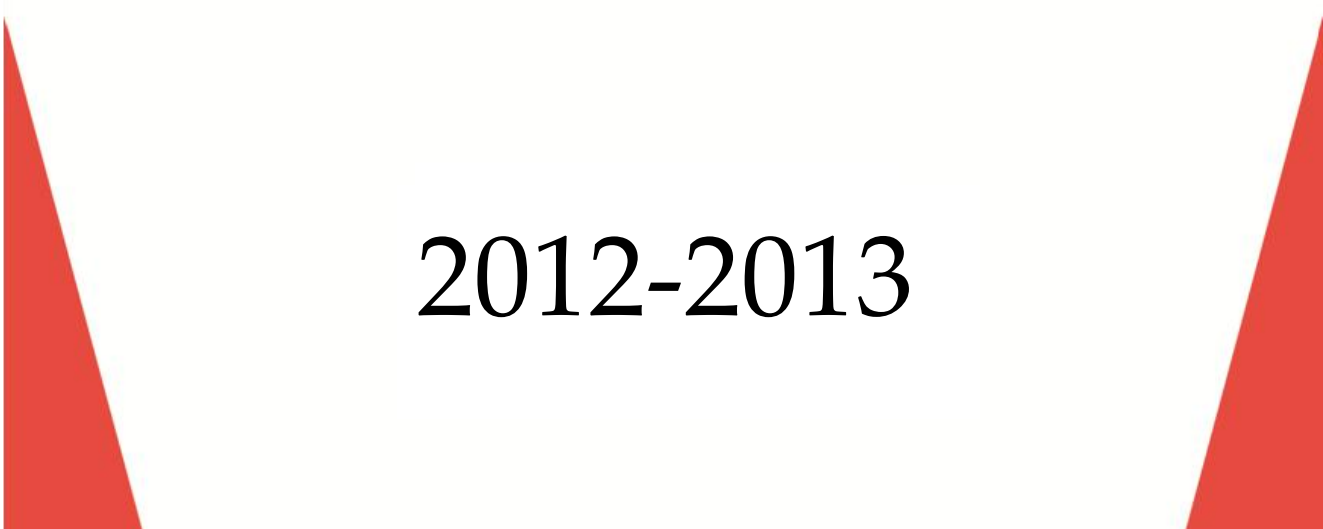




CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

ANNUAL REPORT

2012-2013





NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF CITIZEN ADVISORY

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013



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Opening Remarks from the National Chair

I am pleased to submit the 2012-2013 Annual Report of the Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC). We are proud of the accomplishments we have made to improve the quality of Canada's correctional system, by providing an independent, community perspective on the policies, programs and services of the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC).

This has been a particularly challenging year, as we recalibrated to adjust to the impact of federal budget cuts to Canada's correctional system. It is clear that we will need to work more closely with the CSC as it implements its action plan to address budgetary constraints. I would like to thank the CSC management for keeping us well-informed about the changes that will be made to the corrections system and for their ongoing engagement and consultation with our membership. We will continue to work closely with the CSC at all levels of the organization.

Recruitment remains one of the biggest challenges facing the CAC. All regions report difficulty in both attracting and keeping volunteers. Greater effort will be required in the future to ensure that CACs remain vibrant and sustainable across the country. In spite of recruitment challenges, our membership remains committed and enthusiastic about the work they carry out with CSC staff, offenders and community organizations. As you read this report, you will learn more about the wonderful contributions they have made in improving the lives of offenders, their families and communities.

The NEC-CAC Strategic Plan was renewed and adopted for 2013-2017. The plan outlines high level objectives and activities for the committee in relation to the following themes:

Communication; Partnerships; Consultation; Training and Development, and CAC Profile. The NEC also adopted a new logo which once finalized, along with the user guidelines will be displayed on CAC publications and public outreach materials.



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Finally, the CAC created a recognition award to acknowledge individuals or teams that have demonstrated commitment, drive and leadership in advancing the CAC's mission. The NEC named the award in honour of its first recipient; James A. Murphy. He was presented the award at a ceremony in October 2013 at the CSC's headquarters in Ottawa. Mr. Murphy, who is now retired from the CSC, spent much of his career supporting the work of the CAC.

Thank you,

Bernard Tremblay
Chair, National Executive Committee



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National CAC Profile

Region	Number of CAC sites	Number of CAC volunteers
Atlantic	11	61
Quebec	17	82
Ontario	19	75
Prairie	18	100
Pacific	16	102

The NEC completed consultations with its members on the Commissioner's Directive on Citizen Advisory Committees (CD 023) and submitted its recommendations to CSC headquarters. The revised policy refines the roles and responsibilities of CACs and includes conflict of interest guidelines. The CSC expects a revised policy in the fall of 2013.

A new national constitution was adopted in January 2013, following an electronic vote of CACs across Canada. A total of 85 CACs were consulted, 62 CACs voted in favour, one voted against, three (3) abstained and 20 didn't vote.

The NEC also adopted a new CAC logo and will be circulating user guidelines to ensure consistency in its application.

Annual CAC Regional Reports – 2012-2013 **Highlights and Best Practices**

Atlantic Region

- Halifax Area Parole CAC reprinted its popular resource handbook, which is used by parole officers and offenders who are making the transition back to community life.
- Members also plan to expand their public outreach activities by submitting positive news articles to media publications about CAC and CSC activities to support offenders and their families
- Prince Edward Island CAC members will focus future meetings on topics such as sentencing, victims of crime, and new Commissioner's Directives issued by CSC.
- The CAC in Newfoundland and Labrador reprinted and distributed its community resource pamphlet throughout the province.
- All CAC members continue to network and explore new opportunities to work with various community partners, community forums, business groups, and local town councilors.

Sharon Geldart – Atlantic Regional Chair



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Quebec Region

- In January 2013, the Regional Executive Committee wrote to wardens, requesting their support in ensuring that CAC members have access to institutions. Since then, most CACs report fewer problems. CSC staff continues to request CAC staff to act as observers in crisis situations at institutions.
- Members worked with community partners to help offenders find jobs and training opportunities, housing, and social services.
- CAC members continue to be requested by CSC staff to act as observers in crisis situations at institutions.
- CAC members attended parole hearings, acted as observers at inmate disciplinary courts and met with representatives from the CSC's Victim Services Program.
- Members are also sitting in on some institutional committees (ethics, clinical, programs, projects, etc.) in their efforts to build stronger relations and enhance their understanding of institutions.
- Some wardens are now asking CAC members to accompany them on inspections of their institution.
- Throughout the year, members across the region participated in activities such as: speaking engagements to schools, municipalities, and community and business groups; change-of-command ceremonies at institutions; graduation ceremonies; Aboriginal outreach; and, media interviews.

Elise Lecompte – Quebec Regional Chair

Ontario Region

- The sharing of materials such as presentations, videos, and community invitation notices has helped increase participation at public outreach events.
- A couple of CAC sites have joined wardens for monthly walkabouts of their institution. This has helped raise the CAC's visibility with CSC staff, offenders, and visitors.
- The region developed a pilot with a First Nations CAC member, who visits institutions in the Kingston area and provides additional support to CSC staff, elders and Native Liaison Officers.
- Bath CAC developed a process for setting up and conducting Outside Review Board hearings.
- Several CAC members attended a Victims Advisory Committee symposium in Kingston.
- CAC members and CSC staff continued to be involved in several joint projects, such as: pre-release fairs (Fenbrook/Beaver Creek and Collins Bay Institutions); Exceptional Peoples Olympiad (Collins Bay Institution); family socials; volunteer appreciation events; community forums, open houses; public speaking engagements and community events.

Murray Lincoln – Ontario Regional Chair

Prairie Region



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- In March 2013, the CAC membership and CSC staff from the Drumheller institution organized a meeting with community partners to assess the success of partnerships to date and to identify new inmate employment opportunities. Twenty individuals from various organizations attended.
- At Pê Sâkâstêw Centre, the CAC works with staff and Elders to ensure that all partners remain accountable for honouring the Elders' vision for the work undertaken at the centre, and communicating the progress and achievements of the centre to the community.
- The Edmonton Institute for Women CAC prepared and delivered Christmas cards to inmates on Christmas Day, and distributed homemade treats to staff.
- The CAC worked with the Mountainview Lifers Group and Inmate Welfare Committee to raise more than \$400 – enough to supply clothing and school supplies for five children. The same groups also collected \$500 to help the local food bank make Christmas hampers.
- An inmate at the Grande Cache institution donated some paintings and cartoons to schools to help students raise money through raffles.
- CACs throughout the region worked hard to recruit, raise awareness of the CACs work, and improve relations with CSC staff, offenders, and communities. Activities included: assisting with inmate grievances; engaging with the Office of the Correctional Investigator, attending volunteer appreciation events and awards ceremonies; meeting with municipal government leaders, seniors and service clubs; and, participating in events such as the International Corrections and Prison Association Conference, Racial Discrimination Day, Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Training and Restorative Justice Week.

Lori Ebbesen - Prairie Regional Chair

Pacific Region

- A special forum was organized to discuss the gaps in services that Aboriginal offenders encounter when they return to their communities.
- In Victoria, a CAC member and CSC employee visited five First Nation communities to encourage their participation in the CAC.
- Committee members continue to shadow parole officers on occasion when they are in institutions to visit offenders.
- CAC members were involved in a wide range of activities across the region, including: a Victim Advisory Forum; a Community Justice Forum on Vancouver Island; an Aboriginal Community Justice Forum organized by Tsawout First Nations; the official opening of the parole office in Surrey; redevelopment of the Welcome Building at Kwikwèxwelhp;
- CAC members throughout the region participated in community meetings, parole hearings, public speaking engagements, and open houses.

William DiGuistini – Pacific Regional Chair



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Challenges

There are several challenges common to all regions. Primary among them is recruitment, though some regions have been more successful in attracting new members, most have difficulty encouraging citizens to become volunteers in correctional institutions or parole offices. Some regions are calling for greater efforts being made to recruit people who reflect Canada's ethnocultural diversity. There may be merit in the CAC developing a national recruitment strategy.

The regions have expressed a need to focus on a more cost-effective and sustainable approach to training CAC members. If recruitment numbers are low in a region, it is very costly to organize training and orientation sessions. The lack of support for members can lead to low morale and confusion about their role. For this reason, some regions are urging the CAC executive to increase engagement activities with members and involve them more often in consultations with CSC local and regional management.

There continues to be a lack of visibility and understanding of the role of the CAC among members, CSC staff, offenders and communities. As a result, some CAC members report difficulty accessing institutions. More work is being done to raise public awareness and to build stronger relationships with partners to improve the situation. However, there is still much more to be done to help people understand the important contribution we make in providing an independent community perspective on the management and operations of Canada's correctional system. One approach may be providing more support to local CACs to help them organize activities during CAC Awareness Week.

Other challenges raised by the regions include: the length of time it takes CSC to complete security checks for new CAC members; changes to the chaplains' program at institutions; increasing CAC participation with the CSC's operations; and inmate transfers from other provinces.

A Look Ahead

The CAC will continue to work closely with CSC management as it implements its action plan to address federal budget reductions. Operating under tighter budget constraints will challenge CSC and the CAC to do things in a more cost-effective manner in future.

The CAC will continue to make improvements to the recruitment and retention of its members across the country. The NEC and RECs are committed to making this a standing agenda item at all their meetings.

In addition, several regions will be devoting significant attention to implementing strategic plans and organizing special activities in the coming year to raise awareness and enhance the profile of CACs.