



## Career

# A Career with the Correctional Service of Canada – Join Us!

### Description



career in the service of society and security.

The Correctional Service of Canada offers a wide variety of jobs and occupations. In addition to correctional officers and parole officers, it offers career opportunities for nurses, psychologists, tradespeople, human resources consultants, financial advisors and many others. A career with the Correctional Service of Canada is a

### Classroom time required

Two hours (or more, depending on the time spent on proposed discussion activities).

### Proposed external resources

Meeting with employees of various sectors and/or discussion session with the school guidance counsellor on programs of study leading to various possible career choices in the Correctional Service of Canada.

The Correctional Service of Canada's Speakers Bureau can help. Contact us at <http://appsweb.csc-scc.gc.ca/bureau/welu.do?lang=eng>

### Learning objectives

#### Career Guidance

- Carry out a career exploration activity;
- Evaluate basic interests and skills and compare them with the requirements of a particular job profile;
- Put research skills into practice to find information on different job profiles;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the work and expectations related to the work environment.

## Why work for the Correctional Service of Canada?

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is a key player in public safety and is responsible for the supervision of offenders serving sentences of two or more years and for their safe reintegration into society.

In a normal day, CSC manages over 13,000 offenders incarcerated in its 57 institutions and over 10,000 offenders under supervision in the community.

CSC has a little more than 16,000 employees. Some 78% of its staff works in institutions and about 41% of these are correctional officers. The staff responsible for supervising offenders in the community makes up 8% of the employees. The remaining 14% work at National Headquarters and in regional offices.

Given the number of employees, it is not surprising that CSC offers a wide variety of jobs and occupations, making it a top employer. Although working in an institution might seem dangerous to some people, it should be pointed out that CSC implements all the measures necessary to ensure employee security and provide a stimulating work environment.

In addition to correctional officers and parole officers – probably the best-known careers – CSC employs nurses, psychologists, tradespeople, human resources consultants, financial consultants and many other professionals to ensure the smooth operation of its offices and institutions.

## Careers for all tastes

### ***Correctional Officer (CO)***

Correctional Officers play an essential role in CSC. They are the main point of contact with offenders, since they deal with them continually. Their work gives them the opportunity to get to know the offenders and observe their behaviour, which contributes considerably to institutional security. Likewise, this knowledge gives Correctional Officers the means to support case management and establish a relationship of trust and understanding with offenders that is essential to their social reintegration.

Correctional Officers are responsible for ensuring perimeter security and for the daily maintenance of security in their respective institution.

In addition to security, they must constantly encourage and support offenders to change their criminal attitudes, values and beliefs.

Federal Correctional Officers are professionals. They are role models to offenders. They respect and promote Canadian values in treatment of others. They believe that the values, ethics, life style and attitude they bring to work are key components in the achievement of CSC towards its mission and legal mandate. They believe that with the right experience and attitude, they will make a difference.

To become a Correctional Officer, a secondary school diploma and experience in direct interaction with individuals in an education, work, and/or volunteer environment are required.

### ***Primary Worker (PW) and Older Sister (Aboriginal Healing Lodges)***

Primary Workers are front-line staff in women's institutions and Older Sisters work at the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. In addition, Primary Workers duties include case management and program support.

Primary Workers need experience working with women. They also need to be aware of women's issues and be familiar with the philosophy described in *Creating Choices* (report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women published in 1990).

In addition to general correctional services training, new recruits must complete Women Centred Training. This training covers issues such as sexism, sexual orientation, racism, Aboriginal traditions and spirituality, physical and sexual violence, self destructive and suicidal behaviour, drug abuse, and mental health issues.

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To become a Primary Worker or Older Sister, a secondary school diploma and experience in direct interaction with individuals in an education, work, and/or volunteer environment are required.

## Careers for all tastes (continued)

### *Correctional Program Officer (CPO)*

CSC has emerged as a world leader in development, implementation, and delivery of evidence-based programs designed to make offenders accountable for their criminal behaviour, change criminal attitudes, and to significantly reduce the risk they present to Canadians when they are released back into society.

Correctional Program Officers guide the offenders to take accountability for their actions, while motivating them to learn the skills and competences necessary to help offenders safely reintegrate into society. They use a range of motivational strategies to help the offenders see the value of program participation. Correctional Program Officers are tasked to identify the offenders' risk factors, their deficits and their strengths. They use this information to work with the offender to develop a comprehensive self-management plan. Furthermore, they evaluate the offenders on a regular basis to assess their progress.

Correctional Program Officers assess and analyze offender-related data as part of the Case Management Team (CMT) in order to evaluate the needs for program participation to impact on risk factors for reintegration. They analyze and interpret test results and prepare detailed post-program reports based on assessments and interventions. They assess offender programming' needs on a continuous basis and monitor the offender's progress and participation in mainstream and specific programs in relation to the objectives in their correctional plan.

Correctional Program Officers provide specific expert advice for the development and revision of correctional plans taking into account the needs of offenders and the appropriate programs required to reduce risk.

Correctional Programs are divided into Correctional Program Areas. These areas are grouping Correctional Programs of varying intensity that target the same contributing factors. Contributing factors are those domains or relevant principal components that deal directly with criminal behaviour.

Correctional Program Officers are required to deliver Correctional Programs that fall into the following areas: General Crime Prevention Programs, Violence Prevention Programs, Substance Abuse Programs, Family Violence Prevention Programs, Sex Offenders Programs, Aboriginal Programs, Community Based Correctional Programs.

Correctional Program Officers are trained and accredited in the provision of internationally recognized correctional programs. The training and accreditation process must meet strict quality regulations to be in line with established standards.

## **Careers for all tastes (continued)**

### ***Aboriginal Correctional Program Officer (ACPO)***

CSC has implemented Aboriginal healing and treatment programs specific to the reintegration needs of Aboriginal offenders. CSC supports the development of programs by Aboriginal people who have a recognized expertise in effective correctional service and traditional cultural healing/teachings.

Aboriginal Correctional Program Officers define and determine programming expectations included in the Aboriginal offenders correctional/ healing plan and motivate the Aboriginal offenders to meet the objectives in their healing plan.

Aboriginal Correctional Program Officers provide culturally-specific expert advice for the development and revision of correctional/healing plans taking into account the needs of Aboriginal offenders and the appropriate programs required to reduce risk.

### ***Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO)***

Aboriginal Liaison Officers are responsible for ensuring leadership by raising the cultural awareness of Aboriginal offenders, transmitting knowledge and providing them with counselling sessions and general services. They also help Aboriginal offenders to respond to their cultural and spiritual needs and help them familiarize themselves with the case management process and correctional programs. Aboriginal Liaison Officers are important members of the case management team and ensure a link with Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal Liaison Officer assists in the identification and assessment of the initial healing requirements for Aboriginal offenders and they assist Aboriginal offenders in developing healing/release plans in consultation with Elders and offenders, case management teams, community-based agencies and Aboriginal communities.

### ***Aboriginal Community Development Officer (ACDO)***

Aboriginal Community Development Officers demonstrate leadership by raising Aboriginal community awareness of CSC processes and conveying information on them. They also assist Aboriginal offenders with their reintegration into Aboriginal communities. They serve as an intermediary between CSC, communities and Aboriginal organizations.

## Careers for all tastes (continued)

### ***Parole Officer (PO)***

Parole Officers are assigned to supervise and manage a caseload of offenders with whom they are expected to maintain regular contact. They observe, listen, question, interview, counsel and intervene. They recognize the value of working with others and analysing every available source of relevant information to accurately assess the behaviour of the offenders on their caseload.

Whether they work in a correctional institution or in the community, Parole Officers play a key role in the reintegration of offenders. They must work in close cooperation with persons who support them in their assessments, particularly psychologists, instructors, program officers, correctional officers and the offenders themselves.

To maintain accurate knowledge, Parole Officers must maintain contact with an entire network of people (representatives of the criminal justice system, community organizations and providers of program-related services). With this knowledge, and using their judgment, Parole Officers are able to prepare reports and conduct the assessments necessary for the various stages of the offender's life, such as parole, transfers or contacts in the community.

If you have a university degree in sociology, psychology, social work, criminology or a related field, and if have an interest for human behaviour, you are an ideal candidate for the position of a Parole Officer.

### ***Psychologist***

Our Psychologists are primarily focused on the provision of mental health services to offenders (including assessment and treatment), and on providing assessments of criminal risk. They often use their professional training and the various tools at their disposal to make determinations about an offender's mental health needs, and his or her risk to public safety. They share their findings with other members of the corrections team as appropriate and provide risk assessments to those responsible for making decisions about the case and release to the community. You can expect to work closely with other professionals from various occupational groups that share a common goal – to make a difference in the lives of offenders and in the attitudes that govern their behavior.

CSC employs approximately 300 Psychologists, roughly 75% of all the Psychologists working for the federal public service. Most institutions and communities have psychologists who are permanent or contract employees of CSC and offer an entire range of services.

Psychologists play various important roles at CSC:

- providing mental health services to offenders (assessment and treatment of mental disturbances and behavioural problems)
- preparing assessments used in the case management and social reintegration processes (including intake assessment, essential for the development of correctional plans, and assessment of offender risk of recidivism prior to parole)
- providing high-intensity programs (such as violence prevention and treatment of sex offenders)
- conducting research

## Careers for all tastes (continued)

### *Nurse*

Health services at the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) cover the entire range of clinical services found in a community setting. We specialize in services that reflect the needs of an inmate population, such as infectious diseases, methadone maintenance, inmate suicide prevention and enhanced discharge planning, as well as the mental health strategies to support offenders with mental disorders.

Nurses are the cornerstone of CSC's health services operations. Over 700 Nurses work in clinics throughout Canada's correctional institutions at various levels of security, including dedicated facilities for women, healing lodges for Aboriginal people, community correctional centres and mental health treatment units for those that require specialized care.

Members of the nursing staff in CSC institutions work as members of a multidisciplinary team. However, as front-line health care workers for inmates, they work more independently in an institutional environment than in a hospital. Nursing staff members must be willing and able to accept this level of independence, in an environment that requires them to act professionally at all times in matters of clinical judgment and evaluation. They must also show a keen interest in the promotion of health and prevention of infection.

Being a Nurse with CSC is a unique and dynamic work experience that can make a considerable difference in the lives of Canadians. Because the majority of individuals in our care will eventually return to the community, CSC's Nurses contribute to improving the overall health of the outside community through interventions aimed at improving the health of those inside.

Some of these measures include:

- education for offenders on admission and throughout their sentence about health issues;
- thorough health histories upon admission to identify past medical problems and risk behaviors;
- screening on admission and throughout incarceration for infectious diseases;
- immunization programs;
- treatment of chronic conditions and infectious conditions according to community standards.

## Careers for all tastes (continued)

### **Chaplain**

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees offenders the right to practise their religion during their period of incarceration. The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* requires that CSC provide offenders with objects of prime necessity indispensable to their religious or spiritual practices.

CSC engages various denominational organizations on contract to provide chaplain services in institutions, in cooperation with the Interdenominational Committee.

Chaplains work in institutions or in the community. Because of the large number of Christian offenders, chaplain services for Protestants and Catholics are offered in most institutions. Services for offenders of other denominations are provided by occasional chaplains or designated volunteers. Agreements are currently being concluded to obtain chaplain services for the following denominational groups: Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists.

Chaplains in the community work with chaplains in institutions to create links with offenders before they are released. They also work with the local parole office to coordinate the supervision plan. They have a dual role to play: they work with former inmates to assist them in their social reintegration, and they are at the service of a more vast community to help it welcome these former inmates.

### **Social Program Officer (SPO)**

Social Program Officers are responsible for planning, coordinating and facilitating all the cultural, artistic and recreational activities as well as the social programs in their respective institution. These activities introduce offenders to **prosocial lifestyles** and help them acquire and practise social skills required for their complete social reintegration.

In these social activities, offenders are placed in various situations that give them the opportunity to put into practice the social skills learned in correctional programs. If an offender does not act appropriately, the Social Program Officer intervenes directly and promotes prosocial reaction or behaviour.

## Careers for all tastes (continued)

### Teachers

Teachers are responsible for providing educational services to offenders in institutions. Their duties include assessing levels of education, studying records to establish the objectives to be achieved to meet CSC education standards and providing a provincially accredited education program. Instructional direction varies with the current management style in each region; however, it depends on a combination of permanent and contract teachers to provide education services.

### Other career opportunities

CSC also employs other professionals such as heating systems servicers, labour and tradespeople, as well as employees responsible for general services, administrative support and Human Resources specialists and generalists.

As members of the CSC team, employees must ensure that the workplace is safe, clean and stable and must promote healthy relationships between staff and offenders. They might ensure maintenance of electrical installations, plumbing, heating and ventilation systems, repair of equipment and furniture, or building renovations.

The Correctional Service of Canada thus offers an impressive range of career choices. Yet all the employees have one characteristic in common: they make a difference in our society!

### Classroom activities

1. Using all the tools at your disposal, research the training path leading to one of the jobs available at the Correctional Service of Canada.
2. Choose a CSC job profile and prepare a questionnaire for a staff member working in this sector. Your objective is to find out more on the daily life of this employee, his workplace, areas of interest, level of education, and the specific requirements of that position.

*Note to teacher: This questionnaire could be emailed to CSC staff members or used in a meeting with one or more CSC employees.*

### Glossary

**Prosocial lifestyles:** Lifestyles emphasizing healthy, brotherly, selfless relationships.