

# 2021-2022 Citizen Advisory Committees Annual Report

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**The Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) are independent and impartial advisory committees that work in collaboration with, and contribute to, the mandate of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). The opinions and content expressed in this report are those of the CAC. The report is published on CSC's website for information purposes.**

## *Overview*

One of the principles articulated in the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* is for the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to involve the public in its operations. Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) contribute to CSC meeting its legislated mandate.

The mandate of the CACs is outlined in section 7 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations, which gives members access to all parts of the institutions and parole offices, as well as staff and offenders. Committees are also obligated to make themselves available for discussions and consultations with the public, offenders, staff members, and CSC management.

Initiated in the early 1960s by citizens to be a bridge between prisons and the communities where they are located, CACs help CSC build stronger links between CSC and the public. They are the eyes and ears of the public in an environment otherwise closed off to most of society.

Members are citizens appointed to serve on committees in a voluntary capacity. They believe in public safety, the right of all citizens to be involved in the correctional process, and the ability of offenders to become law-abiding citizens.

CACs have three main roles:

- **Observe:** CACs are impartial observers of CSC's day-to-day operations. Members visit facilities regularly to meet with offenders, CSC officials, and staff. They help assess if offenders are getting adequate care, supervision, and services.
- **Liaise:** CACs listen to public concerns and offer CSC a community point of view. They also help raise awareness of federal corrections in their communities and networks and promote the important work that CSC undertakes to encourage citizens to get involved.
- **Advise:** Based on their observations, CACs give independent advice to CSC on its policies, programs, services, and operations.

## *Summary of membership*

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022), committees reported 281 members in 74 committees.

Region	Number of Members 2021-2022	Change in Membership 2021-2022	Number of Committees 2021-2022
Prairie	67	-8	16
Ontario	42	4	18
Quebec	62	-6	15
Atlantic	37	8	9
Pacific	73	unknown	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>74</b>

CAC operates at the same three levels as CSC: there is a CAC at the site level (institution and parole offices), 5 regional committees, and a national committee. The members of the regional committees are drawn from the local committees whereas the National Executive Committee is made up of the chairs of each region.

The local committees are the heart and soul of CACs. They are supported by dedicated CSC staff and officials, without whom the committees would not be able to meet their mandate. A big thank you to all members, along with CSC staff and officials.

At a national level, the committees were represented and supported by the following individuals in 2021-22:

- **National Chair:** Peggy Joiner
- **Atlantic Region:** Donna Gardiner (CAC), Sherry Jackson-Smith (CSC) and Anthony Delorme (CSC)
- **Quebec Region:** Ingrid Schmidt, National Executive Committee Vice Chair (CAC) and Marjorie Bernard (CSC)
- **Ontario Region:** Mark Jowett (CAC), Maire Bracken (CAC), and Debra Masters (CSC)
- **Prairie Region:** Michael Swait (CAC) and Nell Hales (CSC)
- **Pacific Region:** Tatiyanna Kolesnichenko (CAC) and Reeta Shandil (CSC)
- **CSC Co-Chair:** Katherine Cole

Thank you to Commissioner Anne Kelly for her continued dedication to Citizen Advisory Committees. In addition, we have been well supported by the Communications and Engagement sector at National Headquarters, including Kirstan Gagnon, Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Engagement; Katherine Cole, Director of Citizen Engagement; and the

entire Community and Stakeholder Relations Unit, including April Dorion, Donat Bilomba, Alysha Doria, Hamida Khire and Corinne Potvin-Jacques.

## ***The New Normal***

Like last year, there were teleconferences and videoconferences with staff and with offenders. While some committees have maintained their activities using virtual methods, it is now understood that this cannot replace in-person work. When the risk was manageable, some committees were able to resume the best practice of observing in person.

Recruitment and retention continued to be of concern and carefully monitored, with some committees reporting fewer members willing to continue volunteering due to the pandemic either virtually or in person. While all efforts were made to keep members safe and engage them, some were not comfortable resuming their duties in person and some also felt less connected to the mandate virtually or did not have the digital capacity to support virtual participation.

## ***Highlights***

It is important to note that given the COVID-19 situation, CACs were still not able to fully engage in their usual variety of activities to carry out their mandate. Nevertheless, the work continued throughout the year, and highlights are presented below.

All regional chairs appreciated the numerous phone calls between them and the Regional Deputy Commissioners to stay updated on current developments, especially regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on offenders, staff, and volunteers.

## ***Atlantic***

Despite recruitment challenges in the region, the regional executive succeeded in organizing a virtual annual general meeting that was attended by the Regional Deputy Commissioner (RDC), the CAC regional chair, and the Atlantic project officer.

The Springhill CAC helped coordinate a special project to refurbish and enhance two old coal carts from the Springhill mines as part of a tourism project for the local community.

The Atlantic Region Indigenous Initiatives team, CORCAN, the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), and community partners came together to develop a bike repair restoration program that will help support and uplift marginalized individuals in St. John's, Newfoundland (see the link to media article below).

The CAC regional chair and regional project officer conducted a tour of institutions and community offices in the region, during which concerns about diet and food services were raised by offenders, which were in turn raised to the NEC for further discussion.

The Newfoundland CAC had guest speakers this year including Sean Hickey, president of the local Union of Safety and Justice Workers (USJE) for Newfoundland and Labrador CSC Community Parole, and Tracy Hynes, a parole officer who spoke on intimate partner violence.

## **Quebec**

The Quebec regional CAC executive met every six weeks, except in the summer months, and meetings were open to the entire Quebec membership comprising 15 local CACs. Guest speakers included Michel Gagnon, from Maison Crossroads, which provides services to aging populations, including former inmates, as well as a presentation from CORCAN personnel. A virtual annual meeting was held where the guest speakers included the RDC and Elliot Louan, a correctional services advisor from France who explained the correctional context in his country.

The nomination of the candidate for the James A. Murphy prize was a team effort prepared with the collaboration of the regional executive committee and three community CACs to recognize the dedication and support of their community Area Director, Benoît Roy.

The CAC representing the East-West district of Quebec contacted people on parole who indicated that they were spending the holiday season alone. The calls, which varied from 30 minutes to two hours, allowed for a warm exchange of holiday greetings and a pleasant discussion in a more informal setting.

At La Macaza institution, the Assistant Warden, Interventions (AWI) solicited help from the CAC to provide poles from locally sourced trees for the reconstruction of a tipi (see the link to media article below).

CAC members from Quebec participated in two Outside Review Boards. The regional CAC Health Committee held two meetings during the year to inform the membership of COVID-19-related developments, health care services provided in halfway houses, operations at the regional health center, the aging offender population, and particular measures in place regarding admissions and the evaluation of their health care needs.

## **Ontario**

Regular virtual meetings for site chairs continued until October 2021 when a virtual conference was held to elect a new Regional Executive. The regional executive now shares a common e-mail inbox to ensure transparent communication between all three members. They also reached

out to as many members as possible and discussed ways in which the members could become more engaged. Members who had not been active for some time were contacted to ensure their continued membership in CAC. This approach allowed the Executive to better understand why some sites were holding virtual monthly meetings and others were not. The fiscal year was also a time of growth in that the number of sites with CACs increased, opening the possibility of greater future membership. Most of the new CACs are single-person sites but hopefully, this membership will grow.

In January, the RDC supported the purchase of licenses for MS teams and Zoom to facilitate meetings without the time constraints of free licenses. Efforts were made to engage all members in CAC virtual activities, as almost no site visits were permitted. Information was shared with all members whenever there was an opportunity to attend virtual conferences or other virtual educational webinars.

Despite the restrictions due to COVID-19, it is obvious that CAC members are passionate about their roles. CACs participated in providing “Goody Bags” and “Christmas Bags” to former offenders on parole. CACs at some sites have used this opportunity to reach out to community groups to build a stronger network to assist with the needs of former offenders for re-entry into the community.

## *Prairies*

The entire Prairie CAC membership was invited to Prairie Region Subject Matter Expert Learning Opportunities. In 2021-2022, this included:

- Structured Intervention Units: presenters included the Warden and Deputy Warden of Stony Mountain Institution (April 21, 2021)
- CSC Victim Services with a focus on outreach to ethnocultural communities: presenters included the Prairie Victim Services Manager and a member of the Prairie Regional Victim Advisory Committee (October 6, 2021)
- CSC Restorative Justice Opportunities: presenters included mediators from CSC’s Restorative Opportunities program (November 17, 2021)
- Integrated Correctional Program Model: presenters included Program Managers from Prairie Region Assessment and Interventions (January 26, 2022)

Prairie CAC members asked for better feedback regarding how their recommendations are actioned during Outside Review Boards (ORB). They asked for updates from Offender Redress on the status of offender grievances at the national level, and any trends or indicators that are identified at this level. These concerns were raised at the NEC and further discussions on the topic are anticipated.

## *Pacific*

Metro Vancouver West CAC hosted a webinar in November 2021 titled “Victims of Federal Offenders: Exploring Needs and Improving Supports”. This webinar provided information about victim services offered by CSC and its partners, and how victims can register to receive information about an offender. It also explored some of the gaps and barriers that exist in accessing services and information and offered potential solutions. The topic was also discussed at the Pacific Region AGM, which hosted guests from the Regional Victim Advisory Council (RVAC). The webinar was featured in a story on CSC’s Let’s Talk Express platform (see link to media article below) and the webinar is available on YouTube.

Pacific Institution CAC participated in Orange Shirt Day, which included a picnic table project for offenders. Mission Institution CAC and CSC began working with the local municipal government and Fraser Valley University in an effort to have the inmates build Buddy Benches at specific locales in the community. This broadens Mission Institution’s collaboration with the community where they have also gained the support of the local municipal government. The Mayor and his delegate have attended CAC meetings since December 2021 and have brought new perspectives and ideas to these meetings. Their interest in the Institution as a community partner is welcome and refreshing.

It is noted that two of the Pacific region’s CAC members provided advice to 20 Outside Review Boards, an arduous task!

## *National Highlights*

### **COVID-19**

The national chair continued to be part of regular meetings of CSC’s Advisory Committee on Shaping the New Normal, which was initiated in the summer of 2020. Through this committee, the national chair had the opportunity to shape the direction of all infection prevention and control measures included in CSC’s Integrated Risk Management Framework. Information was shared regularly with the NEC, and regional chairs also received regular briefings and updates from their Regional Deputy Commissioners. Many local committees were kept up-to-date on the situation by their site through virtual meetings.

The National Executive Committee met monthly, with the usual exception of July and August. Despite the ongoing challenges for CACs across the country, the national chair and national executive were able to advance a number of initiatives, outlined below.

### **CAC Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

Over the past 2 years, NEC has worked with CAC members across the country on operationalizing the three strategies that arose from the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (available [here](#)). These include:

1. Results and Reporting
2. Recruitment and Retention
3. Professional Development and Training

These strategies will be finalized in 2022-23 and new initiatives will follow.

### **CAC Management Framework**

In 2018, a CAC working group made recommendations for revisions to Commissioner's Directive 023 – *Citizen Advisory Committees*, which included, among other suggestions, the development of a CAC management framework. In the fall of 2019, it was acknowledged that the management framework was still aspirational and, as such, revisions to the Commissioner's Directive (CD) were put on hold. Under the leadership of Peggy Joiner and Katherine Cole, the NEC worked on bringing it to fruition through revisions to the Constitution, rather than the CD. The framework will be managed by the NEC, which keeps it independent and flexible, to meet the ongoing needs of the membership. The framework focuses on three areas: the constitution and by-laws, the strategic plan, and supporting resource materials.

### **CAC Constitution**

A new CAC Constitution was amended over the course of 2021-2022, in consultation with the membership, which will replace the previous NEC Constitution. With its approval in June 2022, a set of accompanying by-laws will be developed in 2022-2023 that will specify the roles and responsibilities for each local, regional, and national committee that will be mandatory. Where local and regional committees require the by-laws to reflect local or regional distinctions, the committees will be able to add additional by-laws managed locally or regionally.

### **CAC Resource Materials**

New resource materials were also developed and shared with all members, including:

- Information about CSC's National Victim Services Program and the Restorative Opportunities program was shared with all CAC members (August 2021)
- CAC Bulletin on Victim Services (November 2021)
- Drafting initiated for a CAC Chairs Handbook (to be disseminated in 2022-2023)
- Drafting initiated for a CAC Resource Manual for CSC Staff (to be disseminated in 2022-2023)
- Completion of the CAC Communications Guide (disseminated in 2022-2023)
- Development of a Recruitment and Retention Toolkit (to be disseminated in 2022-2023)

All resources can be accessed in the "CAC Resource Centre" space on the CSC Stakeholder Collaboration Hub. All members are encouraged to have an account to access resources. More information about it can be found [here](#).

### **CAC Engagement in Structured Intervention Units (SIUs)**

The CAC national and vice chair were invited to participate in CSC's stakeholder roundtable on SIUs in June 2021. In an effort to get CACs more involved in speaking with inmates in SIUs, the national chair canvassed for interest and created a working group. The intent is to gain a more fulsome picture of what is occurring in SIUs, including why some inmates do not want to leave them. The hope is that CACs will be able to assist in getting information to the public to provide another perspective on the SIUs.

While COVID-19 limited the opportunity for CAC members to visit their local SIUs, with more opportunities to meet in person, there is growing interest in getting the committee established.

### **Health Services**

In 2019, CSC Health Services did some consultations with regional frontline staff and they heard that they wanted to see more of a person-centered care model and better integration of health services in general. This sparked the idea of changing the model to a person-centered model of care, which involves the person receiving care and any supports they have identified (this could be family, friends, etc.).

CSC's Health Services invited the CACs to assist in hearing from those presently receiving care, as they may be more inclined to speak with someone who is not a CSC staff member. In early 2022, information and guidelines were distributed to CAC members to support discussions with offenders, hopefully in person. This information will be shared back with Health Services.

### **Thematic issues**

Local committees are required to raise issues to their regional committee/council, which will decide if issues should be raised to the national executive. In 2021/22, two issues were raised for discussion.

#### **1. Special dietary considerations**

In response to the concerns expressed by the regional Atlantic chair, the NEC invited CSC staff from food services to explain how diets are developed and reviewed as part of the modernization of food services. This is a topic of ongoing concern.

#### **2. Feedback on Commissioner's Directives 860 and 890**

A CAC in the Quebec Region received a letter from an inmate committee requesting that inmate canteen expense allowances be increased from \$90 per pay period to \$120 per pay period and that the maximum allowable transfer of inmate money from the savings account to the checking account be increased from \$750/year to \$1000/year. The above amounts are set in Commissioner's Directives 890 and 860 respectively and have not been changed since 2014. This was discussed at the NEC and information was provided to CSC. More information will be provided in 2022-23 to support ongoing learning and discussion.



## *2021 James A. Murphy Award*

While the winner of the James A. Murphy Award was traditionally announced in January during CAC Awareness Week, after careful consideration, the CAC National Executive Committee decided to permanently cancel CAC Awareness Week and initiate a CAC Appreciation Day beginning in 2022. The day will be held annually during National Volunteer Week (in April), on which day the winner of the James A. Murphy Award will be announced.

Committees were encouraged to work with their local sites to organize awareness activities at times that they feel are more appropriate throughout the year.

Accordingly, the winner of the James A. Murphy Award for 2021 was announced in April 2022. Candidates were nominated from all regions as follows:

### Atlantic:

- Michael Tobin
- Joan Smith
- Robert Smith
- Donna Gardiner
- John McPherson
- Paul Woodruff
- Mac Mandeville
- Sharon Warren

### Quebec

- Benoît Roy

### Ontario

- Murray Lincoln

### Prairies

- Lauren Davies

### Pacific

- Eddy Elmer

The NEC salutes all candidates for their efforts, dedication and commitment to CACs. The winner of the 2021 award, announced in April 2022, was Benoît Roy, a CSC employee from Quebec Region.

## *CACs in the public domain*

CACs were mentioned in media in 2020-2021:

- [Un immense tipi](#)
- [Aucun cas de Covid-19 a la prison de La Macaza](#)
- [Un comité s'affaire à la qualité du processus correctionnel](#)

CACs acknowledged in CSC's Let's Talk Express in 2021-2022:

- [St. John's Indigenous Bike Program: Collaboration, Rehabilitation and Giving Back to the Community](#)
- ["Buzzing" around at Stony Mountain Institution!](#)
- [The Power of Collaboration: CAC Provides Learning Opportunities to a Wide-Range of Community Partners](#)

CACs were mentioned on CSC's social media channels in 2021-2022:

- [The Federal Training Centre in #Laval is recruiting #volunteers for its Citizen Advisory Committee!](#)
- [For more than 50 years, Citizen Advisory Committees \(CACs\) have been an important bridge...](#)
- [#ICYMI: learn about the achievements, opportunities, and challenges of our Citizens Advisory Committees...](#)
- [#DYK that volunteers, including members of our Citizen Advisory Committees, must be fully vaccinated...](#)
- [CSC's Metro Vancouver West Community Corrections Citizen Advisory Committee...](#)
- [During #BlackHistoryMonth, we tip our hat to Mr. Greg Martin, chair of the Dorchester Institution Citizen Advisory Committee...](#)

## *Conclusion*

CAC members are grateful for the support from CSC at the regional and national level and, most importantly, at the local sites, which allows us to carry out this important mandate and contribute to public safety.

All committees look forward to being able to resume their in-person visits in 2022-23 as the infection rates decrease and prevention and control measures can be eased.

In an ongoing spirit of collaboration with CSC, our members will focus efforts in 2022-2023 on reviewing and updating committee bylaws to clarify expectations; participating in committees that explore the particular challenges of inmates in structured intervention units (SIUs) and women's institutions; as well as appreciating the work of chaplains, elders, and food service officers. We look forward to continuing learning opportunities on various aspects of correctional services, including outside review boards (ORBs).