



Research in Brief

Federal Indigenous Women Offenders Who Participated in Section 84 Releases

Overall, 41% of Indigenous women participate in Section 84 releases; 72% are supervised in the Prairie Region.

Why we did this study

Recent research indicates that about one-quarter of Indigenous men participate in Section 84 releases¹, which contribute to better post-release outcomes for men and are cost-effective.^{2,3} However, less is known about the profile of women offenders. Therefore, this study focused on federal Indigenous women offenders who have participated in Section 84 releases.

What we did

In total, 485 federal Indigenous women offenders were released on conditional release⁴ between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2017.⁵ First Nations women accounted for 71% of the release cohort, while 27% were Métis and 2% were Inuit. Indigenous women who participated in Section 84 releases were compared to those who were not. Comparisons were considered for First Nations and Métis participants and non-participants.⁶

What we found

Overall, 41% ($n = 199$) of Indigenous women offenders participated in Section 84 releases during the study period. Almost half (46%) of First Nations women and 27% of Métis women participated in Section 84 releases.

Section 84 Indigenous women participants were more likely than non-participants:

More Likely To

- be released on discretionary release;
- be classified as minimum security prior to release;
- participate in Indigenous interventions such as Pathways, Elder reviews, or healing plans;
- be released from or previously incarcerated in a Healing Lodge;
- have an Aboriginal Community Development Officer or other Indigenous staff assigned to their case management team;
- participate in temporary absences and work releases, especially those for personal development;
- have completed Indigenous programming.

Equally as Likely To

- have a high static factor at intake or at release;
- have committed a violent offence;
- be serving a sentence of three years or less;
- have an identified substance misuse issue;
- have been a member of a Security Threat Group.

Less Likely To Have

- a high dynamic factor rating at release –ratings were similar at intake;
- a responsivity issue;
- a residency condition for their release;
- completed non-Indigenous programming.

Compared to First Nations Section 84 participants, Métis women participants were less likely to be serving their first federal sentence, to be convicted of a violent offence, to be single, and to be assessed with a high dynamic need at intake. Their dynamic factor rating at release, however, was higher than First Nations women participants and they were more likely to have an identified responsivity issue and to have been a member of a Security Threat Group.

What it means

Indigenous women who participated in Section 84 were active in Indigenous interventions and had similar risk profiles to non-participants. Future research examining post-release success of these two groups is underway.

For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

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¹ Section 84 releases are a legislated directive in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act that allow Indigenous offenders to be released to an Indigenous community during conditional release.

² Farrell MacDonald (in review). *Section 84 releases: Profile of federal Indigenous men offenders* (RIB 17-10). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

³ Allegri, et al. (2013). *Evaluation report: The strategic plan for Aboriginal corrections* (File 394-2-49). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

⁴ Includes discretionary (day or full parole) and non-discretionary (statutory release or long term supervision order) releases.

⁵ The initial release for the most recent sentence served was examined. Indigenous women offenders who were initially released on a non-Section 84 release but whose release converted to a Section 84 release ($n = 7$) were excluded from the study.

⁶ Regional comparisons were not possible as only 8 Indigenous women participated in Section 84 releases in the Quebec and Atlantic regions. Indigenous women in the Prairie region accounted for 72% of Section 84 participants.