

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Post-pandemic Provisional Federal Population Forecasts

Post-pandemic changes in 10-year federal population forecasts were observed for men, women, and across regions.

Why we are doing this study

Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) regularly refreshes its provisional federal institutional and community population forecasts. As previously noted, a major assumption in any forecasting exercise is that things will remain the same, which has not been the case in recent years when courts slowed or closed completely resulting in a decrease in admissions. Consequently, over the course of two and half fiscal years marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, CSC exhibited unprecedented declines in the in-custody (-1,392 or 10.1%) and community supervision (-903 or 9.6%) populations.¹ While provisional forecasts were undertaken in 2022-23, the reopening of courts and very sharp rise in federal admissions coupled with a decline in the number of releases it appears that the in-custody population is quickly returning to pre-pandemic levels and normal growth. The following provides an update on the previous² population estimates with refreshed 10-year estimates to fiscal year-end 2032-33.

What we did

A forecasting database of weekly snapshots of institutional and community supervision counts from 1990-91 to 2022-23 was derived from CSC's Offender Management System. The historical time series in-custody and community supervision populations were used to develop provisional scenarios for men and women to 2032-33. Again, projections for men and women were estimated separately, as historical trends for these two groups differ.

SAS/ETS software was used for exploring and analyzing univariate time series data and to select the best-fitting model. Computing estimates for each security level across the five administrative regions of CSC added precision by taking into account variations that occur over time with these sub-populations.

What we found

As reflected in the table below, for men in-custody on 29 March 2023, the actual count was reported to be **12,308**. For fiscal year-end 2032-33, the 10-year forecast for men is estimated to be **13,618**. For women, the actual custody count in 2023 was reported to be **655** and the 10-year forecast for 2033 is estimated to be **753**.

For men the 10-year forecast difference of +1,310 or 10.6% is a substantially lower percentage than for women at +98 or +15.0%.

Also displayed below, for men under community supervision on 29 March 2023, the actual count was reported to be **7,658**. For fiscal year-end 2032-33, the 10-year community forecast for men is estimated to be **7,436**, a decline. On the other hand, for women the actual community count in 2023 was reported to be **640** and the 10-year forecast is estimated to be **646**. For men, the 10-year forecast difference of -222 or -2.6% is a substantially higher percentage than for women at +6 or +0.9%.

National and Regional Population Forecasts to 2032-33

	Custody Forecast	Net Change	Community Forecast	Net Change
Atlantic	1,359	+186	763	+5
Quebec	2,987	+278	1,832	-74
Ontario	4,015	+395	2,397	-94
Prairies	4,291	+490	1,859	-41
Pacific	1,718	+58	1,231	-12
National	14,370	+1,407	8,082	-216
Men	13,618	+1,310	7,436	-222
Women	753	+98	646	+6

Note: Some numerical differences may be due to rounding.

¹ RIB-22-05 - Pandemic Era Impacts on the Federal Supervision Populations

² RIB-22-19 - Pandemic Era Impacts on Provisional Federal Population Forecasts

What it means

While the national 10-year custody forecast being higher than the current institutional count is expected, it appears that the in-custody population will return to pre-pandemic levels much sooner than expected and return to a normal growth rate. However, the national community supervision count currently being higher than the end-of year national forecast is again surprising and reflective of significant declines of both the custody and community populations exhibited during the pandemic, relatively flat release rates and sentence expiration while on conditional release.

For more information

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Prepared by: Larry Motiuk and Ben Vuong

