

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

INTAKE TO PAROLE PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in September 1998, contains the results of our performance audit* of the Intake to Parole Process, Department of Corrections (DOC).

AUDIT PURPOSE

This performance audit was conducted as part of the constitutional responsibility of the Office of the Auditor General. Performance audits are conducted on a priority basis related to the potential for improving effectiveness* and efficiency*.

BACKGROUND

The overall mission* of the Department of Corrections' parole consideration process is to provide the Parole Board* with accurate, reliable, and timely information about a prisoner so that the Parole Board can make a factual and realistic decision to grant or deny a parole. Section 791.233 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* states that a parole may not be granted unless the Parole Board has reasonable assurance that the prisoner will not become a menace to society or to the public safety.

In 1996, the Parole Board processed 17,523 parole cases.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES,
CONCLUSIONS, AND
NOTEWORTHY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Audit Objective: To determine if DOC's methods for accumulating information for the parole review process effectively provided information that is accurate, reliable, and timely.

Conclusion: We concluded that information provided to the Parole Board generally was accurate, reliable, and timely. However, our assessment disclosed reportable conditions* related to minimum sentence* calculation and to Parole Board data (Findings 1 and 2).

Noteworthy Accomplishments: DOC is required to obtain and process a large amount of data and related documentation as part of the parole process. The importance of the completeness and accuracy of this information cannot be overemphasized to ensure that only those prisoners who have earned the right to parole are considered for parole. We found that DOC did a good job accumulating this data and related documentation. Although DOC management strived to ensure that complete and accurate information was obtained for all prisoners, errors did occur in the process. However, we found that DOC kept those errors to a minimum and thereby maintained the integrity of its mission to provide the Parole Board with accurate, reliable, and timely prisoner information that allowed the Parole Board to make proper parole decisions.

Audit Objective: To determine if DOC's methods for accumulating information for the parole review process complied with the applicable statutes, rules, policies, and procedures.

Conclusion: We concluded that DOC generally complied with the applicable statutes, rules, policies, and procedures governing the parole review process. However, our review disclosed a reportable condition related to parole eligibility reports* (Finding 3).

**AUDIT SCOPE AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the accuracy of the information provided to the Parole Board during the parole process. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Our audit procedures included examination of prisoners' records and activities during the periods of their sentences.

We performed a preliminary survey to obtain an understanding of DOC's intake to parole process. We selected for review a sample of prisoners considered for parole by the Parole Board from April through June 1997. We recalculated the minimum sentence for the prisoners in our sample and verified the information presented to the Parole Board in the parole eligibility reports. Also, we verified the information used by the Parole Board in preparing the parole guideline score sheets*. We recalculated the scores on the score sheets to determine the effect of any errors on the prisoners' probability of parole* .

AGENCY RESPONSES

Our audit report includes 3 findings and 4 corresponding recommendations. DOC agreed with 2 of the recommendations and partially agreed with the other 2 recommendations.