

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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# Regional Profiles of Canadian In-Custody Women Federal Offenders

*Although the profiles of women in custody vary across regions, patterns suggest that women in all regions during FYE 2021/22 had more complex risk and need profiles than those observed in previous cohorts.*

## Why we did this study

Recent research has demonstrated that the national profile of in-custody women has changed over time, marked by a greater proportion of women with poor or very poor criminal risk ratings, more likely to be serving a sentence for a violent offence, and more likely to be rated as having a high overall level of criminogenic need (Motiuk & Keown, 2022). The current study examined regional profiles for in-custody women at three different time points to further understand these differences and to provide more nuanced findings that can be used to inform future planning around resource allocation, infrastructure needs, and population management.

## What we did

Three fiscal year end (FYE) snapshots were examined for the purpose of this study. All women who were federally incarcerated at the end of fiscal years 2011/12 ( $N = 593$ ), 2016/17 ( $N = 635$ ), and 2021/22 ( $N = 558$ ) comprised the cohort for that given year. Data extracted from the Offender Management System (OMS) were analyzed to construct profiles for each region that contained information pertaining to demographics, sentence and offence information, and risk and need assessments.

Analyses focused on describing the regional profile of in-custody women at each FYE snapshot, with an examination of how the profile had changed across the three time points as well as how regions differed from each other. A national profile was also examined for reference purposes.

## What we found

Results highlighted that the profiles of women across regions differed in a few meaningful ways. For example, at FYE 2021/22, most women in the Atlantic, Ontario, and Quebec region were White, whereas the majority of women in Pacific and Prairie region were Indigenous. Sentences between 2 to 4 years were most common in the Atlantic, Ontario, and Prairie regions, while indeterminate sentences were most common for women in Pacific and Quebec. In addition, the proportion of women affiliated with

a security threat group varied considerably across regions, with the highest proportion in the Prairie region (21%).

Most regions also demonstrated changes in their profiles over time. The general pattern observed across most regions was that women at FYE 2021/22 had more complex and elevated levels of risk and need, and a greater proportion had a need for substance use treatment and correctional programming compared to the earlier cohorts. Additionally, Indigenous women made up the largest proportion of in-custody women in FYE 2021/22, whereas for earlier cohorts, White women made up the largest proportion of in-custody women. Finally, the vast majority of Indigenous women in custody demonstrated an interest in various components of the Indigenous Continuum of Care at FYE 2021/22, which generally marked an increase relative to earlier cohorts.

## What it means

The most recent regional profiles had some notable changes compared to 5- and 10- years ago, which may have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the noted changes in the most recent regional profiles, resource allocation, population management, and infrastructure planning can be informed by the results of this study. Future research would be beneficial to understand these differences, and to explore other important areas of women's corrections, such as the impact of transfers on access to programming and visits.

## For more information

Wanamaker, K., & Chadwick, N. (2023). *Regional Profiles of the Canadian In-Custody Women Federal Offender Population* (Research Report R-467). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

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