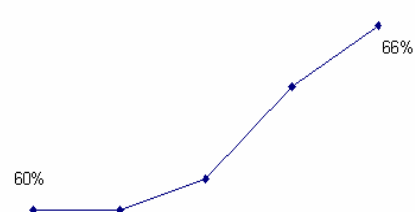
By focusing supervision activities in areas that have been demonstrated to have an impact on outcomes, Georgia's parole officers are moving this knowledge from proven theories to proven practices.

## Performance Driven

The agency's success in transitioning offenders into the community can be attributed to management strategies that focus on performance based measures, successful outcomes, and the professionalism and dedication of Georgia's parole officers.

Parole Officers skillfully and carefully reintegrate parolees into the community. Their commitment to excellence has resulted in **66%** of the parolees who left supervision in FY '09 successfully completing parole.

Successful Parole Completion Rate Fiscal Years 2005-2009



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# Focusing On What Matters

## Successful Transitions

Every day that parolees are employed improves the likelihood that they will become a successful, law abiding member of society. The parolee employment rate is 78%, and studies show that for every day a parolee is employed, there is a 1% decrease in the chance that they will be re-arrested.

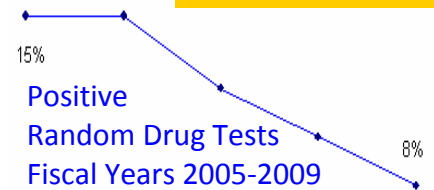
Every time a parolee attends a program, the likelihood of success improves

- **9,394** parolees were enrolled in drug treatment programs during Fiscal Year 2009.

The agency uses two types of drug testing to monitor parolees, identify those who need counseling and ensure compliance with parole conditions.

- Targeted drug testing is used to verify compliance with counseling or special conditions.
- Random drug testing is used to determine the level of drug usage in the population and identify offenders who need counseling but may not have been identified through other means.

A total of **99,941** drug tests were administered by parole officers in FY 2009



## Graduated Sanctions

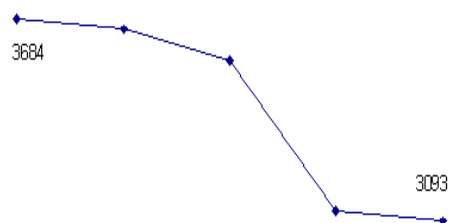
Responding to violations and undesired behaviors by parolees, Parole Officers incorporate strategies for changing the behavior.

A Parole Officer has a number of graduated sanctions available to assist parolees to address violations and undesired behaviors are present.

- Verbal Warning
- Letter of Reprimand
- Administrative Hearing
- In-house Programs
- Out Patient Programs
- Community Service Work
- Electronic Monitoring
- Short Term Incarceration

Despite efforts to assist parolees in becoming productive members of society, some parolees do not fulfill the requirements of their parole. In these cases, the Parole Board issues a Board warrant for the parolee's arrest.

A final hearing is held before a Board Member, who then makes a recommendation to the full Board on whether or not parole should be revoked and the offender returned to prison.



Parole revocations FY 2005-2009

# Victim Services



## Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Victim Service is to provide post sentencing support and information to crime victims, their families and to members of the community.

The Office of Victim Services works with victims and/or their families to answer questions about parole, to ensure their views and concerns reach the Board Members prior to any parole decision, and keep them notified of activity on their case. All letters and contacts with the office are made a permanent and confidential part of the parole file on the offender.

Additionally, the Office of Victim Services encourages victims of crimes to become informed about and involved in the case of their offender. By utilizing the services provided through the Office of Victim Services, victims have access to information concerning the status of their offenders.

During Fiscal Year 2009:

- The Office of Victim Services received **2,515** phone calls from victims or family members with questions pertaining to offenders.
- **1,546** correspondence from victims or family members were officially filed as part of the offender's record.
- Over **10,925** correspondence were sent to victims or family members addressing their concerns.
- Victims filed **2,355** victim impact statements and notifications with the Office of Victim Services.
- **1,403** victims received **\$89,174** in restitution from their offender.

## Victims Visitors' Day

The Office of Victim Services, in order to enhance services to victims of crime, instituted a **Victims Visitors' Day** in 2006. Board Members and employees of the Parole Board travel to various cities across the state to address face-to-face the needs of victims and their families. The Office of Victim Services has met with over 850 crime victims and their families since this special program began.

**262** victims were seen at three Victims Visitors' Days during Fiscal Year 2009.

**98%** of the Victims Visitors' participants rated their overall experience as good or excellent.

## Services Offered

- Notification of the release or escape of an inmate from the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections
- Ensuring Victim Impact Statements and Protest Letters are submitted to the Parole Board for review
- Notification of Parole consideration, release, and supervision
- Access to Georgia V.I.P. (Victim Information Program) automated information system (1-800-593-9474)
- Advocacy on behalf of victims, including but not limited to, situations involving harassment or unwanted contact from offenders either incarcerated or under parole supervision, and compliance with court-mandated conditions
- Referrals to community based resources and services
- Preparation and orientation for family members of homicide victims for pending executions in death penalty cases

## V.I.P.— Victim Information Program

V.I.P. is a 24 hour automated information system used by the Georgia Department of Corrections, in partnership with the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, to provide victims of crime and/or their families with access to information about their offender. By simply picking up a telephone and dialing the toll-free V.I.P. number, information regarding custody status of an inmate can be obtained.

**11,192** calls were logged into the V.I.P. Automated Phone system by victims and others during Fiscal Year 2009.

V.I.P. also operates as a notification system. Through computer generated telephone calls, individuals who have registered with the Office of Victim Services will automatically receive notification of the release of the offender from custody.

**873** calls were automatically made to victims of crime during Fiscal Year 2009.

**Upon registering, victims will automatically begin receiving computer generated notification calls when any of the following occurs:**

### How to Register with the Office of Victim Services

Victims or family members of the victim of a crime can register for notification by returning a completed Crime Victim Notification Request Form and/or a Victim Impact Statement to the Office of Victim Services at the address below.

The Victim Notification Request Form and/or the Victim Impact Statement can be obtained from the District Attorney's Victim/Witness Assistance Program serving your community. This form may also be obtained by contacting the Office of Victim Services or downloaded from our website.

Upon receiving a completed form, the Office of Victim Services will register the contact for notification into the system and mail a letter confirming the request has been received and recorded. Along with the confirmation letter, the registrant will also be issued a PIN (Personal Identification Number) that will be used to acknowledge that notification of a release has been successfully completed.

The inmate is released from prison after completing the court-ordered term of incarceration

Release from prison after completing the confinement portion of the sentence to begin a court-ordered probation period

Upon being granted a parole release

The Office of Victim Services office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

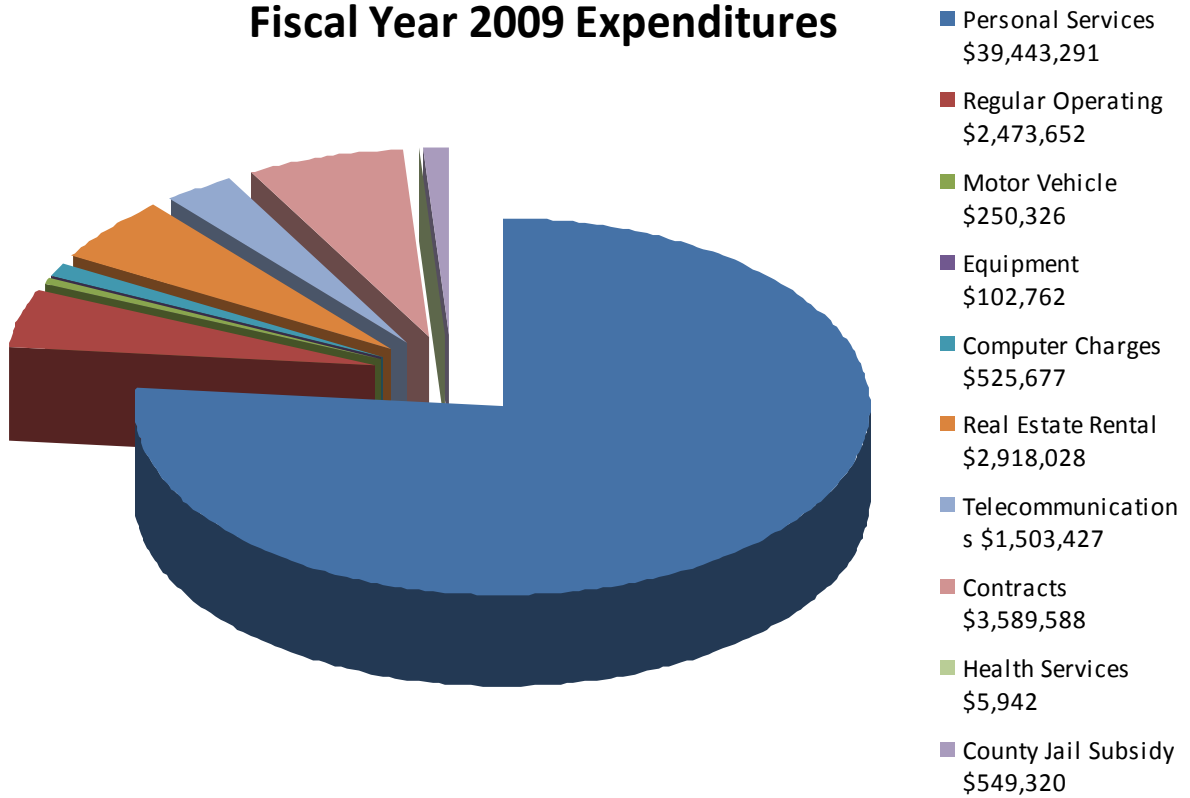
State Board of Pardons & Paroles  
Office of Victim Services  
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive  
Suite 458, East Tower  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
(404) 651-6668 Fax (404) 654-6377  
Statewide Toll-free Number  
1 (800) 593-9474

[www.pap.state.ga.us](http://www.pap.state.ga.us) or [www.dcor.state.ga.us](http://www.dcor.state.ga.us)



# Financial Performance and Impact

## Fiscal Year 2009 Expenditures



## FY 2009 Payments by Offenders

Supervision Fees	3,293,911.92
Restitution	99,989.35
Victim Compensation	<u>709,351.36</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,103,252.63</b>

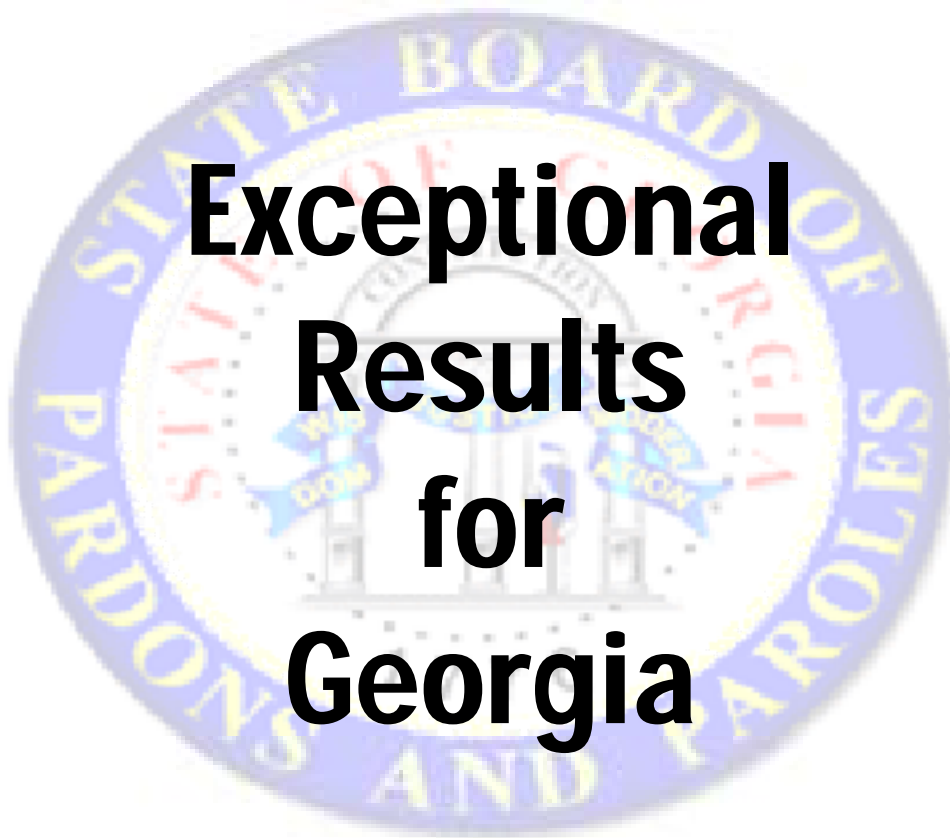
## Cost Avoidance of Residential Partnership Housing Program Since Program Inception

Total Program Savings	8,609,927
Less Expenses of Program	<u>1,097,600</u>
<b>Cost Avoided by Program</b>	<b>7,512,327</b>





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# Exceptional Results for Georgia

The FY 08 Annual Report  
was prepared by the Parole Board's  
Office of Public Affairs  
and  
Research, Evaluation and Technology

For further information please contact:  
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