



# Corrections **FAST FACTS**

*The corrections process in Canada is aimed at contributing to public safety by helping to prepare offenders for a safe, productive and law-abiding life.*

## Did You Know?\*

Between 1997 and 2005, changes to the offender population profile have included:

- more extensive histories of involvement with the court system;
- an increasing prevalence of learning disabilities as well as offenders with low-functioning capacities;
- 12% of male and 26% of women offenders are identified with serious mental health problems;
- about 4 out of 5 offenders now arrive at a federal institution with a serious substance abuse problem; and
- 1 in 6 men and 1 in 10 women offenders have known affiliations with gang and/or organized crime.

## People Who Work with Offenders

Between sentencing and warrant expiry (i.e., end of sentence), federal offenders will work with a broad range of individuals. These individuals may each perform different functions, but they share the common goal of contributing to public safety by preparing offenders for their eventual return to the community as law-abiding citizens. These individuals can be grouped as follows:

### Case Management Team

This is a multi-disciplinary team of correctional staff members who have regular and frequent contact with the offender. In addition to a parole officer (as leader), a correctional officer and a correctional manager, an offender's case management team could also include a program officer, instructors of correctional or vocational programs, a psychologist or a psychiatrist, a Chaplain, an Aboriginal liaison officer, an Elder or a member of the offender's Aboriginal community. Once the offender is released in the community, the team may broaden to include police officers, police liaison officers, volunteers, caseworkers from aftercare agencies or community residential centres and other correctional staff.

The case management team works to develop, monitor and assess individual correctional plans that are based on a comprehensive assessment of the offender's risks and needs. The case management team works to ensure that the goals in the offender's correctional plan remain on track. The team also makes recommendations to various decision-makers regarding transfers, program assignments and conditional release.

\* Source: *Quick Facts: Changing Offender Profile*, Correctional Service of Canada, April 2007.

# People Who Work with Offenders

## The National Parole Board (NPB)

The NPB is an independent administrative tribunal that has exclusive authority under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) to grant, deny, cancel, terminate or revoke day parole and full parole or, in certain circumstances, to order the detention of offenders subject to statutory release. Parole Board members rely on information from their partners in law enforcement, corrections and criminal justice to make quality decisions about the release of offenders. In most cases, a panel of NPB members will interview individual offenders in prison. The protection of society is the most important consideration in any conditional release decision.

## Volunteers

Approximately 8,000 Canadian volunteers contribute to a variety of institution-based programs including chaplaincy, recreation activities, classroom and workshop instruction, social events and cultural activities. In the community, volunteers support families of incarcerated offenders and help released offenders readjust to life in the community. Volunteers come from all walks of life, all generations and diverse professions.

## Citizens' Advisory Committees

Citizens' Advisory Committees (CACs), whose members are drawn from the community, provide a link between the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), offenders and communities. For example, CAC members may provide advice to wardens on the operation of correctional programs that deal with the care and supervision of offenders. In other cases, CAC members may be called to act as independent observers to help resolve problems within the institution. CACs also help to increase public awareness about correctional issues in Canada.

## Aftercare Agencies and Offender Support Groups

These organizations form an integral part of the criminal justice system through the delivery of a wide range of services to offenders both in prison and in the community. The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, the John Howard Society, the Salvation Army, the Seventh Step Society and the St. Leonard's Society are among the agencies that operate halfway houses (community residential facilities) under contract with the Correctional Service of Canada. Staff and volunteers of these and similar organizations work with released offenders and their families to locate employment and to arrange for their enrolment in programs designed to meet their diverse needs.

## Correctional Investigator

In its role as ombudsman for federal offenders, the primary function of the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) is to investigate and bring resolution to individual offender complaints. The OCI's 2006-07 Annual Report indicates that they received 7,662 complaints. The investigative team dedicated a total of 407 days in federal penitentiaries where they conducted approximately 2,700 interviews with inmates and 1,400 interviews with institutional and regional staff.

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