



CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.



**Appearance before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security
(SECU)**

2024 to 2025 Supplementary Estimates B

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Correctional Service
Canada

Service correctionnel
Canada

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1. Hot Issues Notes

1.1 Supplementary Estimates "B"

Proposed Response – Changes in the number of offenders in our custody and price fluctuations:

- The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has sought incremental funding for 2024 to 2025 to address immediate pressures faced by changes in the number of offenders in our custody and price fluctuations.
- Of the funding to be authorized through the 2024 to 2025 Fall Supplementary Estimates "B", \$58.1M represents an increase in CSC's voted operating authorities.
- This funding will be used to address pressures facing CSC due to changes in the number of offenders in our custody as well as price changes on specific quasi-statutory items.
- The funding being sought through these Estimates will enable CSC to deliver on its mandate to support public safety through the appropriate care and custody of inmates.

Proposed Response – National Satellite Training Academy (Budget 2024):

- CSC has sought incremental funding for 2024 to 2025 to address immediate pressures to address its ongoing increasing needs for training due to various factors, e.g., as the increase of population and the abolishment of segregation, CSC entered into a contractual arrangement with Holland College in February 2019 following the end of its previous agreement with RCMP.
- Of the funding to be authorized through the 2024 to 2025 Fall Supplementary Estimates "B", \$13.4M represents an increase in CSC's voted operating authorities to support pressures in the National Satellite Training Academy (NSTA) training program.
- The funding being sought through these Estimates will enable CSC to ensure that an appropriate number of staff are keeping our institutions and communities safe.

1.2 Mother-Child Program

Proposed Response – Safety of Children

- The safety and security of children who participate in the Mother-Child Program is a top priority for CSC.
- There are rigorous eligibility criteria protocols in place for participation in this program.
- This includes child welfare screening completed by provincial and territorial child and family services, as well as ensuring that people residing in the Mother Child Living Unit have not been convicted of an offence against a child.
- Children are supervised at all times and no child is ever left unattended.
- Since the program was implemented in 2001, there have been over 170 participants, and no child has ever been harmed.

Grand Valley Institution

- The Mother Child Living Unit at Grand Valley Institution has a fenced yard for children to play in.
- The unit's doors and windows are locked and alarmed, and there are camera views of all entry points.
- Inmates are not permitted to access other units or yards than their own.
- Inmates requiring a high degree of supervision and control within the penitentiary or presenting a high risk to the safety of the public will be classified as maximum security.
- No children are allowed in the maximum-security perimeter.

1.3 Management of Sex Offenders

Proposed Response

- Appropriately managing sexual offenders is a top priority for CSC.
- Although sex offenders represent a small proportion of federal offenders, we know the lasting impact that these offenses have on victims and their communities.
- That is why sexual offenders receive a variety of specific interventions and services while incarcerated, which are matched to their individual levels of risk and need.
- Evaluations continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of CSC's correctional programs in reducing recidivism, including sex offender programs.

In the community

- Should any change in the offender's behaviour or situation occur which might be linked to an elevated risk to re-offend, CSC takes immediate action to assess its potential so that appropriate steps can be taken to manage the risk to the public.
- If it is determined that an offender can no longer be managed safely in the community, the offender's conditional release will be suspended, resulting in their return to custody.

1.4 Security Classification and Transfers (Including HPOs)

Security Classification

- As per policy, CSC must review the security classification of medium and maximum-security inmates at least every 2 years.
- CSC is required to ensure all offenders are placed in institutions that match their security level.
- CSC's approach to both initial security classification and subsequent security reclassification includes the use of evidence-based assessment instruments along with the professional judgment of specialized staff, if applicable.
- A change to the security classification of offenders is based on the assessment of their risk related to institutional adjustment, escape risk, and risk to public safety in the event of escape. These factors are set out in law and policy.

Inmate Transfers

- Transfers of inmates from 1 institution to another may occur for many reasons, including when an offender's security classification is reviewed.
- When transferring an offender, CSC takes into account several aspects, such as the degree and type of control they require to ensure the ongoing safety of the public (including victims), offenders, and our staff as well as the availability of programs and interventions, accessibility to family and support, mental and physical health of the offender.
- All transfers of inmates to lower levels of security occur only after CSC has duly considered such aspects as public safety, institutional security and the risk of escape.
- An inmate can be returned to a higher security level at any point if deemed necessary to ensure the safety of the public or our institutions.
- Decisions around offender specific cases and CSC operations fall under the purview of CSC. The Minister does not have a role or authority in security classification or transfer of offenders.

1.5 Conditional Release

Proposed Response

- To keep our communities safe, CSC strives to gradually release and safely reintegrate federal offenders through structured community supervision and works with criminal justice partners to ensure this goal.
- Research shows that society is best protected when an offender is gradually reintegrated into society through supervised release, rather than released at the end of the sentence with no controls or support.
- If the offender's behaviour changes and there is an increased risk to public safety, CSC takes immediate action and completes a reassessment of the offender's risk and behaviour under supervision and a review of the supervision strategy.
- If it is determined that an offender cannot be managed safely in the community, the offender's conditional release will be suspended, resulting in a return to custody. The offender's release can ultimately be revoked by the Parole Board of Canada (PBC).

1.6 Staff Safety

Proposed Response

- The safety and wellbeing of staff is of paramount importance CSC.
- CSC is committed to ensuring the safety of the thousands of dedicated staff who, on a daily basis, have the challenging task of managing a complex and diverse offender population.
- We acknowledge that correctional staff have challenging jobs, and we appreciate the work they do every day to keep our employees do to keep Canadians safe.
- We are, and will continue, to work with our staff and union partners to ensure safe work environments. These are issues that have our ongoing attention, vigilance, and action, as we all work towards the same goal.

1.7 Contraband Detection

Proposed Response

- Preventing the introduction of contraband and reducing the use of illicit substances by offenders in correctional institutions remains an ongoing key priority.
- Strict policies concerning contraband and unauthorized activities are in place, which are enforced through dynamic and static security practices, including extensive search procedures for offenders, staff and visitors.
- Offenders found to be in possession of contraband or unauthorized items such as cell phones may be subject to disciplinary action, and/or criminal charges.
- There are a number of strategies and tools available that are used to prevent the flow of contraband into and throughout our institutions. These include:
 - Intelligence gathering and analysis processes
 - Metal detectors, x-ray machines, detector dogs, ion scanners
 - Robust search procedures for offenders, staff, visitors, cells, rooms, vehicles and other areas
 - Continued collaboration and information sharing with local police agencies and communities.
- To disrupt drone activities, CSC uses a layered approach of security practices (e.g., dynamic and static security, routine and non-routine searching, etc.), technology, intelligence activities, collaboration with local police agencies and infrastructure enhancements.
- CSC also monitors technological advances in drone detection and works with other government departments and criminal justice partners to identify the most effective approaches.
- The Service will continue to work closely with local police agencies and communities to help prevent contraband and unauthorized items from entering its institutions.

1.8 Harm Reduction Measures

Proposed Response

- Canadians across the country have been impacted by the tragic and ongoing opioids crisis, and those living within our federal institutions are no exception.
- One of CSC's top priorities is ensuring that offenders have access to quality, safe, patient-centred health care.
- To help save lives and prevent the spread of infectious diseases, over the last number of years, CSC has introduced a number of harm reduction measures to better support those living with substance use disorders.
- This includes the Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT), the expansion of the Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP), and the establishment of the world's only prison-based Overdose Prevention Service (OPS).
- Mental health and substance use are first-and-foremost health issues, and we continue to work to break down stigma, while providing effective and appropriate harm reduction and treatment options.

Prison Needle Exchange Program

- Like in the community, the PNEP provides federally incarcerated individuals access to sterile needles in an effort to limit the transmission of infectious diseases, such as HIV and HCV.
- Additionally, the PNEP provides an opportunity for healthcare staff to engage with patients about substance use.
- A collaborative model similar to the one currently in effect for EpiPens and insulin needles is used for CSC's PNEP. Operations conducts a Threat Risk Assessment to review participant applications, ensuring the safety and security of staff, incarcerated individuals and the institution.

Concerns About Injury

- Appropriate safeguards have been established in every institution to ensure that PNEP kits are safely stored and accounted for at all times.
- As of November 2024, no reported assaults involving staff or incarcerated individuals associated with operating PNEP.

Overdose Prevention Service

- The primary goal of the OPS is to save lives and prevent fatal, and non-fatal, overdoses by having health care professionals available to respond immediately in the event of a medical emergency.
- There have been no fatalities amongst those using the program.
- The OPS also supports the reduction of the spread of infectious diseases by using sterile supplies and making institutions safer for employees and incarcerated individuals, and it makes communities safer when individuals are released.

1.9 Mental Health

Proposed Response

- One of our key priorities is the provision of professional, clinically independent, culturally responsive and coordinated person-centered care.
- This is underscored by CSC's legislative mandate to provide every inmate with essential health care and reasonable access to non-essential health care, in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- Effective and timely intervention in addressing the mental health needs of offenders is a priority.
- CSC's health services are accredited by Accreditation Canada, which is the same organization that accredits hospitals and other service providers in communities across the country.
- CSC has a mental health service delivery model to ensure essential mental health care services match the needs of the offender population.
- Mental health services are provided along a continuum of care, and individuals have access to mental health care provided by qualified health care professionals, based on an individualized assessment of their needs.
- Mental health awareness training is also offered to institutional staff.

1.10 Overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples

Proposed Response

- The overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system and correctional institutions is a reflection of the systemic disparities that all levels of government must work to fix.
- We share the concerns about the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in federal institutions and have taken actions to address systemic factors that have contributed to the disproportion, which includes:
 - Appointing a Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections.
 - Creating Indigenous Interventions Centres to support Indigenous offenders, from the commencement of their sentence.
 - Streamlining the Section 84 release process to remove barriers to early release to Indigenous communities.
 - Making efforts to eliminate barriers to optimize the full use of existing Section 81 Agreements, while expanding the number of offenders benefiting from them.
 - Implementing reintegration initiatives that support Indigenous offenders as they transition to a life in the community, including project funding for Indigenous organizations delivering trauma and life skills interventions.
 - Implementing the Indigenous Offender Employment Initiative in Prairie, Ontario and Pacific regions.
 - Having culturally relevant correctional programming for Indigenous offenders and Inuit men offenders as well as training for staff.
 - Supporting a culturally appropriate and Indigenous-informed security classification process, in partnership with universities and Indigenous communities.
- Work is ongoing to develop a culturally appropriate and Indigenous-informed security classification process, in partnership with universities and Indigenous communities.

1.11 Implementation of Section 81 Releases (Healing Lodges)

Proposed Response

- Addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous people within the criminal justice system is part of building a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous people, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.
- CSC, while working collaboratively with Indigenous communities, Elders and Indigenous advisory boards is committed to supporting the rehabilitation and safe reintegration of Indigenous offenders into their communities.
- Healing Lodges promote healing through an Indigenous lens, guided by an Elder using traditional cultural practices, teaching and ceremonies.
- Under section 81 of the CCRA, we have been able to collaborate with Indigenous community organizations who participate in the care of Indigenous offenders outside of traditional correctional settings. Using traditional teaching and culturally relevant programming, offenders are supported in their successful reintegration into their communities.

1.12 Sexual Coercion and Violence

Proposed Response

- CSC has a zero-tolerance approach for sexual coercion and violence of any kind in any of our institutions.
- All incidents of sexual assaults and/or allegations of sexual assault must be reported.
- Institutional management has an obligation to notify the police immediately regarding any sexual assault or an allegation of sexual assault.
- CSC is working to enhance awareness and training with all employees working with inmates and has taken a number of actions to address this important issue and provide the necessary supports to inmates in its care and custody.
- CSC is guided by Commissioner's Directive 574 - Sexual Coercion and Violence, which establishes a framework to prevent, identify, respond to, investigate and monitor incidents of sexual assault and/or allegations of sexual assault towards offenders in federal custody. Additionally, related guidelines such as GL 800-11 – Health Care Response to Sexual Assaults of Offenders have also been promulgated.
- These policies provide direction for responding to alleged sexual assaults in a manner that ensures the victim's needs are prioritized and support and healthcare is provided effectively.
- CSC's monitoring of these incidents, as well as the results of the Public Safety-led national prevalence study, will help inform the development of evidence-based strategies to better work towards the prevention of sexual coercion and violence, especially for those who may be more vulnerable.

1.13 Dangerous Offenders

Proposed Response

- The designation of a Dangerous Offender is determined by the courts.
- CSC administers these determinate or indeterminate sentences in the same manner as all federal sentences handed down by the courts.
- The Dangerous Offender designation provides an additional measure of public safety as it alerts the staff of CSC, as well as the PBC, that the offender belongs in a high-risk category.
- When the court imposes an indeterminate sentence on a Dangerous Offender, the offender will be under the jurisdiction of CSC for the rest of the offender's life.
- CSC regularly assesses all offenders including dangerous offenders, to ensure that they continue to be placed at the appropriate security level.
- The transfer of an offender to a lower security level depends on their progress against the objectives of their correctional plan, the results of the Security Reclassification Scale and a thorough assessment of the offender's risk to escape, risk to the public in the event of an escape, and their institutional adjustment, that is, the degree of supervision and control they require within the institution.

Escapes

- Appropriate mitigation strategies are in place to ensure that risks to institutions and communities are properly managed.
- In the past 10 years, there have been 2 escapes by inmates designated as Dangerous Offenders. Both were recaptured: 1 recapture occurred within less than 24 hours and the other was recaptured within 1 week.

1.14 Electronic Monitoring

Proposed Response

- Ensuring the safety and security of our communities is a top priority for CSC and electronic monitoring contributes to ensuring the safe transition and management of offenders.
- CSC requires that some offenders wear an electronic monitoring device to monitor certain special conditions while in the community.
- It is a tool currently available and adopted by parole officers in all regions of the country to monitor certain higher-risk offenders.
- It is important to note that electronic monitoring is not a stand-alone tool intended to replace traditional means of supervising offenders on release.
- Rather, it is an additional tool available to community parole officers that works in tandem with other supervision methods that supervise offenders and keep our communities safe.
- The purpose of electronic monitoring is to monitor a geographical special condition. Electronic monitoring will not be imposed as a condition; rather it is a supervision tool that can monitor a condition.
- Depending on the releasing authority, the geographical special condition must be imposed by either the PBC or the Institutional Head.

1.15 Gender Diverse Offenders

Proposed Response

- CSC is committed to ensuring that gender diverse offenders are given the same protections, dignity and rights as other offenders, consistent with the Canadian Human Rights Act.
- We provide education, awareness and guidance to staff and offenders in an effort to ensure that the health, safety and dignity of everyone is respected at all times.
- In May 2022, following extensive consultations, CSC issued CD 100, Gender Diverse Offenders, which defines the roles and responsibilities of employees and decision makers regarding the custody, care, and supervision of gender diverse offenders.
- Requests for gender-related accommodation measures are offender-driven and ensures that offenders are involved in the development and review of their accommodation measures throughout their sentence, as needed.
- CSC will assess the implementation of this policy, including feedback from stakeholders, to incorporate lessons learned and best practices.

1.16 Strip Searches and Body Scanners

Proposed Response

- CSC takes seriously its obligations to provide safe, secure, and humane treatment while assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens.
- CSC recognizes that many offenders have experienced trauma, including sexual abuse, in their lives which is why strip-searching is limited only to those situations whereby it is necessary to maintain the safety of inmates and staff and the security of the institution.
- When used, it is conducted in a discreet, humane, and a gender-responsive and trauma-informed manner. To that effect, strip searches are conducted in a private area, out of sight of others, by a staff member of the same sex and in the presence of a witness. This witness will also be of the same sex as the individual being searched.
- If the inmate has identified gender-related needs, the strip search will be done in accordance with their individualized protocol.
- In recent years, CSC has increased alternatives to strip-searching, when feasible, to continue working to detect and interdict contraband and unauthorized items.
- For example, in 2019, CSC received legislative authorization to use body scanners, and the regulatory framework for this was introduced in October 2024.
- Currently there are 2 institutions that are using body scanners to detect contraband.
- It is anticipated that strip searches will decrease as more body scanners become available at institutions across the country.

1.17 Dry Cells and Body Scanners

Proposed Response

- The Government of Canada remains committed to keeping contraband out of federal institutions to ensure a safe and secure environment for staff, inmates, and visitors.
- Detecting, intercepting and seizing contraband contributes to the prevention of overdoses and works towards reducing violence, which are not conducive to rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Dry cells are used as a last resort when there are reasonable grounds to believe an inmate has ingested contraband or is carrying contraband in their digestive system.
- Amendments were passed by Parliament that addressed the Court's decision to ensure that the use of these cells comply with the Charter.
- CSC is enhancing its reporting mechanisms and continues to ensure adequate provisions are provided to inmates in these cells and gives significant consideration to their mental and physical well-being.
- CSC continues to explore new technologies to detect the presence of contraband.
- In July 2022, body scanners were deployed at Edmonton Institution for Women and Bath Institution as part of a pilot program to further supplement current contraband detection methods. CSC is now engaged in the procurement process for body scanners to be deployed to other sites throughout the country.

1.18 Structured Intervention Units

Proposed Response

- Structured Intervention Unit (SIUs) are part of a historic transformation of the federal correctional system that is fundamentally different from the previous model.
- An inmate's transfer to an SIU is not about punishment or causing harm. SIUs allow CSC to separate inmates who cannot be managed within a mainstream inmate population.
- An inmate can be transferred to an SIU if they are a threat to any person or the security of the institution, their safety is in jeopardy or their stay in the mainstream inmate population would interfere with an investigation, and where no reasonable alternative to the transfer to the SIU exists.
- SIUs are meant as a temporary measure with the goal to return inmates to a mainstream inmate population as soon as possible. They are used as a last resort.
- In an SIU, inmates continue to have access to rehabilitative interventions, cultural/spiritual services and health care.
- In accordance with the CCRA, inmates in an SIU are provided with opportunities to be out of their cells for a minimum of 4 hours daily, and to interact with others for a minimum of 2 hours each day.

1.19 Brazeau, Reddock and Gallone Administrative Segregation

Proposed Response

- CSC remains committed to meeting its legal obligations.
- 3 certified class actions, known as Brazeau, Reddock, and Gallone (now Diggs due to a change in class representative in Quebec), challenged the use of administrative segregation in federal correctional institutions.
- The use of administrative segregation was abolished in November 2019 in federal correctional facilities in Canada.
- The Court awarded damages for diagnosed seriously mentally ill (SMI) offenders who were placed in administrative segregation, and to non-SMI offenders placed in administrative segregation for more than 15 consecutive days.
- We have been working with the Court-appointed external claims administrator and class counsel to ensure the Protocol is implemented as outlined by the Court, including the distribution of damages awards to eligible claimants.

1.20 Victim Services and Notifications

Proposed Response

- The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that victims and survivors of crime, and their families, are treated with fairness and respect, and that their rights are appropriately considered at all stages of the criminal justice process.
- CSC is mandated to provide relevant, timely and accurate information to victims of federal offenders so they can have an effective voice in the federal corrections and conditional release process.
- As part of its commitment to providing the best possible services to registered victims, CSC engages in ongoing consultations with victims, stakeholders and criminal justice partners to gain greater awareness of victims' needs.
- In 2023 to 2024, CSC provided services to approximately 8,970 registered victims. During this period, the CSC's Victim Services Officers were involved in tens of thousands of contacts with registered victims.

1.21 Respect in the Workplace / Harassment

Proposed Response

- CSC is focused on ensuring that its institutions provide a safe, respectful and secure environment, conducive to inmate rehabilitation, staff safety and the protection of the public.
- As part of this we created an Office of the Ombuds to provide a safe environment for all employees to raise an issue informally and confidentially while getting assistance and exploring options to resolve their concerns.
- Additionally, CSC has developed a Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Program and implemented mandatory training for all employees.
- As of January 1, 2021, new Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations came into effect. As a result, CSC has developed its own policy in consultation with union partners via the National Health and Safety Policy Committee forum. Strong privacy protections are included within the policy to ensure complaints are treated confidentially.
- CSC has also developed a Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Program, which includes a violence and harassment workplace assessment tool used to identify risk factors within the workplace and preventive measures associated with those factors, as well as mandatory training for all employees and managers.
- CSC continues to work with staff and union representatives to address any issues related to Workplace Harassment and Violence. CSC has also added robust expectations to performance agreements for executives, managers, and supervisors on effectively managing harassment, intimidation, and bullying.
- This supports our commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and ensuring that issues related to workplace harassment and violence are addressed in a consistent manner.
- CSC also created the first National Working Group for Women Employees to identify the barriers faced by women and has developed an action plan to address the challenges identified.
- We have also undertaken an audit of our organizational culture to make meaningful progress and sustain positive change to ensure that all employees have a respectful and safe work environment.

1.22 Employment and Employability Skills Programs

Proposed Response

- One of the ways that CSC is working to enhance public safety is by providing offenders with the employment experience and skills they need to become productive, law-abiding citizens and skilled workers when they return to the community.
- Research clearly demonstrates that offenders who are employed in the community are less likely to re-offend or return to federal custody.
- To that effect, employability related training is available at all federal institutions, in addition to CORCAN-operated on-the-job training sites at 36 CSC institutions across the country and in 7 community-based operations.
- Additionally, CSC provides apprenticeship opportunities to offenders through certain on-the-job training assignments in institutions, as well as during transitional employment offered through the CORCAN Community Industry program.
- In 2023 to 2024, 14,730 offenders had an active employment assignment for at least 1 day, including 2,628 offenders participating in CORCAN employment assignments.
- In fiscal year 2023 to 2024, there were 22,132 certificates earned, broken down as follows: 13,856 certificates for non-Indigenous men offenders; 1,458 for non-Indigenous women offenders; 5,552 for Indigenous men; and 1,266 for Indigenous women.
- Such interventions result in both technical and transferable skills that are in line with the Canadian labour market.

1.23 Education Programs in CSC Institutions

Proposed Response

- CSC recognizes the benefits that education provides to offenders to help them become law-abiding citizens.
- Education programs reduces the risk of reoffending and increases the potential for successful reintegration, particularly for moderate and high-risk offenders.
- This is achieved through the provision of provincially accredited or certified education programs aligning with labour market employment standards.
- These programs assist offenders in acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to deal more effectively with daily problems encountered in the community, as well as to participate meaningfully in CSC's correctional, employment and social programs.
- CSC is modernizing its education programs to digital education and computer-based learning. For example, the Digital Education Project (DEP) pilot allows offenders to gain foundational computer skills while upgrading their education and increasing their literacy and is currently available in all regions.
- Through the pilot, and partnerships with colleges and organizations, CSC has increased access and availability of post-secondary opportunities for offenders. For example, post-secondary micro-credential courses are available and lead to industry recognized certifications.