



# CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.



## Progress Report Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion 2021-2023



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## Message from the Champions

Global events in past years and longstanding issues of Indigenous and Black overrepresentation in the criminal justice system have prompted an increased push to do more to address systemic racism in the criminal justice system. In addition, Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is committed to working in concert with its partners to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black Canadians sentenced to serve time in federal corrections.

CSC is committed to building an anti-racist organization that is diverse, inclusive and equitable. To guide this work, in November 2020, we launched an [Anti-Racism Framework](#) and built a dedicated Directorate to oversee this work. The document outlines major initiatives underway across CSC, under common corporate objectives, and benefits from ongoing feedback from our employees and Ethnocultural and Indigenous Advisory Committees. These Anti-Racism initiatives and projects focus on three pillars: employees, offenders and stakeholders, which complement ongoing Employment Equity and Diversity Committee (EEDC) events and learning opportunities in place for CSC staff.

To further these efforts, a new executive Champion of Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion was appointed in 2021, and CSC started building a new Directorate dedicated to following through on this work. At each Executive Committee meeting, this topic is a standing agenda item.

We are pleased to put forward CSC's first annual progress report for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This past year was one of continued progress. With the creation and staffing of a new director of the Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion in January 2022, we began building capacity in the directorate and established an Anti-Racism Action Table, with representatives from all of CSC's regions and sectors. We also began a series of regional conversations to meet with and hear from racialized employees, offenders and stakeholders. CSC also committed to developing a Black Offender Strategy and continues to experiment with different staffing models and case management tools, which, along with ongoing research, will provide information for taking an evidence-based approach in the implementation of new initiatives for Black, ethnocultural, and racialized offenders.

There have been employee-led groups that have gained momentum over the past two years, which include the EEDC, the Black Employee Network (BEN), the National Persons with Disabilities Working Group, National Working Group for Women and the Connecting Spirits | Creating Opportunities (CSCO) wellness and networking initiative for Indigenous employees. These groups are important not only to support employees but also to foster dialogue, raise awareness within CSC and help ensure policies and processes are inclusive.

To support Indigenous offenders in our care and custody, CSC is constantly evolving and developing new approaches with the assistance of the National Elders Working Group, the National Indigenous Advisory Committee, and other key stakeholders. In addition, CSC recently appointed its first-ever Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections (DCIC). Reporting directly to the Commissioner, the DCIC will play an integral role within CSC to help address issues within the correctional system, including the disproportionate and overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples. The DCIC will also work to build and further partnerships with Indigenous

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peoples, groups, and communities, as well as ensure the delivery of culturally responsive interventions, supports, and services for federal offenders. The DCIC will also ensure the implementation of the Calls for Justice of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action within CSC's responsibility, as well as support the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

A key next step in our work is to develop an updated version of the Anti-Racism Framework, informed by consultations with staff, offenders and stakeholders. These consultations are currently underway. We are also developing a performance measurement framework that will support CSC to track and report on results on a more regular basis.

While we have many successes to highlight, this is a multi-year initiative requiring the ongoing dedication, input and efforts of everyone at CSC as we work towards preventing racism and building a culture that is diverse, equitable and inclusive. Thank you for your individual and collective efforts as we work together to move this important initiative forward.

Kirstan Gagnon  
Assistant Commissioner, Communications  
and Engagement  
Champion, Anti-Racism, Diversity and  
Inclusion

Michael K. Olotu  
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Rights, Redress and Resolution  
Champion, Multiculturalism

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## Overview

An organization is nothing without its people. CSC's employees are our greatest asset in supporting CSC's mission and priorities; they are hard-working, professional and passionate about making a difference in the lives of offenders while ensuring public safety. To do their work to the best of their ability, they require and deserve a safe, inclusive, diverse and supportive environment.

As such, CSC is taking bold action to address systemic racism, build a diverse and inclusive workforce and foster a safe, respectful and healthy environment.

### Advancing anti-racism

Since 2010, CSC has benefited from a robust EEDC that initiates and promote events across the country to advance diversity. Regional and local committees are also in place to implement initiatives to promote and strengthen diversity at CSC. In 2018, CSC received an Award of Excellence from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation for the work done by its EEDC.

CSC also benefits from the commitment and wisdom of various groups, including its National Indigenous Advisory Committee, National Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, and Citizen Advisory Committees. The work of these diverse committees, including their ongoing advice, is key to supporting offenders in our care and custody, and preparing them for a safe and successful release back into our communities.

CSC is working at ensuring that its practices, policies and initiatives address the root causes of inequities to best support Indigenous, Black and all racialized people. This work falls under one umbrella strategy for the organization: the Anti-Racism Framework and Action Plan, which was developed in 2020 to initiate conversations internally and externally about our anti-racism actions as an organization across three pillars: workforce, offenders and stakeholders.

The Action Plan includes a number of projects that are underway across our organization in addition to a number of partnerships, alliances, and promote allyship. Many of these projects are significant in how they aim to identify and address potential barriers and implement positive systemic change. They include:

- A quantitative four-part study on ethnocultural offenders released in late 2022, which provides areas of strength and opportunity for continued effort.
- Building Indigenous-informed risk assessment processes and tools, from the ground up, in partnership with universities and Indigenous peoples.
- Validating the Custody Rating Scale specifically for Black offenders, working with academic experts.
- Piloting a new position working with Black offenders to provide culturally responsive services and create a bridge with the community to support their reintegration.
- Piloting the Black Social History initiative that provides a guide to ensure consideration of cultural and social history in case management for Black offenders.

A new dedicated Directorate has been put in place under the Assistant Commissioner for Communications and Engagement who also serves as the Champion for Anti-Racism, Diversity

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and Inclusion. They have also developed an action table that brings together all regions and sectors. These representatives act as champions within their own areas of responsibility to ensure progress and centralized reporting on initiatives under the Framework and Action Plan.

### **Building a diverse and inclusive workforce**

Our workforce must reflect the diversity of the Canadian population and that of our offender population. It is also important for employees to know that diversity and inclusion is valued and is a priority.

In early 2021, CSC set local representation objectives for Indigenous peoples and visible minorities that exceed the workforce availability (WFA) and that are based on the offender population. Representation objectives were formulated by using 30% of the calculation based on the unit offender representation and 70% based on the regional WFA to establish unit-specific objectives. Representation objectives are continuously changing based on offender representation at specific locations. Their purpose is to enable us to bolster our workforce to be more representative in locations where there is a larger difference between the offender and workforce representation. Representation objectives have been made available with weekly updates for all employees to view through the Human Resources Business Intelligence Tool.

Hiring objectives were also set in 2021 to increase the representation of women and persons with disabilities over the following four years. With two years remaining, CSC will need to increase efforts in this area in order to meet the workforce availability (WFA) by the 2025 target date. In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the hiring objective for persons with disabilities was 508 people. To date, CSC's hires (including relevant promotions and rehires) was 126 persons with disabilities. With regard to the women hiring objectives, CSC's hiring objective for women in the EX group was 18 in 2022-2023 and there have been 15 women hired in EX positions (including relevant promotions and rehires). The objective for women in the CX group was 440 people and the number of women hired in the CX group was 252 (including relevant promotions and rehires).

In response to the Office of the Auditor General's 2022 report on Systemic Barriers in CSC, the Women Offenders Sector is committed to conduct a review of the targeted Primary Worker staffing ratio for women's institutions and the healing lodges, which is presently underway.

In 2021, we also formalized our commitment to diversity and inclusion through a Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace, which was signed by CSC's executive committee members. All other executives were also invited to sign it. Moreover, one of the performance objectives of every executive, manager and supervisor is to take meaningful and timely action to promote a healthy work environment and culture that is inclusive and respectful of diversity.

- Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace

To better support leadership development, with a specific emphasis on supporting members of under-represented employment equity groups who aspire to leadership and executive positions, CSC launched the Leadership Connexion program in Spring 2022. CSC reviewed its National Mentorship Program in consultation with these groups to identify and reduce barriers and

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promote diversity and inclusion in the program in support of a more diverse representation among CSC's future leaders. One of the results of the review included revised eligibility criteria to prioritize employees who are part of the employment equity groups and equity-deserving communities.

*Connecting Spirits, Creating Opportunities (CSCO)*, launched in 2019, is a wellness and networking initiative, which was conceived in response to the Many Voices One Mind strategy in consultation with CSC's Indigenous employees. This initiative creates an environment where Indigenous employees can freely contribute to and engage in a community where they network and support one another through cultural and employment-related activities. CSCO also supports Indigenous employees to help advance their careers and retain their skills and perspectives in CSC. Doing so will ensure Indigenous offenders have access to culturally competent Indigenous staff, interventions and programs, and that they receive the culturally-grounded support they require.

Currently, the CSCO team is revamping this initiative by creating a positive and safe environment through a new virtual space dedicated for CSCO participants, CSCO supervisors and CSCO team leads. The CSCO team is also engaging in an information-collecting initiative to gather data on positions and perspectives regarding the CSCO initiative.

### **Fostering a safe, respectful and healthy environment**

Every year since the campaign was launched in 2018, CSC celebrates Respect Day on November 20, which is an opportunity to remember the importance of committing, individually and as an organization, to making the workplace a healthy environment where people want to come to work each day.

CSC has supported the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ people in the workplace through the Positive Space Initiative, which began through with an interdepartmental pilot sponsored by Treasury Board Secretariat in 2013 with the support from the Ontario Public Service Pride Network. CSC actively participated in this initiative and in 2014, CSC's Executive Committee approved Positive Space as a national initiative and established a national working group. Champions were trained beginning in 2015 to support a national network of Positive Space Champions.

Positive Space is an international movement striving to increase safety and inclusion for people of all genders and sexual orientations. It has been embraced by the private industry, not-for-profit agencies, educational institutions and governments around the world. Champions voluntarily participate in training, visually designate their workspace and embody the spirit of Positive Space by promoting diversity and offering support.

In July 2020, a national working group for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) was formed to consult on CSC's Accessibility Plan. In December 2021, a new National Employee Diversity Chair for PwD was appointed to provide advice, expertise, and recommendations on a wide range of accessibility and disability-related matters. Since 2022, the working group includes representatives from all sectors of CSC as well as its regions. This group will continue to monitor and share progress of CSC's 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, which was implemented in November 2022.



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In 2021, CSC launched a new Black Employee Network (BEN), which offers a safe space to discuss collective commitments to preventing racism and discrimination. The Network also fosters meaningful dialogue for Black employees. The BEN has hosted a series of discussions on the needs, challenges and aspirations of Black employees at CSC. Members have also been consulted on the development of various training, policies and strategies.

In January 2023, CSC launched a new Ombuds for Workplace Well-Being. The Ombuds is available to all employees, including Black employees, to work through issues related to workplace concerns or issues, or point them to resources.

CSC's [response](#) to the Clerk of the Privy Council's Call to Action on Anti-racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service outlines these and other actions taken to further create an anti-racist, diverse and inclusive organization.

## Audit and Evaluation

Going forward, CSC's Audit and Evaluation Sector will be reporting on disaggregated data for racialized employees and offenders. This is a significant step forward as disaggregated data can help to identify and respond to issues of social inequities, discrimination, and systemic racism within the corrections and conditional release systems<sup>1</sup>.

CSC is conducting an [Audit of its Culture](#) to assess whether the actual organizational culture is in line with its desired culture. This audit will help CSC to have a better understanding of the current culture within the organization, as well as the root causes where the organizational culture may not be aligned with the desired culture.

CSC is also supporting the Canadian Human Rights Commission in undertaking an Employment Equity Audit to assess CSC's compliance with the *Employment Equity Act*, identify employment barriers of designated group members, and gather best practices in the workplace in the recruitment and retention of designated group members.

Lastly, the OAG's Audit of an Inclusive Public Service for Racialized Employees is currently underway and includes CSC, among other members of the Public Safety Portfolio and the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada – Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer and Public Service Commission. The objective of this audit is to determine whether selected organizations took action to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by racialized employees and have demonstrated progress towards creating an inclusive organizational culture.

## Communications

CSC celebrates diversity and inclusion through commemorating important dates, using awards to acknowledge diversity-related contributions, and promoting initiatives through all-staff communications. Some examples of these communications include (but are not limited to):

- The celebration of Black and Indigenous History Months, Asian Heritage Month, International Women's Day, Pink Shirt Day, and Emancipation Day.

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<sup>1</sup> [Report and Draft Recommendations: Engagement on Corrections Disaggregated Data and Analysis Strategy \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#). Accessed 25 July 2023.



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- Supporting the Annual Public Service Pride Awards, the Art Solomon Memorial Award and the Emerson Douyon Award Multiculturalism Award
  - The recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

CSC has established an annual communications plan consisting of department-wide messaging from the Commissioner and other senior-level executives to recognize, commemorate, and build internal awareness of key dates and issues related to different dimensions of diversity, including, but not limited to, Black, ethnocultural, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQI+, multiculturalism, accessibility. CSC also developed a new Corporate Communications Plan, approved at EXCOM in December 2022, which includes a pillar on “culture, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion”. In addition, ARDI is also developing a comprehensive communications plan focused on activities to support anti-racism, diversity and inclusion.

Regions have also contributed to communication efforts around anti-racism, diversity and inclusion. In 2022, the Quebec Region developed a series of video vignettes on systemic racism that were proposed by their Regional Ethnocultural Advisory Committee (REAC). The purpose of these videos was to demystify systemic racism and to raise awareness among CSC staff about the myths surrounding ethnocultural and Indigenous offenders, including unconscious biases that can affect both our colleagues and offenders are also addressed. The videos were made available to all staff. The Region also worked with the REAC to develop a leaflet on microaggressions, which was shared by e-mail with all Quebec staff and all inmates received a hard copy to raise awareness of microaggressions.

In 2023, the region also worked with their REAC to develop a series of bilingual posters featuring eight ethnocultural ex-prisoners (five men and three women) to encourage and motivate ethnocultural inmates through inspirational role models. While the quotes on the posters were collected from ex-prisoners, the photos and first names are fictitious to preserve their anonymity. A total of 448 posters were printed and sent to all institutions, parole offices and community correctional centers in Quebec Region. They are being formatted to be distributed across the country.

## Engagement

The ARDI team is currently conducting consultation sessions across the country on the Anti-Racism Framework and Actions. The goal is to raise awareness of the Framework with employees and offenders and determine additional projects or gaps for the next version of it.

In November 2022, engagement sessions were held with employees, offenders and stakeholders in the Atlantic region followed by the Quebec Region in February 2023. Additional sessions are planned in the Ontario, Prairie and Pacific Regions, to be completed in 2023. Sessions will also be organized at National Headquarters and with the Black Employee Network to obtain feedback. All employees are invited to get involved to help shape our future plans.

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## Summary of Progress

With all of this in mind, the present Progress Report shines a light on some successes in addressing systemic racism in our organization as well as further work required to make lasting and ongoing change. Below is a summary of progress on all action items included in the 2021 version of the CSC Anti-Racism Framework and Actions across the three pillars:

- Employees
- Offenders
- Stakeholders

The framework is evergreen and will be refreshed in the Fall/Winter 2023, once engagement activities with staff and stakeholders are complete.

### I. Employees

The following are anti-racism actions being taken by the employer.

#### 1.1 Implement a National Employment Equity and Diversity Committee Strategic Plan (On hold)

CSC has rich and vibrant EEDC at the local, regional, and national levels. These committees actively work to create a barrier-free, accessible, and inclusive work environment by utilizing funding to support local initiatives such as employee training, awareness campaigns, and cultural celebrations. Their purpose is to provide advice on the development of diversity and inclusion training products that reflect CSC's reality and the experiences of employees and offenders. This committee is open to representatives at various levels (employees, supervisors, and managers) and from various areas of the organization.

In 2022, 23, the National EEDC hosted 32 events on anti-racism, Canadian Black and Indigenous history, and cultural education. The events are opened up to members of CSC's advisory committees and were attended by 4137 employees and stakeholders. Some of the key events included: Asian Heritage and Social Justice; All our Relations: Finding the way forward; Anti-Black racism; History of Black Presence & Slavery in Quebec; Reconciliation: The Secret Path; How we battle racism; and Canada's Black History: What it means for Federal Institutions & Agencies today to examine the opportunities we all have to address anti-Black racism.

While a draft National Employment Equity and Diversity Committee Strategic Plan was developed for 2020-2023, guided by four pillars, it was put on hold when ARDI assumed responsibility for EEDC.

In 2023, CSC revised the EEDC Terms of Reference to address some concerns raised by a complaint to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL). This gave us the opportunity to introduce new direction, with the intention of revitalizing the committee in the coming year.

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## 1.2 Review Correctional Officer assessment and recruitment tools (Completed)

The intention of Correctional Officer assessment and recruitment tools was to:

- Increase diversity and representation on staffing assessments boards.
- Provide anti-racism and cultural sensitivity training to all recruitment and staffing employees.
- Conduct a fairness review of the Situational Judgement Test (SJT)

CSC reviewed the Correctional Officer assessment and recruitment tools to ensure there is no cultural bias and if pass rates were different for any of the four designated Employment Equity groups for the SJT and for Indigenous candidates for the psychological assessment. The result of the study for the psychological assessment did not identify any cultural bias.

The review of the SJT did identify a slightly lower pass rate for visible minority candidates. As a result, in 2022-23, the Human Resource Management Sector created a preparation guide to help future Correctional Officers in preparing for the Situational Judgement Test. The SJT is one of the assessment measurement tools used in the selection of recruits to attend the CSC National Training Academy Correctional Training Program (CTP). CPT is a mandatory program for all individuals selected to be a Correctional Officer, Primary Worker / Kimisinaw / Older Brother / Older Sister. The new guide was reviewed by CSC's National Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, National Indigenous Advisory Committee and EEDC before being finalized and posted on CSC's website (it can be found [here](#)).

## 1.3 Increase Indigenous awareness training through the new Introduction to Indigenous Corrections (Completed)

The Learning & Development Branch developed and implemented an Indigenous-informed learning session/opportunity, called Foundations for Indigenous Corrections (FIC), for recruits and new employees. It has been offered in every CTP since spring/summer 2022. Training for non-CX new employees began in the summer of 2022.

The training material covers historical and contemporary information to explain the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system, along with building understanding and skills for how to better support Indigenous individuals. It also includes a focus on the history of Indigenous Peoples and pre- and post-colonial contact; Indigenous Social History; the history of systemic discrimination and understanding of the over-representation of Indigenous offenders within CSC.

FIC's Indigenous-informed approach, rooted in culture, promotes reconciliation through the sharing and facilitation of knowledge by Elders, Spiritual Traditional Knowledge Keepers through a teaching, sharing and learning Circle. The Indigenous-informed approach promotes reconciliation through the facilitation of knowledge through those who demonstrate cultural humility, demonstrated competence and ally behaviours. Facilitation models and reinforces the acceptance and validity of traditional Indigenous teaching and learning styles; and sets the tone of how relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples can grow and thrive.

Following the development and implementation of the FIC training, meetings were held with internal and external stakeholders and regional and National Elders Working Group to provide advice on incorporating traditional practices in Indigenous training. Stakeholders included the

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Office of the Treaty Commission and the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatoon, SK, the Buffalo Sage Wellness House in Edmonton, AB. These groups provided advice on how to implement and conduct Indigenous-informed learning in ways that meaningfully reflect the spirit and intent of traditional practices. As such, culturally safe learning spaces were developed in each region to offer opportunities for learning.

CSC considers Indigenous Social History (ISH) in its case management decision-making regarding Indigenous federal offenders. To support this, CSC has developed ISH training for staff working with Indigenous offenders. The training creates awareness of historical and contemporary laws, policies, and Supreme Court decisions that impact Indigenous people in Canada. It provides key information on the factors which contribute to the over-representation of Indigenous offenders in the Criminal Justice System and how CSC addresses these factors.

#### **1.4 Target efforts to recruit and retain members of visible minorities and ethnically diverse employees by working with the ethnocultural advisory committees (Ongoing)**

Within the Front-line Planning and Recruitment (FLPR) division at CSC, outreach efforts are deployed across the country to promote employment opportunities offered within CSC, targeting various diversity groups. New recruitment material (images, banners) have been developed to demonstrate greater diversity within CSC. CSC employees attending recruitment outreach events are representative of diverse groups. CSC communicates with the National Ethnocultural Advisory Committee (NEAC) to provide ad-hoc updates on CSC's recruitment efforts.

Since September 2021, CSC has participated in 7 recruitment events targeting racialized groups (2021 Immigration career fair, Diversity in uniform 2022, 2022 Immigration career fair, Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre, Actions interculturelles de Sherbrooke, Diversity in uniform 2023, 2023 Immigration career fair). The FLPR division sent e-mail call outs to 15 racialized groups communities periodically with the CX job posters. CSC has increased its workforce representation for the EE racialized groups.

#### **1.5 Increase the cultural responsiveness of staff through training, toolkits, activities and events on cultural issues. (Ongoing)**

To improve diversity and inclusion in programs, CSC established a Learning Advisory Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (LACDEI), and an Employment Equity Diversity and Inclusion team (EEDI) under the Human Resources (HR) Management Sector. Consideration for employees from racialized communities and Indigenous peoples has prompted the development of national Indigenous Action Plans, the update of the Visible Minority Action Plan, and as well as the current development of the National Action Plan for Women Employees and Accessibility Plan, all of which were created with an intersectional lens. These Action Plans include the employees' experiences, needs, and required services.

A Centre of Excellence on Diversity Learning (CEDL), within Learning and Development, was created in Quebec and Atlantic Regions to become a benchmark for diversity training. The CEDL's mandate is to continuously foster a focused reflection on the strategic means to be implemented to continue learning and development efforts to explore and reflect on the broad theme of diversity.

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The CEDL will ensure coordination and cohesion in the various leaning products on diversity and will provide recommendations on how to address gaps and thus build, through training, an inclusive, equitable and diversified organization.

CSC offers a variety of training such as the mandatory in-class Diversity and Cultural Competency Training (DCCT) and Working Environment Free of Bias and Racism, which has three components:

- Unconscious Bias Training
- Uniting Against Racism
- Manager's Toolkit for Action

Through the Indigenous Initiatives Directorate, employees are provided with specialized Indigenous-centered training (Indigenous Social History and Cultural Awareness), and the opportunity to apply that training on a regular basis to address the impact of Indigenous offenders' social history, including their risk factors and needs, how to address those risks and needs in the most culturally appropriate way possible. This training content is developed in consultation with Indigenous Elders, the National Indigenous Advisory Committee, and the National Elders Working Group. These training modules also introduce staff to the Indigenous Continuum of Care model and highlights the role of Indigenous communities in the healing journey of Indigenous offenders

To recognize both the unique needs of Inuit offenders as well as the uniqueness of their culture, IID developed a facilitator's guide for Inuit Cultural Awareness sessions aimed at individuals who support the Indigenous Continuum of Care, namely those working at regional Inuit Centres of Excellence. These sessions ensure that the Indigenous Social History of Inuit offenders are considered by these staff.

CSC continues to collaborate with external Indigenous agencies, like KAIROS Canada, to provide training to staff. KAIROS Canada worked to certify CSC staff as KAIROS Blanket Exercise (KBE) facilitators. The KBE is a unique history lesson that fosters truth, understanding respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The objective of the KBE and having CSC certified internal facilitators supports CSC's commitment to effective, culturally appropriate interventions and reintegration support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders.

The Health Services Sector has committed to an Indigenous-led speaker series, where monthly webinars are provided to Health Services staff on a variety of topics such as the impact of colonialism on Indigenous health and wellness, intergenerational trauma, cultural safety, anti-racism, and unconscious bias. Speakers have included well known Indigenous health care professionals and Indigenous agencies such as the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council (IPHCC).

CSC partnered with the IPHCC to provide a three-part webinar series *on Indigenous Cultural Safety, Understanding the Importance of Traditional Healing and Wholistic Health, and Turning Knowledge into Action*. As part of this series, Health Services hosted a screening of "The Unforgotten", an award-winning, short documentary, produced with funding by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), followed by a panel discussion. The purpose of the film is to explore

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the health and well-being of Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples across five stages of life, from birth to elderhood. Told through first-person narration and interviews, the film explores instances of systemic racism, the impacts of colonialism, and the ongoing trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples within the Canadian healthcare. This film was created to raise awareness, incite reflection, and encourage dialogue about how to make meaningful change within Canada's health care system.

In the Prairie Region, select employees enrolled in an Intercultural Competence Certificate Program through the Bow Valley College in Calgary, AB. This four-module course will increase the knowledge and awareness of cultural competency, racism and bias among employees. Following the training, the certified employees will act as mentors and provide training sessions to their colleagues.

The modules include:

- developing cultural diversity in the workplace
- cultural diversity and communication
- unconscious bias
- impact in the workplace, and good practices in diversity and inclusion

Various types of communications, conferences, symposiums, book clubs and webinars on diversity and discrimination are offered across the organization on a continual basis. Furthermore, all CSC employees were required to complete various mandatory training on diversity, bias, harassment, and workplace violence through the Canada School of Public Service.

To expand awareness and skills for Correctional Program Officers (CPO) to work effectively with Black offenders, the Reintegration Programs Division is creating a professional development workshop for CPOs. The workshop will assist CPOs in meeting the responsiveness needs of Black offenders and enable them to further develop their working alliance and cultural competencies for working with Black offenders. The workshop will also include culturally relevant examples for use in correctional program delivery. The development of the workshop is currently underway, with the implementation aimed for March 2024.

#### **1.6 Direct the Executive Committee to engage their employees through the Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Completed)**

In March 2022, senior management at CSC signed a Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace in which they commit to fostering a safe, positive environment where issues can be brought forth and discussed in the workplace. The statement is posted on the CSC intranet. All other executives were invited to also sign it.

#### **1.7 Outcome measures in all executives' performance assessments and make committing to a diverse and inclusive workplace an objective for all CSC employees (Ongoing)**

Specific outcome measures were included for all supervisors and managers in 2022-23, with the following indicators:



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- Lead and engage staff in accordance with CSC's Values and Standards of professional conduct
  - Commit to champion a diverse and inclusive CSC workplace culture and integrate the guiding principles of the National Comprehensive Strategy on Workplace Wellness and Employee Wellbeing.
  - Facilitate a collaborative performance management program that fosters an agile, innovative, inclusive and well-equipped workplace as outlined in Beyond 2020.

Indicators (selected for relevancy):

- Actively promote and engage all staff in behaviours that reflect CSC Values of Respect, Professionalism, Inclusiveness, Fairness and Accountability.
- actively promote policies and practices on anti-racism, the use of gender-inclusive language and official languages and engage employees in building an inclusive workplace that is respectful of all forms of cultural and gender identities and expressions.
- Use programs and flexibilities to prioritize the hiring, development and promotion of Employment Equity (EE) and equity-deserving group members to meet EE and Diversity and Inclusion objectives and to foster an equipped and diverse workforce.
- Promote awareness, understanding and respect of Indigenous peoples in Canada through regular messaging and discussion at staff meetings.
- Actively engage with employees on workplace culture and wellbeing with intentional actions throughout the fiscal year.
- Ensure compliance with the *Official Languages Act* and understand its importance in delivering excellent service to Canadians and in creating a respectful work environment for employees.

All employees had a similar objective with the following indicators:

- Demonstrate an awareness of, and model CSC Values and Standards of professional conduct, while committing to a diverse and inclusive CSC workplace culture that applies the guiding principles of the National Comprehensive Strategy on Workplace Wellness and Employee Wellbeing that fosters an agile, innovative, inclusive and better equipped workplace Beyond 2020.

Indicator (selected for relevancy):

- Regularly and actively commit to educating yourself and promoting a healthy work environment and culture by modeling behaviours that reflect the CSC Values of Respect, Professionalism, Inclusiveness, Fairness and Accountability; including but not limited to individual's abilities, ethnicity, gender identity or expression and sexual orientation and ensure your own behaviour is anti-racist, free of harassment, violence, bullying, sexual violence and inappropriate conduct.

### **1.8 Evaluate the workplace environment in terms of diversity and inclusion in the Workplace Climate and Employee Wellbeing Annual Report for 2020-2021 (Ongoing)**

The first annual report by CSC on workplace climate and employee well-being was launched in 2019. This report informs the organization on areas for improvement, and on the programs and areas that must be prioritized in the future. It has served as the organization's means to analyze



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risks, identify opportunities for change, as well as to provide recommendations in support of CSC's continued commitment to employee mental health and wellbeing. It creates linkages between employment equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, including CSC's Anti-Racism Framework. Finally, it specifically acknowledges the diversity of the organizational workforce as a point of strength, and as well an opportunity for further growth.

This report was followed in 2020 by the launch of the National Comprehensive Strategy on Workplace Wellness and Employee Wellbeing, which identifies risks and action plans with clear accountabilities and performance monitoring so that we can track progress. It also promotes initiatives that contribute to diversity and inclusion at CSC. It outlines the path forward and reiterates the importance of creating inclusive organizational structures to reduce prejudice and stigmatization. Furthermore, it directs that CSC strive to promote a culture of respect characterized by trust, transparency, fairness and inclusion.

In 2022-23, CSC launched a Comprehensive Plan on Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for 2022-2025 that aligns with the Strategic Plan for People Management 2022 to 2025. The Plan establishes measurable objectives to remove barriers, ensure equal opportunities for members of employment equity groups and measure initiatives for inclusive workplace. This is an integral part of ensuring that the CSC workforce is representative of the Canadian population and the offender population it serves.

## New Initiatives

Since the implementation of the Anti-Racism Framework in 2020, several new initiatives have been implemented, which are included below.

### Sponsorship Programs

In spring 2022, CSC launched the Leadership Connexion Program (LCP) pilot which is the CSC version of the TBS Mentorship Plus Program. [Mentorship Plus](#) is a Government of Canada initiative that is being implemented by 52 departments across the country with a focus on sponsorship. The goal is to promote inclusion and diversity through the program in support of a more diverse representation among our future leaders.

The LCP promotes CSC's priorities and commitments to remove barriers and implement strategies that focus on inclusive leadership development, as well as accelerate progress in the representation of designated employment equity groups and equity-deserving communities in the most senior ranks. The LCP has supported seven (7) high potential protégés to date from underrepresented groups who aspire to leadership and management positions. Senior executives (sponsors) were matched with participants (protégés) who identify as belonging to one of the Employment Equity (EE) and/or equity-deserving groups.

In order to support employees' career development goals, the LCP has several core elements that responds to equity-deserving employees' most common career development requests such as Key Leadership Competency development, meaningful experience building opportunities such as assignments, career coaching through an MOU with the Public Service Commissioner and support in obtaining language training if required.

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CSC also participates in the government wide Mosaic Leadership Development Program, a 15-month program, co-developed by the Centre on Diversity and Inclusion with experts and representatives from government departments and equity-deserving employee networks, that is facilitated by the TBS Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and aims to develop future leaders from equity-deserving groups. Once CSC employee graduated from the first cohort of the program and in June 2023, CSC submitted nominations for the second cohort of the Mosaic program, scheduled to begin in September 2023.

### **Indigenous Recruitment**

The Human Resource Management (HRM) working group for the Executive Sub-Committee on Indigenous Corrections, called "Tiger Team", was established to develop an action plan to increase representation of Indigenous people and to implement recruitment and retention strategies to support a greater Indigenous workforce presence at all levels of the organization. The Tiger Team Action Plan for Indigenous Recruitment and Retention (2021-2022 and beyond) is an evergreen document that outlines priorities and commitments to further CSC's goals for Indigenous people representation. It will continue to evolve as progress is made.

In tandem with the Tiger Team Action Plan, a separate Indigenous Action Plan (IAP) was developed. The Human Resources Management Sector continues to communicate to regions as sectors, as part of the HR planning cycle, that all units are required to add one new action in support of resourcing, retaining, or developing Indigenous employees under the IAP.

To recruit Indigenous individuals, CSC implemented specialized recruitment inventories at the national and regional level that enable Indigenous people to submit general applications, which are then reviewed for consideration in appropriate job openings. Since creating the inventory, CSC has hired 12 new Indigenous employees. CSC is also having conversations with educational institutions and improving the use of social media for recruiting. A final round of evaluations of candidates from the Indigenous Inventory Process was launched December 2022 using a phased approach by position levels based on organizational need. Regions and Sectors continue to have access to the list of potential candidates as the Indigenous Inventory Process prepares to be relaunched.

Additionally, in spring 2023, the Information Management Services (IMS) branch began recruiting Indigenous employees through the Information Technology (IT) Apprenticeship Program for Indigenous Peoples, which is a Government of Canada initiative specifically for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples that creates a pathway to employment in the federal public service for Indigenous peoples. The apprentices hired through this program begin their employment within the public service and undergo a combination of on-the-job training and mentoring for a 24-month period within their department. It is hoped that apprentices will remain within CSC, or the federal public service in general upon completion of the program.

## **II. Offenders**

The following are anti-racism actions for individuals in our care and custody, either in institutions or on conditional release in the community.

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## 2.1 Finalize research to better understand the experience of ethnocultural offenders, including Black offenders (Ongoing)

CSC has begun an arm's-length initiative to develop an Indigenous-informed security classification process, from the ground up, to ensure it is gender-informed and culturally relevant for Indigenous peoples.

In addition, based on Recommendation 33 of the Auditor General's report on *Systemic Barriers*, the Research Branch of CSC has committed to undertake a validation of the Custody Rating Scale (CRS) specifically for Black men (there is an insufficient sample size to undertake a validation for Black women) and a revalidation of the CRS for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women. The focus of these projects will be on predictive validity for institutional outcomes.

These validations are being undertaken in collaboration with a panel of four external experts that have been engaged by CSC through a contracting process. Work on the project has commenced with a final set of reports scheduled for release by the end of 2023.

CSC is also currently working with the University of Regina to develop an Indigenous-informed risk assessment instrument(s). The service intends to incorporate that tool within its case management decision-making framework to help address the disproportionate categorization and placement of Indigenous inmates into maximum-security. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently in place with University of Regina to undertake the conceptualization of a risk assessment process for security classification that is culturally based and infused with Indigenous voices from the ground up while the research and data-collecting phase is ongoing.

## 2.2 Finalize research to better understand the experience of ethnocultural offenders, including Black offenders (Ongoing)

In December 2022, CSC published new research that provides critical information for evidence-informed services, programs and interventions by looking at:

- Diversity trends
- Admission profiles
- In-custody experiences
- Release outcomes

This is in addition to the qualitative study produced by researchers at Nipissing University that helps CSC better understand the correctional experience of offenders on conditional release who self-identified during CSC's admission screening protocol as being of ethnocultural backgrounds, including Black offenders.

- [A Qualitative Study of Ethnocultural Offender Correctional Experiences: Programs, Services, and Community Connections](#) Greco, C., Brown, G.P., Barker, J., et al. (2022)

CSC will be undertaking several other studies from the 2022/23 Research Plan related to Black offenders. They include:

- Research examining the cumulative time spent by Black individuals before reclassification and cascading to lower levels of security. This research will be completed during 2023-24.

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- Research exploring use of force (released in July 2023).

This, and much more research, can be found on CSC's website, including information related to Indigenous offenders.

### **2.3 Training sessions regarding the assessment, classification, management and rehabilitation of Adjudicated Persons of African Descent (Ongoing)**

In 2021-22, the Atlantic Region developed a session for regional Parole Officer Continuous Development (POCD) training to enhance case management interventions with Black offenders called "Improving Assessment, Classification Management and Rehabilitation of Adjudicated Persons of African Descent". This component was facilitated by Robert Wright, an African Nova Scotian social worker and sociologist who spearheaded the development of cultural assessments used by the Courts of Nova Scotia. The training was also attended by members of the Parole Board of Canada (PBC).

Reports like the ones Mr. Wright and several others began creating in Nova Scotia are now referred to as Impact of Race and Culture Assessments (IRCA) reports and are funded nationwide through funding from the federal government.

The IRCA is a pre-sentencing report that helps sentencing judges better understand the effect of poverty, marginalization, racism, and social exclusion on the offender and their life experience. These reports explain how the offender's lived experiences inform their circumstances, offence(s) committed, and their experience with the justice system. IRCAs provide valuable information about ethnocultural offenders' social history and enhance the capacity of the criminal justice system to accurately and comprehensively assess the needs of these offenders.

In late 2021, CSC developed a Communication Strategy for the implementation of IRCAs within federal corrections, which included the development of an IRCA page on CSC's intranet site and a Case Management Bulletin issued on September 6, 2022, to provide information on the IRCA to all case management staff.

The implementation plan for the Parole Officer Continuous Development (POCD) for 2023-2024 includes an Ethnocultural Structured Learning Day that will be implemented by each region. It aims to improve the knowledge of Parole Officers, their managers and Indigenous Community Development Officers (ICDO) regarding the legal requirements surrounding the consideration of the ethnocultural aspect (CD 767 - Ethnocultural Offenders: Services and Intervention and section 4(g) of the CCRA). This day also aims to ensure that POs and their managers are aware of the resources and stakeholders available to assist them in assessing the needs of ethnocultural offenders and in the use of ethnocultural services and/or interventions. An activity guide was developed to support the operational units in the organization of this day.

### **2.4 Enhance organizational capacity to respond to the needs of ethnocultural offenders through the Ethnocultural Action Framework (Ongoing)**

Pursuant to Section 4 (g) of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, all correctional policies, programs and practices are required to respect gender; ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic differences; sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and are responsive to

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the special needs of women, Indigenous persons, visible minorities, persons requiring mental health care and other groups. At CSC, an ethnocultural offender is defined in policy as any offender who has specific needs based on ethnicity, culture, religion or language and who has a desire to preserve their cultural identity and practices.

In accordance with CSC policy, namely [Commissioner's Directive 767 - Ethnocultural Offenders: Services and Interventions](#), the organization ensures that the specific needs and cultural interests of ethnocultural offenders are identified and met through the provision of services and interventions that contribute to successful reintegration and enhanced public safety. All initiatives for Black offenders, the second most over-represented group in CSC's care and custody, are identified and met through CSC's ethnocultural services.

CSC launched the Ethnocultural Action Framework (EAF) in May 2021 to enhance organizational capacity to respond with agility and inclusivity to the needs of ethnocultural offenders, as well as foster cohesion, consistency and collaboration at all levels of the organization that identifies targeted projects and initiatives. While the EAF is ongoing, and evergreen, to date CSC has:

- Identified and supported over 60 staff members to perform the role of Ethnocultural Site Coordinator (ESC), who provide key support to ethnocultural offenders;
- Established the Ethnocultural Representative (ER) role (offender position available to inmates as a work assignment) in all institutions to further support ESCs in their role, as well as enhance offender engagement in ethnocultural initiatives;
- Developed an educational ethnocultural/anti-racism resource list provided to all institutions with funding to support the acquisition of such resources; and
- Launched the Ethnocultural Offender Resource Kit, an online resource for all staff available on CSC's intranet that assists with identifying and responding to the needs of ethnocultural offenders.

CSC is in the process of finalizing a comprehensive Resource Guide and companion Workbook for the Ethnocultural Site Coordinators.

With additional funding for ethnocultural services, a number of new initiatives were continued from past years, including:

- An Ethnocultural Anti-Racism Calendar was first produced in 2021-22 and developed again in 2022-23. It was printed and shared broadly. It allows for offender self-expression through art and poetry, which is critical in supporting rehabilitation.
- Ethnocultural book clubs were launched in 2021-22, inspired by the ethnocultural book club at Matsqui Institution. One institution per region was selected to facilitate a book club. In 2022-23, the four existing clubs continued, as well as an additional ethnocultural book club was established in all regions and continuation of the club in Pacific Region. A total of 10 number of book clubs were supported across the country.
- In 2021-22, the inmate Ethnocultural Group at William Head Institution (WHI) completed and printed the inaugural volume of Intersections Magazine, a 52-page colour magazine designed, created and produced by WHI in partnership with Nanaimo African Heritage Society. The magazine consists of artworks and writings submitted by incarcerated individuals across the country with themes related to lived experience and social justice

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issues. Volume 2 was produced in 2022-23 and one copy of the magazine was mailed to each institution's library where inmates across the country will be able to borrow the copy. Inmates who contributed to the magazine also receive a hard copy.

- The Ethnocultural Group at WHI, with the assistance of Dr. Lisa Gunderson and Parker Johnson, developed and ran a twelve-module discussion group called Makin' It Real from September 2021 through March 2022. The 12 modules addressed masculinity, trauma, relationships, pre- and post-release planning and concerns and reality. This discussion group came about after the movie and discussion series "The Masks We Live In" launched in 2020. In 2022-23, participants from the Makin' It Real Pilot Group continued with a deeper dive in four key areas, including trauma, masculinity messaging (toxic and healthy), self-esteem and boundaries through the Keepin' It Real Discussion Group.

### **2.5 Expand the Ontario region pilot of the Black Offender Social History (Ongoing)**

CSC has been engaged in the Black Social History (BSH) pilot project in the Central Ontario District since 2016. The project was initiated by CSC in acknowledgement of the overrepresentation of Black offenders. It provides a mechanism for employees to better take lived experiences of these offenders into consideration in correctional planning.

The BSH is a set of historical and ongoing factors to consider in all decisions for offenders of African descent. These factors, such as racism and socio-economic barriers and experiences, have ongoing impacts on offenders. The BSH also involves making connections with community organizations to help support cultural needs of offenders. In this respect, the BSH is meant to provide a more structured way to equip employees to be responsive to the unique challenges faced by Black offenders.

In 2022-23, the Regional Deputy Commissioner sent out a guide for the BSH across the Ontario Region. Training has been provided to staff to complement the implementation, and there is capacity for site-specific support from the BSH committee.

The work is guided by the BSH Committee, which has worked closely with Dr. Scot Wortley from the University of Toronto to build the BSH criteria. In addition, the Committee met with Black incarcerated individuals in institutions in the region to hear from them about the challenges and opportunities. CSC is working to capture results from the BSH initiative and share it up in another region.

### **2.6 Roll out a questionnaire for Citizen Advisory Committees to consult with ethnocultural offenders (In progress)**

A questionnaire was developed to guide Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) in having discussions about the impact of systemic racism on Indigenous, Black and other racialized ethnocultural offenders. As CSC's trusted independent and impartial advisors attached to institutions and parole offices across the country, CAC members are well placed to meet with interested ethnocultural offenders to hear their perspective. They can share this information with staff and senior management on ways that CSC could better support their needs. Under the Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations (CRRR), CACs have the right to access the institutions/offices and consult with offenders. Since they are volunteers from the community, offenders often value the opportunity to interact with them.



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The questionnaire will be circulated in the form of a CAC Bulletin. Committees will be able to share observations and advice with CSC at all levels: local, regional and national. While this is in progress, it has not yet been completed.

### **2.7 Regional Ethnocultural Reintegration Committee (Ongoing)**

Since September 2021, the Atlantic Region has supported the Regional Ethnocultural Reintegration Committee (RERC), which was established to review internal strategies, with the aim of reintegrating ethnocultural offenders at the earliest and best time. There is no end date to this committee.

In addition, Atlantic Region developed an Ethnocultural Correctional Interventions Board (ECIB) where ethnocultural offenders' cases are discussed and plans are developed to increase the reintegration results by ensuring the cultural needs of the offender are met, program needs are discussed, and interventions are provided throughout the offender's sentence. The ECIB was initiated in December 2020 and are now operating in all male institutions in the region.

The initiative has also been operationalized at Nova Institution for Women. While numbers are smaller for women offenders, the ECIB has been incorporated into bi-weekly site-level Correctional Intervention Boards to ensure that ethnocultural women are discussed on a regular basis to continue to show success in their reintegration results and to ensure that both gender-specific and cultural needs, program needs as well as interventions and services continue to be provided throughout the offender's sentence.

Ontario Region has also implemented ECIB pilots at some of the medium sites, including Grand Valley Institution and Beaver Creek Institution (BCI), which have been going for several months, with Collins Bay Institution just starting up. BCI, in particular is running Indigenous, Inuit and ethnocultural CIBs once a month to prioritize these cases.

### **New Initiatives**

Since the implementation of the Anti-Racism Framework in 2020, several new initiatives have been implemented, which are included below.

#### **Reintegration Officer**

One promising practice being monitored for its potential scalability is the African Canadian Reintegration Officer (ACRO), a position that has been piloted in the Atlantic Region since 2021-22. The position is responsible for assisting the Black offender population with access to Afro-centric services for enhanced reintegration outcomes within CSC, as well as external community agencies and service providers. The ACRO has established relationships with community partners that allowed Black offenders to participate in culturally specific workshops to discuss topics such as mental health, racial trauma, as well as personal and professional development in a culturally inclusive environment.

The position is being piloted now in other parts of the country. In 2022-23, the Ontario Region accessed funding to pilot an Ethnocultural Reintegration Officer who will have similar roles and responsibilities as the ACRO. Prairie Region has also launched a Black Offender Liaison Officer in the AB/NWT District for Black offenders in Alberta. More information about these pilots can be



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found on CSC's website here: [Working with Black offenders 'inside' and out | Let's Talk Express](#).

### **Afri-Centric Programming**

There is a common thread across regions related to Afri<sup>2</sup>-centric initiatives that is being monitored. Similar to what Dr. Lisa Gunderson and Mr. Parker Johnson are doing for African, Black and Caribbean offenders in Pacific Region in relation to exploring trauma, masculinity messaging, self-esteem and boundaries, the Atlantic Region is also providing complementary programming around personal development.

In 2022-23, Mr. Malik Adams, an educator in the Nova Scotia public school system, worked with ethnocultural individuals virtually to share information about Black history, the importance of self-confidence, educational/intervention programs and healthy choices. He also conducted separate workshops with educational and program staff to increase awareness and best practices when teaching and engaging with the African, Black and Caribbean offender population.

The Atlantic Region also worked with the Association of Black Social Workers to provide workshops specifically to those men of African descent across all security levels with a culturally responsive and trauma informed approach. They would serve to increase a psychologically and culturally safe environment to talk about their cultural pain, and to empower them to have their voices heard. This will be offered in 2023-24 at the Nova Institution for Women.

The Atlantic Region also offered a financial literacy program through the organization, Urban Rez, called "Ounce of Prevention" that integrates transferable life and professional skills offenders can apply to real world opportunities. Programming content addressing Conflict Management, The Art of Negotiation, Mentorship, Business Fundamentals, Marketing/Branding, Effective Communication, Presentation Skills and Public Speaking.

Based on feedback from the offenders and correctional staff, these initiatives have been instrumental to decreasing the stigma the offender population of African descent feel about mental health. In turn, this increased the offenders' awareness of the strategies to address their mental health needs. From these workshops, offenders were able to create relationships with community partners to assist with their reintegration into the community.

Ontario Region also engaged with Urban Rez through a contract to deliver their Ounce of Prevention program at Collins Bay Institution to 20 offenders, which started in February of 2023. It is ethnocultural centered and designed to provide cultural and Security Threat Group disaffiliation supports to offenders and was very well received. Ontario has secured funds to support two further initiatives in the region for fiscal year 2023-24.

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<sup>2</sup> The spelling has been chosen based on the preference of Black communities in Canada to use "Afri-centric" rather than "Afro", as per the article from *The Toronto Star*: [Afro vs. Afri \(thestar.com\)](#), accessed 25 July 2023.

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### **Human Rights and Offender Redress**

CSC has strengthened its Human Rights Division to provide leadership in CSC's actions to respond to its human rights obligations, promote awareness, and ensure accountability in addressing the human rights concerns of offenders in our care and custody.

Furthermore, the Offender Redress Division is actively committed to the ongoing prioritization of offender grievances alleging harassment and/or discrimination, to ensure both individual and organizational accountability for actions, language and decisions that are inconsistent with the values of the Service.

### **Health Services Indigenous Engagement**

Between May and October of 2022, the National Health Services Sector engaged with Indigenous individuals at 12 institutions, spanning all five regions across the country. Sites were selected to ensure regional representation while paying particular attention to institutions with higher proportions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals. The purpose of engagement was to gather input from Indigenous people in custody on their health and wellness needs and recommendations for how health services can better meet their needs.

In total, NHQ Health Services spoke with 253 Indigenous individuals (202 men and 51 women), utilizing a sharing circle format with the support of institutional Elders. Findings from each sharing circle were analyzed using a thematic analysis and the resulting themes were reported to the Health Services Executive Team, the National Medical Advisory Committee, National Professional Practice Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Initiatives Directorate, the Women's Offenders Sector and EXCOM. Subsequently, Health Services is working on formalizing an Indigenous Health and Wellness Action Plan.

### **Lifer Strategy**

The St. Leonard's Society of Canada established the PeerLife Collaborative (PLC) in the Ontario Region in 2012 with the goal to provide specialized supportive services to indeterminately sentenced offenders within federal institutions and in the community on conditional release, with a focus on ethnocultural, Indigenous and women offenders.

While under contract in 2022-23, the PLC provided information sessions to over 100 incarcerated men and women, attended PBC hearings, escorted inmates, participated in case conferences, and provided support via telephone. The PLC supports Indigenous and ethnocultural offenders by identifying their unique needs and barriers and endeavouring to provide culturally specific support to these offenders while incarcerated. The PLC has developed connections with Indigenous and ethnocultural community supports in Ontario and created a directory of services, which is available to offenders. In recognition of the unique needs of ethnocultural and Indigenous offenders, the PLC is actively recruiting in-reach workers with diverse cultural backgrounds to further enhance its services in 2023-24.

### **Gender Considerations**

In May 2022, CSC implemented Commissioner's Directive (CD) 100, *Gender Diverse Offenders*, which provides overarching policy direction. The new CD replaced the Interim Policy bulletin that was issued in December 2017 after Bill C-16, *An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights*

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*Act and the Criminal Code*, came into force, adding gender identity or gender expression as a prohibited ground for discrimination. CD 100 highlights the principles and changes to operational procedures for employees working with an offender with gender-related needs.

CSC created the Gender Considerations Secretariat (GCS) to serve as a centre of expertise with respect to gender diverse offenders. The Secretariat provides ongoing support across the organization aimed at building a safe and inclusive environment that is respectful of the accommodation needs of this offender population. It is actively engaged in the decision-making process around requests from gender diverse offenders to be placed or transferred to an institution that better aligns with their gender.

The GCS is also currently working with the 2SLGBTQI+ community to lead the development and delivery of training for staff and awareness building sessions for offenders to increase knowledge and understanding of the lived experience of gender diverse individuals.

### III. Stakeholders

CSC works with community partners, stakeholders, advisory committees and volunteers to facilitate the safe return of offenders to communities, as well as maintain the well-being of offenders and communities. CSC provides services to victims to uphold their rights to information, protection and participation. The following are anti-racism actions being taken as an organization with our external stakeholders.

#### **3.1 Increase horizontal collaboration to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black offenders in the criminal justice system (Ongoing)**

There is an overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black people in correctional institutions as compared to their percentage of the general Canadian population. Overrepresentation is a reflection of the disparities within our society.

Work must be done at all levels of the criminal justice system to address overrepresentation.

CSC collaborates with many internal and external stakeholders, including other federal government departments, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous representative organizations, non-governmental organizations and experts. Some of these initiatives are outlined below.

For more than 20 years, CSC has supported a National Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, made up of volunteers from the community who come from ethnocultural backgrounds or have experience working in the area of multiculturalism. They advise the Commissioner on the delivery of programs and services that contribute to ethnocultural offender reintegration and enhance public safety.

CSC also maintains a National Indigenous Advisory Committee made up of external members that provides advice and recommendations to the Commissioner on the provision of correctional services to Indigenous offenders.

CSC continues to collaborate with other government departments and community stakeholders on the development of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plan and of the UN Declaration will contribute

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to the Government of Canada's continued efforts to break down barriers, combat systemic racism and discrimination, close socio-economic gaps, and promote greater equality and prosperity for Indigenous peoples. CSC is also contributing to the development of the Indigenous Justice Strategy, being led by Justice Canada.

CSC is also working with other government departments to support the objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent, including promoting respect, protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent, and encouraging a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture, and contributions of these communities to society around the world. The decade was proclaimed in 2014 by the United Nations General Assembly and provides a framework for state and non-state actors to join people of African descent and take measures towards the objectives of the International Decade. CSC is also contributing to the development of Canada's Black Justice Strategy, being led by Justice Canada.

In 2022, CSC contributed to the development of the Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism (FFRR) implementation plan being led by Public Safety Canada. The FFRR offers the opportunity to explore various opportunities to increase the capacity for community corrections supports, breaking the cycle of recidivism, while supporting rehabilitation. As part of these conversations, some key themes emerged to advance the priority areas in the Framework: housing, education, employment, health, and positive support networks. Early focus for the Framework will include culturally relevant supports to help address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and Black Canadians in the criminal justice system, as well as actions targeted towards communities.

There are a number of activities being led with external Indigenous partners to improve rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities for Indigenous offenders. A partnership with the Kativik School Board of Nunavik, for example, offers various courses including language training for students to learn Inuktitut as a first language, and French or English as a second language. Inuit offenders in the Quebec region can now participate in virtual education courses in their native languages.

CORCAN continues to engage with Indigenous communities and organizations to increase employment and employment training opportunities for Indigenous offenders. To date, the work has included agreements for residential housing for Indigenous communities that provides employment skills training, in addition to partnerships with specific Indigenous communities or organizations to further enhance capacity through additional training opportunities for offenders and community members, while also increasing Indigenous community capacity to maintain their own housing.

CORCAN continues to be a member of the Leadership Circle with Indigenous Works, formerly the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, which is an Indigenous national social enterprise. Indigenous Works provides information, discussion forums, horizontal connection and learning opportunities on an ongoing basis relative to Indigenous people's employment and training to support CSC's offender training program, as well as recruitment, retention and inclusive workplace practices for Indigenous people relative to human resources strategies for CORCAN.

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Through CSC's Interdepartmental Memorandum of Understanding with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), CSC and ISC continue to collaborate on initiatives such as the Enhancing Community Success project. The project aims to optimize release planning as Indigenous offenders return to their communities and coordinate better access to ISC-funded post-release services and supports. The Enhancing Community Success project builds on the success of the interdepartmental Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) initiative, which has trained CSC staff as trusted sources for the secure status card application and since resulted in approximately 1000 eligible Status First Nations men and women receiving their SCIS. The SCIS facilitates access to Non-Insured Health Benefits such as prescription coverage and dental benefits. The Enhancing Community Success project will be rolled out in three CSC regions (Quebec, Ontario and Prairie regions) and facilitate referrals of eligible Status First Nations and Inuit offenders to an ISC community navigator, who will assist in linking project participants to community services and supports.

### **3.2 Work with partners to explore offender release and reintegration barriers and solutions (Ongoing)**

As most offenders will eventually return to their community, we place a high priority on productive relationships with diverse partners, community experts and stakeholders. These relationships enable CSC to facilitate the safe return of offenders to communities, as well as maintain the well-being of offenders.

Some of those partners include non-governmental, non-profit organizations that operate community-based residential facilities for offenders on release on contract. As offenders present varying risks and needs, this allows for specialized services within the most appropriate environment. Many offer programming for their residents.

Given the increasing diversity of federal offenders, in particular the disproportionate rate of Indigenous and Black incarcerated individuals as compared to the general population, partnerships are all the more important.

In support of CSC's long-standing corporate priority of providing effective, culturally appropriate interventions and reintegration support, CSC launched the Indigenous Offender Reintegration Contribution Program (IORCP). The contribution program supports the facilitation of Indigenous offender reintegration by strengthening community partnerships.

CSC facilitates and supports the development of community-based, restorative and culturally relevant projects, such as healing lodges. Section 81 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) provides Indigenous communities with the opportunity to deliver correctional services to offenders wanting to incorporate Indigenous values, traditions and beliefs in their healing journey. These agreements allow for a unique approach to Indigenous corrections that is culturally responsive and inclusive of Indigenous communities.

There are currently ten healing lodges across Canada funded and/or operated by CSC and CSC is looking to grow that number. To support this, CSC has developed a strategic Action Plan to expand the use of Section 81, as per the Commissioner's mandate letter.

Section 84 of the CCRA also provides the legislative framework for CSC to work with Indigenous communities in the development of release plans for Indigenous offenders. These

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release plans apply to offenders who wish to serve their eventual conditional or statutory release in an Indigenous community or in an urban area with the support of an Indigenous organization. It also applies to offenders who are subject to long-term supervision orders.

CSC's Indigenous Community Development Officers (ICDO) work with rural and urban communities identified by Indigenous offenders and help prepare communities for an offender's release. They support Indigenous offenders in their transition from the institution and reintegration to the community and connect them to culturally specific and other community-based programs, services, and resources.

CSC is proud to work with several Indigenous-led organizations including the Native Counselling Services of Alberta, which manages the Stan Daniels Healing Centre and Buffalo Sage Wellness House for Women. CSC also works with the Indigenous Women's Healing Centre, which operates the Eagle Women's Lodge for women. Eagle Women's Lodge is a Section 81 Healing Lodge able to accommodate up to 30 women involved with CSC.

In Ontario Region, CSC established collaborative partnerships with Movember and True North Aid to facilitate the Work 2 Give Initiative (W2G). Movember supports the project by providing funding for the raw materials needed to build the items identified as "needs". True North Aid supports the project by purchasing and delivering the materials identified by CSC and the Indigenous community being served. W2G engaged numerous Indigenous communities (Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Wahgoshig First Nation, Wiikwemikoong First Nation, Weenusk First Nation, Serpent River First Nation, etc.) in a traditional manner to foster meaningful relationships.

W2G supports the mental health and effective reintegration of Indigenous offenders incarcerated in CSC. Indigenous offenders involved in the initiative produce various items identified as "needs" by Indigenous communities through which they develop new skills and an understanding of themselves, which redefines who they are as Indigenous offenders and supports a fulsome healing journey. Moreover, Indigenous offenders are provided an opportunity to forge new relationships with Indigenous communities, which fosters a great sense of reciprocity and connection. Indigenous participants are focused on release planning, developing work related skill sets and have a desire to give back to community. The items created through W2G serve Indigenous communities by providing a gathering place for ceremony, traditional teachings, mental health and overall wellbeing related activities.

Through the Digital Education Pilot, Ontario Region is working with the organization, Good Learning Anywhere, which provides unique Indigenous-based electronic learning opportunities to offenders through their Desire to Learn (D2L) platform. These mini courses provide offenders the opportunity to address practical skills, acquired through an Indigenous lens. Since August of 2022 to the end of June 2023 there have been 3,327 related certificates for these micro-credentials.

In February 2023, CSC launched the Expression of Interest (EOI) to identify community groups and professionals representing Black, racialized and ethnocultural individuals interested in working with CSC to support offenders in our care and custody. These organizations and professionals were asked to submit an application with information about the services and supports they provide. This information will be shared with regions and sites who will continue to



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use contracts, as they do presently, to fund projects with external organizations. The EOI will allow CSC to identify new organizations, to complement those it already works with, in order to match offender needs with organizations and professionals across the country.

### **3.3 Develop an outreach strategy to reach victims of crime in Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities (Ongoing)**

Statistics show that victims and survivors of crime from Indigenous and Black communities are also over-represented in the criminal justice system. In 2021, CSC launched the Victim Services Outreach Strategy for 2021 to 2024 that includes a national, shared objective to increase outreach to Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities to ensure that they are aware of our services and their rights. NHQ and all regions are identifying activities in their annual outreach plans to work toward this goal. The strategy will be reviewed in 2024 with plans to renew.

In June 2022, we offered a learning event led by Dr. Bailey and Reverend Sky Starr in order to raise awareness amongst our Victim Services Officers (VSO) and Managers about the diverse needs of the victims they work with, and in particular how they may have been impacted by systemic racism within the various levels of the criminal justice system as a result of their racial or ethnic profile. This event assisted VSOs in their telephone/written communications with victims from racialized/marginalized communities, helping ensure that their interactions are trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and responsive to and consistent with victims' experience.

The Victim Services Division has identified and contacted victim-serving agencies that provide services to individuals from Indigenous, Black, and other racialized and/or marginalized communities and added them to the Victim Services National Stakeholder Registry. Our hope is that our outreach will assist in developing relationships with agencies that can guide us to better reach victims of crime in these communities.

CSC has connected with representatives of the Family Information Liaison Units (FILU), which have provided us with contact information for several agencies which serve Indigenous victims and communities. CSC Victim Services Fact Sheets (translated into Indigenous languages) and other communication products were shared with the FILU representatives. The FILU representatives also shared contacts in organizations that serve Indigenous communities and provided helpful feedback on strengthening our communications and outreach strategies.

Employees of CSC's Restorative Justice (RJ) Division attended the National RJ Symposium in November 2022 that included workshops related to unconscious bias, racism, gender bias, and discrimination focused on black, Asian, and Indigenous peoples. The Division contracted the organization Just Outcomes to deliver training that explored the role of RJ within Black communities.



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## Next steps 2023-24 and beyond

### Scaling

ARDI will support the expansion of innovative pilot projects. These pilots are often the products of a specific context – based on a combination of employee champions, organizational culture, partners, resources, etc. CSC’s operational units differ greatly from one to the other in terms of offender population, needs, geographic and linguistic considerations, security level, etc. These innovative ideas from the frontline of the organization rarely spread, or achieve widespread impact, without deliberate effort to support scale up.

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*Scaling is about transforming an intervention from pilot to practice.*

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In addition to transforming successful pilots into practice, consideration also needs to be given to anchoring new evidence-based practices in the policy framework.

### Performance Measurement

The ARDI Directorate will develop a Performance Measurement Strategy for the Anti-Racism Framework that identifies ways that CSC can measure success. This will include working with regions and sectors to identify and/or develop new outcome measures to measure the results of pilot projects.

### Anti-Racism Lens

The Champion for Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion wants to encourage the utilization of supportive tools to promote further understanding of possible systemic issues and solutions. This includes looking at our policies, practices and programs through an anti-racism lens.

CSC is developing an anti-racism lens with the support of the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat (ARSEC) at Canadian Heritage. ARSEC has developed an anti-racism lens as part of the Government of Canada’s efforts to address systemic racism. Using an intersectional and integrated anti-oppressive practice approach, it centers perspectives and experiences in planning, development, decision-making and implementation.

CSC hopes that this lens, once launched, can be used to review internal programs, policies and other activities, in addition to the existing gender-based analysis + framework (GBA+), a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiative. The ARDI unit will be available to support regions and sectors in its application.

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### **Case Study: An anti-racism, diversity and inclusion (ADI) lens applied in OMS-M**

An anti-racism, diversity and inclusion (ADI) lens was applied to all relevant decision-making that affect, or could benefit, racialized and Indigenous offenders in the modernization of the Offender Management System (OMS-M). This included incorporating a scored and weighted impact statement as part of a qualitative idea management process ensuring anti-racism/diversity impacted ideas are prioritized and associated data practices including disaggregated data is supported.

### **Employee Networks**

EEDC has and will continue to support employee networks with financial and human resources. That said, more needs to be done to strengthen the support provided. Moving forward, ARDI will work with the employees who continue to lead these networks and groups, along with the Human Resources Management Sector.

### **Conclusion**

CSC is not alone in seeking ways to address systemic racism and all forms of discrimination within the federal government. This is an unprecedented exercise without a clear roadmap forward. Work in this area will take time; however, the organization is committed to working with employees, offenders and stakeholders to transform the organization in a positive way.

Thank you to everyone who is taking the time to advance anti-racism and promote diversity, equity and inclusion within the organization.