

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Section 84 Releases among Indigenous Offenders Released from Women's Sites

Currently, about one-third of all Indigenous offenders released from women's institutions participated in Section 84 releases; participation rates did not appear to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why we did this study

Section 84 releases are legislated in the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)* to allow Indigenous offenders to be supported by an Indigenous community during conditional release. Past research has demonstrated that participation in the Section 84 process is an effective community reintegration support for Indigenous offenders. The current study examines the prevalence of Section 84 releases for Indigenous offenders released from women's institutions¹ and compares the profile of Section 84 participants to non-participants.

What we did

Community snapshots from the Offender Management System (OMS) included all Indigenous offenders released from women's institutions at the end of fiscal years (FY) 2018-2019 ($N = 198$), 2019-2020 ($N = 206$), 2020-2021 ($N = 216$) and on August 22, 2021 ($N = 220$). Data regarding the prevalence of Section 84 releases, releasing region, release types, and indicators of Indigenous supports and interventions during incarceration were examined.

What we found

At the time of the snapshots, the proportion of Indigenous offenders released from women's institutions on Section 84 releases increased from 26% in FY2018-2019 to 35% in August 2021, indicating that participation rates were not impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of snapshot year, the largest proportion of Section 84 releases occurred in the Prairie region (67% to 72%). First Nations women made up the majority of Section 84 participants (74% to 81%), followed by Métis women (19% to 26%). Inuit women did not participate in Section 84 releases during the study period, although only a few were released during the study period. The proportion of Section 84 participants on statutory release increased from one-quarter to one-third during the study period. The proportion of offenders on Section 84 released from Healing Lodges during the study period, however, decreased from over half (58%) to about one-third (36%); releases from the Okimaw

Ohci Healing Lodge for Women accounted for most of these releases.

Comparisons between those on Section 84 release and those not participating in Section 84 during the study period were also undertaken. Indigenous offenders released from women's facilities in the Atlantic and Pacific regions were less likely to participate in Section 84 releases, while those in the Prairie region were more likely to be Section 84 participants. A smaller proportion of offenders released on non-Section 84 releases were released from Healing Lodges (about 16%), which was consistent across all time periods examined. A greater proportion of Section 84 participants were on discretionary release² at the start of the study period, but by August 2021 comparable proportions of Section 84 participants and non-participants were on statutory release.

Finally, regardless of time period, across all Indigenous indicators and interventions examined, Section 84 participants were more likely than non-participants to have: interest in a traditional healing plan, completed Elder assessments, or Indigenous Liaison Officers or Indigenous Community Development Officers assigned to their case management team. Although not all Indigenous offenders participated in Section 84 releases, over half to almost three-quarters of non-participants had expressed interest in Section 84 participation.

What it means

Section 84 participation slightly increased during the study period, although was lower than previous research.³ Section 84 participation in the Prairie region is high; exploring the reasons for non-participation among Indigenous women expressing interest should be examined. Current research examining the drivers of Section 84 success is also underway.

For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#). You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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¹ The releasing site is used to identify the study cohort in order to include gender diverse offenders released from women's facilities.

² Discretionary releases are defined as day parole and full parole releases.

³ Forty-one percent were identified as Section 84 participants in the study by Farrell MacDonald (2017), <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/rib-17-09-en.shtml>.

