

# **Working together: Citizen Advisory Committees within the Correctional Service of Canada**

As part of the criminal justice system, the Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is the federal agency responsible for:

- the administration of sentences
- the management of correctional facilities, and
- the supervision of offenders serving sentences of two or more years

Because all offenders come from the community, and most will eventually return there, their successful reintegration requires community acceptance and support. This opens the door for citizens to become involved in the correctional system to help shape their communities. One way CSC achieves this is through Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC).

## **Citizen Engagement**

Communities and their citizens have an important role to play in the Canadian criminal justice system. Since their initial inception in 1965, and subsequent recognition through the *Parliamentary Sub-Committee Report on Federal Penitentiaries* (1977), CAC have helped to inform communities about the correctional process and contribute to the overall development of correctional facilities and programs. Approximately 500 citizens participate in CACs and there are close to 100 CACs active across Canada. Almost all of the federal institutions and district parole offices have a CAC.

## **Values of the CACs**

- We believe that public safety must be the paramount consideration in the correctional process.
- We respect:
  - the dignity of individuals
  - the rights of all members of society, and
  - the potential for human growth and development
- We believe in the right of all citizens to become informed participants in the correctional process.
- We believe that offenders have the potential to live as law-abiding citizens.
- We believe that the community has a responsibility to facilitate the reintegration of the offender into society.
- We believe that the effective operation of all CACs throughout Canada is essential in managing CSC with openness and integrity.

## **Goals of the CACs**

- To promote public knowledge and understanding of corrections through communication among:
  - offenders
  - CSC staff, and
  - the public
- To contribute to the overall development of correctional facilities and programs.
- To foster public participation in the correctional process.
- To participate in developing community resources designed to support correctional programs.
- To act as impartial observers.
- To positively contribute to the development and implementation of new policies and programs through meaningful consultation.

## **Community participation**

With a keen interest in positively contributing to the correctional process, CACs provide a means for the community to represent and express itself in the core work of the CSC.

Through their voluntary participation in the Canadian correctional process, which is guided by their mission and values, CACs provide:

### **Advice**

CACs provide advice to CSC management on the development, implementation, and operation of correctional facilities and about their impact on surrounding communities. CAC members fulfill this role by regularly visiting correctional facilities, and meeting with:

- offenders
- CSC management and employees, and
- community organizations

### **Impartial observers**

CAC members act as impartial observers of the day-to-day operations of CSC, which helps demonstrate CSC's commitment to:

- openness
- integrity, and
- accountability

They help CSC evaluate and monitor the provision of adequate care, supervision, and programs for offenders, in accordance with stated values, legislation, and approved regulations and procedures such as CSC's Mission and the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA). CACs also act as impartial observers during institutional crises.

## **Liaison**

By acting as a link between communities and CSC, CACs:

- educate the public about CSC
- address public concerns, and
- build support for the correctional process

They also provide CSC management, at institutions and parole offices, a community perspective on institutional, operational, and policy decisions. They:

- educate the local community on correctional objectives and programs
- develop and implement means to enhance communication with the local community, and
- generally contribute and encourage public participation in the correctional process

## **Membership**

- CACs reflect, as much as possible, the ethnic, gender, socio-economic, and cultural diversity of the community and endeavour to be the "public presence" in corrections.
- CAC members are local citizens who volunteer their time with the goal of making a difference in the criminal justice system.
- CAC members are independent from the management of CSC and are not paid for their services.
- CAC members are appointed for a minimum three-year period, which may be renewed.
- Following the submission of an application, potential CAC members will be subject to an orientation and recommendation process prior to being appointed.
- CACs' role as a community partner is administered through CSC, which is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Public Safety.

## **Interested**

If you would like to become involved or would like more information about CACs or about CSC, please:

- contact your nearest CSC office, or
- visit [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)

## **Correctional Service of Canada**

### **National Headquarters**

340 Laurier Ave W

Ottawa ON K1A 0P9

Email: [GEN-NHQ Citizen Engagement des Citoyens](mailto:GEN-NHQ.Citizen.Engagement.des.Citoyens)

## **Regional headquarters**

### **Atlantic Regional Headquarters**

1045 Main St  
Second Floor  
Moncton NB E1C 1H1  
Telephone: 506-851-6313

### **Quebec Regional Headquarters**

400-4 Laval Pl  
Laval QC H7N 5Y3  
Telephone: 450-972-7768  
Email: [301-Coord.Liaisonaveclacollectivite@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:301-Coord.Liaisonaveclacollectivite@csc-scc.gc.ca)

### **Ontario Regional Headquarters**

443 Union St  
PO Box 1174  
Kingston ON K7L 4Y8  
Telephone: 613-536-4527  
Email: [GEN-ONT-RHQ-Communit@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:GEN-ONT-RHQ-Communit@csc-scc.gc.ca)

### **Prairies Regional Headquarters**

PO Box 9223  
Saskatoon SK S7K 3X5  
Telephone: 306-659-9300  
Email: [500CitizenEngagement@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:500CitizenEngagement@csc-scc.gc.ca)

### **Pacific Regional Headquarters**

100-33991 Gladys Ave  
Abbotsford BC V2S 2E8  
Email: [GenPacRHQCitizenEnga@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:GenPacRHQCitizenEnga@csc-scc.gc.ca)