

Request for Proposals

**Learning Collaborative on Paroling Authorities as Key Partners in Achieving
Governors' Criminal Justice Policy Goals**

Purpose:	To update state executives about evidence-based practices for paroling authorities, and assist them in developing collaborative strategies for strengthening parole in their state's justice system.
Opportunities Provided:	Four competitively selected state teams will: (1) Participate in a two-day summit where they will review the latest research on best practices in parole, identify strategies for strengthening their state's parole system, and explore opportunities for enhancing collaboration between governors' offices and paroling authorities; (2) Receive technical assistance in convening a stakeholder workshop to refine recommendations they develop during the summit; and (3) Present those recommendations and a plan of action to their governor.
Proposals Due:	Monday, July 24th by 5:00 p.m. (ET)
Selection Announcement:	Week of July 31st
Project Period:	September 2017 – September 2018
Date/Location of Summit:	Fall 2017 in Washington, DC¹
In-State Workshops:	Fall 2017 – Summer 2018
NGA Contact:	Lauren Dedon , Policy Analyst, Homeland Security and Public Safety Division (202) 624-5375 or ldedon@nga.org
NPRC Contact:	Leilah Gilligan , National Parole Resource Center, Center for Effective Public Policy (301) 589-9383 or lgilligan@cepp.com

¹ Pending Bureau of Justice Assistance approval.

PURPOSE

Through a policy summit and subsequent onsite technical assistance, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the National Parole Resource Center (NPRC) will assist up to four states in developing recommendations for supporting and strengthening parole decision-making, policies, and practices. The policy summit will examine the latest research on best practices for paroling authorities and the critical role they can play in achieving governors' public safety goals.

BACKGROUND

Of the many responsibilities governors have related to a state's criminal justice system, one of the more important is appointing members and chairs of paroling authorities. Though paroling authorities vary in size and responsibilities, collectively they are responsible for deciding whether and when to release approximately 125,000 inmates on an annual basis. They also set conditions of release for 430,000 individuals—including those released at paroling authorities' discretion and those mandatorily released as determined by law—and have responsibilities regarding parole violation responses.

Because of the importance of the role and influence of paroling authorities in state criminal justice systems, it is critically important that governors exercise their appointing powers with an understanding of the skills and competencies required for such appointments. Further, because parole appointments are for limited terms, it is important for paroling authorities to create an institutional framework for guiding newly appointed members that is based on clear policies and strong decision-making tools.

Through the learning collaborative, the NGA Center, in partnership with the NPRC, aims to assist state executives in developing coordinated strategies for strengthening parole policies and practices. The NPRC, a partnership of the Center for Effective Public Policy (the Center) and the Association of Paroling Authorities International, is staffed by leading experts on parole. Since 1985, the Center has administered over a dozen national initiatives related to parole, and it has worked with agencies across the country to examine the extent to which current parole efforts align with evidence-based practices.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

Through the learning collaborative, teams from four competitively selected states will participate in a series of activities designed to share parole best practices and strengthen relationships among key criminal justice stakeholders. Teams will attend a two-day summit where they will explore the latest research and develop recommendations for strengthening their state's parole system. During follow-up in-state meetings, teams will refine their recommendations and develop plans for implementing them. Areas the learning collaborative will focus on include:

- Understanding the role parole systems play in promoting public safety goals;
- Identifying specific actions that can best support the paroling authority's work, including:
 - Encouraging collaborative partnerships among the paroling authority, corrections, and post-release supervision agencies;

- Adopting and effectively utilizing evidence-based decision-making tools, including risk and needs assessments, and developing support for the identification and development of those tools;
- Improving specific aspects of parole board work in areas such as responding to violations, imposing conditions, reentry initiatives, creating policies and performance measures, and focusing resources on higher risk individuals; and
- Developing an education strategy to promote greater collaboration among stakeholders and better public understanding of the parole process.

As a benefit of participating in the learning collaborative, states will receive travel and lodging reimbursement for up to six team members to attend the summit. Additional benefits include having access to a national faculty of experts, receiving assistance in coordinating and facilitating meetings with key stakeholders, and participating in a structured process for improving policy and practice.

By the end of the learning collaborative, teams are expected to present their recommendations to their governor. Potential outcomes of the learning collaborative could include new partnerships between stakeholders; new insights on important qualifications for appointment to the paroling authority; establishment of workgroups to study and recommend adoption of evidence-based parole practices; and proposed legislation, executive orders, or public education campaigns.

COMPOSITION OF STATE TEAMS

Each state must assemble a “core” team comprised of up to six high-ranking individuals with a demonstrated ability to shape state policy and practice. State teams must include a representative designated by the governor as the team leader. Although each state’s team will reflect that particular state’s priorities and needs, teams must include senior-level advisors and officials, such as the governor’s criminal justice policy advisor, the chair of the state paroling authority, and the director of the state department(s) responsible for corrections and for post-release supervision. Other members could include community representatives, such as crime-victim advocates or community health providers. The “core team” must commit to attending the summit.

In addition, states will be asked to designate a “home-team”—a broader group of stakeholders who will be engaged in the follow-up in-state meeting. Selected states may support participation of additional team members in the summit at their own expense.

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES FOR STATE TEAMS

During the learning collaborative, state teams are expected to:

- **Participate in a two-day summit.** States’ core teams will participate in a two-day summit, during which they will learn about emerging best practices in parole, review their state’s current policies and practices, and develop recommendations for strengthening their parole systems. The summit will be held in Fall 2017 in Washington, DC.
- **Participate in regular networking activities.** Throughout the learning collaborative, states are expected to participate in regular conference calls, webinars, or other networking activities to discuss shared challenges, plans for the in-state workshop, and to learn from their peers.
- **Host two in-state workshops.** Following the two-day summit, teams will work with the NGA Center and NPRC to convene in-state workshops. During the workshops, teams will convene a

larger group of stakeholders to help refine their initial recommendations and build consensus around a plan of action. States will be required to provide a meeting site and support any travel or per diem costs for state participants.

- **Identify potential recommendations to be presented to the governor.** By the end of the learning collaborative, states will identify recommendations for strengthening parole practices to be presented to their governor. NGA and NPRC will provide a letter to each participating state’s governor, summarizing the team’s progress and slate of recommendations.

TIMELINE

The following is a tentative schedule for the project:

Monday, July 24 th by 5:00 p.m. (ET)	Proposals Due
Week of July 31 st	Selection The NGA Center and NPRC will notify states that applied of their selection status.
August 2017	Orientation Conference Call Following the state selection, the NGA Center and NPRC will host a conference call for states to orient them to the project and discuss next steps. States may also be asked to join team calls and/or complete pre-work with the NGA Center and NPRC.
Fall 2017 ²	Two-day Summit (Washington, DC)
Fall 2017 – Summer 2018	In-state Workshops held
Ongoing	Conference calls with selected states
Ongoing	Technical Assistance to states

PROPOSAL PROCESS, REQUIRED PROPOSAL CONTENT, AND SELECTION CRITERIA

All states and U.S. territories with full NGA membership benefits may apply to participate. The NGA Center and NPRC will accept only one proposal per state and submissions must be made through the governor’s office.

The total narrative—excluding the cover page and letters of support—should not exceed 6 pages, single-spaced, with standard 1-inch margins and 12-point font.

- **Cover Sheet (Required)**
Please identify the state and the team leader’s contact information, including his or her title, mailing address, telephone number, and email address. (Note: The cover sheet does not count against the six-page limit.)

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- **Letter from the Governor (Required)**

A letter of support from the governor is required. The letter should include the names of the individuals the governor is appointing to serve on the state team. Additionally, the letter should indicate who the governor is designating as the team leader. (Note: The letter does not count against the six-page limit.)

- **Team Leadership and Membership (40 points)**

Each state must assemble a “core” team comprised of up to six high-ranking individuals with a demonstrated ability to shape state policy and practice. State teams must include a representative designated by the governor as the team leader. States may also assemble a “home team” that is more expansive than the core team and that includes representatives from state systems that intersect with parole. Although each state’s team will reflect that particular state’s priorities and needs, teams may include senior-level advisors and officials, such as the governors’ criminal justice policy advisor, the chair of the state paroling authority, or the director of the state department of corrections. Other members could include community representatives, such as crime-victim advocates, local health providers, or community groups.

Teams will be evaluated based on their breadth, depth, and ability to influence state policy and practice. In the application, briefly discuss the composition of the team and how they will contribute to the learning collaborative’s goals. In an appendix, please include the name, title, address, phone number, and e-mail address for each core team member. (Note: The appendix will not count toward the six-page limit.) The team leader will serve as the key contact for the team and will be responsible for coordinating team activities throughout the learning collaborative.

- **Paroling Authority Discretion and Responsibilities (10 points)**

Applicants should provide a brief description of the level and type of responsibilities the board currently has—especially regarding release from prison, setting conditions of supervision, and responses to violations—and the types/groups of offenders over which the board has responsibility. Where appropriate, applicants should refer to relevant statistics, such as the number of parole reviews, discretionary releases, or revocations from parole in a recent year.

- **Paroling Authority Objectives and Challenges (30 points)**

Applicants should explain how the state expects to benefit by participating in the learning collaborative and how it can help promote the governor’s public safety priorities. Applicants should highlight critical challenges facing their system, such as a need for greater communication and collaboration between the paroling authority and the department of corrections, guidance on integrating risk and needs assessments into the parole process, improved coordination across entities on offender programming, or help identifying and implementing effective evidence-based practices.

- **Readiness for Reform, and Sustainment of State Efforts (20 points)**

In this section, applicants should discuss ongoing reform efforts in the state as they relate to the criminal justice system and parole, including a brief overview of collaborations and partnerships with advocates or other stakeholders.

Applicants should also discuss potential obstacles to achieving the learning collaborative objectives and sustaining reform efforts over the long-term. Those might include challenges to

implementing a strategic plan developed during the policy summit and in-state workshop. Applicants should discuss strategies for addressing those challenges.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

States should submit a PDF version of the application to Lauren Dedon at ldedon@nga.org. All applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. ET on Monday, July 24th**. Only one application per state will be considered.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLYING STATES

As states develop their applications to participate in the learning collaborative, they may want to consult the *Paroling Authority Self-Assessment Toolkit* found on the National Parole Resource Center web site as an orientation to the types of issues that the learning collaborative will address. The toolkit will help applicants consider their state's current paroling practices and the degree to which they adhere to NPRC's practice targets for risk reduction. The toolkit will also help applicants identify potential areas for strengthening their state's paroling practices as they develop their proposals. Use and/or completion of the self-assessment contained in the Tool Kit is optional, and suggested as a resource. However, if an applying state does complete the self-assessment, they are encouraged to include that assessment as an appendix to their application. The toolkit can be accessed at <http://nationalparoleresourcecenter.org/toolkit2/index.php>. (Note: The completed self-assessment toolkit does not count against the six-page limit for the application.)

STATE SELECTION

Applicants that have applied will be notified about their selection status the week of July 31st.

DISCLAIMER NOTICE

This Request for Proposal is not binding on the NGA Center or NPRC, nor does it constitute a contractual offer. Without limiting the foregoing, the NGA Center and NPRC reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals; to modify, supplement, or cancel the RFP; to waive any deviation from the RFP; and to negotiate final terms and conditions that may differ from those stated in the RFP. Under no circumstances shall the NGA Center or NPRC be liable for any costs.