



Research in Brief

Federal Indigenous and Non-indigenous Offenders Reaching Sentence Completion

Improved reintegration results for federal indigenous offenders have not narrowed a performance gap.

Why we did this study

A “performance gap” in criminal justice can be reflected by the disparity in sanctioning rates between groups of people. The performance gap may show up in federal admissions, custodial counts, conditional releases, and successful reintegration rates, among other measures. It is most often used to describe the troubling performance gap between Indigenous offenders, at the higher end of representation¹ in the federal correctional system (26% in-custody versus 4% in Canadian society), and their Non-indigenous counterparts. With the findings of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015*, the closing of gaps for indigenous people has become a focus of federal accountability. This has contributed both to greater awareness of disparities and to rising concern about other kinds of performance gaps. In addition to a review of the criminal justice system, policy makers have also begun to focus attention on other gaps, such as those based on employment, housing and health. It is anticipated that the increased attention on performance results will lead to more targeted interventions for indigenous people, and hopefully close gaps to an appreciable degree.

What we did

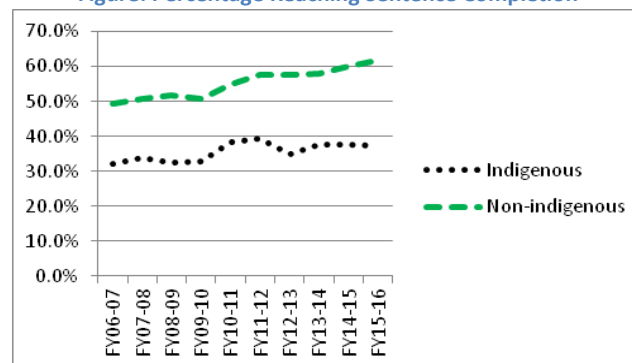
Public safety outcomes reflected in Correctional Service of Canada's Offender Management System were extracted from the automated Performance Direct (PD) system. The PD system standardizes the historical reporting of over 75 metrics at the national and regional levels. One such metric is the percentage of offenders successfully reaching sentence completion without readmission. Data were drawn for 10 consecutive fiscal years (2006-07 to 2015-16) for both Indigenous and Non-indigenous offenders.

What we found

While PD results show that, over the past 10-years, the number of Indigenous offenders who successfully reached their warrant expiry date without readmission have increased from 260 to 378 (or +45%), a wide

performance gap still separates them from the Non-indigenous (37.4% versus 61.9% in 2015-16). Although these gaps have persisted over the years, the performance differentials between Indigenous and Non-indigenous offenders have widened between 2006-07 and 2015-16 (17.7% and 24.2%, respectively).

Figure: Percentage Reaching Sentence Completion



What it means

While the disproportionate representation of indigenous people in federal custody may, in part, be attributed to proportional disparity of new admissions (1,144 out of 4,869 or 23.5% in 2015-16), sustained efforts are still required to reduce readmission rates. While improved results are reflective of concerted efforts being made to improve reintegration results, more criminal justice and community development work is needed to effectively moderate federal admission and readmission rates.

¹ (on August 14, 2016 there were 3,815 indigenous inmates / 14,528 = 26.3%)

For more information

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Prepared by: Larry Motiuk