

#### FOREWARD FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Despite another full year in a Covid pandemic environment, the Board and its staff continued to serve the public with integrity through a lens focused on improving processes. The leadership team who manages operations does so making every effort to provide board members with all possible relevant information that will lead to the best decision for both the offender and the community.

Throughout the reporting year board members operated remotely, with minimal personal attendance at the Board's premises. Incarcerated persons appeared for hearings from their assigned housing location and were interviewed via Zoom. This worked exceptionally well and served the citizens of the State through a monetary savings, in addition to enhanced public safety as no prisoner transport was required.

We are proud to have been able to bring more transparency to our operations as hearings were broadcast live on the internet. As a result, participation by all stakeholders has increased dramatically. This is especially important as stakeholders have a role in the pardon and parole processes and can contribute to public safety through their participation.

This year we were able to expand services to victims and survivors of crime through the Louisiana Victim Outreach program. We also established Victim Assistance Coordinators and stationed those committed individuals throughout the state to assist victims and survivors of violent crime. Providing services and resources to victims and survivors ensures their voice is heard and offers a mechanism for healing.

According to recidivism reports published by the Department of Corrections, parole releases have better success after release than others. The June 30, 2021 report is a clear indicator of successful parole decisions. The 5-year recidivism rate for the total DOC population is 43.5%, while the 5-year recidivism rate for parole releases is 29.4% -- a 48% lower recidivism rate. This parole success rate is not only a result of the parole decision, but the recognition of those 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 released, they apply what they've learned and have the desire to leave their criminal past behind.

The Louisiana Board of Pardons & Parole is always looking for ways to improve, and operationally our team is continuously working on advances. Enormous credit is due to every member of our staff who have adapted so well during the pandemic and continue to work to assist in the pardon and parole processes.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission, with public safety being the first priority.

Surge a Ravation

#### **Our Mission**

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

#### **Our Vision**

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

Render just determination in regard to parole release and revocations, thereby maximizing the restoration of human potential;

Ensure crime victims have a voice in the decision-making process;
Use appropriate Department of Corrections and community resources to
facilitate an offender's successful transition from confinement to the community;
Impose reasonable conditions of release consistent with the goal of structured
reintegration of the offender;

Hold accountable those offenders who violate the conditions of release; Foster a positive relationship with all stakeholders;

Administer the clemency process with recommendation to the Governor fully commensurate with public safety and due consideration;

Strive to be a continuously learning organization

#### **Our Values**

We value Ethics, Integrity, Equity and Innovation.

#### **STRUCTURE**

In 2012, the duties, functions, and powers of the Board of Pardons were merged with that of the Board of Parole, creating a Committee on Parole.

All members of the Board are appointed by the Governor and are subject to confirmation by the Louisiana Senate. There are five members of the Board of Pardons. The Committee on Parole is composed of the five members of the Board of Pardons and two at-large members appointed by the Governor. The at-large members serve only as members of the Committee on Parole.

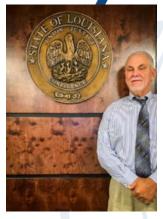


#### SHERYL M. RANATZA, Board Chair

Mrs. Ranatza retired from the position of Deputy Secretary with the LA Department of Public Safety and Corrections

Board of Committee on Parole is e five members of the ns and two at-large inted by the eat-large members of the Parole.

Jafter a Corrections career of over 30 years, which included service as Deputy Warden at Louisiana State Penitentiary for 14 years. She served in a variety of management positions throughout DPS&C. She has served as Chairman of the Louisiana Board of Pardons and Parole since 2012.



#### JIM WISE, Board Vice Chair

After studying criminal justice at Northwestern State
University in Natchitoches, and completing the Calcasieu
Regional Law Enforcement
Training Academy, Mr. Wise

served as a deputy in the Vernon Parish Sheriff's Office for 18 years as supervisor over all uniformed divisions. He later served as an Investigator at Louisiana State Penitentiary. Mr. Wise was first appointed to the Louisiana Parole Board in 2004 and was appointed to the Pardon Board in August 2012. He is the longest serving member.



#### ALVIN ROCHÉ, JR Pardon & Parole

Mr. Roché served as the director of library services at Southern University Law Center from 1990 until his retirement in August of 2007. Prior to becoming the

director of library services, Mr. Roché served a variety of roles in the Southern University System, including associate law librarian and associate professor at the University Library. Mr. Roché received his bachelor of sciences degree in social science-history with a minor in library sciences from Southern University and a masters of library services from Louisiana State University. Mr. Roché serves on the Board of Pardons and Committee on Parole as the victims' advocate.



## BONNIE JACKSON, Pardon & Parole

Judge Bonnie Jackson earned her Juris Doctorate. from the LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 1978, one of five African American students to

graduate from the law school that year. Judge Jackson worked for the East Baton Rouge Parish Public Defender's Office for 14 years. While there she became the assistant director, a position she held until the launch of her judgeship campaign. Bonnie Foster Jackson was a judge for Section 1, Division K of the Louisiana 19th Judicial District Court. She left office on December 31, 2020.



## TONY MARABELLA, Pardon & Parole

Tony Marabella is a graduate of LSU, obtaining his Juris
Doctorate in 1973 from LSU's
Paul M. Hebert Law Center.
He has participated in all

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



## PEARL WISE, Parole

Ms. Wise began her criminal justice career as a probation and parole officer in the Monroe District Office of the Division of Probation & Parole.

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



#### **BRENNAN KELSEY,**

#### **Parole**

Mr. Kelsey is a physical therapist with 20 years of experience, 15 of which were in his own private practice. Throughout his career, Mr.

Kelsey has worked in a variety of settings including mental health outpatient, rehab, and acute care. Mr. Kelsey received a bachelor of science in physical therapy from Louisiana State University Medical Center and a master's in general business and healthcare from Southeastern Louisiana University. Mr. Kelsey was appointed by Governor John Bel Edwards to serve as an at-large member of the Committee on Parole.



## **Education & Training**

#### 2022 Training Topics Included:

- Justice Reinvestment Grant Funded Programs
- Specialized Community Supervision Programs
- Non-Unanimous Jury Convictions
- Trauma Informed Victim Support
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as it Relates to Board Decisions
- Legislative Updates and Time Computation
   Updates
- Medical Assisted Treatment Programs
- Statistical Analysis of Recidivism in Long Serving Offenders

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

After their appointment, Board Members are required to participate in continued education as part of our ACA Accreditation. Our team works diligently to provide training opportunities for our Board Members and Staff.



#### Association of Paroling Authorities International

**Professional Development** 

The benefits of the Board's participation in APAI are invaluable to all of it's stakeholders. APAI is a global association dedicated to the accomplishment of public safety and successful offender reentry through training, education, standards of evidence-based research and best practices. This network of professionals from discretionary releasing authorities from around the world provide peerbased technical assistance and support in collaboration with strategic partners. Chairman Ranatza (right) nominated Executive Director Abbott (left) for the Vincent O'Leary Award in recognition of his significant contribution to APAI and his demonstrated vision, leadership and commitment to the field of parole. Abbott was elected to serve as Secretary of APAI and serves as the Chairman of the Communications Committee.





In addition to Chairman Ranatza and Executive Director Abbott, APAI's Annual Training Conference in Ft. Worth, Texas was attended by Board Members P. Wise and Marabella. Ranatza (top right) attended roundtable discussions with Parole Chairmen from around the world. Abbott presented two separate training tracks. The first was titled "Neighboring States with Varying Approaches to Victim Services" and it looked at Victim Services in Louisiana. Arkansas and Texas. The second training track Abbott collaborated with Bob Lancaster (left), a law professor with the LSU Parole Clinic and Andrew Hundley with the Louisiana Parole Project. This track was titled "Connecting" Universities, Law Schools, Reentry Non-Profits, and Paroling Authorities to Energize Success on Parole."



#### Site Visit & Reaccredited

In April the Board welcomed ACA Auditors Sandra Hylton and Ken Valentine for its Standards Compliance Reaccreditation Audit. Staff presented three years worth of documentation and successfully answered the auditors questions. As a result the Board received a 96% score at its ACA Audit Exit Interview. As one of only a few Parole Boards in the Country that are ACA Accredited, we strictly adhere to the standards set forth by ACA. There are 128 standards, with 2 of those being non-applicable to our organization, leaving a total of 126 standards to guide us in our daily operations. Of those 126 standards, we were found to be in compliance with 122 standards. There were only 4 standards we were found to be non-compliant with; the ACA audit team recognized that this was out of our control due to statutory restrictions that we have continued to make efforts to address through the legislative process.

## **Clemency Process**

The Governor may grant reprieves to persons convicted of offenses against the state, and upon recommendation of the Board of Pardons, may commute sentences, pardon those convicted of offenses against the state, and remit fines and forfeitures imposed for such offenses. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the governor shall not grant any pardon to any person unless that person has paid all of the court costs or fees imposed in connection with the conviction of the crime for which the pardon is to be issued.

#### Application

Application submitted.





#### Administrative Review

Application granted (schedule hearing) or denied

#### Investigation

- Investigation ordered
- Victims are interviewed
- Input from District Attorney, Judges, and Law Enforcement



#### Hearing - Offender interviewed

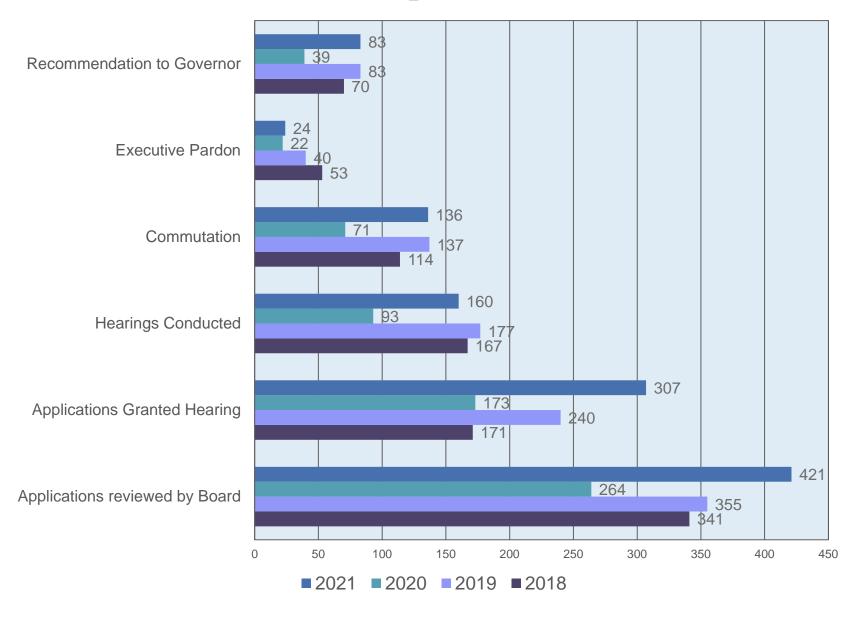
- Victim participation/submit
   Victim Impact Statement
- DAs, Judges, LEOs participate in hearing/send official statement

#### Outcome

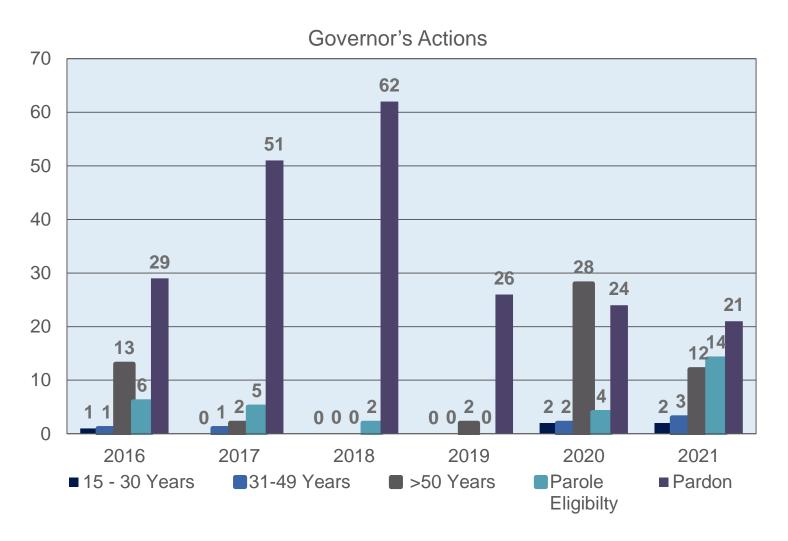
Application denied or Recommendation made to the Governor



## **Clemency Statistics**



## **Clemency Statistics**



This chart shows the range of relief the Governor has granted by commuting sentence to a number of years or providing Parole Eligibility.

#### Eligibility

DPS&C submits statutorily eligible individuals





#### Administrative Review

Application granted (schedule hearing) or denied

#### Investigation

- Pre-Parole Investigation ordered
  - -Victims are interviewed
  - Input from District Attorney, Judges, and Law Enforcement



#### Hearing

- Offender interviewed - Victim participation/submit
- Victim Impact Statement
- DAs, Judges, LEOs participate in hearing/send official statement

#### Outcome

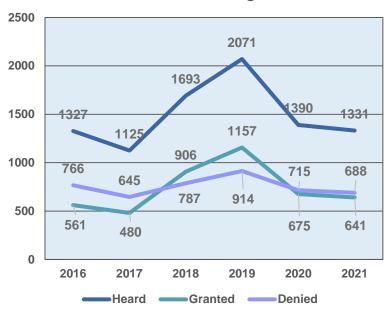
Parole Denied or Parole Granted



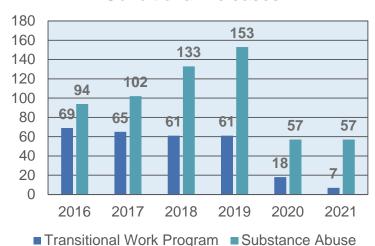
## Parole Process

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

#### Parole Hearings



#### **Conditional Releases**



## Parole by the Numbers

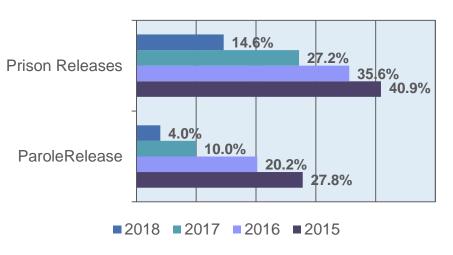
Parole Hearings show the number of hearings conducted by year and paroles granted. The increase in parole hearings in 2018 & 2019 is a result of the 2017 Criminal Justice Reform package of legislation.

Conditional Releases shows the number of offenders that had to complete programming prior release on parole.

Decrease in conditional releases in 2020 & 2021 are due to lack of programming

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

#### 3 Year Parole Release Recidivism



## **Factors For Decision Making**

Every eligible offender is given a meaningful opportunity for parole. The Committee considers pertinent and available information relative to an offender six to nine months prior to the parole eligibility date. The Committee exercises its discretionary releasing authority based upon consideration of the unique factors of each individual case. Shown below are the guidelines used for consideration; however, the guidelines are not to be construed so as to mandate either a favorable or unfavorable parole decision. A parole decision is at the discretion of each individual parole panel member.

- Nature and Circumstances of the Crime
  - Prior Criminal Record
- Character, Social Background, and Emotional and Physical Condition
  - Institutional Adjustment
  - Law Enforcement, Judicial, and District Attorney
    - Community attitude toward the offender.
      - Parole Plan
      - Program Participation
        - Risk Assessment

## Rehabilitative Programs

While many of the offenders who appear before a parole panel have been exposed to DOC certified treatment and rehabilitative programs, some still have not received programming that addresses their reasons for incarceration. The Board's support staff reviews offender records prior to parole hearings to identify offenders who may have special needs. The ultimate goal in these situations would be to place the offender in appropriate programming at a facility close to their post-release residence plan so they can maintain and strengthen family ties.

## Risk Factors & Possible Program Opportunities

#### Substance Abuse

Medical Assisted TreatmentLong Term and Short Term

#### Mental Health

- Evaluations
- Medicaid/Medicare Sign-Up
  - After Care Plan
- Specialized Parole Agents

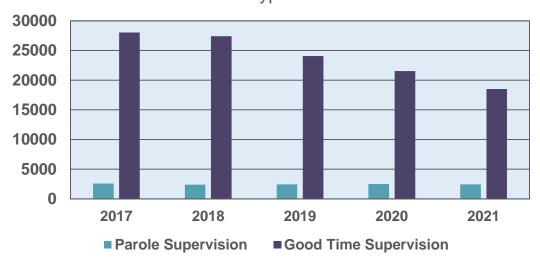
#### **Employability**

- Expanding use of Transitional Work Program
  - Basic Vocational Training

#### Education

- Literacy - Adult Basic Education - HiSet

### Average Number of Offenders by Supervision Types



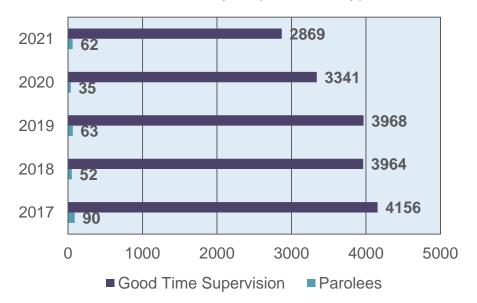
#### **Community Supervision**

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

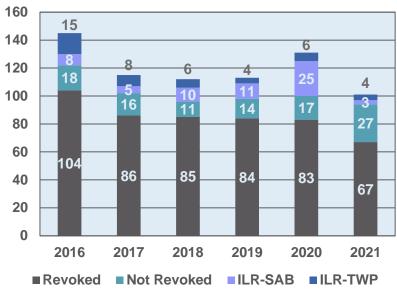
Revocation by Supervision Type shows a decrease in revocations as the use of alternatives to incarceration have increased. These alternatives include administrative sanctions that the parole officer can put in place.

Revocation Hearing Outcomesor Substance Abuse Treatment (SAB) or participation in Transitional Work Program (TWP) that can be ordered In Lieu of Revocation (ILR).

#### Revocations by Supervision Type



#### **Revocation Hearing Outcomes**

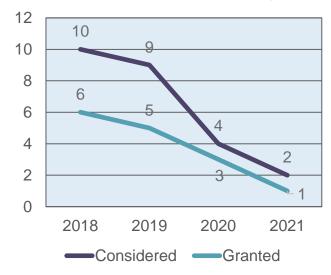




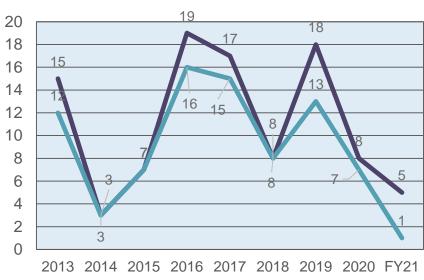
## An Aging Population

The Committee on Parole considers the offender's crime and criminal history, length of time served in custody, institutional conduct, whether the offender represents a low risk to himself or society, as well as an assessment of the offender's condition. In the assessment of risk, emphasis is given to the medical condition and how this relates to the overall risk to society. Medical Parole is not available to any offender serving a sentence for a conviction of first or second-degree murder. If the offender's condition improves such that he is no longer eligible for medical parole, the medical parole may be revoked and the offender returned to custody.

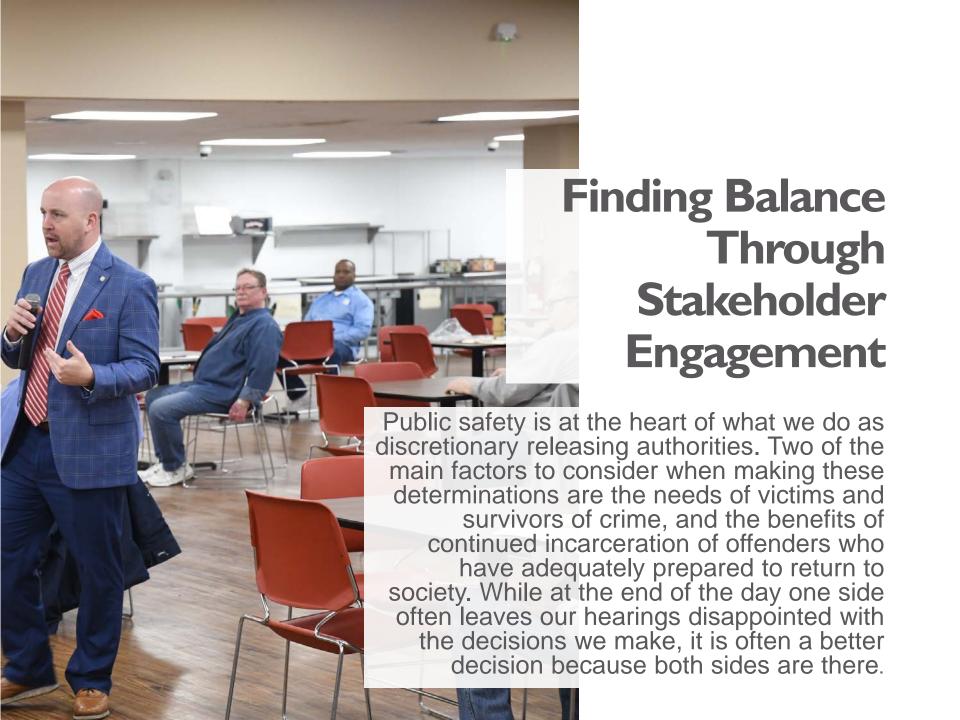
#### Medical Treatment Furlough



#### **Medical Parole**



Considered —Granted



## Stakeholder Engagement

## **Louisiana District Attorneys Association**

The LDAA serves as a central contact for our organization to disseminate information to the 30 different district attorneys across the State of Louisiana. We have established data sharing practices that provide information with cloud-based data storage. This practice delivers pertinent information to district attorneys about the offender's time while incarcerated including, but not limited, to disciplinary conduct, programs of completion and job history. It is our belief that this information can bring balance to the input provided by district attorneys.

#### Penalties & Sentences

- HCR 5 (McCormick)- suspends criminal penalties for violation of EO during pandemic.
- HCR 97 (Jones)- Study on best practices relating to parole and parole release.

"I can say without hesitation that the leadership and staff of the LBPCP have been extremely accommodating to the Louisiana District Attorneys in the sharing of information and enhancing access to the proceedings for prosecutors and victims."

- Loren Lampert, Executive Director of the LDAA

## Stakeholder Engagement



#### **Promise of Justice Initiative**

The Board and PJI have worked to address multiple issues emerging in the criminal justice arena. Most recently Jamila Johnson, Managing Attorney for PJI's Unanimous Jury Project, and Executive Director Abbott addressed the offender population at Louisiana State Penitentiary about their work on the Equal Justice Task Force created by HR 197 of the 2021 Regular Session.

## Stakeholder Engagement

#### Louisiana Parole Project

Louisiana Parole Project is a nonprofit that was initially created to respond to the needs of Juveniles sentenced to life without the possibility of parole, who suddenly found themselves with parole eligibility after the rulings in Miller and Montgomery. Services start with legal representation provided through an innovative partnership with the Louisiana State University Parole Clinic Program, in which law students are allowed to represent offenders before the Board. We work closely with both the LSU Parole Clinic and LPP to provide docket information to ensure the law students have enough time to engage their clients and conduct the necessary due diligence to represent an individual in cases of this magnitude.



"We have the same objective as the Parole Board in that we want to ensure that public safety is strengthened through our work." - Andrew Hundley, LPP Executive Director

#### **Victim - Survivor Rights & Services**

#### **Victim Outreach**

VICTIM-SI

Throughout 2021, Louisiana Victim Outreach Program (LAVO) continued to provide victim/survivor services remotely. LAVO staff delivered counseling, advocacy, and survivor-focused events to community members across the state via Zoom and phone. In challenging circumstances, LAVO staff worked diligently to provide support and resources to victims and survivors of crime.

In January, Julie Collura, LAVO Social Services Director, appeared on several

Louisiana TV news stations, including WWLTV of New Orleans and Good Day CenLA out of

Alexandria. Ms. Collura introduced LAVO to viewers and spoke about survivor services. In February, Ms. Collura met with representatives from the Orleans DA's Office to discuss collaborating in order to better serve victims.

In April, LAVO collaborated with the Accountability Working Group, a New Orleans based coalition of service providers working with survivors and perpetrators of sexual harm, to offer a four-part webinar series. Entitled, "Healing and Accountability in Sexual Harm," the series was geared toward counselors, social workers, advocates and

featured presenters who are experts in the field of sexual harm prevention. Around 100 attendees participated in each of the four webinars.

#### **Therapeutic Services**

Ms. Collura continues to provide therapeutic counseling to survivors around the state through HIPAA secure video conferencing. Julie, along with Jolie Duarte and LAVO's intern from the Tulane School of Social Work, Kai Werder, also provided advocacy, assistance with victim impact statements, and support before, during, and after hearings via phone and Zoom. Jolie and Kai made more than 200 calls to victims to follow up and offer services after hearings, focusing on victims in districts not served by a Victim Assistance

Coordinator. Kai worked over 600 hours for LAVO, including compiling resources for our Healing and Support Services guidebook. This is another valuable tool for LAVO to share with clients, service providers, and law enforcement. The guide is regularly updated and available on our website (www.lavo.info/servicesdirectory).

TULANE UNIVERSITY

Ms. Collura collaborated with the New Orleans Family Justice Center (NOFJC) to facilitate a weekly online expressive arts group for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. On December 7, Ms. Collura facilitated an in-person expressive arts workshop for NOFJC clients. We are hopeful that we will be able to offer expressive arts as a weekly group onsite at the NOFJC beginning in January.

#### **Connection & Education**

The implementation of the Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) Program strengthens LAVO's ability to serve victims across the state. The VAC's are invaluable resources in the field and support victims by making initial contact, providing counseling referrals to Julie, and connecting LAVO with local service providers. On December 7, LAVO, along with community partners in the Caddo-Bossier parish area, presented a webinar focused on survivor services in NW Louisiana. Speakers included the VACs in the Caddo-Bossier area, along with representatives from the NW Louisiana Family Justice Center, Project Celebration Inc., Caddo-Bossier Domestic Violence Task Force, Caddo DA's Office Victim Assistance Coordinator, and Shreveport Probation &

Parole. The goal of the webinar was to provide information to survivors about services in their area, and to build community partnerships. The live webinar was attended by 70 people and was recorded and made available on LAVO's YouTube channel. LAVO plans to collaborate with area VAC's to offer similar webinars focused on other parts of the state. LAVO also hopes to offer an in-person victim services event in Baton Rouge next year.

To inform victims of the NW Louisiana survivor services webinar, Ms. Duarte mailed letters to all registered victims in the Caddo-Bossier area. Numerous victims called LAVO after receiving letters in order to update their contact information. This gave LAVO staff an opportunity to offer services to callers. As a result of the mailing, we connected with many victims who were unaware of LAVO services, and updated our records with accurate victim information.

In addition to managing LAVO's social media accounts, Ms. Duarte created a LAVO Google My Business profile. As a result, we have seen an increase in calls and website visits. In the last quarter, people searched for LAVO over 1000 times. The most common search terms were "domestic violence", "domestic violence Baton Rouge", and "victim advocates near me".

Toward the end of the year, LAVO moved into a new suite of offices at DPS&C Headquarters. The move puts all of victim services in the same building and in close proximity to the new hearing room. The space will also allow LAVO to offer in-person counseling and groups to survivors in the Baton Rouge area and provide in-person support to victims attending hearings.

#### **Survivor Lobby Day**

On June 6, stakeholders from across the state gathered at the Capitol in Baton Rouge for Survivor Lobby Day. Victim Services Advocate Jolie Duarte (right) and Investigative Specialist Whitney Troxclair and Tobi Robertson participated on behalf of LAVO and the Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole. More than 50 survivors, victims' loved ones,



advocates, and allies connected with lawmakers to advocate for investing in crime prevention strategies, resources for impacted communities, and making the Capitol a more trauma-informed and welcoming place for survivors to share stories.

#### **Victim Offender Dialogue**



The Victim Offender Dialogue Program held four meetings with its facilitators during 2021, three were conducted virtually and one in person, in Shreveport and included guest speaker Ms. Jeri Bowen, Director for the Northwest Louisiana Family Justice Center. Due to the ongoing pandemic. facilitators were often unable to meet with offenders in institutions and state facilities. When able to practice safe social distancing victims and survivors met with VOD Facilitators in person. For the first time in our program's history we utilized tele-conferencing to connect an offender and victim for a dialogue.

#### **Victim Impact**

The Victim Impact: Listen and Learn Curriculum was approved as a certified treatment rehabilitation program within the DPS&C. This 32-



hour program teaches offenders the impact of their crimes on their victims. This course is comprised of lessons on the following; introduction to victim impact; property crime; assault; robbery; hate and bias; gang crime; sexual assault; child abuse and neglect; domestic violence; drunk and impaired driving; homicide; and making amends. Offenders who are eligible for good time credits may earn 90 days upon completion of the class. Facilitators have been trained at eight state facilities and fifteen local level facilities.

#### The Accountability Letter Program

DPS&C Staff facilitate the Accountability Letter Program to offenders housed in state institutions and local jails. An accountability letter is a letter written by an offender to the victims of the crimes for which the offender has been sentenced. In these letters, the offender accepts responsibility for the crime, acknowledging the harm caused to the victim and expressing regret for that harm. Once the offender completes a letter, if there are victims registered they are notified of this letter and may receive a copy if they chose. A total of 127 accountability letters were written during the 2021 year.

#### **Victim Assistance Coordinators**

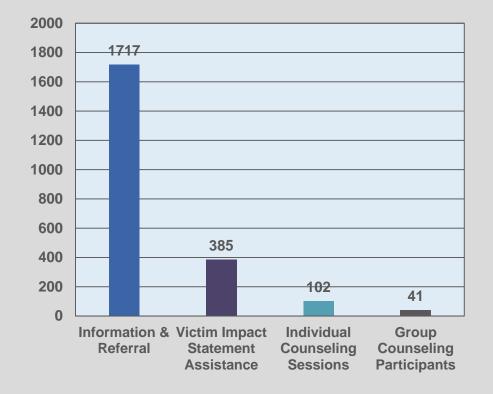
While preparing grant applications to fund our Victim – Survivor Services for the 2021 calendar year, an analysis of our operations revealed a need to focus on approaching initial contact with victims and survivors in a manner that is trauma informed. Our team put together a multi-year plan to create Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) Positions and have them stationed in Parole

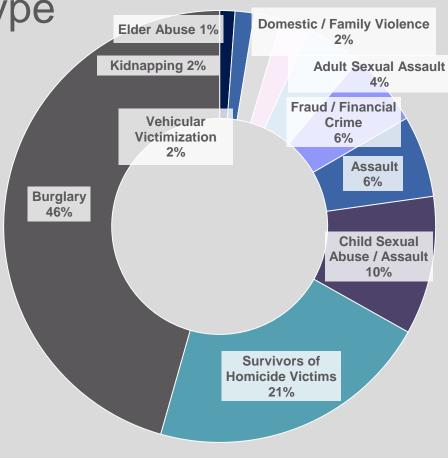


Offices around the State of Louisiana. These newly created VACs would assist locating victims, interviewing and preparing victim impact statements and when needed referring victims to services. This plan was presented to the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement in late November of 2022 and immediately realizing the public's need for these services we were approved for funding beginning January 1, 2021. Since then we have hired nine VACs and one Program Administrator.

Victims Receiving Services by Crime Type

#### Services Provided to Victims





## 2021 Legislative Session

- ACT 122 Provides parole eligibility to offenders with violent and sex offense convictions who have served at least 20 years and reached the age of 45.
- ACT 125 Decreased Probation and Parole Fees.
- HR 197 Established the Equal Justice Task Force to address convictions by non-unanimous juries.
- SCR 45 Established the Survivor Informed Task Force to study the link between trauma, abuse and subsequent incarceration. Executive Director Abbott serves as the designee for DPS&C's Secretary Leblanc on this taskforce.

