

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

Pandemic Era Older Offenders (65+) in Canadian Federal Corrections

The older (65+) offender population in custody and under community supervision continued to grow during the pandemic era.

Why we are doing this study

Marked by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) experienced an unprecedented decline (-1,392 or 10.1 %) in the federal in-custody population from 13,720 at year-end in 2019-20 to **12,328** in 2021-22. Similarly, there was also a major decline (-903 or 9.6%) in the community supervision population from 9,382 at year-end in 2019-20 to **8,479** in 2021-22. An earlier study¹ had found that prior to the pandemic over a five year period (2012-13 to 2017-18) there had been a substantial increase of older (65+) both in federal custody (+530 or 41.4%) and under community supervision (+372 or 50.3%). Understanding whether this trend was sustained during the pandemic era can facilitate the allocation of programming and operational resources.

What we did

Historical year-end federal institutional and community supervision counts are recorded as standardized reports in CSC's Corporate Reporting System-Modernized (CRS-M). Similarly, historical counts of federal admissions and releases are also recorded in CRS-M.

What we found

Over the pandemic period to 2021-2022 there continued to be an increase of older (65+) in federal custody (+41 or 5.9%) and under community supervision (+159 or 13.6%).

Older Offenders (65+): 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Fiscal Year-end | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Custody | 695 | 701 | 672 | 736 |
| Community | 1,168 | 1,245 | 1,307 | 1,327 |
| Total | 1,863 | 1,946 | 1,979 | 2,063 |
| Growth Δ | | +83 | +33 | +84 |
| Ratio In/Out | 37/63 | 36/64 | 34/66 | 36/64 |

Overall, admissions to federal custody for older offenders rose from **167** in 2018-19 to **187** in 2021-22; a difference of **+20** (or +12 %). When unpacking this increase by type of federal admission it is notable that the number of 65+ admissions to federal custody through conditional release revocations remained relatively the same at 36 in 2018-19 and 37 in 2021-22. Consequently, some of the growth in the older offender population was due to the increase of

new warrant of committal admissions from 126 in 2018-19 to 149 in 2021-22; a difference of +23 (or 18%). On the other hand, the number of older offenders (65+) released from federal custody appears to have decreased from **243** in 2018-19 to **211** in 2021-22; a difference of -32 (or 13.2%). Again, unpacking total releases by type it is noteworthy that there was an increase in day parole releases from **120** in 2018-19 to **158** in 2020-21 and then a decrease to **104** in 2021-22.

While there was a decline in older admissions in year 1 (2020-21) of the pandemic era, there had been an initial rise in earlier releases on day parole, however in year two (2021-22) there was a notable decline. This trend break may be an artifact of the CSC case review exercise undertaken at the beginning of the pandemic to identify and case prepare 65+ release eligible offenders and deemed to be good candidates for discretionary release consideration by the Parole Board of Canada.

National Population Flows: 2019-20 to 2021-22

| Fiscal Year | Total Admissions | 65+ Admissions | Total Releases | 65+ Releases |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2018-19 | 7,333 | 167 | 7,269 | 243 |
| 2019-20 | 6,998 | 177 | 7,245 | 250 |
| 2020-21 | 5,279 | 128 | 6,725 | 266 |
| 2021-22 | 6,268 | 187 | 6,607 | 211 |

What it means

Although the older offender population in federal custody continued to grow during the pandemic era, it appears that more older persons (65+) were being released earlier in their sentence and were managed safely in the community. Collective efforts at efficient case preparation and effective supervision have resulted in a sustained trend of more older offenders being released each year than admitted to federal custody.

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.

Prepared by: Larry Motiuk and Luc Bisson

¹ RIB-19-07 - Older Offenders (65+) in Canadian Federal Corrections (2019)

