

# Changing Population of Men in Federal Custody: 2015 to 2020

*The men in federal custody population is now more diverse, slightly older, and serving longer sentences for violent crimes.*

## Why we are doing this study

At time of admission to federal custody both demographic and sentence information is recorded for every offender and thereby the entire population. These variables serve as an integral part of the individualized assessment and correctional planning process and can be used for understanding changes in custodial population profiles.

## What we did

Data was gathered on the 2014-15 and 2019-20 year end federal men custody population (14,205 and 13,032, respectively) in relation to five major characteristics – diversity, age, sentence lengths, major offence and security level. Given there has been a substantial decline of -1,173 (or 8.3%) over the past five years, we can see the impact of decline on the residual population.

## What we found

Statistics show that men in federal custody have become more diverse over the past five years. More specifically, there has been an 8% proportional decline in Caucasian men in federal custody and a 5% increase in Indigenous men. With respect to age composition, there has been a proportional decline in those under 35 years and slight increases in those between 35 and 65 years of age as well as 65 and over.

Overall, the composition of the men serving less than four years and determinate sentences of 4 years or more has dropped slightly. There has been a 3% increase of men in custody serving an indeterminate sentence. A growing percentage of men in federal custody are serving sentences for homicide-related, major assault, and sex offences. Meanwhile, the proportion serving sentences for robbery, drug and property-related crimes has declined.

In relation to offender security level, a smaller proportion of men in federal custody are classified as maximum security, slightly more are classified as medium security, and fewer are classified as minimum security.

Population Profile of Federal Men in Custody

Characteristic	2014-15 % (n)	2019-20 % (n)
<b>Diversity</b>		
Caucasian	57.3 (8,134)	49.1 (6,401)
Indigenous	24.1 (3,417)	29.6 (3,855)
Black	9.4 (1,340)	9.0 (1,171)
Other	9.3 (1,314)	12.3 (1,605)
<b>Age</b>		
< 35	42.0 (5,959)	40.2 (5,243)
35 to 64	53.6 (7,620)	54.5 (7,101)
65+	4.4 (626)	5.3 (688)
<b>Sentence Length</b>		
< 4 years	36.7 (5,217)	35.2 (4,585)
4 years+	39.2 (5,566)	37.8 (4,922)
Indeterminate	24.1 (3,422)	27.0 (3,525)
<b>Major Offence</b>		
Homicide	24.7 (3,512)	27.2 (3,550)
Major Assault	10.3 (1,457)	11.4 (1,485)
Robbery	14.3 (2,036)	12.0 (1,516)
Sex	15.0 (2,137)	16.9 (2,199)
Drug	13.4 (1,910)	12.9 (1,676)
Other	22.2 (3,153)	20.2 (2,606)
<b>Security Level</b>		
Maximum	14.5 (2,065)	12.4 (1,766)
Medium	59.2 (8,405)	60.1 (7,838)
Minimum	19.8 (2,812)	18.3 (2,384)
Undetermined	6.5 (923)	8.0 (1,044)

## What it means

The residual men in custody population has become more diverse, slightly older, longer sentenced, serving sentences for violent offences and is more likely to be housed in medium security. The gradual accumulation of Indigenous men and indeterminate offenders in federal custody highlights the continuing need to ensure delivery of culture-informed, appropriate and enhanced programming to improve upon safe reintegration.

## For more information

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

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