



# Research Snippet

## Aboriginal Women Offenders' Use of Aboriginal-specific Staff for Reintegration Purposes

**KEY WORDS:** *Aboriginal offenders, women offenders, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO), Aboriginal Community Development Officer (ACDO), community supervision*

### What it means

Enhanced awareness of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLO) and Aboriginal Community Development Officers (ACDO) may further increase the number of Aboriginal women using these services. Increasing the accessibility and availability of ACDOs to women could support additional Aboriginal community involvement in release planning. Furthermore, the strengthening of working relationships between Aboriginal-specific staff and Parole Officers may aid in reintegration success and contribute to the use of restorative justice practices.

### What we found

According to their Parole Officers, roughly half of Aboriginal women in the sample have used ACDOs and ACLOs (see Table). Compared to Community Parole Officers (CPO), Institutional Parole Officers (IPO) tended to report more women working with staff in these roles. IPOs also reported a closer professional relationship with ACLOs and ACDOs. In comparison to the national average, IPOs and CPOs in the Prairies reported closer working relationships between Parole Officers and ACLOs and ACDOs whereas Pacific and Atlantic region respondents reported lower ratings.

Staff in both roles was seen as relatively available and accessible, although the ACLOs were viewed as more accessible overall. Again, IPOs tended to provide higher ratings than the CPOs.

### Impetus

ACLOs and ACDOs are available to Aboriginal offenders as resources to assist in establishing close ties between Parole Officers, offenders, and the community in order to promote successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. Specifically, ACDOs facilitate Section 84 conditional releases<sup>1</sup> for offenders who choose to pursue this option.

<sup>1</sup> In this type of release, Aboriginal communities participate in the release planning of an offender to promote healing of the community, victim and offender.

Given that little research has focused on the use of ACLOs and ACDOs with Aboriginal women offenders and their working relationships with Parole Officers, this area was explored.

*Use of ACLOs and ACDOs as reported by Parole Officers*

	IPOs	CPOs
<b>ACLOs</b>		
Prevalence of use by women	65%	43%
Availability/Accessibility <sup>a</sup> to women	7.2*	5.0*
How closely the ACLO works with Parole Officers <sup>a</sup>	6.5*	4.3*
<b>ACDOs</b>		
Prevalence of use by women	62%*	28%*
Availability/Accessibility <sup>a</sup> to women	6.0	4.6
How closely the ACDO works with Parole Officers <sup>a</sup>	5.5*	3.8*

*Note.* \* Indicates that the difference between IPOs and CPOs is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

<sup>a</sup> Scores reflect mean ratings on a scale of 1 (not at all closely) to 10 (extremely closely) or 1 (not at all available/accessible) to 10 (completely available/accessible).

### What we did

As part of a larger project examining the needs of women offenders under community supervision, 57 CPOs and IPOs completed an online survey about women's reintegration needs. The Parole Officers who participated provided information regarding 66 Aboriginal women in custody and 53 in the community. Surveys were completed between January 14 and February 5, 2013.

### For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

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