

Iowa Board of Parole FY2026 Integrated Annual Agency and Performance Report

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Over the past year, the Iowa Board of Parole has focused on a straightforward responsibility: making sound decisions under Iowa law that protect public safety, recognizing the interests of victims, and supporting safe and successful transitions from incarceration back to the community. The Board sees Iowa's correctional system from a particular vantage point. We review thousands of cases each year, often years after sentencing, from every state correctional institution. We see how sentencing, institutional behavior, programming, release planning, victim participation, parole supervision, and revocation connect over time. That perspective reinforces something we have emphasized in our outreach: no single decision determines Iowa's prison population or long-term. During FY2026, the Board completed 9,801 release deliberations, including 2,864 parole decisions, 777 work release decisions, and 596 special sentence decisions. Our administrative law judges completed 2,796 revocation decisions. We ended the year with 8,996 registered victims in our system and continued to provide notice and opportunities for victim participation. Board members and staff also spent significant time in Iowa's institutions and Community-Based Corrections districts and participated in training with state and national partners.

Our strategic plan asks us to do more than process cases. It calls on us to use current evidence-based practices, make consistent and data-informed decisions, keep victims' interests at the center of the process, understand the fiscal effects of our work, strengthen collaboration, learn from national experts, and build stronger quality assurance. Those commitments are reflected throughout this report.

Parole is not simply about when someone leaves prison. When release is appropriate, parole can provide a structured step down from incarceration while a person is still accountable to the conditions of a sentence. At the same time, the Board must continue to examine its own work. We are using data to align our decision-making, track release and revocation outcomes, and ensure effective performance.

In the year ahead, we will continue that work and our outreach to stakeholders. Our goal is to be transparent about what we do, clear about what the data shows, and useful to Iowa leaders as they consider public safety, corrections, supervision, and the long-term performance of the criminal justice system.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renee Schulte". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a stylized "S".

Renee Schulte, Chair
Iowa Board of Parole

1. About the Iowa Board of Parole

The Board is an independent decision-making body responsible for reviewing eligible cases for parole and work release, considering appeals and other release matters, conducting parole revocation hearings through administrative law judges, reviewing executive clemency applications and making recommendations to the Governor, and carrying out victim-related responsibilities.

Mission

To enhance overall public safety by making evidence-based and data-informed parole decisions for successful reentry into the community.

Vision

To make evidence-based release and revocation decisions that prioritize public safety while also being conscious of managing prison population, while creating consistent data-informed Board operation procedures that foster collaboration between all stakeholders.

Statutory Responsibilities

Under Iowa Code 906.5, annual reviews for individuals without mandatory minimums or life sentences are strict legal obligations, not indicators of release. In evaluating release suitability, the Board focuses on a number of factors including institutional conduct, risk assessments, and supervision history rather than relitigating past offenses. We deeply respect the grief carried by victims, ensuring meaningful participation under Iowa Code Chapter 915 remains an essential part of every review.

Strategic Direction

The Board's FY2026 strategic plan identifies seven goals that guide its work:

- Use updated and relevant evidence-based practices in decision making.
- Base decisions on evidence-based practices that prioritize public safety.
- Ensure victims' interests are considered in the deliberation process.
- Remain fiscally conscious of the financial impact of decisions.
- Forge collaborative relationships with stakeholders.
- Collaborate with nationally recognized experts to improve system effectiveness.
- Develop a quality assurance process that uses data effectively.

2. FY2026 Strategic Progress & Performance

To simplify year-end reporting, the Board's seven strategic goals are organized below into four key focus areas. Each section pairs FY2026 progress directly with its related performance metrics. Per Iowa law, projected targets for FY2027 are also detailed below.

Evidence-based, Consistent, and Public Safety-Driven Decision-Making

The Board continued monthly tracking of release decisions, denials, DOC recommendations, and revocation activity while investing in training and data use. The strategic plan also identifies quality assurance and stronger data-analysis capacity as longer-term needs.

Measure	FY26 target	FY26 actual	FY27 target	FY26 context
Agreement with DOC recommendations	80%	75%	80%	Below target by 5 points. Board decisions remain individualized determinations.
Parole release deliberations	10,500	9,801	9,500	Below target by 699. This is a workload measure reflecting cases presented for deliberation.
Parole revocation decisions	3,000	2,796	2,500	Below target by 204. This is a workload measure reflecting revocation activity.

Victims and Executive Clemency

The Board reported full performance on its designated victim notification and executive-clemency measures. FY2026 victim reporting also recorded 1,014 registration letters, 3,176 notification letters, 2,145 registration decisions, and 8,996 registered victims as of June 30.

Measure	FY26 target	FY26 actual	FY27 target
Victims notified as designated	100%	100%	100%
Executive clemency applications reviewed and processed	100%	100%	100%
Commutations reviewed by the Board	100%	100%	100%

Collaboration and Professional Development

The Board expanded partnerships across Department of Corrections facilities, Community-Based Corrections, universities, funders, and national criminal justice organizations like Arnold Ventures, Recidiviz, Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), the Crime & Justice Institute, and the University of Nebraska Omaha. Professional development focused on risk assessment, mental health, sex offender treatment, and revocation practices.

Measure	FY26 target	FY26 actual	FY27 target	FY26 context
Board visits to DOC institutions	9	15	9	Exceeded target by 6.
Board visits to CBC districts	8	8	8	Met target.
ALJ visits to CBC districts	6	8	8	Exceeded target by 2.
Community partner events	3	5	3	Exceeded target by 2.
Internal trainings	12	13	12	Exceeded target by 1.
External trainings	6	10	6	Exceeded target by 4.
Local/national specialist conferences attended	6	4	6	Below target by 2. Participation included the Iowa SOR Symposium, Iowa Mental Health Summit, AV Bridge conference, and APAI.

Fiscal Responsibility and Organizational Capacity

The Board reviewed financial information throughout the year and continued planning for future organizational and data needs. The June FY2026 report showed a \$1,545,114 appropriation plus \$32,710.48 in training and technology carryforward. Final closed-year figures should be used for any final expenditure or reversion statement. The strategic plan identifies quality improvement and data-analysis capacity as longer-term needs.

3. FY2026 Operations and Accomplishments

Release Decisions

The Board completed 9,801 release deliberations during FY2026. The year-end decision report breaks that work down as follows:

Decision type	FY2026
Parole	2,864
Work release	777
Special sentence	596
Release denied	3,709
Appeals	715
Interview granted	485
Other/miscellaneous*	655
Total	9,801

**Other/miscellaneous activity includes effective-date changes, canceled or rescheduled interviews, decision changes, rescind decisions, work release extensions, and special-condition changes.*

Parole Revocations

Administrative law judges conduct parole revocation proceedings. In FY2026, the Board processed 2,796 revocation hearings, resulting in 1,341 total revocations.

Revocation statistics	FY2026
Parole revocation hearings	2,796
Parole revoked to prison*	666
Automatic revocations	384
Parole revoked to work release	291
Total revocations	1,341

**Excludes automatic parole revocations triggered by new felony or aggravated misdemeanor convictions under Iowa Code §§ 908.10 and 908.10A.*

Revocation appeals	FY2026
Appeals affirmed	98
Appeals remanded for review	0
Total appeals	98

Executive Clemency

The board evaluates executive clemency applications and submits recommendations to the Governor. In FY2026, the Board reviewed and processed 100% of all complete executive clemency and commutation applications.

Executive clemency	Decisions	Recommended
Commutation	12	0
Pardon (P)	24	2
Firearm restoration (FA)	43	10
Firearm restoration/pardon	50	4 FA/P; 8 FA only

Victim Services

Victim notification and participation are core parts of the Board's work. FY2026 reporting recorded the following activity:

Victim activity	FY2026
Registration letters	1,014
Notification letters	3,176
Registration decisions	2,145
Registered victims as of June 30, 2026	8,996

4. Correctional System Context

The Board reviews cases after sentencing and often years into a person's incarceration. As the Board has emphasized in legislative outreach, sentencing, incarceration, parole eligibility, release decisions, and community supervision interact over time. The figures below provide FY2026 context for the system in which the Board operates. They are not Board decision counts.

Prison population	Count
July 1, 2025	8,442
June 30, 2026	8,915
Net change	+473

Population by Parole Eligibility Status

The FY2026 Department of Corrections data examines Iowa prison admissions, population counts as of June 30, 2026, and prison closures. Using additional detail provided by the DOC, the data tracks annual intake and release pathways alongside specific custody categories, including life sentences and mandatory minimum fulfillment.

FY2026 prison admissions	Count
Total admissions	4,384
New court commitments	1,434
Probation revocations	1,403
Parole revocations	847
Work release revocations	312
Special sentence revocations	181
OWI revocations	13
Other admissions	194

Approximately two-thirds of Iowa's prison population was technically parole eligible on June 30, 2026. Of the 8,915 people incarcerated, 5,900 (66.2%) had either satisfied an applicable mandatory minimum or were otherwise technically parole eligible. Technical eligibility does not imply a DOC recommendation for release, nor does it guarantee Board approval. The Board evaluates each case independently and makes release decisions based on Iowa law and individual case factors.

Point-in-time prison population on June 30, 2026	Count	Share of population
Life penalty/Class A felony	863	9.7%
Mandatory minimum not yet satisfied	2,152	24.1%
Mandatory minimum satisfied	1,020	11.4%
Other technically parole eligible	4,880	54.7%

** Of the 863 individuals identified with Class A felony life penalties, 27 committed their offense before age 18. However, because tracking data does not fully reflect post-conviction modifications like commutations or successful appeals, this count may overestimate the number of individuals actively serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole.*

FY2026 prison closures	Count
Total closures	3,716
Discharge/parole to discharge	779
Parole	1,075
10b/C11P /work release	1,268
Other closures	594

Length of Stay and Early Release Reporting

The FY2026 BOP Annual Length of Stay data examines Iowa prison closures by most serious convicting crime. For the three principal felony classes, the offense-level data can be separated into drug and non-drug offenses to show how length of stay differs within the same felony class.

Felony class/most serious offense	FY26 closures	Average LOS (months)	Average LOS (years)
Class B - Drug	68	24.8 months	2.1 years
Class B - Non-drug	69	112.2 months	9.3 years
Class C - Drug	218	16.2 months	1.3 years
Class C - Non-drug	455	34.6 months	2.9 years
Class D - Drug	239	15.5 months	1.3 years
Class D - Non-drug	1,027	16.6 months	1.4 years

Drug offenses are those whose most serious convicting offense is under Iowa Code chapter 124. The non-drug category includes violent, property, sex, weapons, and other offenses, so it should not be read as synonymous with violent crime.

The largest difference is within Class B: drug-offense closures averaged 24.8 months, compared with 112.2 months for non-drug Class B offenses. Class C drug closures averaged 16.2 months compared with 34.6 months for non-drug offenses; Class D averages were much closer at 15.5 and 16.6 months.

5. Looking Ahead: FY2027

The Board's continuing strategic priorities are evidence-based and data-informed decision-making, public safety, victim participation, fiscal responsibility, collaboration, professional development, and stronger quality assurance. The Board continues to analyze decision consistency, release and revocation outcomes, and operational transparency to inform long-term correctional policy.

Appendix. Reporting Requirements Crosswalk

Report element	Primary source	Location
Chair/Director message	DOM recommended component	Front matter
FY2026 agency operations	Iowa Code §7E.3(4)	Sections 2 and 3
Strategic progress	Iowa Code §8E.210; DOM guidebook	Section 2
Operational accomplishments	DOM guidebook	Section 3
All FY2026 performance measures, targets, actuals	Iowa Code §8E.210; DOM guidebook	Section 2
Variance explanations	DOM guidebook	Section 2
FY2027 goals/objectives and targets	Iowa Code §7E.3(4); planning materials	Sections 2 and 5
Early release/LOS	Separate Board/statutory reporting	Section 4
Executive clemency	Board statutory function and performance reporting	Sections 2 and 3
Victim notification	Board statutory function and performance reporting	Sections 2 and 3

Source Notes

- Iowa Code §7E.3(4), Iowa Code 2026.
- Iowa Code §8E.210, Iowa Code 2026.
- Iowa Department of Management, Guidebook for Fiscal Year 2026 Performance Reports, revised February 2026.
- Iowa Department of Management, Strategic Planning Guidebook, revised February 2026.
- Iowa Department of Management, Operational Planning Guidebook for FY2027, revised February 2026.
- Iowa Department of Management, 2026 Agency Planning & Performance Timeline.
- Iowa Board of Parole Strategic Plan, updated FY2026.
- Iowa Board of Parole Operational Planning FY2026 draft.
- Iowa Board of Parole Monthly Reports, June 2026.
- Iowa Board of Parole FY2026 performance actuals and FY2027 targets workbook.
- Iowa Board of Parole FY2026 statistics sheet.
- Iowa Board of Parole FY2026 Annual Length of Stay Report.
- Master File: Prison Population, Admissions, and Closures; FY2026 data restricted to July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026.