



## **THE CHANGING FEDERAL OFFENDER POPULATION UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION: RECOGNITION AND RESPONSE**

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### Abstract

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) administers the community supervision of all federal offenders on conditional release. A modernized approach to correctional policy, programming and management practice requires timely, accurate and objective information on the offender population. CSC's automated capacity to produce profiles of the community supervision population is being used to raise awareness about size and composition. Analytics show that CSC is facing some new challenges in managing the complexities of an increasingly diverse community supervision population.

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A critical theme in accommodating and managing the Canadian federal offender population continues to be enhancing the public safety aspect of reintegrating criminal offenders into the community. Since fiscal year-end 2012-13, about 25,000 new offenders have been admitted to federal custody across Canada. Virtually every federally sentenced offender (those sentenced to two years or more) will be released from incarceration and serve a portion of their court-imposed sentence in the community. Those released onto community supervision may be on Day Parole, Full Parole, Statutory Release or on a Long-term Supervision Order. The Parole Board of Canada (PBC), an independent agency, is the decision-making authority for discretionary release (Day or Full Parole) and sets the conditions for release supervision. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) administers the community supervision of all federal offenders on conditional release. The challenge for CSC is to provide efficient and effective correctional services and programs that will enable offenders on conditional release to safely reintegrate into the community.

In order to meet this challenge, it is essential to understand the composition of the Canadian federal community supervision population as well as the obstacles faced by correctional administrators, front-line staff (parole officers and program facilitators), non-government organizations and volunteers. Moreover, an active intervention approach to correctional policy, programming and management practice requires accurate, objective research-based information on the offender population. The CSC's capacity to produce meaningful and accurate profiles of selected characteristics can be used to raise awareness about the composition of the federal offender population under community supervision.

Comparative analyses tell us we are facing some unprecedented correctional challenges in managing an increasingly diverse federal community supervision population. Data derived from the recently implemented CSC Corporate Reporting System-Modernized (CRS-M) and datawarehouse<sup>1</sup>, illustrate there are five emerging aspects of the federal community supervision profile to support this claim.

First, the decline in violent crime rates, the decreasing numbers of new admissions combined with successful reintegration efforts have resulted in a downward trend in the Canadian federal prison population<sup>2</sup>. The federal in-custody population was at 15,224 at the end of 2012-13, and later peaked at 15,300 in 2013-14. A more recent in-custody population snapshot finds the institutional count standing at 13,931 (as of December 25, 2018). This represents a noteworthy decline of 1,293 inmates (or 9%). On the other hand, the 2012-13 community supervision count stood at 7,628 and by fiscal year-end 2017-18 it was at 9,167. A more recent snapshot finds the community supervision count to be 9,455 (as of December 25, 2018). This represents an increase of 1,827 (or 24%) offenders under community supervision. Moreover, the federal population of women under community supervision increased by 239 (or 50%) from 482 in 2012-13 to 721 in 2017-18 and Indigenous offenders increased by 437 (or 36%) from 1,218 in 2012-13 to 1,655 in 2017-18. The significant growth of the federal community

1 Motiuk, L.L. & Jean, B. (2018). *Correctional Performance in the Federal Correctional Population. Research in Brief 18-08. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.*

2 Motiuk, L.L. (2018). *Exploring the Shift in the Federal Women Offender Distribution. Research in Brief 18-07. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.*

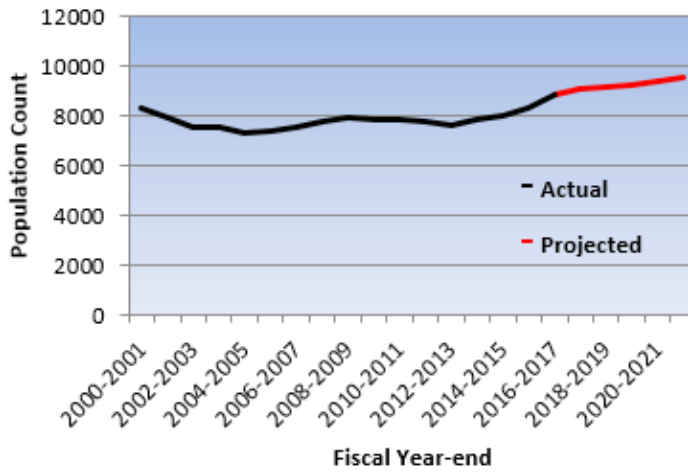


Figure 1: Actual and Projected Community Supervision Population

population and shift<sup>3,4</sup> translates into a net demand for additional community supervision resources.

Secondly, a forecasting database of weekly snapshots of community supervision counts from 1990-91 to 2017-18 was derived from the CSC Offender Management System. The historical database was used to develop alternative and provisional forecasting scenarios for the community supervision population up to 2022. SAS/ETS software was used for exploring and analyzing univariate time series data and to select the best-fitting model<sup>5</sup>. A review of the actual and projected community supervision population (2000-01 to 2020-21) figure below reveals some important information about the federal community supervision population. Most notable is the steady rise of the community supervision population since 2012-13. At this time, assuming all else remains constant, it is estimated that the federal community supervision population will continue to grow. Presently, it appears that increased discretionary release (more Day Paroles) and improved reintegration outcomes (fewer returns or revocations) are having an impact on the size of the federal community supervision population. Again, the anticipated growth in the community supervision population points to a requirement for more resources over the short- to medium-term planning horizon.

Thirdly, the task of reintegrating federal offenders back into the community is challenged by the type of supervision at first release to the community. At the end of 2012-13, the majority (60%) of the community supervision population was comprised of first releases and by 2017-18, this had increased to 67%. The magnitude of this growth is manifested in the relative increase in numbers first released on day parole from 4,587 in 2012-13 to 6,091 in 2017-18, a difference of 1,505 (or 33%). Furthermore, a snapshot of those on community supervision reveals that, between 2012-13 and 2017-18, the number of offenders on Day Parole increased from 1,222 to 1,659 – an increase of 437, or 36%. During this

3 Motiuk, L.L. (2018). *Explaining the Decline in the Federal Custody Population. Research in Brief 18-06.* Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

4 Motiuk, L.L. (2018). *Exploring 'Inside-to-Outside' Ratios in Federal Corrections. Research in Brief 18-18.* Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

5 Motiuk, L.L. & Vuong, B. (2018). *Forecasted and Actual Federal Community Populations: 2017-2018. Research in Brief 18-09.* Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

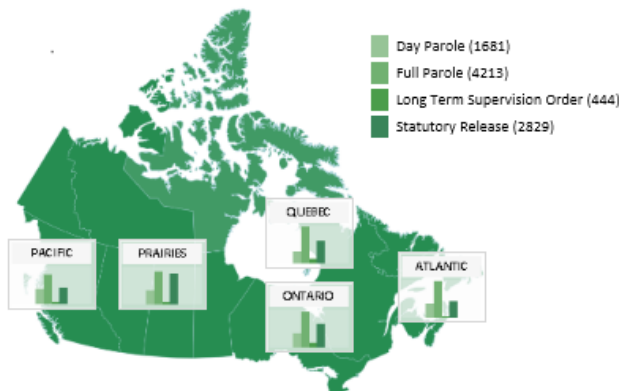
period, the number of offenders on Full Parole increased from 3,157 to 4,233 – an increase of 1,076, or 34%. Clearly, integrating a population with a majority requiring additional support upon release poses a challenge to CSC. The substantial rise in the community supervision population on discretionary release (Day or Full Parole) means extended periods in which to manage caseloads.

Fourthly, the task of reintegrating federal offenders back into the community is challenged by the nature of the crimes committed by offenders who are under community supervision. The federal community supervision population is comprised mostly of offenders with a violent offence history. Between 2012-13 and 2017-18, the number of offenders under community supervision with an index offence homicide increased from 1,961 in 2012-13 to 2,293 (17%). During this period, the number of offenders under community supervision serving their sentence for a sex offence increased from 909 to 1,414 (56%). This aforementioned change necessitates supervision adherence to the core risk management principles of case-based analysis; communication; monitoring; and when required, active intervention.

Finally, CSC’s ability to deliver correctional intervention is significantly impacted by the length of sentence to be served by an offender. As the number of federal offenders under community supervision has increased over the years, the sentence length composition has changed significantly. Notwithstanding the percentages of longer sentenced categories (ten years or more, life or indeterminate) appear to have decreased, the absolute numbers in the longer sentenced categories

### COMMUNITY OFFENDERS BY SUPERVISION TYPE

Period: 2017-2018 (2018-03-27)



[View model in Excel](#)

LOCATION	TOTAL	DAY PAROLE	FULL PAROLE		LTSO		STATUTORY RELEASE	
			No Residency	Residency	No Residency	Residency	No Residency	Residency
NATIONAL	9,167	1681	4146	67	183	261	2052	777
ATLANTIC	884	184	464	9	4	11	148	64
QUEBEC	2,373	362	1130	18	80	65	525	193
ONTARIO	2,456	440	1117	9	50	97	531	212
PRAIRIES	2,106	368	849	8	23	46	661	151
PACIFIC	1,348	327	586	23	26	42	187	157

have increased 23% (from 398 in 2012-13 to 491 in 2017-18) and 13% (from 1,723 in 2012-13 to 1,947 in 2017-18) respectively. Moreover, the shorter sentence length category (under 4 years) has increased 11% from 3,513 in 2012-13 to 3,888 in 2017-18. Likewise, both the numbers and percentages have increased for those serving 4 to less than 6 years from 1,310 (17%) in 2012-13 to 1,775 (20%) in 2017-18.

When addressing the aforementioned challenges posed by the changing federal community supervision population, two things come into play: recognition and response. CSC has implemented a number of new and improved information-based platforms and is now better equipped to strategically focus on the correctional challenges it faces. For example, the CRS-M provides staff with weekly updates of offenders by release type by region and location from 1999-2000 to present day (see below). In addition, an offender profile module in CRS-M provides important information on residency conditions, sentence lengths and diversity.

Another example is CSC's Performance Direct (PD) reporting platform that standardizes the historical reporting of a wide variety of metrics at the national and regional levels. PD has a community intervention module that provides a number of indicators such as the percentage of offenders on conditional release successfully reaching Sentence Expiry Date (SED) without re-admission (no revocation, charge or conviction). Notwithstanding the fact that the community supervision population has grown by 20% from 2012-13 to 2017-18, the number of revocations have decreased by 27% (from 2,893 in 2012-13 to 2,125 in 2017-18) and the percentage of offenders successfully reaching SED has increased from 53.5% in 2012-13 to 61.4% in 2017-18. These positive community supervision results are reflective of concerted efforts to better prepare offenders for safe release and effective case management.

CSC uses trends, analytics and performance metrics for assessing, monitoring and recognising variations in the offender population. Consequently, there is a clear recognition of an operational shift towards more offenders under community supervision. Ample quantitative information is readily available related to community supervision management, programming, and policy. Reporting platforms are helping to instruct the organization about whom they are dealing with, where they are, what they are like and what kind of problems they face while under supervision in the community. However, strategic planning and management require more than an analysis of current needs; it is indeed important to consider what to expect in order to move corrections forward into the future.

Increased awareness about the changing federal population can serve to structure much of the correctional decision making with respect to accommodation, supervision (frequency of contact) and community-based programming and maintenance. Therefore, it would not be surprising to find both current and future efforts directed towards strengthening community partnerships; enhancing trends, analytics and performance measurement systems; implementing national accommodation strategies; and improving the delivery of supervision and rehabilitation services across the country.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

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### **About the Author**

**Larry Motiuk** is currently serving in the position Assistant Commissioner, Policy at the Correctional Service of Canada. He began his correctional career in with the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services providing direct clinical services and conducting operational research. As an employee of federal corrections, he has served as Associate Assistant Commissioner Policy, Special Advisor Transformation and Renewal, Director General, Offender Programs and Reintegration and Director General, Research. In addition, he has served as a scientific/visiting expert for the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), The Netherlands Department of Justice, the United Nations Far East Institute (UNAFEI), and the United Nations Office of Drug Control (UNODC). He is widely published on the topics of offender assessment and effective correctional programming.