



British Columbia

# JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL

**Sector Strategic Plan 2024-2027**



## SECTOR CONTEXT

The justice and public safety system continues to transform and respond to increasingly complex challenges. From systemic issues of inequity and access to justice, to the innovations and lessons learned from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the justice sector in British Columbia is complex and constantly evolving. Communities throughout British Columbia are expressing heightened concerns regarding public safety. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing toxic drug crisis disproportionately affect the challenges faced by people in encampments, experiencing homelessness, and those struggling with mental-health and addiction. There is also continued concern throughout the sector over people's ability to obtain services, understand their rights and effectively participate in the justice system. This requires transformational thinking about how we can advance our system to administer justice and deliver public safety services and programs in a way that is culturally safe for everyone.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

To follow up on commitments made in the 2022 and 2023 Strategic Plan Statements, the Council has set the course for the future by renewing the strategic planning priorities for the sector. To help guide the vision for the sector, an Advisory Board of key justice and public safety contributors was created to provide a cross-section of perspectives, identify focus areas and provide insights into the sector's priorities. Reflecting past Justice Summits, pulling from partner engagement surveys as well as feedback received from the Advisory Board, the Council's refreshed plan highlights some of the top sector priorities for the next three years.

## PURPOSE

The Justice and Public Safety Council was created in 2013 through the [Justice Reform and Transparency Act](#) to provide strategic direction to the justice and public safety sector. Each fiscal year the Council publishes a three-year [Strategic Plan](#). This year, the Council refreshed the plan to guide the sector's overall vision which organizations can draw from to inform their mandates and adapt to their day-to-day operations.

The Council acknowledges the contributions of all organizations that support the sector. This includes the critical contributions of external sector partners as well as the distinct roles of the executive and judicial branches of government. These goals, opportunities and strategies will rely on collaboration and represent an aspirational vision all can contribute to.



## GOALS

The following goals describe the aspirational vision for the justice and public safety sector and reflect a commitment from the Council to promote true and lasting reconciliation, and a desire to address the longstanding disparities in access to justice faced by Indigenous people and other marginalized communities.

### FAIR

#### **Is accessible and people-centred**

Provides culturally appropriate services that are available regardless of finances and geographic location. Services are easier to navigate through design and modern technology.

#### **Models integrity and natural justice**

Treats people equitably in procedures and services.

#### **Delivers outcomes on a timely basis**

Reduces systemic delays, fosters early intervention for conflicts resolution, and embraces alternative processes such as restorative justice.

### SAFE

#### **Protects communities by reducing threats**

Values the rights of victims, complainants and communities including preventing revictimization.

#### **Addresses racism**

Reforms systemic barriers that disproportionately effect Indigenous peoples and racialized communities.

#### **Supports behavioural change**

Provides early prevention services and intervenes after offenses to support behavioural changes.

## EMPOWERING

#### **Supports emerging First Nations justice systems**

Supports the development of First Nations justice systems through consistent and coordinated action.

#### **Supports vulnerable people**

Acknowledges people whose intersecting identity factors increase their vulnerability. This includes people with mental health and substance-use challenges, people leaving correctional centres, women and girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, children and youth and people who are in crisis.

## OPPORTUNITIES & STRATEGIES

There have been many successes across the sector in the past few years, and many more initiatives are underway that will move us towards achieving our goals. However, work remains to be done to address gaps in the system. The following areas of opportunity and accompanying strategies are just a few achievable highlights that will contribute towards the sector goals.

### Timely justice system outcomes

Timely resolution of court and complementary processes and services increases access to justice, contributes to fairness and equity and supports public perception that the sector has integrity.

Virtual bail allows participants to remotely attend virtual courtrooms. Virtual bail allows trials to proceed without being interrupted by bail hearings. This change reduces travel for accused and lawyers increasing access to duty counsel. Virtual bail reduces displacement of accused people from their own communities and community supports.

### Overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system

Strengthening partnerships with Indigenous leadership and communities supports addressing systemic racism and improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples across the justice and public safety sector.

Indigenous Justice Centres take a holistic approach to client and community wellness by facilitating connections to supports such as Elder and Knowledge Keeper guidance, housing, mental health and addictions treatment, and employment services, in addition to providing legal advice, information and representation on both criminal and child protection matters.

### Supporting complex needs

Coordinating support services aids in the transition of leaving correctional centres for people vulnerable due to substance use.

Community Transition Teams offer support services for people leaving provincial correctional centres. Teams include social workers, nurses, peer support workers and Indigenous patient navigators, who will provide short-term substance-use or mental-health treatment, medication-assisted treatment and motivational interviewing, and will connect people to psychiatric, clinical and social supports, among other services.



## FUTURE AREA OF FOCUS

Integrating sector data for improved management – Integrating the collection, analysis and reporting of sector data supports more effective management of program and services in the sector. This additional evidence allows the sector to determine the value of future investments and the effectiveness of strategies. This area of focus emerged from the feedback provided by the Advisory Board during the planning process as well as the conversations that occurred during the 2023 Justice Summit.

**The justice and public safety sector** is defined as the publicly-funded programs and services that contribute to the administration of justice, to the delivery of justice services, and to public safety in British Columbia, within or outside government.

**The Justice and Public Safety Council** (the Council) is made up of public service executives responsible for programs dedicated to serving and improving the justice and public safety sector.

The **Advisory Board** is made up of key justice and public safety contributors, external to government, who provide a cross-section of perspectives, identify focus areas and provide insights into the sector's priorities.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### Goal 1: Time to conclusion in Provincial Court

Time to conclusion represents the median number of days between an adult criminal case's first appearance and its conclusion. Time to conclusion decreased to 165 days in 2022/23, from 169 days in 2021/22.

### Goal 2: Custodial Involvement Rate

1.7% of Indigenous people experienced custody between 2019/20 to 2020/21, compared to 0.2% of non-Indigenous people.

### Goal 3: Number of clients served through Community Transition Teams

The number of unique clients served through Community Transition Teams increased to 1,103 in 2023/24 (Q1-Q3) from 1,047 in 2022/23.

## SECTOR VALUES

Accountable

Addresses Structural Issues

Continuous Improvement

Community-Centred



# JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL 2024-27 STRATEGIC PLAN AT-A-GLANCE

SECTOR VALUES: **Accountable** | **Addresses Structural Issues** | **Continuous Improvement** | **Community-centred**

## Goal 1: Fair

### Objective 1.1 – Is accessible and people-centred

Provides culturally appropriate services, available regardless of finances and geographic location. Services are easier to navigate through design and modern technology.

### Objective 1.2 – Models integrity and natural justice

Treats people equitably in procedures and services.

### Objective 1.3 – Delivers outcomes on a timely basis

Reduces systemic delays, fosters early intervention for conflicts resolution, and embraces alternative methods such as restorative justice.

### Opportunity

#### Timely justice system outcomes -

Timely resolution of court and complementary processes and services increases access to justice, contributes to fairness and equity and supports public perception that the sector has integrity.

### Highlighted strategy

**Virtual bail** – allows participants to remotely attend virtual courtrooms. Virtual bail allows trials to proceed without being interrupted by bail hearings. This change reduces travel for accused and lawyers increasing access to duty counsel. Virtual bail reduces displacement of accused people from their own communities and community supports.

#### Performance Measure:

##### Time to conclusion in Provincial Court

Time to conclusion represents the median number of days between an adult criminal case's first appearance and its conclusion. Time to conclusion decreased to 165 days in 2022/23, from 169 days in 2021/22.

## Goal 2: Safe

### Objective 2.1 – Protects communities by reducing threats

Values the rights of victims, complainants and communities including preventing revictimization.

### Objective 2.2 – Addresses racism

Reforms systemic barriers that disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples and racialized communities.

### Objective 2.3 – Supports behavioural change

Provides early prevention services and intervenes after offenses to support behavioural change.

### Opportunity

#### Overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system -

Strengthening partnerships with Indigenous leadership and communities supports addressing systemic racism and improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples across the justice and public safety sector.

### Highlighted strategy

**Indigenous Justice Centres** – take a holistic approach to client and community wellness by facilitating connections to supports such as Elder and Knowledge Keeper guidance, housing, mental health and addictions treatment, and employment services, in addition to providing legal advice, information and representation on both criminal and child protection matters.

#### Performance Measure:

##### Custodial Involvement Rate

1.7% of Indigenous people experienced custody between 2019/20 – 2020/21, compared to 0.2% of non-Indigenous people.

## Goal 3: Empowering

### Objective 3.1 – Support emerging First Nations justice systems

Supports the development of First Nations justice systems through consistent and coordinated action.

### Objective 3.2 – Supports vulnerable people

Acknowledges people whose intersecting identity factors increase their vulnerability. This includes people with mental health and substance-use challenges, people leaving correctional centres, women and girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, children and youth and people who are in crisis.

### Opportunity

#### Supporting complex needs -

Coordinating support services aids in the transition of leaving correctional centres for people vulnerable due to substance use.

### Highlighted strategy

**Community Transition Teams** – offer support services for people leaving provincial correctional centres. Teams include social workers, nurses, peer support workers and Indigenous patient navigators, who will provide short-term substance-use or mental-health treatment, medication-assisted treatment and motivational interviewing, and will connect people to psychiatric, clinical and social supports, among other services.

#### Performance Measure:

##### Number of clients served through Community Transition Teams

The number of unique clients served through Community Transition Teams increased to 1,103 in 2023/24 (Q1-Q3) from 1,047 in 2022/23.

**Future area of focus:** Integrating sector data for improved management - Integrating the collection, analysis and reporting of sector data supports more effective management of program and services in the sector. This additional evidence allows the sector to determine the value of future investments and the effectiveness of strategies.

## APPENDIX 1: Justice and Public Safety Council

*Alphabetical order by last name*

- Barbara Carmichael, KC, Deputy Attorney General, Ministry of the Attorney General (Chair)
- Doug Scott, Deputy Solicitor General, Ministry of the Public Safety and Solicitor General (Vice-Chair)
- Glen Lewis, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policing and Security Branch, Ministry of the Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Chris Mah, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer, Information Services Branch, Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Jenny Manton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Court Services Branch, Ministry of the Attorney General
- Christine Massey, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
- Colleen Spier, KC, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Justice Secretariat, Ministry of the Attorney General
- Lisa Sweet, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corrections Branch, Ministry of the Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Taryn Walsh, Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Ministry of the Public Safety and Solicitor General

## APPENDIX 2: Advisory Board

*Alphabetical order by last name*

- Kirsten Barnes, BC First Nations Justice Council
- Ian Batey, Police Victim Services of British Columbia
- Michael Bryant, Legal Aid BC
- Karen Campbell, BC Law Institute
- Yvon Dandurand, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform
- Craig Hodge, Chair of the Community Safety Committee (UCBM)
- Stephanie Howell, Society for Children and Youth of BC
- Liza Hughes, BC Civil Liberties Association
- Ninu Kang, Ending Violence Association of BC
- Dr. Harjit Kaur, Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society
- Robert Lapper, Law and Public Policy, University of Victoria
- Michael Lucas, KC, Law Society of British Columbia
- Mark Medgyesi, John Howard Society of BC
- Jacqui Mendes, Community Legal Assistance Society
- Mark Miller, Connective
- Brenda Morrison, The Centre for Restorative Justice, Simon Fraser University
- Caroline Nevin, Courthouse Libraries BC
- Christianne Paras, Restorative Justice Association of BC

### **Judicial Observers:**

- Caroline Berkey, Provincial Court of British Columbia
- Heidi McBride, Supreme Court of British Columbia
- Sally Rudolf, Court of Appeal for British Columbia