



The **CAMPAIGN** for the
FAIR SENTENCING
of **YOUTH**

2025

FREQUENTLY ASKED

QUESTIONS

Minnesota Supervised
Release Board Hearings
**For People Incarcerated
Since Childhood**

Last Updated July 2025



FAQ:

Minnesota Supervised Release Board Hearings For People Incarcerated Since Childhood

Disclaimer: This document is not legal advice and does not replace individualized legal assistance from a licensed attorney. It is designed as an informational resource only and to help those who are being reviewed by the Supervised Release Board to prepare for their hearings.

Introduction

This document is an informational resource about ‘Juvenile Offense Case’ (JOC) hearings before the Minnesota Supervised Release Board. People who are eligible to receive a JOC hearing are those who received sentences of 15 years or more for an offense that was committed when they were under age 18. This guide addresses a 2023 Minnesota law change and is an informational resource for people serving and their loved ones.

Defining supervised release

What is early supervised release?

‘Early supervised release’ is an opportunity for people whose crimes occurred before they were 18 years old to be reviewed for release from prison.

Recent changes to Minnesota law make people convicted of offenses that occurred when they were under age 18 eligible for release consideration after serving either 15, 20, or 30 years of incarceration, depending on the structure of their sentence. Minn. Stat. § 244.05.

People on supervised release are subject to supervision by the Minnesota Department of Corrections through a parole officer, and must follow certain rules and obligations. If a person violates the terms of their release, they can be returned to prison for a period of time.

Eligibility for Supervised Release

Who is eligible to receive a 'Juvenile Offense Case' (JOC) hearing?

You are eligible for a JOC hearing if:

- you received a sentence of more than 15 years
- for a crime that occurred when you were under the age of 18

What is my 'minimum term of imprisonment?' When am I eligible for supervised release?

Your 'minimum term of imprisonment,' or your 'Parole Eligibility Date' (PED), is the amount of time you must serve before you are eligible for supervised release. Your minimum term of imprisonment will be somewhere between 15-30 years, depending on the structure of your sentence. Minn. Stat. § 244.05 subd. 4(b).

If I am eligible for supervised release, does this guarantee that I will be released?

No. Being eligible for supervised release means that you will have the opportunity to be considered for release by the Board. While eligibility is an important first step, release is not guaranteed. The Board is required by statute to consider twelve factors when deciding whether or not to grant release. Minn. Stat. § 244.05 Subd. 5(i). These factors fall into three primary categories: 1) risk to the community; 2) development while incarcerated; and 3) mental health and criminal history.

The Basics

How is supervised release different from resentencing?

Both supervised release and resentencing provide opportunities for your case to be reviewed, but they are different processes. Resentencing occurs when a court revisits and modifies your sentence. Supervised release is a process through which the Supervised Release Board evaluates your readiness for release under supervision. Unlike resentencing, supervised release does not change the sentence imposed by the court.



I already have a release date. Will going before the Supervised Release Board delay my release?

No. If you already have a release date, going before the Board will not delay your release. The Board does not have the power to extend your sentence. However, going before the Board may allow you to come home early if the Board grants you supervised release.

Do I need to apply for supervised release? Am I guaranteed a hearing?

You do not need to apply for supervised release and there is no cost to have a hearing. If you meet the eligibility requirements for a supervised release hearing, you are legally entitled to a supervised release hearing and the DOC will schedule your hearing. If you believe that you are eligible, but you have not been scheduled for a hearing, you can ask your caseworker if they have more information for you.

What is the standard for release?

The Board has the authority to grant supervised release to a person that has served their minimum term of imprisonment.

The Board does not have authority to grant release if the person being reviewed:

- has failed to complete relevant treatment recommended by the DOC (such as sex offender treatment, substance use disorder treatment, or mental health treatment);
- does not have a comprehensive release plan that ensures that upon release the person being reviewed will have suitable housing and community-based treatment, and that the person being reviewed has a post-prison employment or education plan;
- has not yet served their minimum term of imprisonment.

Minn. Stat. § 244.05 Subd. 5(j).

Board Structure

What is the Supervised Release Board?

The Supervised Release Board (the “Board”) is an official government body with the authority to grant supervised release to people with indeterminate or life sentences, or those who received sentences of more than 15 years when they were under the age of eighteen. The Board only



has the authority to grant release after the person being reviewed has served a 'minimum term of imprisonment.' Prior to the creation of the Board, the Commissioner of Corrections was solely responsible for granting or denying parole to those serving life sentences in Minnesota, but the Board assumed these duties effective July 1, 2024, due to a change in Minnesota Law. Minn. Stat. § 244.049.

Who serves on the Supervised Release Board?

The Board has five regular members, including the Commissioner of Corrections, who serves as the Board Chair. When the Board considers people who were sentenced before they were age 18, two additional members with backgrounds in youth development or psychology are included. Board members generally serve four-year terms and are appointed by the Governor after receiving recommendations from the Minnesota House and Senate majority and minority leaders. Minn. Stat. § 244.049.

Does the Board vote on whether to grant release?

Yes, the Board votes to decide whether or not to grant release. To make release decisions, the Board must have a majority of the five regular Board members present, and at least one member with an expertise in childhood psychology. A majority vote of all members present is required to either grant or deny release. Minn. Stat. § 244.049 subd. 3. If the vote is a tie, supervised release is only granted if the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections votes in favor of granting supervised release. Minn. Stat. § 244.05(k).

Hearing Structure

I was scheduled for an 'initial' hearing. What does this mean?

Per Minnesota statute, you will be scheduled for an initial hearing three years before you finish serving your 'minimum term of imprisonment.' For example, if you are eligible for supervised release after serving 15 years of incarceration, your initial hearing should be scheduled after you have served 12 years. At this hearing, the Board will assess your status and make programming recommendations relevant to your release review. The Board does not have the authority to grant release at this hearing, and you are not eligible for release until you have served your minimum term of imprisonment. Minn. Stat. § 244.05.



I have already served my minimum term of imprisonment, but I never got an initial hearing. Why?

Minn. Stat. § 244.05 is both prospective and retroactive. In other words, it applies to both people who were sentenced before the legislation passed and after it passed. This means that some people became immediately eligible to be considered for release when the law passed. If you had already served your minimum term of imprisonment when the law passed in 2023, you were immediately eligible for a release hearing, and thus would not have been scheduled for an initial hearing.

Do I need an attorney at my hearing?

No, the law does not require you to have an attorney to appear before the Board. You have the right to attend your hearing without one. That said, you are allowed to bring someone to support you – this could be a loved one, mentor, attorney, or any other advocate that you choose. While having an attorney is not required, it can be helpful as you prepare for your hearing.

Will my hearing be in person?

If you are currently incarcerated, your hearing will likely take place via videoconference.

Who will be at my hearing?

All supervised release hearings are subject to Minnesota open meeting laws. Minn. Stat. Chapter 13D. This means all meetings are 'live streamed' and open to public attendance, either in person or virtually. Members of the Board, as well as a few DOC staff, will be present at your hearing. It is possible that the victim or the victim's family will be present at your hearing. Under state law, victims have the right to provide the Board with a written or oral statement at review hearings. Minn. Stat. § 244.05(g)

What happens if I am denied release at my hearing?

If you are denied supervised release at your hearing, the Board is required to issue a decision regarding their denial, including an explanation for the decision. This explanation will include programming recommendations and other obligations from the Board, as well as a timeframe for your next hearing. Anyone under 18 at the time of their offense who was denied release can request a subsequent hearing three years after their denial. Minn. Stat. § 244.05 Subd. 5(m).



How can I prepare for my hearing?

The most important things you can do to prepare for your hearing are:

- Maintaining good behavior;
- Engaging in educational or vocational work;
- Participating in treatment or other programming;
- Creating a strong reentry plan.

For further information about preparing for your hearing, you can request a free copy of the CFSY's Parole Preparation Toolkit.

Additional Resources



The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth Parole Preparation Toolkit

Write to us to request a free paper copy or access online here:

<https://bit.ly/CFSY-Parole-Toolkit>



Guides from UnCommon Law

(please note that these guides are specific to the California parole process)

- How to Write a Letter of Remorse
<https://bit.ly/CL-letter-remorse>
- How to Write a Parole Plan
<https://bit.ly/CL-parole-plan>
- How to Write a Parole Plan if You Have an ICE Hold
<https://bit.ly/3GYRav>



Minnesota Statute 2024 § 244.05, subdivision 5

<https://bit.ly/MN-244-05>

Contact

If you still have questions or want additional resources to prepare for your JOC hearing, you can write a letter to the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth, at the address below. Additionally, please write to us if you have been reviewed by the Board or are preparing for review and would like to share your experience with the CFSY.

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

Attn: Legal and Policy Team
1319 F St NW Suite 303
Washington, DC 20004

www.cfsy.org 
info@cfsy.org 
[@theCFSY](https://www.facebook.com/theCFSY) 

