

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Federal Custody Turnover Rates: 2018-19 to 2020-21

Men and women in federal custody are turning over at relatively high rates, at roughly 50% and 75% respectively.

Why we are doing this study

Federal custody turnover rates are reflective of the results of focused efforts being made by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to adequately prepare, safely release and deliver successful reintegration outcomes for both men and women as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders. It is expected that by delivering appropriate interventions and services to diverse groups while in custody and then while on conditional release will lead to reduced incarceration and improved public safety.

What we did

Three fiscal years (2018-19 to 2020-21) of release and count data reflected in CSC's Corporate Reporting System-Modernized were disaggregated for men and women federal inmates and within groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. While there are various other methods to calculate a turnover rate, the approach used in human resources was chosen. The federal custody turnover rate refers to the percentage of all those released (*Releases*) during a period over the average number of inmates (*Average*) calculated by dividing by two the number of inmates at the beginning and the end of the fiscal year. Consequently, the turnover percentage is $[(R) / (A) \times 100]$.

What we found

In Table 1, statistics show for men that while there has been a decline in the custody population during the COVID-19 pandemic period, the overall turnover rate has remained constant (50.1% in 2018-19 and 50.4% in 2020-21). However, it is also noteworthy that recently Indigenous men have seen a slightly higher turnover rate than non-Indigenous, 51.5% and 49.9% respectively.

Table 1: Federal Releases / Average Custody - Men

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Overall
2018-19	1,870 / 3,762 (49.7%)	4,842 / 9,670 (50.1%)	6,712 / 13,432 (50.1%)
2019-20	1,990 / 3,866 (51.5%)	4,709 / 9,374 (50.2%)	6,699 / 13,235 (50.0%)
2020-21	1,931 / 3,751 (51.5%)	4,318 / 8,655 (49.9%)	6,249 / 12,405 (50.4%)

Table 2 statistics show that for women in federal custody there has also been a recent decline over the COVID-19 pandemic period. Nevertheless, the population turnover rate, while substantially higher than men, for women there has been a downward trend over the past three years from 80.4% to 73.5%. It is recently observed that Indigenous and non-Indigenous women have equivalent population turnover rates.

Table 2: Federal Releases / Average Custody - Women

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Overall
2018-19	219 / 281 (77.9%)	335 / 408 (82.1%)	554 / 689 (80.4%)
2019-20	230 / 285 (80.7%)	317 / 408 (77.7%)	547 / 693 (78.9%)
2020-21	201 / 273 (73.6%)	278 / 379 (73.4%)	479 / 652 (73.5%)

What it means

Notwithstanding recent declines in the federal custody population, it appears that relatively high turnover rates have been maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period. Equivalent federal custody turnover rates are observed for men and women and similarly for Indigenous and non-Indigenous inmates. While women are turning over more slowly over time, it may simply be signaling a significant change in the residual composition of women inmates. This later finding warrants further investigation.

For more information

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