



NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

Evaluation Report
For The National Parole Board's
Effective Corrections And
Citizen Engagement Initiatives
2000-2003

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National Parole Board



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List of acronyms used in this document

CAH	Community assisted hearing
CCRA	Corrections and Conditional Release Act
CRIMS	Conditional Release Information Management System
CRS	Conditional Release System
CSC	Correctional Service Canada
Department	Department of the Solicitor General Canada
EAH	Elder assisted hearing
ECCE	Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement
Ministry	Ministry of the Solicitor General Canada
NLO	Native Liaison Officer
NO	National Office
NPB	National Parole Board
OMS	Offender Management System
TB	Treasury Board

Note to readers regarding terminology:

For the purposes of simplicity in this document the term:

Elder assisted hearing (EAH) - refers to NPB's culturally sensitive hearing approaches for Aboriginal offenders, which are held within the institutions.

Board Elder - refers to Elders or Aboriginal advisors who provide advice or assistance to NPB members on Aboriginal culture and traditions during EAHs.

Aboriginal - refers to First Nations, Inuit and Métis persons.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Public safety is the mandate of the Ministry of the Solicitor General. In support of this, the Ministry has identified four strategic priorities: organized crime, effective corrections, integrated justice and citizen engagement. This evaluation relates to the specific initiatives concerning effective corrections and citizen engagement.

Effective Corrections is about distinguishing between offenders who need to be separated from society from those who would be better managed in the community. The two key areas of focus for the Ministry are Aboriginal corrections and community corrections infrastructure.

The disproportionate number of Aboriginal people in prison is a national tragedy. Aboriginal Canadians are incarcerated at 8 times the rate of non-Aboriginal Canadians nationally, and in some jurisdictions (e.g. Saskatchewan) at 35 times the rate. In 2002/03, Aboriginal offenders represent 15.7% of the federal offender population while they represent 3.3% of the total Canadian population. This situation will become more critical in the next few years as the emerging Aboriginal baby boom accelerates. Aboriginal offenders also serve a greater proportion of their sentences in prison and are incarcerated at higher security level. Investment in strategies for Aboriginal community based-corrections is urgently needed to ensure the situation does not worsen dramatically, as expected, over the next decade.

The majority of inmates serve sentences of fixed duration and return to their community. Incarceration must be supported by meaningful measures for safe and timely reintegration. Gradual, supervised and supported release to the community is the best way to contribute to public safety. Efforts in this direction are already showing results but further progress will not be possible without investment of new resources in community-based reintegration.

With respect to citizen engagement, over the past decade all parts of the criminal justice system have experienced declines in public confidence, despite the decreasing crime rate. Lack of information, pervasive myths, the influence of sensational media coverage, and the perception that the system is not responsive to the people's needs, are largely responsible. The understanding and confidence of Canadians in the criminal justice system must be raised by better communication and engaging citizens to a greater extent in public discussions on ways to improve it.

To respond to these challenges the Ministry and its key partners have developed a strategic framework that supports the government's public safety framework for the 21st century. The framework focuses on the development and implementation of appropriate initiatives and activities to advance Aboriginal corrections, community corrections and public education and citizen engagement.



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Budget 2000 accorded \$45M over five years for *A Strategy to Advance Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement* (ECCE). The funding was divided between three partners, namely the Department of the Solicitor General Canada (Department) (\$8.5M), the Correctional Service Canada (CSC) (\$30.0M) and the National Parole Board (NPB) (\$6.5M).

1.1 Overview of the Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement Initiatives

Aboriginal Corrections

Effective Corrections initiatives focus on measures to enhance the safe reintegration of offenders, particularly Aboriginal offenders and other high need groups. Improved programs and treatment for offenders in institutions and in the community, enhanced risk assessment tools and training to support quality decisions on the timing and conditions for the release of offenders to the community will continue to be priorities.

The need for alternative justice strategies for Aboriginal offenders is particularly acute. Through the public safety framework, the Ministry continues to build on existing work with Aboriginal communities to encourage a partnership approach in the development of innovative, community-based approaches for offender healing and reintegration as well as to expand the use of elder-assisted and community-assisted parole hearings.

The five-year funding, which began in 2000, is being used to enhance policy, risk assessment tools and training related to the needs of Aboriginal offenders, and to expand the use of Elder-assisted and community-assisted parole hearings. Funding was also allocated to implement parole hearing models that are culturally sensitive to offenders from the Nunavut Territory. Another portion of the funding was allotted to enhance our capacity for outreach to Aboriginal communities to strengthen their involvement in the reintegration process for Aboriginal offenders.

Community Corrections

Consistent with the Government's commitment to enhancing public protection, NPB has developed plans to strengthen its capacity for quality policy development, training and conditional release decision making for offenders with histories of violence. The Board also intends to develop similar plans to address the growing cultural diversity of the federal offender population and the communities to which they would return. Funding also allows the Board to take measures to improve case preparation, information for parole decision-making and processes, and to enhance its capacity to carry out conditional release reviews.



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Citizen Engagement

Many factors contribute to low public confidence in parole boards and in conditional release. Fear of crime and concerns for safety have an impact. Lack of information also plays a role, as does the growing perception among Canadians that they have no influence, no voice in decisions that affect their communities and their families.

To address these challenges, the Board has developed a strategy to engage citizens, to provide timely information about parole, to provide opportunities for Canadians to participate in debating important issues and to build partnerships with the community for the safe reintegration of offenders.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES

The evaluation of the Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement Initiatives is non-discretionary. When Treasury Board (TB) approved funding in 2000, it directed the Departments involved to submit a report to the Secretary of the Treasury Board no later than June 30, 2004 detailing the results of the Effective Corrections and the Citizen Engagement Initiatives. TB also noted that the need for ongoing funding would be assessed in terms of their anticipated long-term benefits for corrections and conditional release as demonstrated by the evaluation of results for the ECCE Initiatives.

The three main purposes of the NPB's ECCE evaluation are:

1. To identify key activities carried-out by the NPB in support of Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement and assess their impacts and effects;
2. To identify expenditures on these key activities and compare these expenditures with funding approved for Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement, and;
3. To assess the implications for the NPB's conditional release program of a discontinuation of investment in Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement.

2.1 Methodology

This evaluation, formative in nature, looked at the strengths and weaknesses in the NPB's effective corrections and citizen engagement efforts with a view to measuring achievements to date and identifying areas of improvement. This evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect on the NPB's past achievements and to make decisions on future courses of action. A number of evaluation methodologies and tools were used to conduct the evaluation. Every effort was made to secure several lines of evidence to identify and analyse findings and reach conclusions. The evaluation methodologies include:



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- Program/Administrative File Review (policies, processes, systems, risk assessment training tools, training, previous reports, etc);
- Offenders' Case File Review ;
- Key informant interviews and focus groups across Canada. The evaluation team interviewed 47 Board members, 90 NPB staff, 35 CSC Staff, 40 Elders, Aboriginal Advisors and Native Liaison Officers, 13 community representatives and 96 Aboriginal offenders: 67 were First Nations, 9 were Métis and 20 were Inuit. One Caucasian parolee who had benefited from an Elder Assisted hearing was also interviewed.
- The evaluation team members observed a total of 20 hearings across Canada. Although the great majority were Elder assisted hearings, the team members also attended a few regular hearings during visits to the regions.
- Financial analysis of expenditures related to the ECCE initiatives;
- Analysis of statistical information (main sources CRIMS, OMS);
- Review of communication material for the public.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The findings from this evaluation are linked to the specific objectives of the three components of the ECCE initiatives. They are summarized below.

3.1 ABORIGINAL CORRECTIONS

The NPB has made the following commitments for the Aboriginal corrections component of the ECCE initiatives:

- To enhance its policies, risk assessment tools and training;
- To expand the use of Elder Assisted Hearings (EAH);
- To expand the use of Community Assisted Hearings (CAH);
- To implement culturally appropriate hearing models for offenders from the Nunavut Territory; and
- To enhance its capacity for community liaison and Aboriginal community outreach.

3.1.1 Commitment: *To enhance NPB policies, risk assessment tools and training:*

Policies

In 2000, NPB's Policy Section, on the recommendation of the Aboriginal Circle¹, and with the assistance of a sub-committee of the Aboriginal Circle, undertook a review of its policies. This extensive exercise was to review the policy from an Aboriginal perspective and to incorporate the principles of the Supreme Court's *Gladue* decision into its assessments for release decision-making. As a result of this review, three of the key chapters of the Board's policies have so far been modified and received the Executive Committee's approval in December 2003. The sections

¹ The Aboriginal Circle was formed and approved by the Executive Committee of the National Parole Board in 1999. It is composed of Aboriginal Board members and staff who meet on an annual basis to discuss Aboriginal issues and concerns in relation to the work of the NPB.



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which have been re-written are, Section 1.2 pertaining to Conditional Release Decision-Making, Section 2.1 relating to the Assessment for Pre-Release Decisions: Decision-Making Criteria and Process and, Section 9.2.1 relating to Hearings for Aboriginal Offenders. The NPB will pursue the review of its policy manual and bring changes where deemed necessary and in keeping with the direction established in the first three chapters that were re-written.

The revised policies reflect more appropriately the special circumstances of Aboriginal offenders and provide the Board with more information as it relates to assessment for pre-release decision-making. The *Gladue* principles were incorporated into Section 2.1 -*Assessment for Pre-Release Decisions: Decision-Making Criteria and Process*, on the recommendation of our Legal services and approved by the Executive Committee. Section 9.2.1 - was rewritten to provide a national perspective and purpose for our hearings with Aboriginal offenders, as well as to more effectively identify a broader definition for the term Aboriginal to include First Nations, Métis and Inuit. The new policy also provides the foundation/direction necessary for global compliance while allowing for regional specificity. This allows each region to develop and adopt hearing approaches that will provide a culturally appropriate hearing environment for Aboriginal offenders.

Now that sections of the Board's policies have been re-written, the next course of action will involve providing Board members with training on how to use the new policy when carrying out their pre-release decision-making responsibilities in the cases of Aboriginal offenders.

Risk Assessment Tools:

In 2000-01, NPB contracted with Myaat Wteeh Consulting to research and situate the National Parole Board's risk assessment process used in decision making, into a culturally sensitive framework. The framework was to become a training tool that would help the Board members gain a better understanding of the Aboriginal worldview, as well as a better understanding of the offender as an Aboriginal person. In its report, the consulting firm provided a detailed explanation of a Traditional Aboriginal Framework, a presentation of the historical factors that have affected Aboriginal philosophy and their impact on the criminal behaviour of Aboriginal offenders. The report outlined preliminary research and findings and identified various concerns and issues that needed to be addressed. In this initial report, the consulting firm concluded that further research and development in different areas were necessary prior to implementing the Traditional Aboriginal Framework.

In 2001-02, NPB again contracted with Myaat Wteeh Consulting to further research and consult across the country to develop a final enhanced training framework for risk assessment in a traditional Aboriginal way. This research built on the initial review of this issue and was the basis for consultation across all regions. When the report was presented, it was determined that NPB was not ready at this stage to implement an Aboriginal Risk Assessment Framework. As a first step, the NPB had to rework its policies from an Aboriginal perspective and integrate the principles of the *Gladue* decision. As mentioned under the heading *Policy*, this course of action



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has now been completed. The next logical step will consist of looking into adjusting and providing appropriate training. Although the Board's commitment to develop a culturally sensitive framework as a Risk Assessment Training Tool is still very present, NPB recognizes that much work remains to be done before implementing such a tool and that it should move steadily but cautiously in this direction.

Training:

The Pacific and Prairie regions, which have the largest Aboriginal offender population, have placed considerable emphasis on training/workshops and other activities in relation to First Nations traditions, culture and issues. The training included cultural awareness and specialized sessions on the unique needs and circumstances of Aboriginal offenders. Both regions have also provided information sessions on the services and programs for Aboriginal offenders that are offered in the institutions as well as in the community. Both staff and Board members have also been invited to participate in the various activities organized by the Board each year during Aboriginal Awareness Week.

Since 2000, the Pacific region has integrated West Coast traditions (Coast Salish) into its training sessions as several Aboriginal offenders in that region are of that culture. In the past, the awareness sessions were based solely on Prairie Indian traditions.

The great majority of staff and Board members from these two regions have found Aboriginal awareness sessions most useful in their work and they have stressed the need for follow-up training in this area. The NPB Elders' participation as resources during training sessions was also very much valued and appreciated by those who attended the sessions. Most Board members and staff felt that the Elders' teachings were very important and that their involvement in training should continue. Both regions have also held immersion-style training sessions in Aboriginal communities. Most people, who had the opportunity to attend these sessions and to participate in Aboriginal ceremonies, felt that these sessions were of great value as they helped them enhance their understanding of Aboriginal spirituality, culture and traditions. Several Board Members indicated that these sessions were particularly useful in that they provided them with a better appreciation of the importance of the ceremonies and the impact they can have on the offenders who partake in them. They felt that it was particularly important to continue this form of training especially in view of the turnover of Board members and staff. It was also felt that training should be geared to the level of knowledge and/or experience of the participants.

Whereas, the western regions have been involved in Elder Assisted Hearings for a long period of time (since 1992 for the Prairie region and 1997 for the Pacific region), it has been a relatively recent experience for the Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic regions. These last three regions only started implementing Aboriginal hearings in 2000. Therefore, the training provided so far in these regions has been more limited than that which has been provided in the West.



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In both the Ontario and Quebec regions, most of the Board Members and staff felt that the training received in their respective regions had been useful and was a good starting point. However, several people indicated that more awareness sessions were necessary in order to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal culture, traditions and spirituality and to feel comfortable in doing their work. They also expressed the need for more opportunities to meet with Elders or Cultural Advisors, more information sessions on the current realities of the Aboriginal communities in their respective regions as well as more knowledge on the various Aboriginal Nations, i.e. Mohawk, Algonquin, Huron-Wendat, etc.

In addition to the awareness training sessions received in their own regions, two Board members from the Ontario region as well as two Board members and a staff member from the Quebec region attended an Aboriginal Immersion Training Sessions offered in the West. They found these sessions to be very effective and enlightening. They expressed the view, however, that these types of sessions would be even more useful to them if they were to take place in their respective regions. This would allow more Board members and staff to attend the sessions, which would more appropriately reflect the realities of the Aboriginal peoples of their regions.

The Atlantic region has provided significant Aboriginal Awareness Training (First Nations and Inuit), as well as sessions in Aboriginal communities. The Board members and staff interviewed felt that the training received had been adequate and effective, while stressing the importance that it be continued.

An issue, which has been raised across most regions is that although every effort is being made to ensure that training is provided to Board members, the same is not so for staff members. Although staff may be invited to attend Board member Aboriginal awareness sessions, very few have the opportunity to do so. NPB budget restraints or workload issues are cited as reasons that prevent staff members from attending training sessions. It is equally important that staff members be permitted to participate in these sessions, especially for those whose duties have a direct link with Aboriginal issues, i.e. Regional Communications Officers, hearing officers and case review officers.

While Aboriginal awareness sessions have primarily focussed on First Nations culture and traditions, there is a commitment on the part of the Board to be sensitive and responsive to the culture and traditions of the Inuit and the Métis offender populations as well.

On March 31, 2003, there were 939 Métis offenders serving a federal sentence. The Prairie region accounted for 61% of this offender population. The second largest Métis offender population (19%) was in the Pacific region. Although some awareness/information sessions on the Métis culture and traditions have taken place in these regions, follow-up sessions are required.

In 2002/03, the Quebec region had 15% of the Métis offender population, the Ontario region had 3% and the Atlantic region had 2%. These three regions have yet to develop and provide training on this Aboriginal group.



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With respect to the Inuit offender population, as of March 31, 2003, there were 116 Inuit offenders serving federal sentences across the country. Four (3%) are under sentence in the Pacific region, 32 (28%) in the Prairie region, 42 (36%) in the Ontario region, 20 (17%) in the Quebec region and 18 (16%) in Atlantic region.

Since 2000, no Inuit awareness or information sessions have taken place in the Pacific region.

The Prairie region has provided some awareness training activities pertaining to the Inuit culture and issues since 2000. However, those interviewed felt that further training was much needed and should be further developed. Budget constraints were identified as an obstacle in the development of this initiative.

Most of the Ontario region's Board members and staff interviewed during this evaluation felt that the training provided with respect to the Inuit culture, traditions and other issues was lacking. A few Board members indicated that they had attended information sessions regarding Inuit issues, however, others said they had not had such opportunities. In June 2002 and March 2003, some Ontario Board Members and staff travelled to Iqaluit and Igloolik, Nunavut to participate in workshops and attend the Nunavut Federal Council meeting. Although more activities in the North were to take place in the year 2003, they were cancelled as a result of budget restrictions.

The Quebec region has not provided any Inuit awareness training/information sessions since the beginning of the ECCE initiatives.

The Atlantic region has provided considerable awareness information/training sessions on Inuit culture. Some Board members and staff also had the opportunity in 2002 to visit Inuit communities in Labrador.

All regions across the Board will continue in their efforts to identify the issues and cultures of Métis and Inuit offenders. They will also ensure that appropriate awareness training is developed and provided to both Board Members and staff across the Board.

Aboriginal awareness training is an area that has been identified by both the Board members and staff of NPB across all regions as requiring ongoing attention and enhancement. All regions will continue to develop and refine their Aboriginal awareness training/information sessions, and adjust their approach as need be.

3.1.2 Commitment: *To expand the use of Elder Assisted Hearings (EAH)*

This alternative hearing approach was first introduced by the Board to ensure that conditional release hearings were sensitive to the cultural values and traditions of First Nations offenders. These hearings are based on First Nations traditions and are held in a circle without any physical barrier (table). An Elder or Aboriginal Advisor usually opens the hearing by saying a prayer and performing the required rituals such as, smudging. During these hearings, the Elder also



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provides Board members with information about Aboriginal cultures, experiences and traditions, and, when possible, the specific cultures and traditions of the Aboriginal population to which the offender belongs or may return. The Elder may also offer wisdom and guidance to the offender. At the end of the hearing, the Elder usually performs the closing prayer. In these hearings, community members, who wish to provide support to the offender, may also be invited to be part of the Circle. All participants are given the opportunity to speak.

Each region developed their own hearing models following consultations with First Nations' communities of their region. This was done in order to gain an understanding of the cultural mores within the diverse First Nations communities as a means of ensuring that the hearing model would appropriately reflect these cultures. The hearing models were developed and implemented across Canada at different times and, although their purposes are the same, their format vary from region to region and the models also bear different names in the different regions.

For instance, the Pacific and Prairie regions refer to these hearings as *Elder Assisted Hearings*. Both regions have chosen to contract with community Elders. These Elders, in addition to being present during the hearing, may also be present during the Board members' deliberation period.

The Atlantic and Quebec regions both use similar models. The Atlantic region uses the term *Aboriginal hearings* to define this type of hearing and, the Quebec region has chosen the term *Audiences adaptées aux Autochtones*. They have both chosen to use CSC's institutional Elders as a result of their consultations with First Nations communities, offenders, Native Liaison Officers and Elders. It was felt that the Institutional Elders would also be able to provide information specifically relating to individual offenders because they know and work with them. The Elders are responsible for conducting the prayers and other rituals as well as providing advice on Aboriginal culture and traditions to the Board members during the hearing. In these regions, however, the CSC Elder is not present during the Board members' deliberations.

In the Ontario region, these hearings are referred to as *Circle Hearings*. The region has chosen to contract with either community Elders or Aboriginal persons who, although not considered Elders, are respected by their community and knowledgeable about Aboriginal cultures and traditions. These individuals are referred to as *Aboriginal Advisors* and, may advise the Board during the hearing as well as be present during the deliberations.

As mentioned earlier, Elder Assisted hearings were implemented at different times across the country and, as a result, their evolution and enhancement have occurred at different paces.

For instance, in the Pacific region, this form of hearing was introduced in 1997. Since 2000, this region has integrated the West Coast traditions of the Coast Salish people and those First Nations who practice the Big House (Long House/Smoke House) traditions to its hearing process to accommodate the First Nations offenders of those groups. Therefore, as often as possible, the Board now relies on a Coast Salish Elder for advice during the hearings involving offenders of West Coast traditions. Prior to 2000, the Board used Prairies traditions only.



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Since 2000, the number of Elder Assisted Hearings has increased in the Pacific region. In 2002/03, 38% of all hearings for Aboriginal offenders were assisted, compared to 29% in the year preceding the ECCE initiatives.

The Prairie region has, by far, the largest federal Aboriginal offender population in Canada. This region was the first to develop and implement Elder Assisted Hearings. The format was adopted in 1992, and has evolved significantly since that time. The Prairies' model served as the basis for the development of the other regions' models.

Since 2000, the Prairie region has modified its approach by removing the table and conducting the hearings in a Circle. Elders have also been given a more active role during the hearing. In addition to the role mentioned earlier, the Elders also explain the hearing process to all participants and observers, i.e. the role of the Elder, the role of the Board Members and the Circle protocol that will be followed. Their role is also described as facilitating and protecting the sanctity of the Circle. For instance, they intervene to address circumstances or inappropriate (disrespectful) behaviour that disrupt the Circle.

In 2002/03, 49% of all hearings for Aboriginal offenders in the Prairie region were Elder assisted, compared to 30% in the year preceding the ECCE initiatives.

The Atlantic, Quebec and Ontario regions implemented their cultural hearings in the year 2000. It is therefore, a relatively recent process for these three regions and, as of now, no significant modifications have been brought to the models adopted. These regions, like the Pacific and Prairie regions, are committed to openness and will modify their respective models if issues of concern are identified and require that the approach be altered.

In the Ontario region, Circle Hearings increased to 29% in 2002/03 from 7% in 2000/01, when they first started.

In the Atlantic region, Aboriginal Assisted Hearings increased to 23% in 2002/03 from 2% 2000/01, when they first started.

In the Quebec region, the Aboriginal Assisted hearings increased to 18% in 2002/03 from 4% in 2000/01, when they first started.

As previously indicated, the hearing models referred to above are based on First Nations traditions and culture. However, the Board is mindful that the needs and circumstances of the offenders of the two other Aboriginal groups in Canada, i.e. the Métis and the Inuit people, are equally as important and must be considered even if these two offender populations are considerably smaller.



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Only a few Métis offenders presented themselves for the interviews during this evaluation exercise. They said that they identified with the teachings of the First Nations and were comfortable using the existing Elder Assisted Hearing model although, those from the Prairie and Pacific regions said that they would like to have access to Métis Elders.

With respect to the Inuit offenders, to date, the Atlantic region is the only one that has developed a hearing approach to specifically accommodate these offenders. The model was implemented in 2002, after consulting with Inuit communities in Labrador as well as with an Inuk Liaison officer from CSC and Inuit offenders. These hearings are also held in a circle format. They start and end with a prayer or hymn being performed by an Inuk Elder and sometimes ceremonial objects are used such as, a candle or a rock. The Inuit offenders appear satisfied with this model. Since its implementation, two such hearings have taken place in the Atlantic region.

Although all other regions have made efforts to be sensitive to Inuit offenders and have tried to accommodate their needs as much as possible during their hearings, they have not yet developed a specific approach for this population. The regions will continue consultations with the Inuit people with a view to developing and implementing a model that will be suitable to Inuit offenders.

It should also be noted that the Atlantic and Prairies regions also have jurisdiction over offenders who are serving provincial terms of incarceration. Although the Atlantic region has offered Aboriginal Assisted hearings to Aboriginal offenders under provincial jurisdiction, none have requested it. The Prairies region, on the other hand, does not have the resources or the financial capacity to offer Elder Assisted hearings to this population.

Benefits of Elder Assisted Hearings:

Since the implementation of this alternative hearing approach, both the offenders and the Board have observed many benefits.

The majority of offenders interviewed across the country, who have used this process, have spoken very favourably about their experience. They provided comments to the effect that this type of hearing is much less stressful for them. They feel that the Board members are listening to them. Everyone appears to be on equal ground. The method of questioning used is not confrontational. There is a feeling of mutual respect between all participants. Because there are no physical barriers (table), the environment does not remind the Aboriginal offenders of their negative courtroom experiences. The offenders' respect for the Circle, the Elders and the calming atmosphere that they provide, make them feel more at ease and keep them honest and open as they speak from the heart. Some offenders who were not granted a release as a result of their hearing made another interesting comment. They felt that the decision was easier to accept as the comments made by the Elders and the Board members during those hearings made them feel supported and encouraged them to take positive steps to continue in their efforts towards an eventual release.



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Most of the Board members across the country, who have experienced these alternative styles of hearings, also commented favourably. The Board members feel that they have a better understanding of where the offender is coming from. The Aboriginal offenders are more open and honest as well as better disposed to share meaningful information with the Board members than they were through the regular hearing format. The Board members also very much appreciate the input provided by the Elders and community members who can speak during these hearings. Most feel that these hearings are conducive to a better decision-making process as the Board members receive better quality information, which helps them in their determination of the offender's risk to the public. Many of the Board members interviewed have indicated that they find these hearings to be a lot less confrontational and some have also found them to be a lot less stressful. Many of the Board members have commented to the effect that it has even affected the way in which they ask their questions during regular hearings, in that they are using a less confrontational approach.

The implementation of Elder Assisted Hearings has also had an effect on the parole grant rate. Statistical analysis shows that the grant rate is higher for Aboriginal offenders who have benefited from this type of hearing compared to those who had regular hearings. In fact, after the first three years of the ECCE initiatives, the day parole grant rate was 79% after an Elder assisted hearing, while it was 53% after a regular hearing. With regard to full parole, the grant rate was 32% after an Elder assisted hearing and 20% after a regular hearing. There has also been a significant increase in the grant rates when compared to the grant rates three years before the initiative. (See Appendix E)

This difference in grant rates can be attributed to a number of different factors. In many cases, offenders who request Elder assisted hearings have started on their healing path with the help of an Elder within the institution. In addition, they may have had the opportunity to follow correctional programming that has been adapted to their needs. Because of the positive impact these interventions have brought into their lives, these offenders are often committed to continue in that same direction while in the community, and, therefore, follow-up programs and Elder counselling become an integral part of their release plans. These positive elements, when combined with more openness during the hearing and a better sharing of information with Board members, greatly favour the grant of parole.

Since the grant rate is higher, the logical question that follows is to determine if these offenders do better in the community than those who had regular hearings. To answer this question would require much more in-depth research, as it is impossible to form a direct link between being paroled after an Elder assisted hearing and the success of the supervision period. There are a great number of different factors that must be taken into consideration prior to drawing any conclusions in this regard, such as, the criminal profile of the offender, the level of supervision in the community, as well as the level of support available in the community where the offender returns, to name only a few. There must also be a significant number of cases in order to be able to draw any valid conclusions. For the moment, it is too early to draw any conclusions in this regard.



3.1.3 Commitment: *NPB to expand the use of Community Assisted Hearings (CAH)*

These hearings are based on the restorative justice principles of returning balance to the community. The intent for CAH was to increase community involvement especially in situations where community members were directly involved in the supervision of the offender. They take place in the community as opposed to the institution and, they are done in a format chosen by the community and the offender, usually in a traditional circle format. The same Elders who assist the NPB at hearings held in the institutions facilitate the hearings held in the community.

Once the offender has initiated the process and the community has expressed a willingness to participate, under Section 84 of the *CCRA*, there is a great deal of preparatory work that must be done by CSC and NPB. CSC staff works with the offender to ensure that he is ready for the process. In most cases, the offender participates in one or more healing or sharing circles in the community prior to the CAH. At least one week prior to the hearing date, community members are invited to an information session in their community. CSC and NPB staff share information about CSC, NPB and the hearing process. NPB requires community members to have an understanding of the guidelines, regulations and policies of parole, focus of the hearing, as well as the expectations of the community regarding the supervision, unofficially in most cases, of the offender.

A very important consideration in the preparation for a CAH is the involvement of the victim(s). Because these hearings are seen, at least in part, as restorative justice approaches, many consider the inclusion of the victim in the CAH as an integral part of the process. In order to involve the victim in a meaningful way, the victim needs to be advised of the application for the CAH, informed of the nature of the process and provided with a safe method of participating. Victim participation is one of the most sensitive aspects with respect to CAH's. Victims have only participated in four of the eleven CAHs that have been held so far across Canada.

The CAH is a major undertaking for CSC, NPB, the offender and the community. The hearing can be a lengthy, intense and emotional process for all concerned, but in particular for the offender. Board members accustomed to completing several hearings in one day in an institution often have to travel considerable distances to complete one hearing in the community. Although the goal is to complete the CAH within two or three hours, the longest hearing took approximately eight hours. As many as 40 people have participated in a CAH as speakers.

Once again, the Prairie region has been the forerunner in the development of this approach. Since April 1997, this region has held 10 CAHs, in eight different Aboriginal communities. Five of these hearings have taken place since 2000. The feedback on all of them has been extremely positive.



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While the actual number of CAHs has not increased since the Effective Corrections Initiative was implemented, work has been done to review and document the process. Several people have suggested that CAHs are a natural progression or extension of Elder Assisted Hearings but this progression comes with a cost. As explained earlier, CAHs are a lot more complex than Elder Assisted Hearings. They require much more time to prepare and to hold as they involve more participants. They are therefore much more expensive to conduct than EAHs. However, they are perceived by all those who were involved in the process as being very beneficial to the community, the offender, the victim, the Board members and CSC staff. It is, therefore, viewed as a process that should be continued and expanded, although cautiously.

In 2002, the Prairie region sought and received Alternative Dispute Resolution funding from Justice Canada to conduct an evaluation of its Community Assisted Hearing approach. The report prepared as a result of this assessment, entitled "National Parole Board - Prairie Region Evaluation: Community Assisted Hearings, March 2002", offers an informative description of the steps and interfaces required in setting up and conducting CAHs. This document has been well received by other regions as it assists them in identifying the issues and in developing their own Community Assisted Hearing approaches.

The Prairie region has also developed *Guidelines for Community Assisted Hearings*. The final version was issued in May 2003.

The Atlantic region has also developed guidelines and recently implemented the CAH approach. Its first CAH was held in May 2003 in the Elsipogtog (Big Cove) First Nation community. Those who were involved in that first experience have described it as a "huge success". Although other opportunities of using this approach are being looked into, the Atlantic region is moving cautiously in that direction.

Since 2000, the Pacific region has undertaken considerable consultations and has tried to put the process into place but the few cases that were identified as possibilities fell through. This process is very costly and the lack of funding also makes it a difficult approach to implement.

The Ontario and Quebec regions have not yet developed this approach. This process must be developed in conjunction with Section 84 of the CCRA. In the Ontario and Quebec regions, CSC has only recently started to address Section 84. Therefore, consultations with Aboriginal communities are at a very early stage.

3.1.4 Commitment: NPB is to implement culturally appropriate hearing models for offenders from the Nunavut Territory.

The Ontario region has the decision-making responsibilities for federal offenders from Nunavut. On March 31, 2003, there were 42 Inuit offenders from Nunavut serving federal sentences. Most of them were incarcerated at Fenbrook Institution.



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No hearing model to accommodate the Nunavut offenders has yet been developed by the Ontario region.

Consultations with Inuit people and Nunavut communities are taking place, and the Ontario region is looking into the development of a model suitable for the Inuit offenders from Nunavut.

Nine Nunavut offenders at Fenbrook Institution accepted to be interviewed during the course of the evaluation. They stressed that the existing Circle hearing model was based on First Nations traditions, and was not adapted to their culture or tradition. Nevertheless, they feel that the circle hearing approach seems less intimidating than the regular format and, while they would prefer to use that format, they claim that their Parole Officers are telling them that the Circle hearing approach is restricted to First Nations offenders and, therefore, they cannot use it.

3.1.5 Commitment: NPB is to enhance its capacity for community liaison and Aboriginal community outreach.

The Pacific region provided information sessions in 2001-02 in Kelowna, Prince George and Victoria. People from the surrounding Aboriginal communities also attended. Board Members, Elders and staff members were involved in these activities. These sessions were perceived as being important as they were laying groundwork for offenders who would be returning to these communities. They also educated people on the role and responsibilities of the National Parole Board as well as offering support to communities and encouraging them to get involved. These activities also helped identify potential Board members and Elders. The Pacific region stressed that community people appreciated these sessions but have also voiced their frustrations at the lack of follow-up. Ongoing dialogue is necessary but resources and funds are not available. In addition to these activities, at least two immersion-style awareness sessions have been held in Aboriginal Communities since 2000.

The Prairie region has the largest Aboriginal offender population in Canada. For this reason, its contacts with Aboriginal communities have been ongoing for quite some time. For instance, this region implemented Community Assisted hearings in 1997. This initiative, in itself, has required considerable outreach to the communities that have been involved. Contacts with other communities who wish to be informed or involved in this process have also been taking place as much as resources and funding permit. The Regional Manager of the Aboriginal Unit mentioned that these contacts had been perceived as a very positive experience for these communities. Their past experiences with government have often been negative in that they felt that they were not being listened to. The communities contacted have often commented on how astonished they were that the NPB had come to their communities and were listening to them.

Since the beginning of the ECCE initiatives, the Prairie region has held two immersion style awareness sessions that took place in Aboriginal communities. More community outreach activities, especially with Aboriginal groups from the northern communities, are deemed to be very important and are scheduled to take place in the coming year, provided funding is available.



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Representatives of the NPB Quebec region have visited two Mohawk communities (Khanawake and Kanesatake). They also have regular contacts with the *Services parajudiciaires autochtones du Québec (SPAQ)* and with various Aboriginal community representatives through its Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

With respect to First Nations community outreach activities, the NPB Ontario Region said it relies on the advice and guidance of CSC's Regional Administrator of Aboriginal issues. That person was also the one who helped this NPB Region develop its current Circle hearing model and who also recommended the three Aboriginal Advisors currently under contract with the NPB Ontario Region. Contacts with Aboriginal communities have been somewhat limited so far in that region and, this aspect remains to be developed further. With respect to the Nunavut communities, some Board members and staff from the Ontario region have had the opportunity to go to Iqaluit. Some of them also travelled to Igloolik, where they had a chance to meet with members of that community.

At the beginning of the ECCE Initiatives, the Atlantic region contracted with a well-respected member of the Elsipogtog (Big Cove) First Nation community, to develop a handbook on all Aboriginal communities in the Atlantic region. This has generated a lot of contacts with all these communities and has been very well received. In addition, some staff and Board members had opportunities to visit with local Aboriginal communities as well as with Innu and Inuit communities in Labrador.

3.2. COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

The NPB has made the following commitments for the community corrections component of the ECCE initiatives:

- To enhance its policies, risk assessment tools and training with respect to offenders with histories of violence;
- To enhance its policies, risk assessment tools and training in relation to the cultural diversity of the federal offender population;
- To take measures to improve case preparation, information for conditional release decision-making and processes; and
- To take measures to enhance its capacity to carry out conditional release reviews.

3.2.1 Commitment: *NPB is to enhance its policies, risk assessment tools and training with respect to offenders with histories of violence.*

Policies:

The policies that have been developed are based on the practices and experiences of the NPB over the last 20-25 years. Thus, they have evolved from direct operational research. NPB policy now covers risk assessment for all types of offenders. A specific part of the policy addressing family violence is being developed.



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Risk Assessment Tools:

In its decision-making responsibilities, the National Parole Board has the difficult task of determining whether an offender's release is likely to cause an undue risk to society. In order to make this determination, the Board members must take into consideration a broad number of factors. There are numerous actuarial risk assessment instruments that exist and which the Board must consider in its decision-making process. In order to help the Board members get a better understanding of these various actuarial risk assessment tools, the NPB contracted with Adele Forth, PhD, Forensic Assessment and Research Inc., to research and develop a guide on these Risk Assessment Tools. This guide provides a summary of the relevant instruments, which the Board members may find referenced in the parole case files.

Dr. Chris Webster also provided a research paper on training needs and risk assessment tools available to assist NPB members complete their risk assessments on young offenders raised to Adult Court.

Training:

The Board Members Training and Development Section of the National Office has provided training sessions with respect to offenders with histories of violence during orientation sessions for new Board members and in the context of the General Board Meetings held in January and September 2002. The General Board Meetings were attended by all Board members (part time and full time) and by senior staff of NPB. The various training sessions covered the following topics:

- An information session on the changing faces of violent crimes (organized crime, cyber crime, terrorism, etc.)
- An information session on Typologies of Violent Offenders, delivered by Dr. R. Serin
- An information session on Violent Offending and the Mentally Disordered, delivered by Dr. S. Hucker
- A training session on the Prediction, Assessment and Management of violent offenders by Dr. R. Serin (part of the orientation session for new Board members)
- A session on violent offenders with mental health problems, delivered by Dr. C. Webster
- An information session on actuarial risk assessment tools common to parole decision-making.
- Dr. P. Dion developed a session on risk assessment theory and NPB decision making, which is delivered as part of the orientation session for new Board members.



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During General Board Meetings, Board members also have the opportunity to exchange the knowledge they have acquired in terms of risk assessment as well as the lessons learned through Internal Boards of Investigation reports, which are completed following violent incidents committed by parolee. The statistics available clearly demonstrate that the knowledge acquired by the Board members has contributed to the improvement of the Board's decisions, as well as to an important decrease in the number of violent offences committed in the community.

Other training activities have also taken place at the National Office such as, staff and NO Board members attending conferences on organized crime to keep abreast of latest intelligence and research in this field. As a representative of NPB, Dr. Dion, a Board member, also attended a conference on risk assessment procedures.

Training on offenders with histories of violence has also been provided during the professional development training sessions in all regional offices of the Board and has touched on various topics, such as sexual offending, family violence, substance abuse, criminalized gangs, etc.

3.2.2 Commitment: *NPB is to enhance its policies, risk assessment tools and training in relation to the cultural diversity of the federal offender population.*

Policies:

Section 9.2.1 of NPB policies, which referred to Hearings for Aboriginal offenders, has been modified as the Board is working towards developing hearing approaches that are not only more responsive to Aboriginal offenders, but also to offenders from other cultures as well as to women offenders.

Risk Assessment Tools:

The needs with respect to the various ethnocultural offender groups across Canada are currently being assessed. No activities related to the development of risk assessment training tools have yet taken place.

Training:

All regions have received training pertaining to the identification of the various organized crime groups, i.e. Asian, Indo-Canadian, Mafia, Russian organized crime, Aboriginal gangs, etc. Across all regions, Board members and staff commented that the information provided on the various organized criminal groups was useful. However, they would also appreciate more awareness sessions on the various ethnocultural groups represented in their respective regions. This aspect is lacking in most regions and needs to be further developed.



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In 2001, Atlantic region created a committee involving representatives of the African-Canadian communities of the Greater Halifax area as well as from the St-John area. Regular meetings with this group have been taking place since the committee was set up. The information gathered through these meetings has been and continues to be of great assistance to the Board in the development of awareness training on the cultural aspects and needs of the African Canadian population in the Atlantic region. The knowledge that is acquired through these meetings also assists the Board members in improving their assessment of risk of offenders from this ethnocultural group.

Black offenders account for 14% of the total federal offender population in the Ontario Region. In 2003, The NPB Ontario Region initiated consultation with the African Canadian community in the Toronto area in its effort to gain knowledge about this visible minority group and to be able to provide the necessary training that will help the Board members in their decision-making responsibilities. During that same year, NPB started to provide Diversity Awareness Training to Board members and staff. The Board members interviewed felt that this was a first step in the right direction but that much more was required. The Ontario Region intends to pursue these meaningful discussions with the African Canadian communities of the Greater Toronto Area as well as with other visible minority groups in order to be better able to recognize, understand and meet the needs of these ethnocultural communities.

3.2.3 Commitment: NPB will take measures to improve case preparation, information for conditional release decision-making and processes.

The National Parole Board and the Correctional Service of Canada are tightly integrated in terms of the business functions they perform and the information they need to effectively perform their respective mission. Together they must take many decisions regarding individual offenders to assist with their safe reintegration into the society. CSC is responsible for preparing the offender's case and ensuring that NPB receives all the pertinent information that is required so that it can render quality conditional release decisions. Quality of case preparation varies from region to region. Recurring issues include incomplete case documentation, lack of analysis in the reports, lack of information sharing and non-respect of timeframes for submitting the information to the Board. It is difficult to identify all of the reasons for these recurring issues. Some of the reasons appear to be related to issues such as an ongoing turn over of parole officers, lack of appropriate training and absence of effective quality control. A general comment from the NPB regional offices is that although some improvements have been made, this area requires constant monitoring and involvement from the Board, and ongoing discussions are taking place with CSC in order to improve case preparation.

As part of the measures taken by the Board to simplify and/or improve the conditional release decision-making process, a full review of the business process took place in each regional office. A series of improvements have been recommended and many of them have already been implemented. Other recommendations for improvement will require system enhancements and will be part of the development of the new Conditional Release System (CRS).



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3.2.4. Commitment: *NPB will take measures to enhance its capacity to carry out conditional release reviews.*

The NPB has no control over the number of offender cases that have to be reviewed and there is no systematic adjustment in TB resource allocation model that would take into account the increase of the conditional release workload. In some regions, additional case review officer and hearing officer positions have been created, and the use of part time Board members has increased in order to comply with the legislative requirements and ensure national consistency.

3.3 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The NPB has made the following commitments for the Citizen engagement and public education component of the ECCE initiatives:

- Develop and disseminate adequate and appropriate communications information
- Undertake activities to engage citizens and communities in meaningful discussion of key issues; and
- Undertake adequate and appropriate NPB's partnership building activities.

3.3.1 Commitment: *NPB will develop and disseminate adequate and appropriate communications information.*

Various documents have been developed by both N.O and regional offices and provided to the general public, media, community organisations, victim groups, etc. For instance, the NPB has developed, for the benefit of Aboriginal communities, a booklet explaining its role and responsibilities. The booklet has been distributed in both official languages and the Board is looking into having this document translated into Inuktitut. Another similar booklet was also developed for the ethnocultural population and was distributed in both official languages.

Regional offices have also developed some of their own material to ensure that the information provided reflects and responds to the specific needs of their regional clientele.

3.3.2 Commitment: *NPB will undertake activities to engage citizens and communities in meaningful discussion of key issues.*

During 2000-01, NPB contracted with the Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA) to organize citizen engagement forums. These sessions were held in 12 major cities across Canada. NPB Board members and staff participated as panel members in these forums.

On the whole, the feedback received from participants at the Citizen Engagement Forums has been very positive. People appreciated that their views were being considered. They gained a good understanding and a better appreciation of the role and responsibilities of the Board. Activities conducted under Citizen engagement forums have also resulted in some community people, including ethnocultural representation, applying to become Board members.



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During 2001-02, a report on these activities was completed and forwarded to the citizens who had participated in the forums. It was noticed that during these forums, the participation of individuals from Aboriginal and ethnocultural communities was lacking. This may be an area where the Board can improve in future citizen engagement activities. It should be pointed out however, that activities, which have taken place through other NPB commitments under the ECCE initiatives, have involved several Aboriginal communities and other minority groups and such activities will continue to take place.

During that same year, the focus of citizen engagement activities was placed on victims and victim groups consultations which took place across the country. These consultations demonstrated a clear desire on the part of some victims to be able to speak at hearings, to obtain more information about offenders and for more co-ordination in providing information to them. The consultations made victim issues more visible at the Board and identified a need for further sessions of this nature. They are very beneficial to both the victims and the Board. Victims feel that they are being heard and they acquire a better understanding of the Board's responsibilities. For the Board, it allows it to improve on the way it conducts business. These types of consultations, however, are costly and, without further funding and resources, it will be difficult for the Board to maintain and expand on this type of activity.

The NPB Atlantic region keeps in regular contacts with several Aboriginal communities to inform them on its role and responsibilities as well as to discuss any concerns or issues these communities may have with respect to the work of the Board. The communities' views are then brought before NPB's Aboriginal Offender Project Committee, which is composed of an Elder, a NPB Board member as well as staff members. Again, this is the type of activity that is beneficial to both the communities and the Board. The communities greatly appreciate being informed about the NPB's responsibilities and being given an active role in how the Board conducts its business. In turn, the Aboriginal communities' input helps the Board better understand the needs and circumstances of these communities and to identify areas where the Board could improve on its conditional release process when dealing with this population.

In addition to the undertakings mentioned above, all regions have engaged in various activities involving members of the general public and community groups such as through speaking engagements in universities and colleges, social clubs, speaking with observers who attend parole hearings, as well as through media. Such activities will continue as much as resources and funding will allow.

3.3.3 Commitment: *NPB will undertake adequate and appropriate partnership building activities.*

In the Prairie and Atlantic regions, the Board has developed and implemented an alternative parole hearing model (Community assisted hearings) that is held in Aboriginal communities. The partnership established with these communities promotes their active role in the reintegration of offenders.



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Since 2002, the Board has also been involving members of various communities and ethnocultural groups as participants on panels for the selection of possible candidates for Board member positions.

The Atlantic region has established a committee involving representatives of the African-Canadian communities of the Greater Halifax area as well as from the St-John area. The information shared through these meetings has provided these communities with knowledge about how the Board renders its decisions. The Board also benefits greatly from these activities as the input provided by these communities help the Board develop awareness training on the cultural aspects and needs of the African Canadian population in the Atlantic region. This will also assist the Board in improving its assessment of risk of offenders from this ethnocultural group. On March 31, 2003, there were 142 African Canadian offenders in the Atlantic region.

In the Quebec region, NPB and CSC have set up an Aboriginal Advisory Committee. This committee meets on average 4 times a year with various Aboriginal community representatives to discuss issues pertaining to the Aboriginal offender population as well as to provide the communities with information on the roles and responsibilities of NPB and CSC.

The Quebec region has also formed partnerships with colleges and universities in order to heighten the students' awareness of conditional release issues. Each year, the Quebec region meets with hundreds of students in class and also arranges for them to attend parole hearings as observers. This region also organizes open houses to develop and maintain partnerships with the community sector. As an example, service providers and volunteers from the community who work for such organizations as the *Association des services de réhabilitation sociale du Québec* and the *Association des résidences communautaires du Québec*, have participated in these open houses, at which time they had the opportunity to share their views with the Board. Through such activities, the Board establishes closer links with the community and develops natural alliances in its efforts to better inform the public about the issues related to conditional release in Canada.

Across all regions, the Board provides information sessions to various police departments to inform them of the role and responsibilities of the Board as well as of its commitment to protecting the public. The Board also stresses the important role the police play in providing the Board with timely, accurate and comprehensive police reports. During these sessions, the Board also extends invitations to police to attend parole hearings as observers, which they often accept. This works exceptionally well as a public education tool.

The National Parole Board is also part of the National Joint Committee (NJC). The NJC is a well-established forum of senior criminal justice officials that provides a valuable opportunity for information exchange and cooperation across the criminal justice system. There are also regional committees that meet twice a year to discuss and consult on emerging issues that affect the criminal justice system.



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Another good example of the Board's partnership building activities has been its consultations with victims across Canada which have led to the development and implementation of a Board policy to allow victims to read their statements at hearings. A joint CSC/NPB national roundtable with victim serving agencies was also held in November 2002. This activity led to the setting up of a joint (CSC/NPB) office for victims. The overall objective of this office is to supplement and support the work with victims that is already underway at both CSC and NPB. It will also provide an opportunity for further co-ordination of effort between staff in the portfolio of the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice.

The Pacific region of the Board has also built a good partnership activity with victims through the setting up of a CSC/NPB Victim Advisory Committee. The committee meets quarterly for a two-day session during which victim issues with respect to the work of the NPB and CSC are discussed. One of the community members involved in this committee was interviewed during the course of this evaluation. She praised NPB and CSC for this undertaking. She feels that through these meetings, the victims have been given a meaningful voice and both agencies have shown openness and have modified some of their practices as a result of these consultations.

In the Quebec Region, NPB and CSC have also formed a partnership with victim services agencies through an Advisory Committee. The committee is similar to the one established in the Pacific region and reports the same type of benefits.

4. ECCE FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

The National Parole Board has received 6.5M dollars over five years from Treasury Board for the Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement initiatives of which 3.5M (including 498K for employee benefits and accommodations) were approved for the first three years (See Appendix A).

The cost of the ECCE initiatives for the National Parole Board during the first three years was 4.34M dollars (excluding employee benefits and accommodation) what represents an over expenditure of 48% (See Appendix B). It is the Aboriginal Corrections component that creates the most significant pressure on the Board. This component of the ECCE initiatives represented 42% of the total funding, but 51% of the NPB expenses. Elder assisted hearings represented 20% of the Aboriginal Corrections funding, but over 44% of the expenses are related to this component.

The NPB has no control over the demand for Elder Assisted Hearings. In 2002-03, 41.5% of the hearings for federal Aboriginal offenders were Elder Assisted Hearings compared to 22.6% prior to the ECCE initiatives. The cost of an Elder Assisted Hearing is twice the cost of a regular hearing. The length of time required to conduct an EAH is such that, on average, only three EAHs can be conducted per day compared to five regular hearings. Having to go to institutions more often implies additional time/salary for Board members and hearing officers, as well as additional travel cost. Elders' honorarium and travel costs also need to be added. If the number of hearings for Aboriginal offenders remains the same and if all Aboriginal offenders were



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requesting Elder Assisted Hearings, the extra cost for the National Parole Board would be approximately 1M dollars per year. It should also be noted that currently, the Board is not holding Elder Assisted Hearings for provincial offenders who fall under NPB's responsibilities (Prairies and Atlantic Regions) due to financial and resources constraints.

Expansion of the use of Elder Assisted Hearings is only one of the National Parole Board objectives in the ECCE initiatives. The additional cost of these hearings is the element creating the most significant pressure on the Board's financial situation. To be effective, implementation of Elder Assisted and Community Assisted hearings must be supported by appropriate policies, risk assessment tools and training, as well as strong community liaison and outreach. All this is time consuming and requires proper resources. These resources being limited, the NPB had to make choices and set priorities based on the national and regional situations.

Over the years, the NPB has made efforts to strengthen its capacity for quality policy development, training and conditional release decision-making. These efforts are on going and must be maintained and, appropriate resources have to be available.

Many activities have taken place during the first three years to engage citizens and communities in meaningful discussions on key issues and to build partnerships. The objectives in that respect were met at various levels and the Board must continue its efforts. Partnership building and community outreach is not a one shot deal; follow-up activities must continue. People interviewed often mentioned that many local actions were initiated but could not be pursued because of the lack of adequate resources. The impact is that expectations are created in the community and, when initiatives cannot be pursued, it increases frustration and public confidence in the correctional system decreases.



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5. CONCLUSION

During the first three years of the ECCE initiatives, the NPB has taken significant steps to achieve its objectives. Conditional release policies have been modified to include Aboriginal perspectives; work has begun in the development of risk assessment tools for Aboriginal offenders, violent offenders and other groups and training on Aboriginal culture and issues has been provided in all regions. Further work is required to include other cultural diversity perspectives in NPB policies and training.

The Board has developed new and better ways of doing business by implementing Elder-Assisted and Community-Assisted hearings in all regions. The great majority of those who have taken part in such hearings across the country have made this abundantly clear. In some regions that have had less experience with this process, Aboriginal offenders, community members as well as Board members have identified certain aspects of the process that need to be improved. In general, however, people are satisfied with the way in which these approaches are progressing. For them, a return to the old way of conducting conditional release hearings is not conceivable.

In most regions, the models developed are based on First Nations traditions and, as such, they are not appropriate for Inuit offenders. A new hearing model that would meet these offenders' needs still remains to be developed. More in-depth consultation with the Métis should take place in order to ensure that the Board is also sensitive to this Aboriginal group's culture and circumstances and that the hearing approach meets their needs.

Many liaison and outreach activities have been undertaken by the Board to promote citizen engagement and public education, and results are positive. These activities, however, are not a one shot exercise; they need to be continued to ensure effectiveness and permanent results.

Over the long term, innovations and enhancements for all areas will generate pressing demands for continued implementation and ongoing funding. The evaluation conducted by the NPB shows that the Board has spent more resources on these initiatives than what was allocated by TB. The NPB will need increased and ongoing funding to maintain the scope of its program, and to support the Government public safety agenda.

6. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that all responsibility centres set clear objectives for the Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement initiatives, and systematically keep track of their activities and related expenses for reporting and planning purposes.



APPENDICES



NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

APPENDIX A

TB FUNDING							
Effective Corrections and Citizen Engagement - Public Education							
YEAR	INITIATIVE	Salaries	Other Operating	Total Budget	Employee Benefits	Accommodation	Total Approval
2000-01	Aboriginal Corrections	191,000	161,000	352,000	38,000		390,000
	Community Corrections	150,000	107,000	257,000	30,000		287,000
	Citizen Engagement	105,000	169,000	274,000	21,000		295,000
	Total	446,000	437,000	883,000	89,000	28,000	1,000,000
2001-02	Aboriginal Corrections	220,000	126,000	346,000	44,000		390,000
	Community Corrections	190,000	50,000	240,000	38,000		278,000
	Citizen Engagement	115,000	156,000	271,000	23,000		294,000
	Total	525,000	332,000	857,000	105,000	38,000	1,000,000
2002-03	Aboriginal Corrections	440,000	138,000	578,000	88,000		666,000
	Community Corrections	285,000	129,000	414,000	57,000		471,000
	Citizen Engagement	125,000	145,000	270,000	25,000		295,000
	Total	850,000	412,000	1,262,000	170,000	68,000	1,500,000
2003-04	Aboriginal Corrections	440,000	137,000	577,000	88,000		665,000
	Community Corrections	295,000	117,000	412,000	59,000		471,000
	Citizen Engagement	125,000	144,000	269,000	25,000		294,000
	Total	860,000	398,000	1,258,000	172,000	70,000	1,500,000
2004-05	Aboriginal Corrections	450,000	124,000	574,000	90,000		664,000
	Community Corrections	295,000	117,000	412,000	59,000		471,000
	Citizen Engagement	125,000	144,000	269,000	25,000		294,000
	Total	870,000	385,000	1,255,000	174,000	71,000	1,500,000

2003-09-30



NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

APPENDIX B

ECCE INITIATIVES SUMMARY OF EXPENSES			
INITIATIVE	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
National Office			
• Aboriginal Corrections	20 944	27 099	149 345
• Community Corrections	35 721	6 173	9 697
• Citizen Engagement	129 991	66 781	53 341
• Total	186 656	100 053	212 383
Atlantic			
• Aboriginal Corrections	44 403	59 874	44 142
• Community Corrections	0*	50 164	14 508
• Citizen Engagement	75 329	79 597	86 337
• Total	119 732	189 635	144 987
Quebec			
• Aboriginal Corrections	33 046	39 536	45 580
• Community Corrections	66 093	74 118	66 108
• Citizen Engagement	49 873	92 473	117 756
• Total	149 012	206 127	229 444
Ontario			
• Aboriginal Corrections	47 062	55 241	60 457
• Community Corrections	16 507	31 235	27 272
• Citizen Engagement	62 045	113 201	127 872
• Total	125 614	199 677	215 601
Prairies			
• Aboriginal Corrections	367 558	404 181	490 891
• Community Corrections	69 263	16 813	0*
• Citizen Engagement	23 687	119 409	54 808
• Total	460 508	540 403	545 699
Pacific			
• Aboriginal Corrections	135 567	119 874	130 531
• Community Corrections	68 855	55 492	95 384
• Citizen Engagement	28 011	115 471	57 670
• Total	232 433	290 837	283 585
Canada			
• Aboriginal Corrections	648 580	705 805	920 946
• Community Corrections	256 439	233 995	212 969
• Citizen Engagement	368 936	586 932	497 784
• Total	1 273 955	1 526 732	1 631 699

2003-10-07

NOTE: * Included in Aboriginal Corrections.

Salaries and travel cost of BMs and HOs for Elder Assisted Hearings include only extra costs.

Accommodation and employee benefits not included



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APPENDIX C

ECCE EVALUATION Number of Interviews and Hearings Observed							
Region	Board Member	NPB staff	CSC Staff	Elders/ NLOs Abor. Advisors	Community	Offenders	Hearings
National Office	2	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Atlantic	5	18	15	6	5	28	1
Quebec	12	12	5	3	0	9	4
Ontario	10	19	6	10	3	39	5
Prairies	11	22	7	16	3	8	7
Pacific	7	14	2	5	2	6	3
TOTAL	47	90	35	40	13	96	20

2003-10-15

Hearing: Number of hearings observed by the evaluation team members



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APPENDIX D

PROPORTION of ELDER ASSISTED HEARINGS ON TOTAL FEDERAL HEARINGS FOR ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS

		ATLANTIC	QUEBEC	ONTARIO	PRAIRIES	PACIFIC	CANADA
2000-01	#	1 / 49	3 / 79	8 / 117	246 / 639	71 / 209	329 / 1093
	%	2.0	3.8	6.8	38.5	34.0	30.1
2001-02	#	14 / 38	15 / 84	36 / 130	292 / 636	78 / 188	435 / 1076
	%	36.8	17.9	27.7	45.9	41.5	40.4
2002-03	#	9 / 40	15 / 85	33 / 113	327 / 669	85 / 224	469 / 1131
	%	25.0	17.6	29.2	48.9	37.9	41.5

2003-09-30



NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

APPENDIX E

PAROLE GRANT RATE for Aboriginal Offenders								
REGION	DAY PAROLE				FULL PAROLE			
	1997-2000		2000-2003		1997-2000		2000-2003	
	EAH %	Regular %	EAH %	Regular %	EAH %	Regular %	EAH %	Regular %
Atlantic	N/A	66.1	80.0	68.8	N/A	17.0	16.7	16.7
Quebec	N/A	48.7	44.4	40.5	N/A	4.6	10.0	8.0
Ontario	N/A	52.9	60.7	57.0	N/A	20.1	6.3	20.3
Prairies	64.9	58.4	84.3	52.4	20.6	18.8	38.5	21.0
Pacific	66.2	67.4	70.5	57.0	16.1	25.8	17.4	25.0
Canada	65.1	58.4	79.3	53.2	20.0	18.5	32.0	19.9

2003-10-17