

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Evaluation Report Title: Evaluation of the Indigenous Courtwork Program (ICW)
Approval Date of Evaluation by Deputy Minister 03/2023

Recommendation 1: The Policy Implementation Directorate, in collaboration with the Tripartite Working Group, should examine ways to improve access and availability of training for Courtworkers.

Rationale for Recommendation: The evaluation found that there is a need for ongoing and enhanced Courtworker training. This will help address issues related to high turnover, variable skills and abilities and the advent of more complex client needs. This training could leverage ongoing efforts by provincial and territorial governments and Justice Canada to further strengthen and support the role of Courtworkers as professionals within the Canadian justice system. The training could take various forms such as a virtual or in-person training program, a peer-to-peer mentorship network of Courtworkers, or training delivered at annual in-person Courtworker gatherings.

Management Response: Programs Branch, Policy Implementation Directorate (PID) agrees to examine ways to improve access and availability of training for Courtworkers.

Action(s) What SMART action(s) will be taken to address this recommendation?	Deliverable(s) Expected deliverable(s) to demonstrate the completion of the action.	Accountability ADM responsible for implementing the action.	Planned Completion Date
Drawing on existing mechanisms (FPT, TWG), ICW will organize discussions on ways to improve access and training of Courtworkers	Summary of meetings minutes will be retained	Senior Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy Sector	April 1, 2024
The development, negotiating and approval of funding agreements related to training initiatives	Signed funding agreements that support training for ICWs	Senior Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy Sector	April 1, 2026

Recommendation 2: The Policy Implementation Directorate, in collaboration with the provinces, territories and service delivery agencies, should identify ways to increase judicial and court official awareness of the role of Courtworkers and the value of the services they provide.

Rationale for Recommendation: The evaluation identified a need to continue informing and increasing judicial and court officials’ knowledge regarding the services provided by the ICW Program and the value in accessing those services. More specifically, a need was identified with respect to increasing Indigenous cultural understanding, the significance of clients’ circumstances of that of their communities into consideration in decisions, and the value community-based programming.

Management Response: Programs Branch, Policy Implementation Directorate (PID) agrees with the recommendation and will examine ways to improve judicial and court official awareness of the role of Courtworkers and the value of the services they provide.

Action(s) What SMART action(s) will be taken to address this recommendation?	Deliverable(s) Expected deliverable(s) to demonstrate the completion of the action.	Accountability ADM responsible for implementing the action.	Planned Completion Date
ICW will hold discussions with the TWG to discuss and share best practices on approaches/ opportunities for increasing the profile of Courtworkers	Summary of meeting minutes will be retained	Senior Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy Sector	April 1, 2025
The development, negotiation and approval of funding agreements related to educating other justice partners (such as crown, judges, etc.) on the role of Courtworkers	Signed funding agreements that support education and awareness-building activities	Senior Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy Sector	April 1, 2026

Recommendation 3: The Policy Implementation Directorate, in collaboration with the Tripartite Working Group, should explore ways to increase the wellness and mental health supports available to Courtworkers.

Rationale for Recommendation: The COVID-19 pandemic and other changes in ICW program delivery have resulted in increased workload and demands on Courtworkers. The changes are largely due to the increased complexity of client needs, an increase in services to Indigenous persons involved in family and/or child protection justice systems and greater involvement in addressing the holistic needs of clients (e.g., emotional support, food, and clothing). Courtworkers also have increased responsibilities in the areas of advocacy for restorative justice programs and increased involvement in specialized courts. This has contributed to burnout and turnover among Courtworkers. Some options to be considered to address these issues include Courtworker wellness and mental health supports and facilitating peer-to-peer support and sharing of best practices in addressing the mental health needs of Courtworkers.

Management Response: Programs Branch, Policy Implementation Directorate (PID) agrees to explore ways to increase the wellness and mental health supports available to Courtworkers.

Action(s) What SMART action(s) will be taken to address this recommendation?	Deliverable(s) Expected deliverable(s) to demonstrate the completion of the action.	Accountability ADM responsible for implementing the action.	Planned Completion Date
Drawing on existing mechanisms (FPT, TWG), ICW ICW will hold discussions with the TWG to share best practices on supporting the mental health of ICWs	Summary of meeting minutes will be retained	Senior Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy Sector	April 1, 2024
Support the development of a national peer-led ICW mental health working group	Log of meeting dates from the committee of Indigenous Courtworkers on supporting the mental health of Indigenous Courtworkers	Senior Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy Sector	April 1, 2025