

# Identified Needs of Federal Offenders in Custody: 2020

*Upon admission to federal custody, Indigenous offenders have greater needs for intervention than non-Indigenous.*

## Why we are doing this study

At time of admission to federal custody, the individual needs (e.g., education, employment, etc.) of offenders are systematically recorded. Internationally, these variables are contained in objective assessment procedures for classifying criminal offenders and formulating individualized intervention plans.

## What we did

The Correctional Service of Canada's intake assessment and correctional planning process standardizes the recording of a set of individual case needs previous exposure to the criminal justice system and corrections in the Offender Management System (OMS). Data were drawn from the Dynamic Factors and Identification section of OMS at mid-year 2020-21 for the entire federal in-custody population. Indicators were available for the majority of Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders. Missing data are due to legacy and in-progress cases.

## What we found

OMS-reported data show that both Indigenous men and women in federal custody have higher rates of identified needs for intervention than non-Indigenous. Indicators where the difference between the two groups are large (see Tables 1 and 2) appear to have significant overlap with identified Indigenous Social History factors.

Table 1: Percentage Identified Needs (Selected Indicators): Men

Indicator	Indigenous (2,951)	Non-Indigenous (5,952)
Less than high school diploma or equivalent	77.7%	60.5%
Unemployed at time of arrest	79.2%	63.5%
Unstable accommodation	55.0%	35.0%
Financial instability	75.8%	60.2%
Limited family attachment childhood	51.5%	25.7%
Suspected affiliation with street gang / organized crime	23.5%	13.3%
Early age drug use	85.9%	55.4%
Alcohol or drug use has resulted in law violations	91.0%	63.7%
Alcohol and/or drug use is part of the offence cycle	88.2%	59.7%

Table 2: Percentage Identified Needs (Selected Indicators): Women

Indicator	Indigenous (216)	Non-Indigenous (253)
Less than high school diploma or equivalent	68.1%	49.0%
Unemployed at time of arrest	92.7%	69.8%
Unstable accommodation	69.4%	47.6%
Financial instability	82.9%	68.3%
Limited family attachment childhood	53.0%	36.2%
Suspected affiliation with street gang / organized crime	27.4%	3.2%
Early age drug use	84.3%	51.2%
Alcohol or drug use has resulted in law violations	94.9%	60.6%

## What it means

The disproportionate representation of Indigenous people in federal custody is being manifested at the tail end of the criminal justice system. The differences shown in these analyses highlight the greater need for targeted and culturally sensitive interventions that take into account Indigenous Social History factors. More program development and community support work is required to mitigate against the social determinants of exposure to the criminal justice system.

## For more information

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

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