



Summary of CSC's advancement 2023–2024 Federal Pathway Annual Progress Report



Correctional Service Canada (CSC) contributes to public safety in Canada. We support the safety and well-being of **Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people** inside and outside of the Canadian justice system.

To do this, we have been advancing the calls for justice relating to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which can be found in the Government of Canada's [2023–2024 Federal Pathway Annual Progress Report](#). We have been developing culturally appropriate solutions that better support the challenges Indigenous peoples face within the federal correctional system.

Here's how we've been taking action towards real, progressive and systemic change. We've:

- Appointed our first-ever Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections, Kathy Neil, a Metis woman, on May 1, 2023
- Renewed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Native Women's Association of Canada to support Indigenous women and gender diverse people in the Correctional Officer Training Program and increase representation within our workforce
- Creating Indigenous Interventions Centres to provide streamlined support to federally incarcerated Indigenous people, from the commencement of their sentence
- Streamlining the Section 84 release process to remove barriers to early release to Indigenous communities
- Maintaining and expanding partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations to increase support services for federally sentenced Indigenous people transitioning to the community
- Implementing several reintegration initiatives that support federally sentenced Indigenous peoples as they transition to a life in the community, including project funding for Indigenous organizations delivering trauma and life skills interventions
- Implementing the Indigenous Offender Employment Initiative in Prairie, Ontario and Pacific regions

Read more about each Call for Justice relating to the federal correctional system and what we're doing to advance them, below.

Call for Justice 14.1

Establish facilities to ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people have options for decarceration

CSC provides culturally appropriate interventions, treatments and facilities focused on transition to the community. CSC is also:

- enhancing capacity within Healing Lodges
- completing the draft five-year Section 81 Strategy for Healing Lodges
- consulting Indigenous organizations, such as the National Indigenous Advisory Committee (NAIC), on the implementation of An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- working to expand its contracted accommodation capacity in the community to address gaps in specialized services for all types of offenders including Indigenous women

Call for Justice 14.2

Ensure that facilities established under sections 81 and 84 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act receive funding parity with Correctional Service Canada-operated facilities

CSC currently provides funding to ten healing lodges across Canada. It manages some of them, while others are managed by partner or community organizations. CSC is:

- reducing barriers to the full utilization of existing Section 81 Healing Lodge agreements and the creation of new agreements through relationship building and renewed partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations
- creating new agreements through relationship building and renewed partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations
- removing barriers and increasing supportive releases for Indigenous women in home communities



Call for Justice 14.3

Rescind the maximum-security classification that disproportionately limits federally sentenced Indigenous women classified at that level from accessing services, supports, and programs required to facilitate their safe and timely reintegration

All CSC women's institutions, except healing lodges, are multi-level and accommodate minimum, medium and maximum-security women. The healing lodge for women offenders accepts women classified as minimum or medium security.

CSC is working to ensure that its security classification process considers the systemic and background factors of Indigenous offenders and meaningfully integrates culturally relevant and Indigenous-informed interventions. This work is taking place both internally within CSC as well as with academic partners.

Call for Justice 14.4

Evaluate security classification scales and tools to consider the nuances of Indigenous backgrounds and realities

CSC works with academics to include Indigenous voices and Indigenous Research Methodologies when developing security assessment tools. This includes:

- working with independent researchers at the University of Regina
- welcoming arm's length support from the Elders Council at the University of Regina

Call for Justice 14.5

Apply Gladue factors in all decision making concerning Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA people and in a manner that meets their needs and rehabilitation

CSC is:

- facilitating Indigenous healing at all women's institutions through Elders and/or Spiritual Advisors, and is supported by both Indigenous Correctional Program Officers and Indigenous Liaison Officers to address the needs of Indigenous women through a gender and culturally specific approach
- delivering culturally responsive correctional programming for federally sentenced Indigenous peoples, including a gender-responsive stream for federally sentenced Indigenous women. These programs are designed to meet their specific needs by including ceremonial sessions, culturally-specific materials and Elder involvement



Call for Justice 14.6

Provide mental health, addictions, and trauma services for incarcerated Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people

CSC works with National Indigenous organizations, federal departments and advisory bodies to help ensure the successful rehabilitation and community reintegration for Indigenous women. This includes:

- providing mental health, trauma and gender-responsive interventions
- securing additional community beds at Healing Lodges
- facilitating the intake of Secure Certificate Indian Status applications for eligible First Nations women to ensure they have proper identification upon release and can access entitlements conferred exclusively to registered First Nations
- coordinating development and implementation of the Enhancing Community Success project with Indigenous Services Canada to enhance supportive release planning and community reintegration for Indigenous women in select regions
- ongoing implementation of a successful Demonstration Project at Buffalo Sage Wellness House (BSWH), wherein Mental Health Staff from Edmonton Institution for Women provide mental health services to women at BSWH which has led to improvements in continuity of care and increased support to BSWH staff which as enabled them to accept women with higher mental health needs



Call for Justice 14.7

Prohibit transfer of federally incarcerated women in need of mental health care to all-male treatment centres

One of CSC's priorities is ensuring that individuals incarcerated in Canada's federal institutions have access to quality, safe, patient-centred care. CSC provides essential health care and reasonable access to non-essential health care to offenders in keeping with professional standards. CSC policy ensures that:

- the inmate's state of health and/or health care needs are considered in all decisions relating to transfer
- admissions to a CSC Treatment Centre for Psychiatric Hospital Care are a clinical decision based on clinical admission criteria

In fall 2017, CSC enshrined in policy the requirement to use men's Regional Treatment Centres (RTCs) for women only in emergency circumstances and only for short-term periods. Further, CSC requires that these placements only occur based on the recommendation of the treating physician and that services provided to any woman placed at a men's RTC is will be monitored by CSC's Regional Person-Centred Health Committee for the duration of their stay. All efforts are made to minimize the number of transfers while attempting to keep individuals close to their home community.

Call for Justice 14.8

Ensure correctional facilities recognize the needs of Indigenous women when designing and implementing programming

Providing culturally responsive programming and traditional healing practices by Elders and Spiritual Advisors is important to successful rehabilitation and intervention needs of Indigenous women. CSC:

- reviews available operational, mental health and personnel resources
- works with Nekaneet First Nation in Saskatchewan to support the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge (OOHL) for women
- improves mental health, trauma and gender responsive interventions
- is implementing the OOHL Traditional Healing/Medicine Program where Traditional Healers support residents through providing cultural teachings, ceremonies, traditional healing, and traditional medicines





Call for Justice 14.9

Increase opportunities for meaningful vocational training, secondary school graduation, and post-secondary education

CSC works with Indigenous organizations to provide them with funding for needs-based and culturally safe reintegration support for federally sentenced Indigenous peoples. CSC is:

- providing approximately 3.5 million in funding for community reintegration initiatives
- providing Indigenous women with employment and employability skills training through the Indigenous Offender Employment Initiative (IOEI)
- increasing engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities, in regards to reintegration, through our partners
- working to expand the Digital Education Project (DEP) pilot, which blends in-class and computer-based approaches that support offenders in helping them to achieve their educational goals. Through this pilot, a range of courses are offered, including Indigenous course material and resources that specifically address the learning needs of Indigenous offenders.
- partnering with local organizations and post-secondary institutions to offer education courses that incorporate Indigenous content, language and culture



Call for Justice 14.10

Increase and enhance the role and participation of Elders in decision making for all aspects of planning for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA people.

Elders, spiritual advisors and Elder's helpers guide Indigenous peoples in federal corrections to traditional Indigenous ways of life, based on their own teachings. They work both individually and in groups using teachings, counselling, and traditional ceremonies and practices.

CSC is reviewing and revitalizing policies and procedures related to Indigenous corrections in consultation with the National Elders Working group to provide direction on the role of the Elders in cultural interventions

Call for Justice 14.11

Expand mother-and-child programming and to establish placement options described in sections 81 and 84 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to ensure that mothers and their children are not separated.

CSC is strengthening the Mother-Child Program, by broadening the definition of "mother" to be more culturally inclusive and to reflect kinship bonds.



Call for Justice 14.12

Provide programming for men and boys that confronts and ends violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people

CSC provides programs and services that address offenders' criminal behaviour. CSC offers these both in institutions and in the community. For more information: [Programs for offenders - Canada.ca](https://www.csc.gc.ca/Programs_for_offenders_-_Canada.ca)

Call for Justice 14.13

Eliminate the practice of strip searches

Strip searches are one of several approaches and tools that CSC uses to prevent the entry of contraband into institutions. CSC is:

- improving measures to prevent contraband from entering our institutions to ensure a safe and secure environment
- continuing to research and introduce new technology as it becomes available to better facilitate the detection of contraband
- undertaking measures to employ new Body Scanner technology, which will greatly reduce the need for strip searches

