

# Results at a glance

## Evaluation of the Aboriginal Justice Strategy (December 2016)

The Aboriginal Justice Strategy (AJS) is a federally led, cost-shared program that has been supporting Indigenous community-based justice programs for 25 years. These programs are unique in that the services offered by each program are based on justice-related priorities, use restorative justice principles, and are designed to reflect the culture and values of the communities in which they are situated. Although the primary focus for most community-based justice programs is diversion of offenders from the mainstream justice system, AJS programs also provide a range of other justice-related services from prevention to reintegration.

### WHAT WAS FOUND

- There remains a need for programs and services that offer culturally appropriate, alternative means to better protect victims in Indigenous communities, help steer offenders toward more productive and healthy lives, and address the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the mainstream justice system.
- The AJS has succeeded in supporting the establishment of community-based justice programs in many Indigenous communities. These programs offer a range of alternative programming that are recognized as being culturally relevant to the people in those communities.
- An analysis of recidivism found that participants of selected AJS-funded community-based justice programs were 43% less likely to reoffend than those who were referred but did not participate. The evaluation also found that the programs can help bring about transformational change in the lives of participants.
- Mainstream justice system officials that have had experience working with the community-based justice programs indicated for the most part that they offer credible and effective alternatives. However, referrals are not always made, which impacts the effectiveness of the programs.
- The AJS provided immediate savings to the mainstream justice system in the amount of \$14.5M, which increased to \$20.5M in future value over the eight years of study

- The AJS was found to be an efficiently operated program (administrative efficiency ratio of \$0.06) and highly economical as far as costs relative to benefit.

### RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

- Collaborate with the mainstream justice system to increase awareness of and confidence in the AJS to ensure referrals are being made when appropriate.
- Seek stability of funding for the AJS to address program integrity issues in community-based justice programs and to enable effective collaboration within the Department and with the mainstream justice system.
- Focus Capacity-Building Fund resources on supporting activities that promote the development of a community of practice and have the greatest reach/impact on community-based justice programs.

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### ABOUT THE EVALUATION

*The Department of Justice Canada's grant and contribution programs are evaluated every five years to meet the accountability requirements of the Treasury Board's Policy on Results, address requirements of senior management, and inform the renewal of programs and agreements.*

*The evaluation examined departmental activities between 2012 and 2016 using information collected through six lines of inquiry to assess the relevance and performance of the Strategy.*

*For the full report, please visit the Evaluation Division website:*

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/2016.html>

