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The Division of Parole Supervision submits this report to the Judiciary Committee, and to the Legislature at large, regarding the technical parole violation residential housing pilot program that is the subject of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 83-1,122.02.

## Introduction

The Parole REset Program (PREP) is a residential program designed to help parole clients who are struggling to succeed. The Division of Parole Supervision has observed that some clients struggle more than others, often accumulating technical violations and eventually returning to prison and going before the Parole Board for revocation hearings. PREP's mission is to intervene during this process and try to help those parole clients successfully complete parole. PREP's current house is located in Omaha close to bus routes. PREP is only able to serve men, and due to the proximity of school property, no sex offenders are able to enter the program. The program is approximately 90 days long and consists of Three Phases of increasing privileges in relation to continued sobriety, employment, and stability. Clients must commit to all programming and rules to be accepted to PREP. The PREP house has 13 beds which are filled on a rolling admission basis. The first client entered PREP on July 31, 2023 and the program began filling beds.

Specialized Parole Officers who have clients struggling in the community refer them to the PREP team. The Program Director, Assistant Program Director, and Specialized Parole Officer assigned to PREP, review the referral and interview the client for suitability to join PREP. The purpose of the interview is to assess the client's willingness to change and take responsibility for themselves. The PREP team has found that clients must have the internal motivation to change their lives and accept help to succeed at PREP. While a client is in the program, they are assigned to the PREP parole officer who manages their case. Upon graduation, PREP clients return to the parole regional office for supervision.

Parole clients entering PREP are oriented into the house and assigned a bedroom. Clients begin job seeking immediately. PREP has partnered with Metropolitan Community College's Reentry Assistance Program (180 RAP) for help in this area. 180 RAP identifies their job interests, helps them build a resume, and then assists with job searching. PREP staff will help clients with transportation to and from job interviews, along with coaching and preparation. 180 RAP is also able to provide work boots and tools to clients who need them for employment. PREP has found that aside from sobriety, obtaining employment is the biggest hurdle for most clients and it usually takes several weeks. Many clients are moody and depressed during the job hunt and this is when most drug use has re-occurred. Once clients obtain employment, their confidence increases and their ability to focus on programming and parole vastly improves.

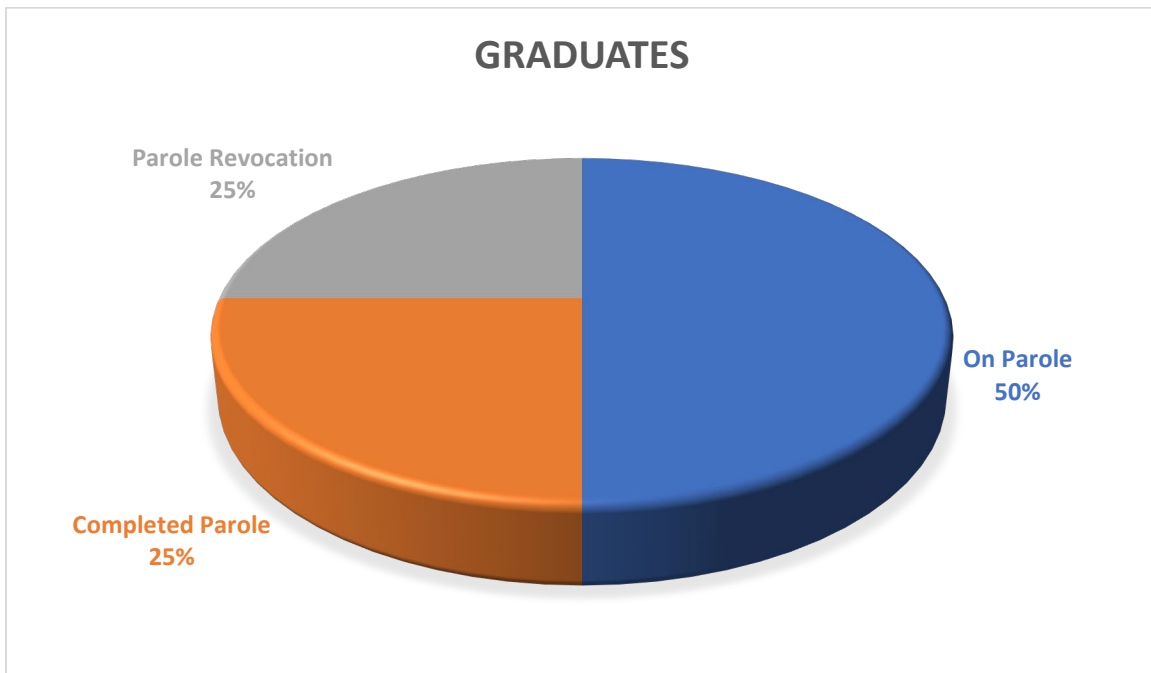
PREP staff conduct case planning meetings with parole providers in the areas of substance abuse, mental health, and stress resiliency. These case planning meetings determine the best individualized treatment plan for each client. PREP clients are expected to attend treatment classes and sessions almost daily during the week. Clients are also expected to attend at least 2 AA/NA meetings every week. Several times per month, the clients volunteer at Heart Ministry during food pantry hours (over 340 hours of volunteer work has been accomplished so far). The goal for PREP is to get clients through as much of the treatment plan as possible in 90 days. When clients complete PREP and return to the regional office for continued supervision, PREP includes a case plan for whatever that client needs to continue working on. PREP graduation does not mean the client is finished with programming and treatment and they will continue following the recommendations of the case planning team.

PREP also helps clients build life skills. Many clients don't have transportation and need assistance learning the bus system. Clients are also responsible for cleaning the house, cooking food, and learning pro-social skills like conflict resolution and peer mentorship. PREP staff are trained to enable the clients

to learn these skills. PREP does not charge clients for rent or utilities and clients are expected to save their money and learn financial skills.

## Graduation

PREP has graduated 16 total clients as of May, 2024. These are all clients who were likely to return to prison and entered into PREP to change their lives. After graduating PREP, clients returned to their regional office for supervision until completing parole. Four of PREP's graduated clients have successfully completed parole. Eight are still on parole. Four have been returned to prison for revocation or absconded from parole. Four of the eight still on parole are on track to complete their parole during summer of 2024.

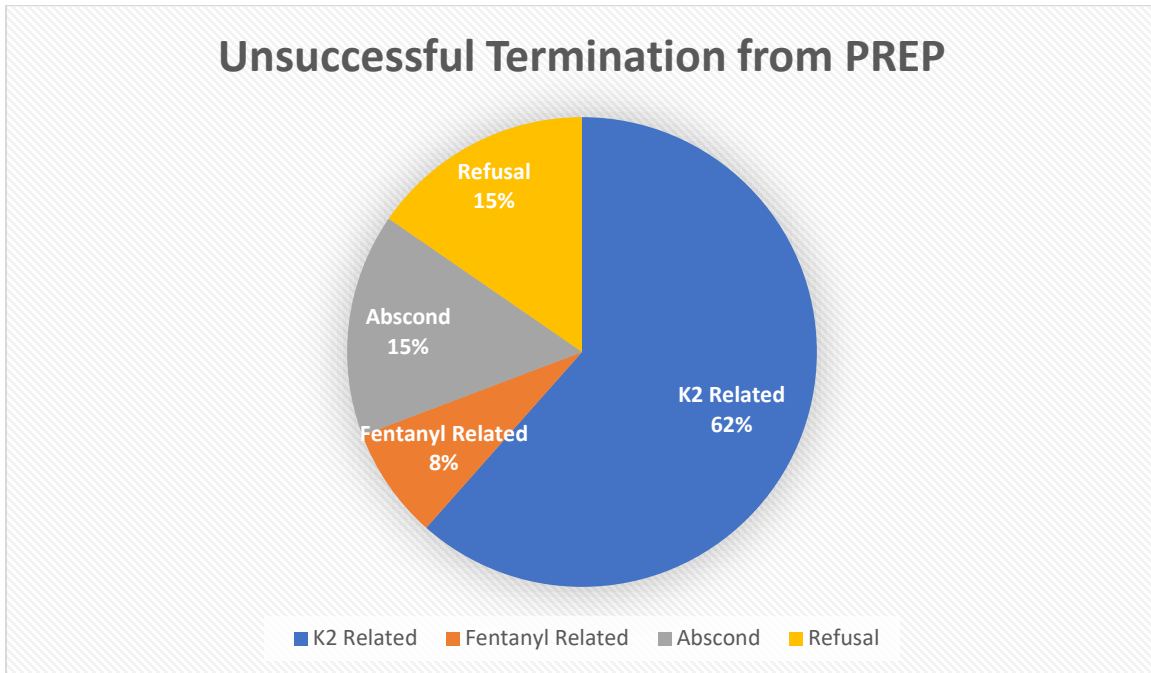


## Unsuccessful Termination from PREP

Thirteen parole clients entered PREP but continued to use substances, refused to participate in programming, refused to follow house rules, and two absconded from PREP and parole. PREP staff have spent a great deal of time trying to identify when the ideal time for referring a client to PREP should take place. Clients who have too many technical violations for substance abuse tend to continue using while at PREP and likely will not succeed. PREP staff have communicated with parole officers to try and identify clients who are beginning to relapse but are still motivated for change, as ideal referrals. Some clients are also better suited for inpatient substance abuse treatment before coming to PREP. Clients who come to PREP after inpatient treatment tend to be more successful than clients who are still heavily using substances. PREP has tried to help clients who have been kicked out of other transitional living houses for substance abuse but have found they are most likely to continue using at PREP and return to prison.

## K2 – Synthetic Cannabinoids

The synthetic cannabinoid referred to as K2, has been the biggest problem for PREP clients. Although urinalysis cups have a test for K2, the frequently changing chemical makeup render the substance undetectable by parole tests. This substance is popular among addicted clients on parole due to the difficulty of detecting its use. PREP has found having parole staff on shifts in the house 24 hours a day, leads to early detection of substance abuse and intervention in a timely manner.



There have been eight K2 related revocations. There has been one Fentanyl related revocation. Two clients absconded from the house and from parole. Two clients have refused to comply with house rules and programming.

## Lessons Learned

While PREP has had success with the clients who have graduated from the program, staff continue to make improvements in all areas to help clients succeed. The biggest challenge so far has been with clients using drugs. Identifying which substance using clients are capable of quitting and succeeding at PREP is difficult in a brief interview. PREP staff have begun requesting substance abuse evaluations to get recommendations on treatment prior to PREP. PREP has also worked with parole officers to initiate the referral to PREP earlier in the client's relapse because the longer the substance use has taken place the more difficulty PREP has had helping the client succeed.

Another challenge has been identifying clients who are serious about change and want to cooperate. Many clients say what they think will get them into PREP to prolong their parole but aren't serious about change. Detecting that mindset is a continued goal during interviews. PREP staff continue to refine the intake process to identify the clients who are struggling but desire positive life changes.

## Anecdotal Case Studies

Below are the stories of two PREP clients who experienced significant life changes while at PREP. There are already many stories of success from PREP clients but these have been chosen to help describe the impact PREP can have. Their names have been changed to tell their stories.

### Joseph

Joseph is a 40 year old man who's criminal history includes multiple DWI convictions and was unable to get a driver's license. He relapsed with alcohol while on parole and due to the struggles with sobriety and remaining employed due to transportation issues, he was referred to PREP by his parole officer. Upon entering PREP, Joseph explained he had a good job that paid well but the bus did not go near his job and he would not be able to rely on family for rides in the long term. Joseph also discovered his minor daughter was stealing money from his bank account and depleted his savings.

PREP was able to provide Joseph transportation to and from work so he could maintain that employment. PREP also helped Joseph secure his bank account and he was able to begin saving money again. During his time at PREP, Joseph participated in programming and was a good resident.

PREP staff transported Joseph to court so he could apply for permission to get an ignition interlock device in his vehicle and get licensed to drive. Due to living at PREP without paying rent and bills, Joseph was able to save money to pay for the ignition interlock device, get the vehicle repaired into operating condition, pay for registration and insurance, and got his license reinstated. PREP staff helped Joseph study for his license tests and accompanied him to his DMV appointments until he was able to pass and legally operate a vehicle. While trying to get SR22 insurance, Joseph was nearly scammed. He had a good rapport with his PREP parole officer and he reached out to her for help when he suspected something wasn't right. She recognized the scam and helped Joseph find a legitimate insurer.

Joseph was also able to save enough money to get his own apartment. Joseph stated he had always lived with family or girlfriends and this is the first time in his life he has had his own home. Joseph graduated PREP and is on track to complete parole in June of 2024.

### John

John is a 41 year old man with an extensive history of substance abuse. While on parole, John tested positive for Methamphetamine several times and was receiving technical violations including a custodial sanction in jail. He was referred to PREP after receiving the custodial sanction in the hope PREP could help him maintain his sobriety. John had a good job prior to the sanction that he wanted to keep but his employer was not happy with his substance abuse. PREP's parole officer was able to establish a good rapport with John who disclosed he used Meth while traveling between work and home and the employer would not have turned a blind eye to the substance use had he known. The parole officer also spoke to John's employer and established a collaborative relationship in monitoring John's behavior for signs of relapse. John was allowed to return to this job. Sobriety allowed John to thrive and he was quickly promoted to a supervisory position, issued a company vehicle, and has even been able to provide employment opportunity to subsequent PREP clients.

While at PREP, John realized he had an unhealthy and toxic relationship with his longtime live-in girlfriend. With the support of staff and PREP mental health providers, John severed ties with this woman. John remained focused on his sobriety and mental health. During his stay, PREP staff very

clearly noticed healthy changes for John during his sobriety. He gained healthy weight, took pride in his appearance, and had a clear improvement of attitude and confidence.

During John's time at PREP working on sobriety, he found several friends in the house. This small group exceeded the mandatory 2 AA/NA meetings per week and attended nearly every day. This group peer support held each other accountable and supported each other's sobriety. These men, including John, all graduated the PREP program at the same time. They worked with a sober living program and were able to rent a duplex together and continued living as roommates after PREP. All three men continue to do well with their parole.

## Conclusion

PREP has been able to help parole clients get control of their lives and get back on track succeeding at parole. Helping parole clients reintegrate with the community is a mandate for parole but some clients struggle and need additional help to succeed. PREP has been able to step into this role and divert clients from heading back to prison to success. The program continues to evolve and change to accommodate the different needs of the clients to help them succeed.