




CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015





NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
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Message from the NEC Co-chairs Murray Lincoln and Julie Renaud

We are happy to present the 2014-2015 annual report of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC).

It has been a busy and soul searching year for NEC due to the handover of two Regional Chairs, as well as the National Chair. NEC would like to acknowledge the continued commitment and engagement of our more seasoned members, as well as new and the support of senior Correctional Service Canada (CSC) leaders. Special thanks to NEC members (from East to West):

- Sharon Geldart (2014) / Peggy Joiner (2015), Atlantic Regional
- Chairs Élise Lecompte-Marmo, Quebec Regional Chair
- Stewart Brown, Ontario Regional Chair
- Lori Ebbesen, Prairie Regional Chair and NEC Vice-Chair
- William DiGuistini (2014) / Chelsea Morrey (2015), Pacific Regional Chairs

NEC Chair activities

- Attended the Government of Canada's Mental Health Action Plan for Federal Offenders – May 1, 2014 in Ottawa and provided a summary to NEC
- Participated in Prairie Region CAC Council AGM – May 3-4, 2014, as well as Ontario CAC AGM in September 2014
- Attended the *James A. Murphy 2015 CAC Award of Excellence* ceremony in the Atlantic Region on February 27, 2015 and presented the award to the recipient, Donna Gardiner. The NEC Chair also engaged local members while attending a local CAC meeting and gained an appreciation for how they function and their unique regional perspectives.

NEC key activities & accomplishments for 2014-2015

NEC was active on a number of initiatives in 2014-2015:

- NEC continued with its **Strategic Plan for 2013- 2017** which provides direction and reflects NECs five key priorities: Communication / Partnerships / Consultation / Training and Development and raising the CAC Profile which were evident in the activities undertaken this fiscal year.
- NEC joined CSC on the Integrated Engagement Strategy which focused on three key areas: Employment, Housing and Mental Health and asked each Regional Chair to task their Regions



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- NEC's Consultation record included invitations and responses on nine CD's: CD 730 Inmate Pay, CD 227 Use of Web 2.0 Technology, CD 726 Correctional Programs, CD 870 Maintenance Allowances for Offenders, CD 880 Food Services, CD 570 Security Equipment, CD 566-11 Electronic Monitoring, CD 566-14 Perimeter Security and CD 026 Communications. A consultation working group was established to find ways to streamline CAC responses to consultation requests.
- NEC provided input into the Coroner's Inquest and jury recommendations resulting from the death of Ashley Smith at Grand Valley Institution in the Ontario Region by canvassing every CAC in the five Regions and providing a summary of their results to NHQ. This unfortunate incident heightened the need for CAC members to ensure a visit to Segregation was part of their observation when members visit their sites. The Commissioner also urged CACs to pay particular attention to Segregation.
- NEC reported that CACs have been responsive to the need for clustering of sites and accordingly the clustering of several CACs as well – the Atlantic, Ontario, Prairie Regions specifically noted successful merging of CAC committees.
- NEC provided info about Wiggio.com a free web based application to facilitate on-line collaboration and idea sharing among the NEC membership. E-invites were sent to NEC members and Regional Coordinators to pilot and encourage use of this software as a collaborative tool moving forward; however, this communication tool was not used.
- NEC put forward a CAC Code of Conduct adapted from the Quebec Region which defines standards of conduct and corrective actions.
- The CAC logo was launched and a zip-file containing multiple bilingual formats of the logo was shared with all regions.
- The *James A. Murphy CAC Award of Excellence* was established and its nomination procedures launched. **Donna Gardiner**, Chair of the Newfoundland & Labrador CAC was the 2015 recipient and first CAC recipient selected from among four stellar nominees. Donna has 14 years of CAC experience and was recognized for the "power and passion" that came across from day one.
- A CAC Orientation Working Group was established to update existing materials and create national-level training materials to facilitate on-line training.
- NEC discussed and set in place subject matter learning opportunities to provide teleconferencing learning forums for all CAC members, starting with Victim Services and Mental Health.
- NEC identified the need to raise the profile of CAC starting with CAC Awareness Week by re-introducing a national theme focus for CAC Awareness Week. The theme this year was "**Building Bridges.**" NEC led the creation of a collection of resource materials that illustrated the theme. These materials were forwarded to all CACs



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across the country for use at each site.

NEC met four times this fiscal year: one in-person at National Headquarters (November 21, 2014) and three times by videoconference (May 28, 2014, September 23, 2014 and March 12, 2015).

NEC appreciates the support of the Commissioner and CSC staff at the local, regional and national levels of corrections, as well as the support from numerous community partners.

Regional highlights / success stories

ATLANTIC REGION:

CAC Institutional Profile: Atlantic: 5 members, one on sick leave / Dorchester Medium / Shepody Healing Centre: 8 members / Dorchester Minimum: 4 members / Springhill: 7 members / Nova: 5 members one on sick leave, one pending and one retirement in December 2015.

CAC Community Profile: This is the area that has seen the most change. CAC's attached to Parole Offices have difficulty recruiting members. The struggle that these groups face was best summed up by Ron Joiner the former National Chair in the report submitted to the RDC of the Atlantic Region:

"For the longest time we have been struggling with the role definition, a sense of purpose, retention and recruitment and the time has come to think about doing things in a more deliberate and effective way...It will mean some restructuring during the initial stages, perhaps even a few challenges along the way but at the end of the day we can have a much stronger regional committee that will address the needs of CSC and CAC more successfully...."

Highlights of CAC activities & accomplishments: The Atlantic Region focused on the professional development of their members. Each committee met on a monthly basis and had a variety of presentations on topics that ranged from mental health to employment to investigations.

The NB/PEI Committee created a Development of Employment and Mental Health power point presentation that was shared with all committees. The Newfoundland CAC members assisted in the planning of and participated in the Employment and Mental Health Community Forum 'Making is Work.' The NS Parole CAC attended a Community Forum sponsored by REAC on Mental Health and Housing.



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Comments from the Chair: *"Many of the committee chairs have commented on the changing nature of the Correctional system and the challenges of do more with less and the lack of opportunity for the clients in the system. The region is also concerned with the consultation process and many of the committee members feel that if CSC wants valid input they have to give us the background information and the time to do it."*

To summarize the year is to say it has been one of change and uncertainty. The CSC personnel changes have slowed down the work on our Regional Plan but we anticipate we will be able to complete it by next April. However the local CAC committees are working hard and actively engaged with the process."

ONTARIO REGION:

CAC Profile: Total of 15 active CACs: eight Institutional with 29 members and seven Community with 31 members for a total of 60 members.

Our **goal** for this fiscal year was for CACs to tackle the three Engagement Strategies: Employment, Housing and Mental Health. Our second focus was recruitment and more importantly retention.

Ontario Regional Executive Committee (OREC) members held three **small group meetings**: one in the Central District and two at our clustered sites where all CAC members participated. These small group meetings allowed for increased net working opportunities and collaboration on initiatives for engagement strategies. The Annual CAC AGM was held in September and two CAC Chairs meetings also took place one for Institutional and one for Community CACs. The two National Volunteer Representatives attended the AGM and Chairs meeting to find ways to bridge the two groups. The NEC Chair also attended the CAC AGM in September.

The pressure of the closure of Kingston Penitentiary and disposition of staff and offenders throughout all facilities has continued to present challenges. RTC moved into its second temporary facility at Bath Institution awaiting completion of the new unit at Millhaven. CAC members were at hand for both staff and offenders throughout this transition. CAC members continued to attend management and inmate committee meetings as well as Community Assessment Team meetings in the community.

Building community partnerships was our CAC main focus in 2014-2015 and CAC members were instrumental in making those connections resulting in: I.D. clinics set up to accommodate offender population, micro loans system established through a community partner to assist offenders pay for union dues and secure work boots/gloves to secure



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employment, increased referrals for work releases, community mental health resource guide developed by Ottawa CAC for the staff at the Ottawa Parole office, connections made for joint mental health training with the Ottawa Police Mental Health Unit to name a few - a very successful year for Community Engagement.

PACIFIC REGION:

The Pacific Region has a total of 18 active CACs at the end of the fiscal year: nine at Institutions with a total of 60 active members and nine at Community Correctional facilities with a total of 46 active members. One Minimum Security is in the process of amalgamating with the Medium as they become a co-located facility. Most of the CACs are experiencing healthy memberships with only three sites working to increase their numbers.

The Pacific Region held its annual meeting in September where we saw a change in leadership at the table. We wish to thank William DiGuistini for his leadership as Pacific Chair and welcome Chelsea Morrey.

Focus areas for Pacific remain around retention and recruiting new CAC members. We continue to see the institution CACs well represented however the local parole office still struggle to maintain healthy membership. Local Chairs will be setting up local meetings to educate and recruit members as well as utilizing the new CAC logo to send out invitations to find out more about local CAC's.

For institutions we are seeing a growing concern around the new food service implementation. Offenders continue to have concerns around quantity and quality of food received. Matsqui institution will be taking a tour of the food service area in order to get a better understand of meal preparation and delivery. Institution CAC's will be meeting regularly with the Wardens to address offender food concerns.

A new chair handbook is being reviewed as we feel when there is a change in leadership at the CAC table we lose wealth of information. John Glenna, Ivor Day and Chelsea Morrey have provided a guided platform for membership to review. This guideline booklet provides some areas where members can go to for recruiting, public events and ways to further build the relationship with CSC. This booklet will remain open for feedback from the membership.



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PRAIRIE REGION:

CAC Profile: Our region has 17 CACs, one fewer than last year: seven (7) at an institution or healing lodge, four (4) at parole offices only, and seven (7) combine institution and parole. There are currently about 80 active CAC members.

CAC Regional Council, Prairies held three meetings: one in-person (May 2014) and two via teleconference (October 2014 & February 2015). The 'Regional Executive Committee' (chairperson, two vice-chairpersons and Regional CSC Project Officer) truly gained traction this year and met a total of seven times during this reporting period. Council updated its Road Map, identified new strategic priorities for 2014-2016 and made tremendous progress in each:

Learning & Development – held a special teleconference with the Commissioner, region-wide teleconference learning sessions for all CAC members, addresses by the RDC (or designate) at each regional meeting, discussion about '*Values and ethics in CAC & CSC leadership and practice*' and, as part of national efforts, led the writing and launch of a trilogy of CAC mandate sessions, OBSERVE, LIAISE, ADVISE

Partnerships – met with several CSC representatives and RMC, REAC, Prairie Region Mental Health Council, NEC, STR8UP gang-free initiative

Communications – shared regular CAC communications and regional and national communiqués via a regional distribution list to all CAC members in the Prairie Region with each notice then copied to CSC operational unit heads; consistently used the CAC logo

Recruitment & Engagement – launched the first-ever pan-Region teleconference session for all Healing Lodge CAC members in the Prairie and Pacific Regions in response to the Commissioner's challenge to CAC to observe in segregation distributed segregation handbooks to institutional CAC members, held CAC showcases at regional meetings; refined regional CAC bylaws, led the development of a CAC Code of Conduct for national use and, new, prepared a compendium of all local CAC annual reports



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QUEBEC REGION:

CAC Profile: 17 active committees, 81 active members

Highlights of local AC activities and achievements, i.e. reinforcing CAC Capabilities: The CAC Action Plan was used by some CACs (Archambault, Lanaudiere, Port-Cartier) to meet members' expectations. The Drummondville CAC raised new members' awareness of their role. The Lanaudiere CAC took advantage of the Director's diligent attendance at regular meetings. The Longueuil and Laval CACs had the opportunity to meet with Deputy Commissioner Alain Tousignant. The Joliette CAC looks for opportunities to provide inmates with work experience before their release.

Comments from the Regional Chair: A year without in-person meetings for the Regional Executive Committee (REC) and the Quebec CAC Chairperson was discouraging to some but local activities were maintained. REC connected with Chairs via eight telephone meetings throughout the year. The Longueuil CAC invited ex-offenders to their meetings. A number of CAC members sat on the Regional Health Committee.

The Quebec Region took part in national consultations with the help of interested members. Progress was made in establishing the consultation process at both the local and national levels however we wonder about the weight of our comments in the decision process. Training material was reviewed as well as a training plan to address all needs by taking travel into account. We are committed to doing our part by being involved in correctional processes and appreciate members' willingness to continue doing so regularly.

Summary from the NEC Co-Chairs

In the last quarter of this reporting period there was a change in the CSC Co-chair with the departure of RuthAnne Corley; Julie Renaud filled the void in an Acting capacity and David Molzahn joined the CAC team in March of 2015.

Frank discussions took place throughout the year with Regional Chairs agreeing NEC needs to focus attention on engaging our CAC members and addressing retention issues. NEC had its agenda full leading into 2015 as it rediscovers its purpose and helps the regions to do the same.

Thank you, NEC and CSC leaders, for steadfast commitment to ensuring that the mandate of CAC is carried out to the best of our abilities and for CSC commitment to move that mandate forward.