

Community-based Residential Facilities: *One Component of Healthier and Safer Communities*



Partnering for Public Safety

Members of the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ) and the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) share a rich history providing Canadians with collaborative, innovative and effective contributions to community reintegration and public safety.

NAACJ Organizations and CSC engage in activities that focus on shared responsibilities and goals that increase the effectiveness of transitions for offenders under federal jurisdiction who are returning to their home communities. For decades they have established and refined well-established systems that enhance public safety.

There are approximately 175 Community-based Residential Facilities (CBRFs) operated by Non-Governmental Organizations that are contracted with CSC to provide accommodation, counselling and supervision services to federal offenders in the community.

CSC is responsible for supervising these offenders under conditional release until the end of their sentence, and the community-based agencies that provide programs and services in the community play a significant role in delivering meaningful and complementary services to support this transition.

CSC contracts with a number of NAACJ Member Agencies and other not for profit organizations and private corporations to house offenders under federal jurisdiction who have been released to the community on conditional release under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*.

Although CBRFs provide services and accommodations under the provisions of their contracts with the Correctional Service, CSC retains full responsibility for offenders under its jurisdiction.

Why it Matters

In 2004, the Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF), a network of more than 20 leading organizations in the Canadian non-profit and voluntary sector, conducted research to study the impacts of insurance and liability issues within the voluntary sector. Regional consultations and surveys found that:

- "Insurance costs are skyrocketing;
- Voluntary sector programming is being driven by insurance restrictions; [and]
- There is no relationship between claims and premiums."

The Insurance Bureau of Canada, also in 2004, began examining the availability of insurance alongside the VSF. Key collaborative issues identified to address included research, tort reform, risk management and other guidelines.

Unfortunately there is no federal investment strategy to address insurance barriers for community nonprofit agencies, as there is for most other sectors of society. As a result, the valuable core services provided by community-based agencies and CBRFs are often paralyzed by access to and costs of insurance.

Economic activity in the Canadian core non-profit sector grew 71.3% between 1997 and 2005, bringing the GDP up to 8.5% in 2006.

161,000 charities and non-profit organizations involve more than 6 million volunteers and 1.3 million staff in Canada, comprising 12% of Canada's economically active population - exceeding key Canadian industries including mining, oil, gas, manufacturing and retail.

Sources of information: Statistics Canada / Imagine Canada

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The Realities of Risk Management

More than just halfway houses, CBRFs provide the many necessary resources that enable people and communities to thrive, such as:

- Personal and employment counselling;
- Life skills training;
- Substance abuse treatment;
- Court assistance programs;
- Restorative Justice programs;
- Community out-reach;
- Institutional in-reach;
- Public information services; as well as,
- Linkages to other social service providers.

Total revenue in the core non-profit sector rose by a cumulative \$30.9 billion between 1997 and 2005, reaching \$68.8 billion in 2005.

Sources of information: Statistics Canada / Imagine Canada

CBRFs are governed by duly elected Boards of Directors, Acts of Incorporation, and Statutes, Charters along with other unique Municipal/Regional and Provincial operational policies that provide for safe and supportive structures. These ensure that a corporate umbrella including risk management practices is designed and implemented on the basis of each community's needs.

Additional minimum standards established by CSC also enhance the consistency of operation across the country. Critical security features, staffing, intake procedures and support systems are required at each facility under contract with CSC, which are audited at least once every three years.

Stringent risk mitigation strategies include:

- **24-hour awake staff supervision;**
- **Non-smoking policies;**
- **Ongoing staff training;**
- **Security features such as personal panic alarms, alarm systems; and,**
- **Contingency plans in case of emergency, including external oversight mechanisms.**

NAACJ, its Member Organizations and CSC have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from information-sharing, knowledge and communication that promotes awareness and public safety. By working together to understand each other's roles and responsibilities, our services can be strengthened thereby making our communities richer, healthier and more vibrant.

We encourage you to get to know the community partners in your area to help ensure a more profitable and sustainable environment for us all to flourish.

