

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee
on Intellectual Property and Judicial
Administration, Committee on the
Judiciary, House of Representatives

April 1993

PRISON INMATES

Better Plans Needed
Before Felons Are
Released



**RESTRICTED--Not to be released outside the
General Accounting Office unless specifically
approved by the Office of Congressional
Relations.**

557082

RELEASED



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

B-252556

April 20, 1993

The Honorable William J. Hughes
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Intellectual Property and
Judicial Administration
Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In our 1991 report on the Bureau of Prisons' (BOP) use of halfway houses, we reported that we had to alter our sample of cases for that study because inmate release plans were incomplete and poorly documented.¹ This report responds to the Subcommittee's September 1991 request that we conduct a more detailed study of BOP's prerelease planning. Our objectives were to determine if BOP was providing release plans for inmates as required by a written agreement between BOP and the Probation and Pretrial Services Division of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (Probation and Pretrial Services), and if those plans contained sufficient information for probation officers to carry out court-ordered supervision of the inmates after the inmates were released back to the community.

Results in Brief

We followed a sample of 73 inmates after their release from prison back to the Probation and Pretrial Services office responsible for their supervision after release. BOP failed to provide release plans for 42 of these 73 inmates within 60-90 days as required by its written agreement with Probation and Pretrial Services. Of the 42 inmates, 20 did not have release plans, and the plans for 22 were sent late, not allowing probation officers enough time to investigate and approve the release plans before the inmates' release. Our sample cannot be generalized to all BOP facilities and inmates released, but the 10 prisons from which the inmate sample was drawn were selected after consultation with BOP officials to reflect the diversity of BOP facilities, and BOP officials said they were comfortable with our choices.

As specified in the written agreement release plans should include information on the inmate's proposed residence and employment or the probability thereof. Some of the release plans lacked other information that, while not required by the written agreement, both BOP and Probation

¹Prison Alternatives: Crowded Federal Prisons Can Transfer More Inmates to Halfway Houses (GAO/GGD-92-5, Nov. 14, 1991).

officials agreed was important to supervising an inmate in the community. This included information on inmate medical or psychiatric conditions or substance abuse treatment needs.

Prison management groups—called unit teams—routinely prepare written progress reports for internal use that provide comprehensive information on an inmate, including institutional behavior, plans on release, medical conditions, and substance abuse treatment. BOP officials sent these progress reports to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division in about half the cases in our sample. In contrast, the release plan, when sent, could be just a letter or memo from BOP to Probation with little information other than the inmate's name, proposed residence upon release, and a statement such as "employment to be secured."

Background

The Probation and Pretrial Services Division supervises offenders sentenced to probation, community service or otherwise not committed to BOP custody by the courts, as well as inmates released from BOP facilities on either parole or supervised release. The Probation and Pretrial Services Division requires a release plan for those inmates released from federal prison under statutes that require that the inmates be placed under the supervision of a probation officer. Most but not all federal inmates have supervision requirements upon release from prison.

BOP houses inmates sentenced in one of two categories: (1) those sentenced for crimes committed before November 1, 1987; and (2) those sentenced for crimes committed on or after November 1, 1987. The length of supervision can depend on when the inmate committed the crime.

In the first category inmates are eligible for parole after serving as little as one-third of their sentence, and the Parole Commission determines the date of their release from BOP custody. Inmates receive mandatory parole at two-thirds of their sentence unless the Parole Commission determines that it is not warranted. Inmates on parole are under the supervision of a probation officer and require release plans. Inmates who do not receive parole but are mandatorily released at the end of their sentences may require supervision by a probation officer depending on how much "good time" they receive. Good time is granted by BOP for satisfactory inmate behavior in prison. A maximum amount of good time can be granted for each year of the sentence. If the inmate is mandatorily released on good time more than 180 days prior to the end of the sentence, the inmate will be subject to supervision by a probation officer.

The second category of inmates was sentenced under the federal sentencing guidelines that were authorized by the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (P. L. 98-473). The act abolished parole for inmates who committed crimes on or after November 1, 1987. These cases are sometimes called "new law" cases, while those sentenced for crimes committed before November 1, 1987, are sometimes called "old law" cases. An inmate sentenced under the new law must serve the entire sentence imposed by the court less a maximum of 54 days per year good time granted by BOP for satisfactory behavior.

Most inmates sentenced under the new law must serve a period of supervised release after prison. When returned to the community, these inmates will be under supervision by a probation officer who can put restrictions on where the former inmate lives and works, as well as other conditions of being in the community, such as routine drug testing. The sentencing judge specifies the length of supervision. Before their release from prison, inmates with supervised release must submit release plans through BOP to their probation officers for approval. The courts may revoke supervision for violations of the terms and conditions of release and send offenders back to prison.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 69 percent of all inmates sentenced under the guidelines during the first half of 1990 were required to serve terms of supervised release after prison. Violent offenders (89 percent) and drug offenders (87 percent) were the most likely to have a term of supervised release. Upon release from prison, inmates served, on average, 42 months of supervised release.

In December 1992, BOP's population included about 15,000 inmates sentenced under the old law and, thus, eligible for parole, and about 47,000 inmates who were sentenced under the new law or federal sentencing guidelines. Even though not all defendants in both categories are statutorily required to be supervised after release, the Probation and Pretrial Services Division considers release plans helpful and desirable, even if not always required. Currently, virtually all inmates sentenced in federal courts are being sentenced under the federal sentencing guidelines.

The Memorandum of Understanding on Release Plans

In 1989 BOP and the Probation and Pretrial Services Division entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on the planning requirements of inmates with supervised release after prison. The agreement responded to

concerns raised by BOP officials and probation officers about the release plans of inmates with supervised release.

Under the agreement, BOP agreed to provide the Probation and Pretrial Service Division with a release plan normally 60 to 90 days before the inmate's release. BOP also agreed to notify the Probation and Pretrial Division of the inmate's release from prison on the day of his or her release using a Notice of Release and Arrival form.

The probation officer must investigate and approve the inmate's proposed release plan. One probation officer said that reasons for disapproval can include (1) an inmate says he plans to reside with a spouse who tells the probation officer that she will not take him back because she is afraid of him or (2) an inmate plans to live with friends who turn out to be suspects in ongoing criminal activity. Also, an inmate may fabricate an address or list an address where the residents do not know the inmate. Although the absence of an acceptable release plan could delay a parole date, under the new law an inmate's release from prison cannot be delayed because of the absence of an acceptable release plan.

Data to Be Included in a Release Plan

According to the Memorandum of Understanding, an acceptable release plan includes a verified residence and employment or, as stated in the agreement, "the probability thereof." For example, one probation officer stated that BOP could identify that an inmate being released had little education, no job skills, and a limited work history, which would make the probability of the inmate's finding a job very poor. For residence, the inmate may have a spouse unwilling to take him or her back and no other family or friends willing to house the inmate, which would make the probability of an inmate finding a place to stay very poor. The probation officer needs to be aware of these conditions before an inmate's release so that arrangements can be made and an inmate still under federal supervision does not get released to the street with no place to stay, no job, little money, and the probability of committing another crime very high.

In addition to the basic requirements of a residence and a job, a good release plan should include other information that, while not required by the written agreement between the two agencies, is important to supervising an inmate who is returning to the community. Probation and BOP officials agreed that important information about an inmate that should be part of a sound release plan included the inmate's special

medical needs, mental health conditions, institutional behavior, and drug or alcohol treatment needs. One Probation official stated that this additional information is necessary not just because it contributes to the successful reintegration of the inmate into the community, but also because it helps protect the safety of the probation officer who will deal with the inmate on a regular basis by alerting the officer to potential risks.

Why Release Plans Are Important

Both BOP and Probation officials noted that the adverse effects of failing to provide complete and timely release plans for inmates included inmates released with no residence to go to, the increased likelihood of inmates returning to prison, and problems in monitoring inmates in the community. One probation officer said that the most substantial adverse effect of failing to provide a release plan is that things cannot be done that would make the inmate's transition from prison to the community more successful, such as getting an inmate into drug testing and aftercare. Repercussions can be particularly serious if the inmate has special needs that require immediate attention, requires special medication, or is released during inclement weather with nowhere to go.

Some BOP officials focused on the problems the inmate faces on the streets if prerelease planning is not done. One BOP official said that without proper release planning, the inmate may not be properly prepared for reentry into the community, which may increase the chances of the inmate committing more crimes. Another BOP official said that a lack of prerelease planning can lead to the inmate violating requirements of his or her release and being returned to the institution. Another BOP official said that some inmates commit violations just to get sent back to prison so they will have a roof over their heads.

Probation officers cited the example of the inmate without a release plan showing up on their doorstep with nowhere to go. One probation officer said that poor release planning presents a problem to the community, to the inmate, and to the probation officer. A poor release plan can significantly increase the likelihood of recidivism.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

A detailed description of our objectives, scope, and methodology is included in appendix I. A brief summary of our approach follows.

To review BOP's prerelease program, we visited 10 of BOP's 66 prisons chosen after consultation with BOP to represent a geographic mix of

minimum-, low-, medium-, and high-security prisons (see app. II). Two of the prisons we visited were from the administrative category, which includes medical centers and women's prisons for which nonsecurity considerations outweigh security concerns. The 10 prisons held inmates classified at minimum-, low-, medium-, and high-security levels and accounted for 1 in 14 inmates in federal prison. Of the 10 prisons, 8 held male inmates, and 2 held female inmates. One of the women's prisons, Pleasanton, had an adjacent camp whose male inmates were included in our sample.

At each prison, we requested a roster of inmates released during the 2 months prior to our visit. This resulted in different 2-month periods at each prison but allowed us to obtain the most current information. We reviewed all of the inmates' files, interviewed prison officials responsible for preparing the release plans, and identified information included in the inmates' release plans. Our sample included 511 inmates released from prison between September 1991 and the end of July 1992. Our sample reflected the diversity of BOP facilities, but it was not a random sample whose results could be generalized to BOP as a whole. However, our sample of prisons was selected with direct input from BOP, and the BOP officials who provided input to the selection said that they were comfortable with the choices.

We reviewed the files of all 511 inmates, and from this sample, we eliminated released inmates who were ineligible for prerelease planning because of the nature of their sentences or the release methods. This could include inmates being transferred to other prisons, being housed at federal prisons under agreements with state governments, being held for psychological observation, or being suddenly ordered released by judges. We also excluded inmates who did not receive supervision after release. After all such exclusions, our final sample included 224 inmates for whom we analyzed BOP's prerelease planning efforts (see app. I).

To determine what release plans BOP provided to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division, we followed up on a subsample of inmates with supervision requirements upon release with their probation officers at local probation offices. To determine which offices to visit, we looked at where inmates from our sample were being released. About one-third (73) of the inmates from the 10 prisons we visited were released to 7 of the 94 judicial districts. We selected these seven judicial districts for our study, and at each of the seven probation offices in these districts we interviewed probation officers, reviewed offenders' files, and identified the

release information sent by BOP, such as employment needs, housing, substance abuse, and medical needs.

In assessing whether a release plan had been sent, we did not include only those documents formally identified as release plans. We also included any document that might have been considered a release plan, such as a letter or memo from a BOP official to the probation officer that included little more information than the inmate's name and proposed residence after release.

We gathered our information from files at BOP and the Probation and Pretrial Services Division using a data collection instrument and verified this information with probation officers and BOP case managers. The statistics in this report were compiled from these data collection instruments and the database that resulted.

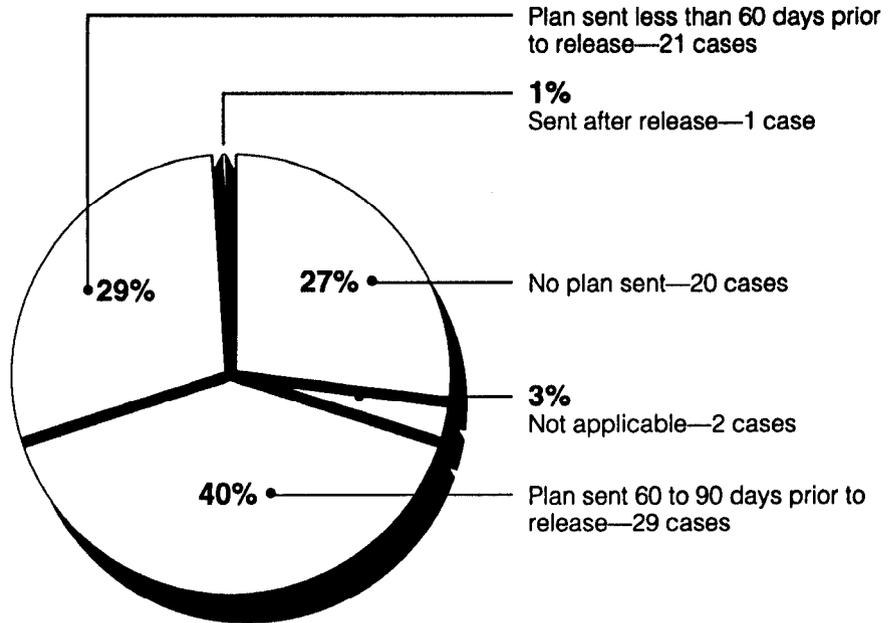
BOP Did Not Provide Release Plans for One in Four Inmates in Our Sample

At the beginning of our study, probation officers said that they were not getting release plans from BOP in all cases. Probation officers said that offenders were showing up unannounced and unexpected after being released from BOP institutions. When BOP sent release plans, they were not always sent at least 60 to 90 days in advance of the inmates' release as required by the Memorandum of Understanding.

BOP was required to send a release plan for 71 of the 73 inmates in our subsample whom we followed back to the communities where they were released.² BOP sent release plans to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division 60 to 90 days prior to the inmates' releases for fewer than half of these inmates (see fig. 1). BOP sent no release plans for 20 inmates. For example, BOP sent nothing on the release of an inmate serving a sentence for bank robbery. The inmate never reported to his probation officer as required, and the probation officer was unaware that the inmate had been released until we discussed it with him as part of our sample. The probation officer stated that a warrant would have to be issued for the inmate.

²We subsequently determined that 2 of the 73 inmates had been sentenced under a statute that made them eligible for mandatory release after having served a specific portion of their sentences. In such cases, Probation considers a release plan desirable and helpful but not required.

Figure 1: Timeliness of Release Plans for 73 Inmates We Followed to Probation



Note: "Not applicable" category includes two inmates for whom a release plan was considered desirable and helpful under the Probation and Pretrial Division's guidelines but not required.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Prisons' files.

Also, in one-fourth of the 73 cases, BOP did not send the Probation and Pretrial Services Division a Notice of Release and Arrival, which notifies the probation officer that an inmate has been released from prison.³ If supervision is required, an inmate generally must report to his or her probation officer within 72 hours or be subject to arrest, although criminals known to have a history of dangerous behavior or who may pose a threat to the community may be required to report sooner. For one case in our sample in which BOP officials did not send a Notice of Release and Arrival, the inmate's probation officer learned of the inmate's release only when the inmate phoned from jail to tell his officer that he was out and rearrested. In another case, BOP officials did not notify the Probation and Pretrial Services Division that an inmate sentenced for armed robbery had

³In 8 of our 73 cases, the Probation and Pretrial Services Division received neither a release plan nor a Notice of Release and Arrival from BOP.

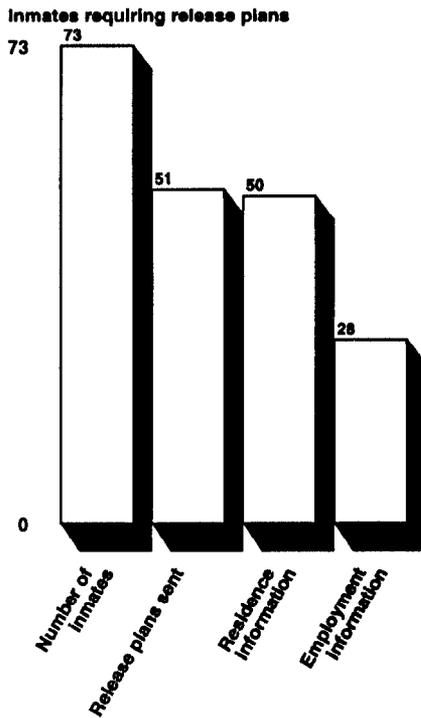
been released. The probation officer was unaware that the inmate had been released until he was arrested trying to cross the border into Canada.

BOP Failed to Provide Timely and Complete Information on Scheduled Releases

BOP's written agreement with the Probation and Pretrial Services Division requires BOP officials to provide release plans "normally" 60 to 90 days before an inmate's release. Probation officers stated that this time is needed to investigate and approve the inmate's release plan before the inmate's release from BOP custody. However, of the 51 release plans sent, BOP officials sent 22 less than 60 days before release. In 4 of the 22 cases probation officers stated they did not have sufficient time after the release plan was received to approve or disapprove the release plan before the inmate's release.

Virtually all (50 of 51) of the release plans sent included information on a residence that the probation officer investigated and approved as acceptable. The agreement called for BOP to furnish verifiable employment or the probability thereof. However, only 28 plans included information on employment (see fig. 2). The other 23 plans had no information on employment or included a general statement, such as "employment to be secured."

Figure 2: Residence and Employment Information Included in Our Sample of Release Plans Sent to Probation



Source: U.S. Bureau of Prisons' files.

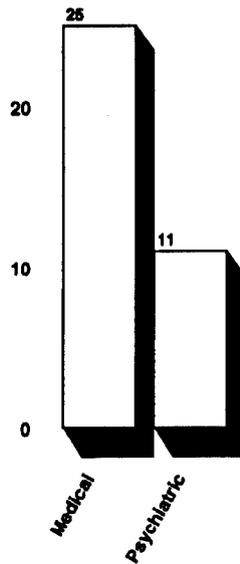
Useful Substance Abuse, Medical, and Psychiatric Data Missing

Based on our review of the case files for 224 BOP inmates for whom release plans were required, about half had an identified need for substance abuse treatment,⁴ 1 in 4 had an identified medical need, and about 1 in 10 had an identified psychiatric problem (see fig. 3). In some cases, BOP sent the Probation and Pretrial Services Division additional information on an inmate's medical, psychiatric, or substance abuse condition and needs. For example, as shown in our sample of 73 inmates, BOP notified the Probation and Pretrial Services Division of 24 of the 30 inmates who had a substance abuse treatment problem, 5 of the 15 inmates who had a medical problem that needed attention, and of 4 of the 6 inmates who had a psychiatric problem. Such information is not specifically required by the written agreement between BOP and the Probation and Pretrial Services Division. However, both BOP officials and probation officers said this information was important to supervise inmates in the community.

⁴In our prison sample of 224 inmates, a substance abuse problem was identified for 120 inmates (54 percent); 60 had a drug problem, 15 had an alcohol problem, and 45 had both.

Figure 3: Percentage of 224 Inmates in Our Prison Sample With Medical and Psychiatric Needs Upon Release

30 Percentage of 224 inmates in prison sample



Source: U.S. Bureau of Prisons' files.

The omission of such information can create problems for both the offender and the probation officer. For example, BOP officials did not inform the probation officer that one inmate had AIDS which could have affected the inmate's release plan. According to one probation officer, the offender would have received additional support and counseling if the probation officer had been notified of his medical condition. BOP policy, Program Statement 6190.1 dated January 21, 1991, requires the inmate's probation officer to be notified if the inmate has AIDS and provides suggested language for the letter. In another case, BOP did not inform Probation that an inmate suffered from schizophrenia, which could be controlled by medication. When the inmate stopped taking his medication, the inmate's functional level deteriorated and his personality disintegrated to a point where he posed a risk to himself and others. In addition, BOP failed to notify a victim about the release of an inmate who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and who, while incarcerated, had made threatening calls to the victim. BOP's Victim and Witness Notification Policy requires such notification.

BOP's Management Procedures for Releases Are Inconsistent

Of the 10 prisons we visited, officials at 6 prisons said that they relied on annual program reviews by BOP headquarters staff and supervisory in-house reviews to ensure that their release program complied with BOP policy. Officials at three prisons said they also used projected inmate release rosters to ensure that release plans were prepared and forwarded to the inmates' probation officers before the inmates were released. Officials at other prisons noted isolated management practices, such as an open-door policy that allowed inmates to express their discontent with prerelease planning or halfway house placement decisions, random in-house review of release plans, and an inmate prerelease checklist. Although these management procedures address inmate prerelease planning, our findings indicated that BOP's internal controls are inadequate to ensure that the release plans BOP officials send to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division are timely and complete as specified in the agreement.

To ensure that inmates understand what is expected of them upon release and to better prepare them for their transition into the community, all 10 of the prisons we visited offer, in addition to individual counseling, an institutional prerelease seminar program. These seminars offer inmates who are near release an opportunity to meet with representatives from local, state, and federal organizations (such as the Probation and Pretrial Services Division, the Social Security Administration, and halfway house organizations) to discuss inmates' personal goals for release and what resources are available to help them achieve those goals.

BOP officials cited regular inmate progress reviews as another way inmates are prepared for release. Based on our sample of 73 inmates, BOP officials have generally provided more detailed release plans to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division when progress reports, which are the records of the inmates' progress reviews, are sent. The progress report, which is required by BOP policy, is a record of the inmate's status by the prison unit team consisting of the unit manager, case manager, and counselor. BOP progress reports generally provide information on many areas that the Probation and Pretrial Services Division finds important to know about the inmate, not just the basic information such as proposed residence and employability. The reports also contain information on the inmate's physical and mental health, relationships with staff, financial responsibilities, and education and vocational participation while in prison.

BOP's policy on progress reports, Program Statement 5803.04 dated December 3, 1990, requires that a copy of each progress report be forwarded to the appropriate probation officer if the inmate has supervised release or is a parole-eligible case and to any other probation officer who has an active interest in the case. BOP policy further requires that as part of the progress report, where appropriate, staff shall request that the inmate provide a specific release plan; and staff shall identify available release resources (including halfway house placement) and any particular problem that may be present in release planning. Despite this requirement, BOP officials sent progress reports on inmates to probation officers in only about half of the 73 cases in our sample.

Conclusions

Although the results from our subsample of cases cannot be generalized to the universe of all inmates for whom release plans were required during the period of our review, those results suggested that BOP has problems providing complete and timely release plans to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division as required by the terms of their written agreement. In fewer than half of our sample of 73 cases, BOP officials provided release plans to probation officers at least 60 to 90 days prior to an inmate's release from BOP custody. Plans were often nonexistent or lacked important information needed to monitor an inmate in the community. BOP officials and probation officers agreed that failing to provide good release plans can lead to problems for the inmate and the community such as an increased likelihood of inmates returning to crime, inmates being on the streets with nowhere to go, and inmates not getting the medical or substance abuse treatment they need.

However, BOP staff have been providing more detailed information in those cases in which a progress report is sent to the probation officer prior to the inmate's release. By ensuring that BOP staff send a progress report to probation officers at least 60 to 90 days before release, we believe BOP can give the Probation and Pretrial Services Division the information it needs to monitor the inmate in the community. Probation officers could approve or disapprove the inmate's plan for release—residence and employment—on the basis of information in the progress report.

BOP needs internal management controls to ensure that the Probation and Pretrial Services Division receives the information it needs 60 to 90 days before an inmate's release so that there is enough time to investigate and approve the plan and to make a new plan if necessary. A BOP official at each prison could, for example, review a regular listing of inmates

scheduled for release within 60 days to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken in getting inmates' release plans to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Attorney General require the Director, BOP, to work with the Director, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, to modify the Memorandum of Understanding to require that a copy of the inmate's current progress report be routinely sent to Probation and Pretrial Services 60 to 90 days before the inmate's release.

We also recommend that the Attorney General require the Director of BOP to

- provide to a responsible BOP official at each prison a regular listing of those inmates to be released so that the prison official can verify that release plan information has been sent to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division 60 to 90 days prior to an inmate's release; and
- develop a system to verify that the progress reports have been sent to and received by Probation.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

BOP officials orally commented that they can do a better job overall in providing release plans to the Probation and Pretrial Services Division. They said that they recognize the situation is a problem and are taking corrective action. BOP officials agreed that the progress report should be sent to probation officers 60-90 days before an inmate's release. They also said that the progress report should include the educational and vocational skills the inmate may have obtained while in prison that will help the inmate find employment. BOP officials offered no comments on our other recommendations. The deputy chief of the Probation and Pretrial Services Division said that he believed our recommendations would help probation officers get the information needed to supervise inmates in the community.

As agreed with the Subcommittee, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of the letter. At that time, we will send copies to the Attorney General, officials at BOP, probation officers at the Probation and Pretrial Services Division of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and other interested parties. Copies will also be made available to others on request.

Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix III. If you have any questions about the contents of this report, please call me on (202) 566-0026.

Sincerely yours,



Henry R. Wray
Director, Administration
of Justice Issues

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Subsequent to our report on halfway houses, the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration asked us to provide more information on how well BOP's prerelease planning currently operates. More specifically, our objectives were to

- determine if BOP was providing release plans to Probation on a timely basis as required, and
- analyze whether these plans provide Probation with sufficient information to effectively carry out court-ordered supervision of inmates after release.

To review BOP's prerelease planning program, we interviewed BOP officials and examined BOP policy and guideline statements for inmate prerelease planning. To determine what information Probation needed from BOP to supervise inmates after release, we interviewed Probation officials in Washington, D.C., and at seven district offices: Eastern Michigan, Northern Ohio, Southern Ohio, Eastern Kentucky, Northern California, Central California, and Southern California. We selected these offices because, of the 94 district court offices of which the Probation and Pretrial Services Division is a part, these received the most inmates with supervised release conditions from the prisons we visited.

In addition, we reviewed policy and guideline statements, including the Probation and Pretrial Services Division's Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedures, Probation Manual, Volume X; the Probation and Pretrial Services Division's Memorandum on Release Planning for Supervised Releases; and the 1989 Memo of Understanding between BOP and Probation on release plans.

To review the release plans BOP prepared for inmates before their release, we interviewed wardens and other prison officials who work directly with inmates and reviewed inmate case files at 10 federal prisons in California, Kentucky, Indiana, Minnesota, and West Virginia (see app. II). After consulting with BOP, we judgmentally selected these prisons to represent a geographic mix of minimum-, low-, medium-, and high-security levels. In 1991, these 10 prisons accounted for 2,292 (18 percent) of BOP's total releases of 12,476 inmates from 66 prisons—or about 1 in 5 federal inmates.¹

At each prison we requested a roster of inmates released during the 2 months preceding our visit. This resulted in a different 2-month period at

¹These figures include all BOP prisons and satellite camps. They exclude all metropolitan detention centers, which primarily house inmates awaiting trial or sentencing.

each prison but allowed us to obtain the most current information. We reviewed each inmate's file, interviewed prison officials responsible for preparing the release plans, and identified information included in the inmates' release plans. Our sample included 511 inmates released from prison between September 1991 through July 1992. Our final sample of 224 inmates included only those for whom BOP should have provided prerelease plans. Our sample reflected the diversity of BOP facilities, but it is not a random sample whose results can be generalized to BOP as a whole.

We eliminated 14 released inmates as ineligible for prerelease planning because of the nature of their sentences or release methods. These inmates were either temporarily incarcerated for psychological observation or were housed at a federal prison under the jurisdiction of state or local authorities. We also excluded inmates who were released without sufficient notification and inmates who were released to another BOP facility with time left to serve. In addition, we excluded from our sample inmates who did not receive supervision after release or inmates who were scheduled for supervision but because of detainers or other factors, were not released to probation officers (see table I.1). This included inmates who were released without court-ordered supervision, were referred to a halfway house before release,² were Mariel Cubans, or in certain instances were criminal aliens scheduled for deportation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.³ An inmate could fall into more than one of these categories, which are not mutually exclusive. After we excluded inmates in all the preceding categories, our sample included 224 inmates for whom we analyzed BOP's prerelease planning efforts.

²According to BOP officials and probation officers, the halfway house is responsible for preparing the release plan and forwarding it to Probation. Although the selection of inmates for halfway house referral is part of BOP's prerelease planning process, it is the purpose of the halfway house to ensure the inmates have jobs and residences after release. Of the 497 inmates from our sample who were eligible for prerelease planning, 145 (29 percent) were referred to halfway houses.

³Criminal aliens are those aliens who, legally or illegally residing in the United States, have been convicted of a crime. Mariel Cubans are those nationals who left Mariel, Cuba, in 1980 for the United States and were detained by U.S. authorities for suspected criminal histories.

**Appendix I
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

Table I: Inmates Excluded From the Final Sample for Whom We Analyzed Prerelease Planning

Types of inmates excluded from final sample^a	Number of inmates
Inmates ineligible for prerelease planning	14
Criminal aliens scheduled for deportation	53
Mariel Cubans	26
Inmates released to a halfway house ^b	145
Inmates without supervision requirements	58
Total	296

^aAn inmate can fall into more than one category; therefore, the total of the individual categories exceeds the total number of inmates excluded from the final sample.

^bInmates released to halfway houses are still considered to be in BOP custody, and thus no prerelease plan is required.

To determine what prerelease planning information BOP provided to Probation, we followed up with probation officers on the release plans of 73 inmates from our sample who had supervised release requirements.⁴ These 73 inmates were released to 7 districts in California, Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky (see app. II). We selected these districts because they received the highest number of supervised releases from the 10 prisons we visited. In each of these districts, we interviewed Probation officials, reviewed inmates' files, and identified the release information sent by BOP, such as employment needs, housing, substance abuse, and medical needs.

We gathered our information from BOP and Probation inmate files using a standardized data collection instrument and verified this information with probation officers and BOP case managers. The statistics in this report were compiled from these data collection instruments and the database that resulted.

We did our work between September 1991 and August 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

⁴We subsequently determined that 2 of these 73 inmates did not require prerelease plans because they were released under a statute that does not require supervision after release.

Federal Prisons Included in Our Sample by Security Level

Prison ^a	Number of inmates	Inmates released in 1991 ^b	Sex of inmates
Minimum security			
FPC Boron, CA	547	131	M
FCI Morgantown, WV	742	200	M
Low security			
FCI Lompoc, CA	900	190	M
FCI Sandstone, MN	878	190	M
Administrative			
FMC Lexington, KY	1,832	496	F
FCI/FPC Pleasanton, CA	1,106	205	F/M
Medium security			
FCI/FPC Ashland, KY	1,231	277	M
FCI Terminal Island, CA	1,242	233	M
High security			
USP/FPC Lompoc, CA	1,959	134	M
USP/FPC Terre Haute, IN	1,826	240	M

^aFMC is a Federal Medical Center, FPC is a Federal Prison Camp, FCI is a Federal Correctional Institution, and USP is a United States Penitentiary.

^bRelease figures for 1991 represent permanent prison releases for calendar year 1991 and do not contain releases from jail units.

Source: Figures reported by BOP as of December 1991 for inmates released in 1991. Figures reported by BOP for July 1992 for the number of inmates in the prison.

Major Contributors to This Report

**General Government
Division, Washington,
D.C.**

**William Jenkins Jr., Assistant Director, Administration of Justice Issues
Barry Jay Seltser, Senior Social Science Analyst**

**Los Angeles Regional
Office**

**Richard R. Griswold, Evaluator-in-Charge
Barbara A. Guffy, Evaluator
Gary R. Wiggins, Evaluator
Edward N. Nash, Technical Advisor**

**Detroit Regional
Office**

**Bascum E. Gillespie, Senior Evaluator
Lawrence M. Kubiak, Evaluator**

Ordering Information

The first copy of each GAO report and testimony is free. Additional copies are \$2 each. Orders should be sent to the following address, accompanied by a check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents, when necessary. Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.

Orders by mail:

**U.S. General Accounting Office
P.O. Box 6015
Gaithersburg, MD 20884-6015**

or visit:

**Room 1000
700 4th St. NW (corner of 4th and G Sts. NW)
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC**

**Orders may also be placed by calling (202) 512-6000
or by using fax number (301) 258-4066.**

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

First-Class Mail
Postage & Fees Paid
GAO
Permit No. G100

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300
