



Offender Rehabilitation in Japan

Walk along with local communities



What is “Offender Rehabilitation”?



What should we do so that offenders will make amends and will not reoffend?

When offenders are released from penal institutions or juvenile training schools, they will lead normal social lives. However, some offenders may commit crimes or delinquencies again. It is important to accept offenders who have decided to get back on their feet in local communities.

Safe and secure local communities will be created by appropriately treating offenders and juvenile delinquents within society in a way that helps them become independent and rehabilitated. This can be achieved by enhancing public understanding and cooperation within the community.

This is **“offender rehabilitation.”**



A CLOSER LOOK!

Recidivism Prevention

In recent years, the percentage of recidivists has remained high at approximately 50%. Therefore, the prevention of recidivism is an important challenge for the government.

The Act for the Prevention of Recidivism was established in 2016, and pursuant to this act, the “Recidivism Prevention Plan” was formulated. Moreover, in accordance with the amended Offender Rehabilitation Act, since December 2023, various programs were adopted for the prevention of recidivism. Some examples are: reinforcement of probation treatment and measures for offenders who have been released after the expiration of their sentences.¹

Measures for offenders who have been released after expiration of their sentence

Offenders who have been released after expiration of their sentence have twice or more the recidivism risk of parolees.² Thus, as far as offender rehabilitation is concerned, efforts are being made for proactive implementation of parole and reinforced support for offenders who have been released after expiration of their sentence.

It is necessary to secure employment and housing after release, and to provide “long-lasting” support through multi-stakeholder partnerships between the national and local governments, and the private-sector community volunteers.

Various kinds of support in the community

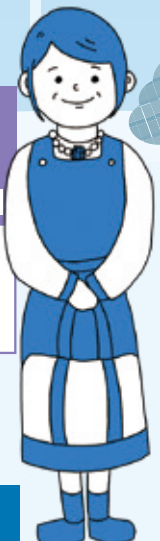
In order for those who have committed crimes or delinquencies to lead their lives without re-offending, it is of significance to arrange schemes that allow them to receive continuous support in communities. To do so, local governments are moving ahead with formulation and implementation of their “Local Recidivism Prevention Plans.” Moreover, efforts for construction of local support networks have commenced.

Note 1: Offenders who have been released after expiration of their sentence means offenders who have been released from penal institutions after serving their full sentences
Note 2: Parolees are offenders who have been released from penal institutions prior to serving their full sentences; persons released on parole are under supervision.

Stakeholders in Community Corrections in Japan

Women's Associations for Rehabilitation Aid (WARA) p.7

Volunteer organizations that work on crime prevention activities and child-rearing support activities.



Cooperating employers p.7

Private business owners who cooperate in providing conditions for living independent lives and achieving social reintegration through employment.



Probation officers p.10

Government officials who provide offenders and juvenile delinquents with instruction and support based on their expertise to enhance their rehabilitation.



Hogoshi (Volunteer probation officers) p.7

Citizen volunteers who support rehabilitation of offenders or juvenile delinquents together with probation officers.



Offender rehabilitation facilities and Self-reliance support homes p.8

Private facilities that provide accommodation for a certain period, thereby supporting released offenders for their reintegration.

Rehabilitation aid associations p.8

Private organizations that perform aid and awareness-raising activities related to offender rehabilitation.



Big Brothers and Sisters Associations (BBS) p.7

Youth volunteer groups that take on mentoring, befriending, supporting, and enjoying activities together with juveniles and children.



The Yellow Feather of Happiness is a symbol representing hope for a happy, bright, and crime-free society.

II Reliance on criminal judicial proceedings

Seamless reintegration into society

Parole as a measure to promote rehabilitation and social reintegration

Eligible inmates in penal institutions and juvenile training schools are released on parole. Adult/juvenile parolees are under supervision during their periods of parole. Through supervision, necessary support (e.g. guidance, securing of housing, and employment) are provided, thereby encouraging smooth reintegration of parolees.

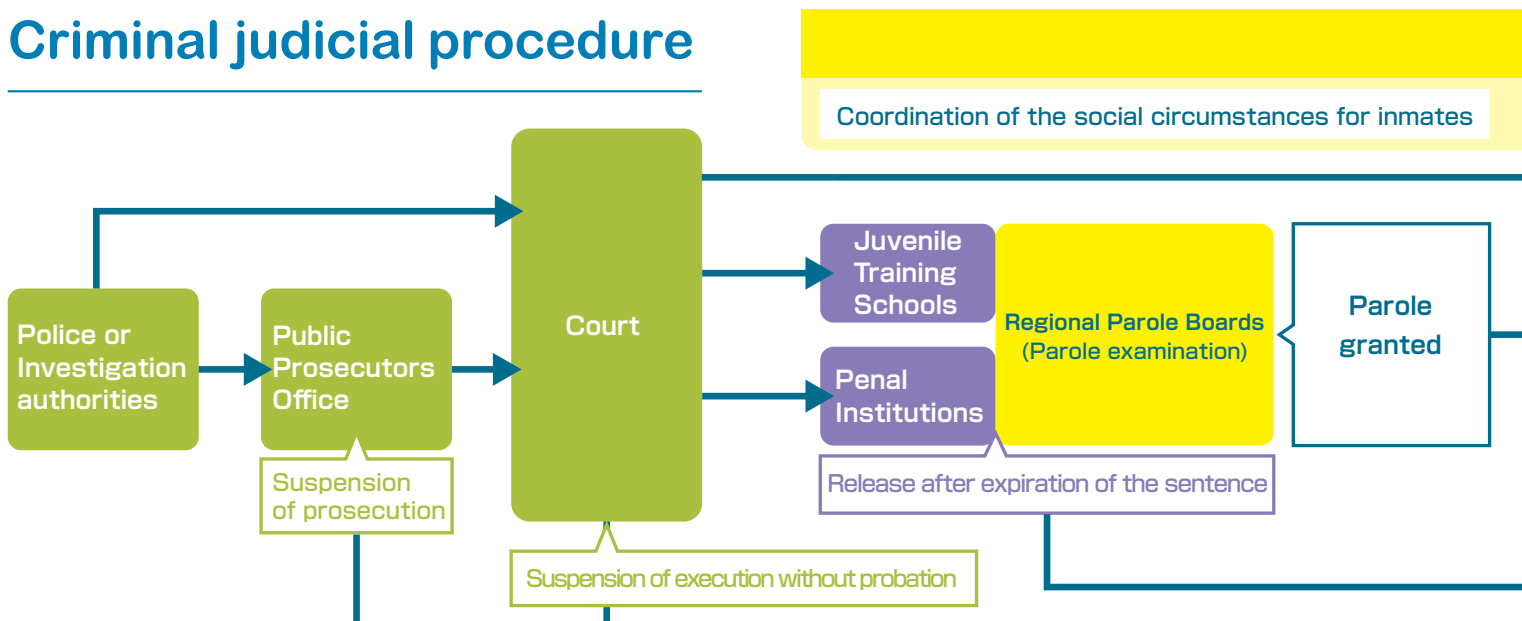
Coordination of the social circumstances for inmates that is used to arrange an environment for the prevention of recidivism

The status of a place in which a parolee will reside after release is investigated while the parolee is detained in a penal institution or juvenile training school in order to ensure that appropriate housing and employment are arranged prior to release. Consultation opportunities are offered so that aid and cooperation necessary from parties involved with welfare and medical care as well as family members and concerned parties can be secured. In this way, social circumstances after release are adjusted.

Urgent aftercare of discharged offenders for prevention of recidivism

Probation offices provide discharged offenders, such as persons who have been released from penal institutions after expiration of their sentence, with accommodations and meals for a certain period of time at the discharged offenders' request so that they will not need to reoffend due to poverty. Some specific measures are employment aid and teaching discharged offenders the daily skills necessary for leading a sound life in society.

Criminal judicial procedure



Supporting the rehabilitation of offenders and juvenile delinquents in the community

Probation/parole supervision nurturing sound members of society

Necessary guidance is provided with an understanding of living conditions. Aid for securing housing and employment is provided.

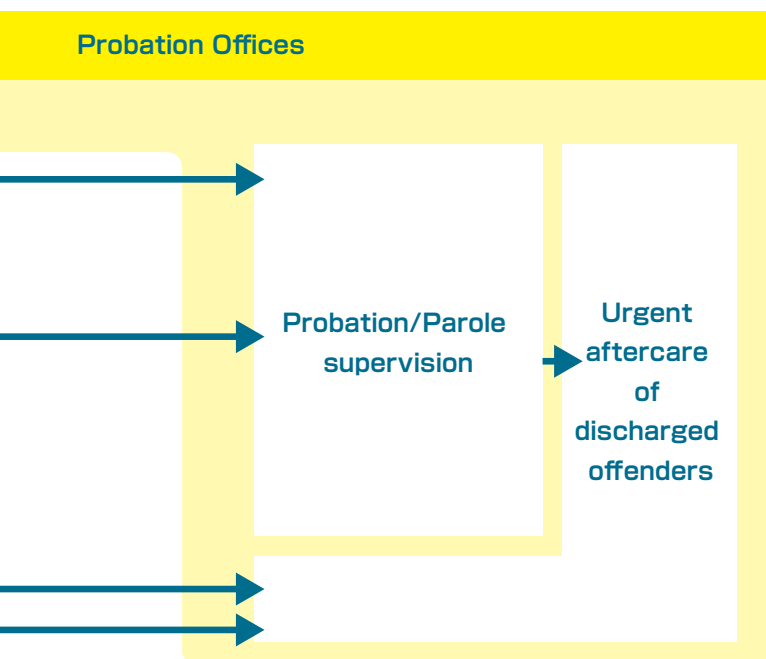
Probation officers and private-sector community volunteers including *hogoshi* work together to conduct supervision.

Juvenile Probationers (Persons put under probation by the family court)	Juvenile Parolees (Persons granted parole from the juvenile training schools)	Adult Parolees (Persons granted parole from penal institutions)	Adult Probationers (Persons under suspension of execution of all or part of the sentence by the court with probation)
Until the juvenile turns 20 years old , in principle*	Until the juvenile turns 20 years old , in principle*	For the parole period	Period of the suspended term

*Juveniles aged 18 and 19 at the time of relevant disposition are called "specified juveniles." They are under probation for six months or two years, or else they are sent to juvenile training schools for three years or less.

Through systematic assessment (Case Formulation in Probation/Parole, or CFP), principles for instruction and support are determined.

Instruction and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide necessary instructions so that persons under supervision will be able to comply with the conditions of probation/parole while their conduct is supervised. ● Implement specialized programs so as to overcome specific criminal tendencies. 	See the next page for details.
Guidance and assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support probationers/parolees in efforts to live in suitable residences, receive medical care and treatment, and obtain employment and means for cultural education and training. ● Improve and coordinate social circumstances. 	



Points to note

"Long lasting" support for social reintegration in the community

~Assistance to local community members by probation offices~

The probation office responds to consultations from those who have committed offences and provides information, advice and other assistance using its expertise in offender rehabilitation even after the probation period has ended. It also offers urgent aftercare for discharged offenders.

Moreover, the probation office establishes local community support networks for reintegration in collaboration with related organizations and responds to consultations from local residents and related organizations regarding crimes and delinquency.

Check here for details (Japanese)



III Instruction and support necessary for assisting in the rehabilitation of offenders and juvenile delinquents

Examples of instruction and support

When offenders struggle with substance dependence

In order to combat specific criminal tendencies such as drug dependence, specialized treatment programs (e.g., drug relapse prevention and drunk driving prevention programs) are implemented.

Probation offices have been focusing on connecting probationers/parolees to continuous support by relevant institutions in the community, as well as providing programs themselves.



◀ Group program (simulation)

When offenders have nowhere to stay or no one to support them

Offenders who have nowhere to stay or no one to support them are entitled to be provided with accommodation at the National Center for Offenders Rehabilitation as well as offender rehabilitation facilities, or halfway houses operated by juridical persons for offender rehabilitation service, and others (page 8).

These centers are attached to the probation offices to provide offenders with temporary accommodations as well as intensive instruction and supervision, along with sufficient employment support by probation officers.



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▲ National Center for Offenders Rehabilitation

When offenders have no jobs

The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare have collaborated to implement "Comprehensive employment support measures for released inmates," assisting offenders in attempts to be hired by cooperating employers.

Moreover, entrusted private employment support offices assist offenders to ensure that they are hired and continue their employment.



Check here for details (Japanese)



▲ Cooperating employers

When offenders need welfare services

For the purpose of the smooth use of welfare services for inmates released from penal institutions who have particular difficulty being self-reliant due to old age or disability, associated institutions, such as correctional institutions, regional parole boards, probation offices, and the Community Life Stabilizing Support Centers established in each prefecture, collaborate to conduct "special coordination" for inmates, so that they will be able to receive welfare services promptly after release.

IV Systems for responding to feelings of crime victims

Systems for crime victims in offender rehabilitation

There are four systems for crime victims and bereaved family members. The government has assigned staff exclusively in charge of crime victim affairs (crime victim affairs probation officers and crime victim affairs *hogoshi*) in each probation office.

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(1) Opinion hearing system in parole examination

Crime victims may express their opinions regarding offenders' release on parole, reentry coordination and probation supervision. Victims may also express their feelings regarding harm they have suffered.

(2) Hearing and Communication System about the Sentiments of Victims

Crime victims may express their sentiments regarding the harm they have suffered and provide opinions about the offender's life and behavior during probation and parole. Furthermore, they can ask the probation office to convey such sentiments to probationers and parolees, if they wish.

(3) Victim notification scheme

Crime victims may access information on perpetrators such as status of examination for parole and status of probation.

(4) Counseling and support

Crime victims may ask staff in charge of crime victim affairs for advice on their issues or concerns.

Redemption guidance program

Instruction and supervision are performed so that persons subject to probation faithfully endeavor to recover and mitigate damage incurred by crime victims. For example, they should fully understand responsibility for harm that they have caused, as well as impacts on and sentiments resulting from their criminal acts upon crime victims. They should faithfully compensate for the damage and apologize. The redemption guidance program is implemented for such purpose.

V Pardon—Proof of rehabilitation

If persons who committed crimes deeply repent for their mistakes or change their behavior and are deemed to have no likelihood of reoffending, restricted qualification may be recovered, or execution of the remaining sentence may be remitted through pardon after giving full consideration to sentiments of crime victims and society.

Pardons encourage persons who committed crimes to be rehabilitated, and serve an important role in maintaining a safe and crime-free society.

Check here for details (Japanese)



VI Various people supporting offender rehabilitation from their different positions

Hogoshi (Volunteer probation officers)



Their main duties are described as follows.

- To interview, guide, and advise persons subject to probation/parole supervision
- To coordinate the social circumstances for inmates in penal institutions
- To conduct crime prevention activities (page 9)

Check here for details (Japanese)



Status

Hogoshi are part-time national government officials. No salary (i.e., remuneration) is provided.

Term of office

One term is two years; however, this does not preclude re-appointment.

Requirements

They are required to satisfy all of the following conditions.

- (1) Highly evaluated in the community;
- (2) Enthusiastic and having sufficient spare time;
- (3) Financially stable; and (4) Healthy and active



Offender Rehabilitation Support Centers

Offender Rehabilitation Support Centers are established for each probation district nationwide, and they assist *hogoshi* with their activities and collaborate with associated institutions.

Women's Associations for Rehabilitation Aid (WARA)



Women's Associations for Rehabilitation Aid undertake a wide range of activities. Examples are crime prevention activities (page 9), activities for healthy upbringing of juveniles, child-rearing support activities, and assistance in offender rehabilitation facilities.

Check here for details (Japanese)



Big Brothers and Sisters Associations (BBS)



Their work includes "befriending activities," which support the growth and independence of juveniles through making friends with them. The BBS undertake regional-based anti-delinquency activities and group work, and they are engaged in the social contribution and participation activities of probationers/parolees implemented by probation offices.

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Cooperating employers



By employing persons who have difficulty finding regular work due to their previous criminal records and histories of delinquency, cooperating employers are private business owners who help offenders achieve a self-reliant life and social reintegration.

Cooperating employers support the recovery of offenders by guiding them to continue their working lives, from the standpoint of private business owners.

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Offender rehabilitation facilities and Self-reliance support homes

Offender rehabilitation facilities

Offender rehabilitation facilities are managed by private juridical persons for offender rehabilitation approved by the Minister of Justice. They assist with the smooth social reintegration of offenders. Some examples of activities are supply of accommodations and guidance for employment and life skills.

Offender rehabilitation facilities assist released inmates who have particular difficulties being self-reliant due to old age or disability to smoothly use welfare services and implement specialized treatment focusing on drug addiction recovery.

Furthermore, offender rehabilitation facilities provide life consultation services and support for drug addiction recovery during the transitional period until offenders have fully reintegrated into their community after leaving the facilities.



▲Offender rehabilitation facilities

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Self-reliance support homes

Self-reliance support homes, owned by nonprofit organizations registered with probation offices, provide accommodations by making their vacant rooms available for persons with no houses, families or relatives on whom they can depend and assist them in restarting their independent lives.

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Rehabilitation aid associations

Rehabilitation aid associations play core roles in local associated institutions and groups to construct local community support networks and to assist in activities by individuals and groups that support the recovery of offenders through implementation of subsidies and training sessions. Moreover, they engage in publicity and education activities for local community residents and local governments.



Column
1

Origin of offender rehabilitation in Japan



Photo: KIMPARA Meizen

Modern offender rehabilitation in Japan originated from the Shizuoka Prefecture Released Prisoners Protection Company established in 1888. It was founded by KIMPARA Meizen, known as a businessperson who strived for public good throughout his lifetime, together with KAWAMURA Kyoichiro, a vice-warden of Shizuoka Prison, and other colleagues.

This company arranged housing and employment for released prisoners. It also allocated 1,700 volunteers throughout the prefecture to engage in rehabilitation for released prisoners, and these efforts seem to be the precursor of the offender rehabilitation facilities and system of *hogoshi*. Japan's offender rehabilitation system originated from private initiatives and has been developing since the Meiji era. Many private volunteers including *hogoshi* take on the roles of private benefactors, even now.

VII Medical treatment and supervision

Medical treatment and supervision are programs for promoting social reintegration of individuals who have committed designated serious harmful acts such as murder or arson but who are in a state of insanity or diminished capacity by ensuring medical care necessary through hospitalization or routine visit to hospitals/clinics. Rehabilitation coordinators (page 10), who are specialized professionals for mental health welfare, are assigned to probation offices. They conduct the following services in collaboration with associated institutions. In addition, they play roles as coordinators for treatment in local communities.

Check here for details (Japanese)



Social circumstance investigation	Probation offices investigate social circumstances of the relevant individuals in the process of trials, and report the results to the court.
Social circumstance coordination	Probation offices move ahead with arrangement of programs for assistance supporting community lives, ensuring housing after discharge and hospitals/clinics for routine visits starting while relevant individuals are hospitalized.
Mental health supervision	Probation offices provide necessary guidance and supervise relevant individuals' lives in local communities. They also hold care-team meetings, share information of relevant individuals with related organizations, and integrate treatment policies.

VIII Understanding and cooperation by local communities required for supporting offender rehabilitation.

Crime prevention activities are conducted to promote public understanding and improvement of social environments that cause crimes in order to prevent crimes from actually taking place. The activities aim to deepen public understanding for the struggles faced by persons who commit crimes and delinquencies and to generate acceptance of such persons as community members. By looking out for and supporting the rehabilitation of offenders and juvenile delinquents, an environment that discourages reoffending and delinquency can be created. The “Campaign to Give Society a Brighter Future — The power of the community to prevents crime and juvenile delinquency and help offender rehabilitation”, organized by the Ministry of Justice, is an example of a crime prevention activity.



▲Crime prevention activities

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IX Global promotion of the significance of community volunteers supporting offender reintegration

As is the case with *hogoshi* in Japan, community volunteers supporting offender reintegration play active roles overseas. Followed by the Asia Volunteer Probation Officers Meetings held in Tokyo in 2014 and 2017, the World Congress for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration (WCCV) was held in Kyoto in 2021 and in The Hague, Netherlands, in 2024, bringing participants from across world. At the 2nd WCCV, the participating experts, practitioners, and organizations endorsed the Declaration designating April 17—the date of the Congress—as “the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration”. The Rehabilitation Bureau of the Ministry of Justice of Japan will remain committed to leading international discussions aimed at enhancing awareness, and further promoting the utilization, of community volunteers in the field of rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.



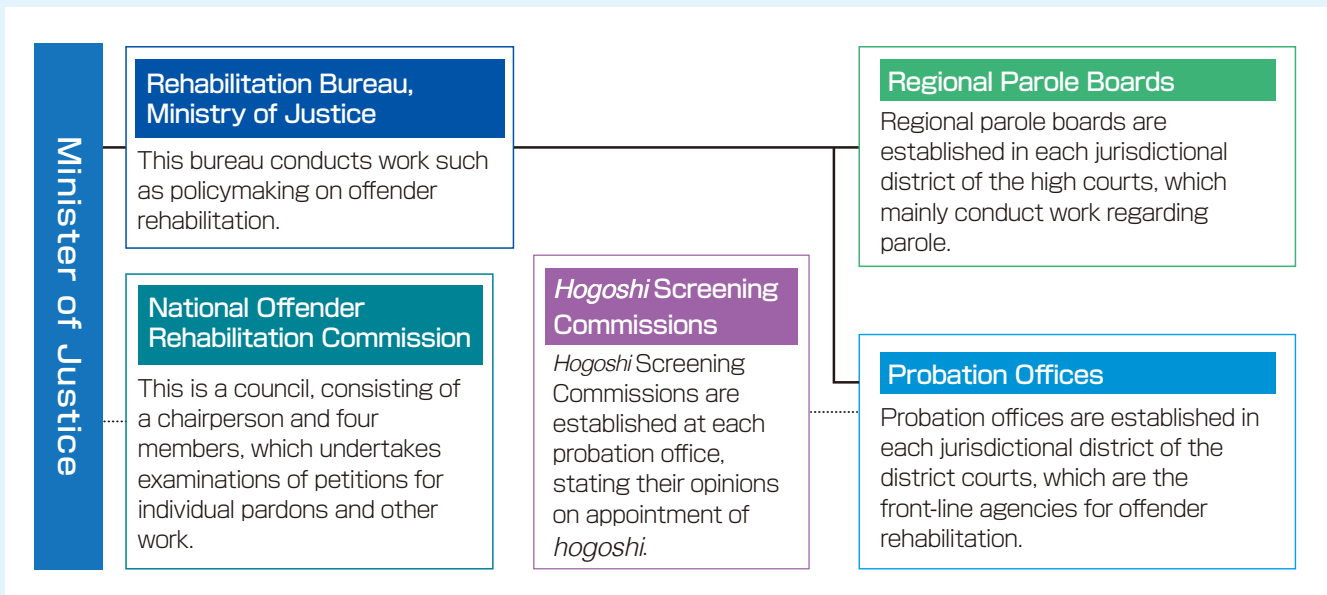
▲The 2nd World Congress for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration

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Organizations and officials involved in offender rehabilitation



Probation officers



Probation officers are experts in offender rehabilitation assigned to regional parole boards and probation offices. Based on specialized knowledge in psychology, pedagogy, social welfare, sociology, and other expertise, they engage in probation/parole supervision and coordination of social circumstances, in collaboration with *hogoshi*, to prevent recidivism and promote social reintegration. They also engage in crime prevention activities. Probation offices also assign probation officers specializing in victim support measures (Victim Support Officers).

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Rehabilitation coordinators



Rehabilitation coordinators are assigned at probation offices as specialists qualified as mental health welfare workers and the like. Based on specialized knowledge about mental health and welfare, they engage in medical treatment and supervision.

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Column 2

Organizational philosophy of offender rehabilitation

In January 2021, an organizational philosophy comprising a “mission” and “guiding principles” was established.

All employees endeavor to serve the public using this philosophy as the foundation for daily services.

Mission

We shall prevent recidivism and repeated serious harm by those who have committed crimes and caused harm, and assist with their rehabilitation and social reintegration as well as expand local networks through which people support people. Thereby, we shall aim to realize safe and secure local communities and an inclusive society in which no one will be left behind.

Check here for details (Japanese)



List of Offender Rehabilitation Offices

Name	Postal code	Address	Tel
Hokkaido Regional Parole Board	060-0042	12 Odori-nishi, Chuo-ku, Sapporo-shi, Hokkaido	011-261-9907
Sapporo Probation Office	060-0042	12 Odori-nishi, Chuo-ku, Sapporo-shi, Hokkaido	011-261-9225
Hakodate Probation Office	040-8550	25-18 Shinkawacho, Hakodate-shi, Hokkaido	0138-26-0431
Asahikawa Probation Office	070-0901	4 Hanasakicho, Asahikawa-shi, Hokkaido	0166-51-9376
Kushiro Probation Office	085-8535	10-3 Saiwaicho, Kushiro-shi, Hokkaido	0154-23-3200
Tohoku Regional Parole Board	980-0812	1-3-1 Katahira, Aoba-ku, Sendai-shi, Miyagi	022-221-3536
Aomori Probation Office	030-0861	1-3-25 Nagashima, Aomori-shi, Aomori	017-776-6419
Morioka Probation Office	020-0023	8-20 Uchimarui, Morioka-shi, Iwate	019-624-3395
Sendai Probation Office	980-0812	1-3-1 Katahira, Aoba-ku, Sendai-shi, Miyagi	022-221-1451
Akita Probation Office	010-0951	7-1-2 Sanno, Akita-shi, Akita	018-862-3903
Yamagata Probation Office	990-0046	1-32 Otemachi, Yamagata-shi, Yamagata	023-631-2277
Fukushima Probation Office	960-8017	17 Kitsunozuka, Fukushima-shi, Fukushima	024-534-2246
Kanto Regional Parole Board	330-9725	2-1 Shintoshin, Chuo-ku, Saitama-shi, Saitama	048-600-0181
Mito Probation Office	310-0061	1-1 Kitamicho, Mito-shi, Ibaraki	029-221-3942
Utsunomiya Probation Office	320-0036	2-1-11 Obata, Utsunomiya-shi, Tochigi	028-621-2391
Maebashi Probation Office	371-0026	3-2-1 Otemachi, Maebashi-shi, Gunma	027-237-5010
Saitama Probation Office	330-0063	3-16-58 Takasago, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi, Saitama	048-861-8287
Chiba Probation Office	260-8553	2-14-10 Kasuga, Chuo-ku, Chiba-shi, Chiba	043-204-7795
Tokyo Probation Office	100-0013	1-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo	03-3597-0120
Yokohama Probation Office	231-0001	1-6-1 Shinko, Naka-ku, Yokohama-shi, Kanagawa	045-201-3006
Niigata Probation Office	951-8104	5191 Nishi-ohatacho, Chuo-ku, Niigata-shi, Niigata	025-222-1531
Kofu Probation Office	400-0032	1-11-8 Chuo, Kofu-shi, Yamanashi	055-235-7144
Nagano Probation Office	380-0846	1108 Asahimachi, Nagano-shi, Nagano	026-234-1993
Shizuoka Probation Office	420-0853	9-45 Oudemachi, Aoi-ku, Shizuoka-shi, Shizuoka	054-253-0191
Chubu Regional Parole Board	460-0001	4-3-1 Sannomaru, Naka-ku, Nagoya-shi, Aichi	052-951-2944
Toyama Probation Office	939-8202	2-9-16 Nishidenjigatamachi, Toyama-shi, Toyama	076-421-5620
Kanazawa Probation Office	920-0024	3-4-1 Sainen, Kanazawa-shi, Ishikawa	076-261-0058
Fukui Probation Office	910-0019	1-1-54 Haruyama, Fukui-shi, Fukui	0776-22-2858
Gifu Probation Office	500-8812	2-7-2 Miejicho, Gifu-shi, Gifu	058-265-2651
Nagoya Probation Office	460-8524	4-3-1 Sannomaru, Naka-ku, Nagoya-shi, Aichi	052-951-2949
Tsu Probation Office	514-0032	3-12 Chuo, Tsu-shi, Mie	059-227-6671
Kinki Regional Parole Board	540-0008	4-1-76 Otemae, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi, Osaka	06-6949-6260
Otsu Probation Office	520-0044	3-1-1 Kyomachi, Otsu-shi, Shiga	077-524-6683
Kyoto Probation Office	602-0032	255-4 Okamatsucho Karasuma-dori Imadegawa-agaru, Kamigyoyu-ku, Kyoto-shi, Kyoto	075-441-5141
Osaka Probation Office	540-0008	4-1-76 Otemae, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi, Osaka	06-6949-6240
Kobe Probation Office	650-0016	1-4-1 Tachibanadori, Chuo-ku, Kobe-shi, Hyogo	078-351-4005
Nara Probation Office	630-8213	1-1 Noboriojicho, Nara-shi, Nara	0742-23-4869
Wakayama Probation Office	640-8143	3 Nibancho, Wakayama-shi, Wakayama	073-436-2501
Chugoku Regional Parole Board	730-0012	2-31 Kamihatchobori, Naka-ku, Hiroshima-shi, Hiroshima	082-221-4497
Tottori Probation Office	680-0842	109 Yoshikata, Tottori-shi, Tottori	0857-22-3518
Matsue Probation Office	690-0841	134-10 Mukoujimacho, Matsue-shi, Shimane	0852-21-3767
Okayama Probation Office	700-0807	1-8-1 Minamigata, Kita-ku, Okayama-shi, Okayama	086-224-5661
Hiroshima Probation Office	730-0012	2-31 Kamihatchobori, Naka-ku, Hiroshima-shi, Hiroshima	082-221-4495
Yamaguchi Probation Office	753-0088	6-16 Nakagawaracho, Yamaguchi-shi, Yamaguchi	083-922-1327
Shikoku Regional Parole Board	760-0033	1-1 Marunouchi, Takamatsu-shi, Kagawa	087-822-5090
Tokushima Probation Office	770-0852	2-17 Tokushimacho, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima	088-622-4359
Takamatsu Probation Office	760-0033	1-1 Marunouchi, Takamatsu-shi, Kagawa	087-822-5445
Matsuyama Probation Office	790-0001	4-4-1 Ichibancho, Matsuyama-shi, Ehime	089-941-9983
Kochi Probation Office	780-0850	1-4-1 Marunouchi, Kochi-shi, Kochi	088-873-5118
Kyushu Regional Parole Board	810-0044	4-2-3 Ropponmatsu, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka-shi, Fukuoka	092-761-7781
Fukuoka Probation Office	810-0044	4-2-3 Ropponmatsu, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka-shi, Fukuoka	092-761-6736
Saga Probation Office	840-0041	2-10-20 Jyonai, Saga-shi, Saga	0952-24-4291
Nagasaki Probation Office	850-0033	8-16 Manzaimachi, Nagasaki-shi, Nagasaki	095-822-5175
Kumamoto Probation Office	862-0971	3-1-53 Oe, Chuo-ku, Kumamoto-shi, Kumamoto	096-366-8080
Oita Probation Office	870-8523	7-5 Niagemachi, Oita-shi, Oita	097-532-2053
Miyazaki Probation Office	880-0802	1-1 Beppucho, Miyazaki-shi, Miyazaki	0985-24-4345
Kagoshima Probation Office	892-0816	13-10 Yamashitacho, Kagoshima-shi, Kagoshima	099-226-1556
Naha Probation Office	900-0022	1-15-15 Higawa, Naha-shi, Okinawa	098-853-2946

Mascots of Offender Rehabilitation



Hogo-chan and Sara-chan, rehabilitation penguins



Mr. KUJIRA (hogoshi)



Brother IRUKA and Sister IRUKA (BBS)



Ms. OKUJO (WARA)



Master ASHIKA (cooperating employer)

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