

Aboriginal Justice Programs and Initiatives

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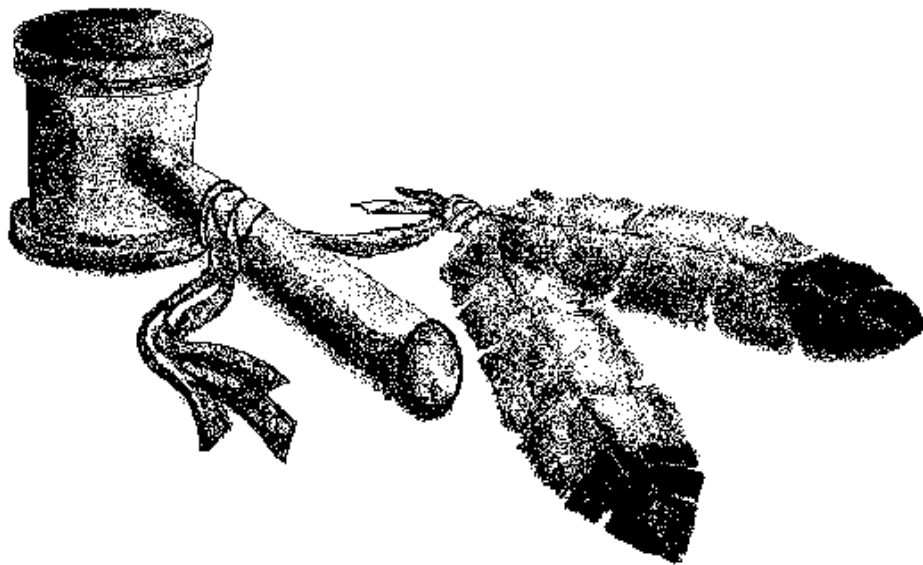


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Aboriginal Justice Initiatives

The Aboriginal Justice Initiatives unit was established by Alberta Justice in June 1993. In March 2001, Alberta Justice was divided into two departments: Alberta Justice and Attorney General which includes Communications, Court Services, Criminal Justice, Legal Services and Strategic Services; and Alberta Solicitor General which includes the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives unit, Communications, Correctional Services, Public Security, and Strategic Services.

The Aboriginal Justice Initiatives unit provides corporate support and advice to Alberta Solicitor General and Alberta Justice divisions concerning Aboriginal justice issues. The director is a member of the executive management teams and the business planning and strategic planning committees of both departments, and represents the departments on a number of inter-departmental and inter-governmental committees and initiatives.

The Aboriginal Justice Initiatives unit works with Aboriginal communities and organizations in developing justice initiatives that promote safe communities and respect for the law. It also coordinates Aboriginal justice initiatives for both departments. Examples of Solicitor General Aboriginal initiatives include First Nation policing, victim services, crime prevention initiatives, correctional centre programs, youth justice committees, cultural training, and community corrections programs. Examples of Alberta Justice Aboriginal initiatives include First Nations' court initiatives, community-based prosecution initiatives, cultural training, courtworker programs, human resource initiatives and legal services.

The Aboriginal Justice Initiatives unit also welcomes the opportunity to work with and support the courts and members of the judiciary concerning Aboriginal justice issues.

Aboriginal Justice Initiatives can be contacted by telephone at (780) 422-2779 or fax at (780) 427-2670, toll-free from anywhere in Alberta by dialing 310-0000.

Alberta Justice and Attorney General Criminal Justice Division

CROWN PROSECUTION INITIATIVES

Aboriginal Liaison Crown Prosecutor Program

The Criminal Justice Division has designated at least one Crown prosecutor in each of the 12 provincial Crown offices as an Aboriginal Liaison Crown Prosecutor. The role of the Aboriginal Liaison Crown prosecutor is to develop relationships and work with local First Nations and Metis communities to identify local criminal justice needs, to participate in developing community-based Aboriginal justice initiatives and to act as a resource to other Crown prosecutors on Aboriginal justice issues.

Cultural Training for Crown Prosecutors

The Criminal Justice Division is working to ensure Crown prosecutors in the Province receive Aboriginal cultural awareness training. Throughout 2001 and 2002, regularly scheduled training sessions were provided and most all of the Crown prosecutors in Alberta have received Aboriginal cultural awareness training. In addition, a unique four-day residential Aboriginal cultural camp specifically designed for groups of 20 Crown prosecutors was facilitated on two occasions by the Oldman River Cultural Centre of the Piikani First Nation and offered an enhanced cultural experience for the participants.

The Criminal Justice Division is also in the process of developing an advanced Aboriginal training component specifically designed to meet the working needs of Crown prosecutors involved in the Aboriginal justice area.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

Alexis Restorative Justice Initiative

A unique First Nations Court and Restorative Justice Initiative has been developed at the Alexis First Nation where Provincial Court Judges and Stony Plain Crown prosecutors share information about the criminal justice system and court procedures with the Alexis Justice Committee, Elders, and other community members. In turn, judges and prosecutors have the opportunity to build relationships with the Aboriginal community and learn about its culture, traditions, and social resources. This relationship building and sharing of knowledge supports a community-based approach to justice that promotes respect for the law and safe communities.

The Court, working with the community and justice stakeholders, has incorporated court-ordered supervision of offenders, interim reviews, and accountability to the community into the Alexis Restorative Justice process. The Justice Committee acts as a sentencing resource that augments pre-disposition or pre-sentence reports by identifying cultural and social resources available at the Reserve. The Justice Committee also assists the probation officer in monitoring the probation of some offenders, and in providing the Court with community reviews of the probationer's compliance. These interim reviews are an important and unique component of the Alexis Restorative Justice process.

Blood Tribe

The Blood Sentencing Panel, officially named Aisiimohki which means "to discipline" in the Blackfoot language, was developed as a community options program. It operates under the Blood Tribe Department of Health and is comprised of professionals from the Blood Tribe departments including Education, Corrections, Health, and Housing. Each panel involves an Elder as the panel relies upon and promotes traditional values.

The process used by the panel is formal and focused. The accused goes through an initial screening process and an assessment process. A structured program is subsequently developed. The Sentencing Panel provides the details of the program in the form of a written report to the Crown prosecutor. The prosecutor may then ask the Court to include the proposed program into the terms of a probation order. To support and encourage rehabilitation, the offender is provided assistance and direction through the process. A condition of being referred to the Aisiimohki is that the accused must plead "guilty" in court and accept responsibility for the criminal act.

The Blood Tribe has also established the Blood Tribe Youth Justice Committee which received ministerial sanction pursuant to Section 18 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. This initiative is also managed by the Blood Tribe Department of Health and is closely related to the Blood Tribe Sentencing Panel.

Both initiatives are designed to work in conjunction with the existing criminal justice system. Crown prosecutors act as “gatekeepers” and assess cases coming through the courts for referral. Such cases are then formally referred and it is the decision of the Panel to accept or refuse the case. The Lethbridge Crown office has worked closely with the Blood Tribe in the successful operation of these two community-based justice initiatives.

Edmonton Adult Aboriginal Sentencing Process

The Edmonton Crown Prosecutors’ Office and the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives unit have started working with Aboriginal justice stakeholders and community partners in the Edmonton area to develop an Adult Aboriginal Justice Committee. Similar in concept to the Edmonton Native Youth Justice Committee, the proposed committee will be made up of community volunteers and Elders and will provide a sentence advisory role to the Provincial Court of Alberta in Edmonton when Aboriginal offenders are involved.

Lethbridge Urban Sentencing Circle

The Lethbridge Crown Prosecutors’ Office has also been closely involved in developing an innovative urban Aboriginal initiative, the Lethbridge Urban Sentencing Circle. In November 1999, two young Aboriginal residents became the first accused persons to be brought before the Circle. The process was inaugurated with the cooperation of the Provincial Court of Alberta, the Lethbridge Crown Prosecutors’ Office, the Lethbridge Police Service and the Lethbridge Community College. The Circle continues to operate successfully.

O’Chiese Band

The O’Chiese Band Council and the Red Deer Crown Prosecutors’ Office have resolved to build and enhance their working relationship and together promote safe communities and respect for the law.

Peigan Nation Youth Traditional Justice Circle

The Piikani Nation established the Peigan Nation Youth Traditional Justice Circle which was sanctioned as a Youth Justice Committee pursuant to Section 18 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. The Circle functions in accordance with Piikani traditions and receives youth referrals at various stages including pre-charge diversion, post-charge diversion or after a guilty plea is entered. In each case, the Circle convenes and a report is submitted to the prosecutor for presentation to the court. The Circle utilizes a very formal process and relies on volunteers including tribal Elders. The Lethbridge Crown Prosecutors’ Office continues to work closely with the Piikani Nation on this successful initiative.

Red Deer Community Justice Forum

Crown prosecutors from the Red Deer office have met with community Aboriginal service agencies to establish a Youth Justice Committee for Red Deer Aboriginal youth. Currently, several Elders and community members have expressed interest in functioning in a community justice forum format and accepting diversion referrals from the Crown's office.

Siksika Nation

The Provincial Court of Alberta sits at the Siksika Nation, and is served by a Judge of Aboriginal heritage and a dedicated Crown prosecutor from the Calgary Crown Prosecutors' Office. This arrangement permits the Crown prosecutor to form a close working relationship with the Nation and supports the provision of culturally sensitive prosecution services.

Southern Alberta Institute of Restorative Justice

The Southern Alberta Institute of Restorative Justice started in the spring of 2001. The Lethbridge Crown office was instrumental in developing this initiative with both Alberta Justice and the Lethbridge Community College providing funding.

One of the main goals of the Institute is to address the specific needs of Aboriginal communities and individuals through the promotion of culturally specific conflict resolution models, with a particular emphasis on the needs of Aboriginal youth.

Program deliverables for the initiative include developing an inventory of all restorative justice programs and processes in Southern Alberta with associated contacts and facilitators along with offering formal training opportunities for all facilitators.

Tsuu T'ina Nation Court and Peacemaker Initiative

The Tsuu T'ina Nation Court and Peacemaker initiative blends Aboriginal justice traditions, including an Office of the Peacemaker, with the Provincial Court of Alberta. An Aboriginal judge, Crown prosecutor, and clerk serve the Tsuu T'ina Nation Court which commenced sitting on October 6, 2000. The Calgary Crown Prosecutors' Office is a full participant in and supporter of the initiative and has assigned a representative to the Advisory Committee that supports the Tsuu T'ina Nation Court and Peacemaker Initiative.

Court Services Division

Aboriginal Justices of the Peace

As recommended by the Cawsey Commission in the publication *Justice on Trial - Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and Its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta* (1991), the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta or his designate has the authority to supervise Aboriginal Justices of the Peace. Supervision by the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court enhances the judicial independence of these positions.

Aboriginal Provincial Court Judges

Since the completion of the *Justice on Trial - Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and Its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta*, three Provincial Court Judges of Aboriginal heritage have been appointed. They are the Honourable Thomas R. Goodson, the Honourable Richard (Dick) S. Fowler and the Honourable Leonard (Tony) S. Mandamin.

Court of Queen's Bench Sittings in High Level

The Court of Queen's Bench commenced sittings in High Level in October 1992. Sittings are scheduled on an "as-needed" basis and substantially reduce travel distances for individuals residing in nearby First Nation and Metis communities.

Alexis Provincial Court

In 1993, the judiciary, Crown prosecutor and the community at Alexis began working together towards developing a restorative court process. The court model that resulted promotes community involvement in the court process. A local justice committee provides recommendations for sentencing options as well as provides assistance to the court in identifying appropriate community-based alternatives. The justice committee also provides assistance in monitoring the probation of some offenders and in providing the court with "interim reviews" of their progress.

Provincial Court sittings are held twice a month in the community of Glenevis, on the Alexis First Nation.

Provincial Court Sitings on the Siksika Nation

On January 8, 1998, provincial court sittings were moved from Gleichen to the courthouse constructed by the Siksika Nation on Siksika Nation lands. The provincial court at the Siksika Nation hears criminal, traffic, child welfare, young offender, by-law offences, and civil matters. The court is in session approximately five days each month as a circuit of the Drumheller Provincial Court.

Training Members of Aboriginal Communities as Judicial Clerks

In 1996, an Aboriginal clerk of the court was recruited and trained to serve the Drumheller court circuit, including the Siksika Nation. Since then, two half-time Aboriginal judicial clerks have been recruited and are employed at the Tsuu T'ina Court and Peacemaker Initiative.

Tsuu T'ina Nation Court and Peacemaker Initiative

The Tsuu T'ina Nation Court and Peacemaker initiative blends Aboriginal justice traditions, including an Office of the Peacemaker, with the Provincial Court of Alberta. The judge, crown prosecutor, judicial clerks and peacemakers are all Aboriginal people. The Tsuu T'ina Court has jurisdiction over offences that have taken place on the Tsuu T'ina Nation. The first sitting of this Court was on October 6, 2000.

Local Peacemakers and Elders are directly involved in the initiative and are referred cases that have been diverted from the criminal justice system as well as cases that require dispute resolution. Cases can be referred to the Peacemaker's office by the Provincial Court, the police, schools, the Tsuu T'ina Band Administration or by a community member.

Other Provincial Court Sitings in Aboriginal Communities

Regular sittings of Provincial Court are held at the Dene Tha First Nation in Assumption (Chateh Reserve) throughout the year. This substantially reduces travel for residents who would normally be required to attend court in High Level nearly 100 kilometers away.

An agreement is also in place for the Fort McMurray circuit court to have Provincial Court sittings at the Janvier Nation as required.

Strategic Services Division

ABORIGINAL COURTWORK PROGRAM ¹

Aboriginal Family Courtwork Program

The Family Courtwork Program is funded entirely by the Alberta Government, and provides an opportunity for families appearing before the Provincial Court of Alberta Family Courts to have access to culturally appropriate, reliable assistance during the court process.

The Family Courtwork Program is available at all family court circuit points in Alberta. In areas with a greater concentration of Aboriginal people and in larger population centres, courtwork services are provided for each court sitting. In other areas, courtworkers attend court on an “on-call” basis, if a client requests that they be present.

Aboriginal Criminal Courtwork Program

The Aboriginal Courtwork Program is cost-shared through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada. The Program provides Aboriginal people with counselling (other than legal) in relation to court procedures, their rights, and the availability of legal aid and other resources.

The mandate of the Aboriginal Courtwork Program is to facilitate and enhance access to justice by assisting an Aboriginal person, who has been charged with a criminal offence and is before the Criminal Division of the Provincial Court of Alberta, to understand the system and its processes.

In four Aboriginal communities, courtwork programs are provided through agreements between Alberta Justice and community corrections societies or justice commissions created by these communities. They include:

Kainai Community Corrections Society
Siksika Justice Commission
Tsuu T’ina Nation/Stoney Corrections Society
Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society

In other Alberta locations, Native Counselling Services of Alberta provides courtwork services for Aboriginal people facing criminal charges.

¹ All Aboriginal people (Indian, Inuit or Metis) are eligible for courtwork services, regardless of their status or place of residence.

Alberta Solicitor General Correctional Services Division

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Aboriginal Addictions Treatment Programs

Specialized addictions services are provided within the context of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual traditions by contracted Community Residential Centres for offenders released on temporary absence or as part of an open custody sentence. The centres include Poundmaker's Lodge (St.Albert), Poundmaker's Adolescent Treatment Centre (St.Paul) and the Bonnyville Indian/Metis Rehabilitation Centre. Funding is provided by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and the Alberta Solicitor General.

Aboriginal Minimum Security Camps

By way of an agreement between the Alberta Solicitor General, Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Environment and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association (Zones 1, 2, 5 and 6) in 1993, the Metis Nation Wilderness Camp located in Lac La Biche, accommodates Metis, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in a minimum security camp setting.

The Westcastle minimum security camp has been operating since the early 1970's. Located west of Pincher Creek, the 20-bed minimum security camp has operated under contract with Native Counselling Services since 1980.

Both programs accommodate male offenders with programs emphasising Aboriginal culture, substance abuse, lifeskills and employment skills. Work programs include crews working for local communities, provincial and federal parks as well as other sites such as the Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump and the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre.

Aboriginal Summer Cultural Camps

Since the summer of 1990, Alberta Solicitor General has assisted a number of First Nations or Metis communities in Alberta in organizing and providing financial support to Aboriginal summer cultural camps for youth. As part of this crime prevention initiative, local youth, under the direction of Elders, are given the opportunity to experience Aboriginal culture, customs and spirituality in a traditional wilderness setting, and to understand how they can contribute to safe communities.

Since the inception of the first camp in 1990, youth from Bigstone Cree Nation, Four Nations at Hobbema, O'Chiese First Nation, Saddle Lake First Nation, Siksika Nation, Stoney Bands, Sunchild First Nation, Tall Cree First Nation, Tsuu T'ina Nation and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association Zones 1 and 2 have attended summer camps.

Assistant Probation Officer Program

Operating since 1979, the Assistant Probation Officer Program recruits and contracts with private individuals at various locations across the province to deliver community corrections services. Services are primarily provided to adult offenders in remote or isolated communities and reserves. Approximately 60% of Assistant Probation Officers are Aboriginal, with most residing in Aboriginal communities.

Community Supervision Program - Aboriginal Offenders

This program provides supervision and counselling to Aboriginal persons with probation, temporary absence, pre-trial or fine option status. Staffed by Aboriginal probation officers, program delivery emphasizes the culture and traditions of local Aboriginal communities.

The program is funded by the Alberta Solicitor General through formal agreements with the following societies and commissions:

Kainai Community Corrections Society
Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Siksika Justice Commission
Tsuu T'ina Nation/ Stoney Corrections Society
Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society.

Kainai Community Correctional Centre

This community-based correctional program is operated by the Kainai Community Corrections Society and involves the operation of a 24 bed minimum-security correctional centre on the Blood Reserve at Standoff, Alberta. Correctional centre programs include an Elders program, lifeskills, a community service work program, hobbies/crafts, recreation and release planning services. The program employs members of the Blood Tribe as well as Aboriginal people from surrounding communities who are trained to Correctional Services Division standards.

Kochee Mena Young Offender Group Home

This open-custody group home is located in Edmonton and is operated by Native Counselling Services of Alberta under a contract for services to Alberta Solicitor General. Kochee Mena, which means “try again” in the Cree language, provides specialized self-contained, live-in suite accommodations in a residential community. Aboriginal cultural and spiritual traditions are emphasized in teaching youth independent living skills.

Youth Justice Committees

Youth Justice Committees are established under Section 18 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* to assist in any aspect of the administration of the Act or in any programs or services for young offenders. Currently, throughout Alberta there are 98 formally designated committees that are involved in the administration of the Alternative Measures Program or in providing a sentence advisory role to the local youth court judge. Youth justice committees provide an avenue for the sentiments of the community to be reflected in dispositions and provide a holistic approach to dealing with youth.

Aboriginal communities with formally designated committees are:

Alexander First Nation	Kikino Metis Settlement
Alexis Indian Band	O'Chiese Band
Bigstone Cree Nation	Paul Band
Blood Tribe (Stand Off)	Peavine Metis Settlement
Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement	Peerless Lake
Calling Lake	Piikani Nation
Elizabeth Metis Settlement	Saddle Lake First Nation
Enoch Cree Nation	Samson Cree Nation (Nipisihkopahk)

CENTRE-BASED INITIATIVES

Elders Visitation Program

Through this program, Elders are contracted to both adult and young offender centres to provide spiritual guidance, counselling as well as conduct cultural and spiritual ceremonies and activities. They provide support to Native Program Coordinators and are considered an important component of correctional centre programs. Currently, Elders provide contracted services to centres located in Edmonton, Calgary, Fort Saskatchewan, Lethbridge and Peace River.

Native Program Coordinators

The Correctional Services Division has established five full-time Native Program Coordinator positions for the purpose of providing Aboriginal programming for offenders in four adult correctional centres and one young offender centre. The coordinators work closely with local Elders to promote spiritual and cultural activities within the correctional centres such as Sweatlodge Ceremonies, Sweetgrass, Pipe Ceremonies, Pow-Wows, Round Dances and Healing Circles.

Native Program Co-ordinators are currently employed at the following centres:

Peace River Correctional Centre
Edmonton Young Offender Centre
Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre
Calgary Correctional Centre
Lethbridge Correctional Centre.

The Native Program Co-ordinator from Peace River Correctional Centre supports programs at the Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre. Similarly, the Native Program Co-ordinator from Calgary Correctional Centre supports programs at the Calgary Remand and the Calgary Young Offender Centre. The Native Program Co-ordinator from Lethbridge Correctional Centre supports programs at the Lethbridge Young Offender Centre.

Public Security Division

FIRST NATION POLICING INITIATIVES

Alexis Community Tripartite Agreement

In April 2003, the Alexis First Nation, the RCMP and the Alberta Solicitor General signed the first Community Tripartite Agreement in Alberta. The Community Tripartite Agreement provides the Alexis First Nation with full-time police service from two members from the RCMP First Nation Community Policing Service. An advisory committee comprised of community representatives, provides advise to the RCMP on community policing initiatives. The Community Tripartite Agreement expires on March 31, 2006.

Blood Tribe Police Service

Established in 1989, the Blood Tribe Police has full policing responsibility for the Blood Tribe. The police service operates with 21 officers. The Tripartite Policing Agreement expires on March 31, 2004.

Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council

Established in 1995 under a Tripartite Policing Agreement with the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council, the Lesser Slave Lake Regional Police Service is a developing police service and provides policing for eight member First Nations. The police service operates with 12 officers. The Tripartite Policing Agreement expires on March 31, 2004.

Louis Bull Police Service

Established in 1987, the Louis Bull Police Service has full policing responsibility for the Louis Bull Band. The police service operates with five officers. The Tripartite Policing Agreement expires on March 31, 2004.

North Peace Tribal Council

Established in 1995 under the Tripartite Agreement with the North Peace Tribal Council, the North Peace Tribal Police Service is a developing police service in partnership with the RCMP and provides policing to the Tallcree First Nation and Little Red River Cree Nation. The police service operates with five officers. The RCMP Fort Vermilion Detachment Commander acts as the Chief of Police. The Tripartite Policing Agreement expires on March 31, 2004.

Tsuu T'ina Nation Police Service

Established in 1995, the Tsuu T'ina Nation Police Service is a developing police service and provides policing for the Tsuu T'ina Nation. The police service is funded for seven Tsuu T'ina Nation officers. The RCMP Tsuu T'ina Detachment operates out of the Tsuu T'ina Nation Police Service building and has five RCMP officers. A satellite Tsuu T'ina Nation Community Police Office has also been established in Black Bear Crossing. The Tripartite Policing Agreement expires March 31, 2004.

CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Aboriginal Crime Prevention Program

As described below, crime prevention coordinators work with the communities, community service agencies and local police to identify crime patterns and causal factors. The coordinators then make recommendations for community program developments in an effort to mitigate the effects of these patterns and causal factors.

The Alberta Solicitor General provides crime prevention funding to the following societies and councils:

- **Kainai Community Corrections Society**

The fulltime crime prevention coordinator's position is community-based and community directed, and has been responsible for developing local crime prevention initiatives, particularly for youth on the Blood Tribe Reserve since 1989. Over the past 14 years, the coordinator has worked with close to 60 volunteers and service providers in promoting and facilitating crime prevention.

- **Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Police Council (via Lesser Slave Lake Regional Police Service)**

The crime prevention coordinator is responsible for working with eight First Nation communities in developing and delivering crime prevention programs to meet the needs of these communities. There is a comprehensive focus of working with youth, Elders, community members and service providers in promoting and facilitating crime prevention.

- **Tsuu T'ina Nation/Stoney Corrections Society**

The crime prevention coordinator works primarily in the areas of youth crime prevention and acts as an inter-agency liaison with the Tsuu T'ina Nation, the three communities of the Stoney Nation at Morley, and at Eden Valley. Workshops, training programs and an annual camp for youth are but a few of the crime prevention initiatives that have been established in these communities.

- **Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society**

Two half-time crime prevention coordinators monitor crime trends and develop programs for the member communities of the Yellowhead Tribal Council (Alexander, Alexis, Enoch, Sunchild and O'Chiese). The coordinators have facilitated workshops on a variety of topics including gangs, spousal violence, and restorative justice. Similar to the work of the other Aboriginal crime prevention coordinators, the needs of the entire community including those of the youth and Elders are recognized and incorporated into crime prevention programs.

- **Metis Settlement General Council/Region 18 Child and Family Services Program**

Alberta Solicitor General worked with the National Crime Prevention Strategy, Metis Settlements General Council and Child and Family Services Authority Region 18 in developing an Aboriginal Crime Prevention Program for the eight Metis Settlements in the province. In 2002/2003, funding was obtained from the National Crime Prevention Strategy (Community Mobilization Program), co-administered by the federal government and Alberta Solicitor General to allow community justice workers serving the Settlements the opportunity to develop and implement crime prevention initiatives.

VICTIMS SERVICES INITIATIVES

Victim Services Units

The **Wabasca Regional Victim Services Society** began operations in July 1999. The unit provides services to the communities of Wabasca, Desmarais and Sandy Lake in association with the local police detachment. The program is unique in that it employs an Aboriginal Co-ordinator and operates with twelve Aboriginal advocates who provide information, assistance and support to victims in the region.

The **Lesser Slave Lake Regional Police Service**, which provides policing services to the Sawridge, Swan River, Driftpile, Sucker Creek and Kapawen'no First Nations, initiated a pilot project for victim services in October 2002. The Victims Services Enhancement project, which employs an Aboriginal Co-ordinator, is specifically geared to establish a structure to address the needs of crime victims of the five First Nations. The project will provide a consistent response to the needs and concerns of victims of crime in the communities with consideration for their unique culture and economic base.

The **Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove & District** is expanding its services to victims of crime to include the Enoch Cree Nation and the Paul Band. An Aboriginal Resource Worker has been hired to ensure that aboriginal victims of crime receive culturally sensitive information and support.

Pincher Creek RCMP Victim Services began providing services to victims of crime of the Piikani Nation in 2002. The program also serves the Town of Pincher Creek, the M.D. of Pincher Creek, Brocket, Waterton Lakes National Park and Beaver Mines.

Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society has been providing services to victims of crime in the Rocky Mountain House RCMP detachment area since 1995. The Unit has also trained Band members of the O'Chiese First Nation and the Sunchild First Nation in suicide prevention. The Suicide Prevention Community Wellness Committee is co-chaired by the Victim Services Unit Coordinator. Committee members are also utilized when victim services involvement is needed by the two First Nations.

Louis Bull Police Service Victim Service Unit has provided services to victims of crime since 1998. An Aboriginal Co-ordinator provides information, assistance and support to members of the Louis Bull Band when the need arises.

General

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment Initiatives

Recruitment advertising that targets potential Aboriginal employees takes place on a continuous basis. In addition, unsolicited resumes from Aboriginal applicants are distributed throughout the department. Literature on the interview process is also made available to Aboriginal applicants.

Contracted Societies

Human Resource Services are provided on an ongoing basis to contracted Aboriginal Societies. These societies include:

Kainai Community Corrections Society
Metis Wilderness Camp Society
Siksika Justice Commission
Tsuu T'ina Nation/Stoney Corrections Society
Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society

Promotion of the Departments to the Aboriginal Community

Human Resource Services has provided assistance in having staff of Aboriginal descent attend career workshops and fairs to promote the departments to potential Aboriginal employees. Employees of Aboriginal descent have been nominated for the Ambassador program through the Personnel Administration office.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Specialized training required for successfully implementing and developing Aboriginal program initiatives is provided by the Alberta Justice/ Solicitor General Staff College. Examples of this are the Special Constable Training Program which includes First Nation Special Constables, and the Camp Officer Basic Training which provides training for Aboriginal communities operating adult and young offender custody camps. In addition, Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training is available to all employees of Alberta Justice and Alberta Solicitor General.

Police officers employed by First Nation police services receive training through the RCMP Academy in Regina, therefore, receive the same standard of training as a regular RCMP member.

BURSARIES

Robert C. Carson Memorial Bursary

A bursary program has been developed for Aboriginal students enrolled in the Law Enforcement or Criminal Justice Diploma programs at Lethbridge Community College, Mount Royal College and Grant MacEwan Community College. Also eligible for the bursary program are students enrolled in the Law program at the University of Calgary as well as the Law and Criminology programs at the University of Alberta. The bursary is intended for students in their second year of the program who have a high grade point average. A total of five \$500 bursaries are available, one for each of the above-mentioned learning institutions. Students can apply through the registrar office of their learning institution.

Other

Aboriginal Policy Framework

In September 2000, following extensive Aboriginal community consultations, the Alberta Government adopted an Aboriginal Policy Framework 'Strengthening Relationships'. The Aboriginal Policy Framework sets out the basic structure that Alberta will follow in developing new policies that may impact the Aboriginal people of Alberta.

The Aboriginal Justice Initiatives Unit participated in the community consultations and in the interdepartmental committee that assisted in developing the draft Aboriginal Policy Framework.

The Aboriginal Policy Framework 'Strengthening Relationships' can be found at http://www.aand.gov.ab.ca/PDFs/final_strengthrelations.pdf

Aboriginal Policy Initiative

The Aboriginal Policy Initiative is one of four cross-ministry priorities identified in the 2003/2004 Alberta Government Business Plan. As a cross-ministry priority, all government departments actively support the achievement of the corporate goals through their business plans and collaborative approaches.

The Aboriginal Justice Initiatives Unit participates, on behalf of Alberta Solicitor General and Alberta Justice, in all committees established under the Aboriginal Policy Initiative, and works collaboratively across departments towards the achievement of the goals outlined for the Aboriginal Policy Initiative and the other cross-ministry priorities.

Additional information on the Aboriginal Policy Initiative can be found at www.finance.gov.ab.ca/publications/budget/budget2002/govbp.html#16

Community Justice Policy

Alberta Solicitor General has developed a Community Justice Policy to support community-based justice initiatives. The policy requires that offenders be accountable to victims and communities for their actions and that more opportunities be available for victims and communities to have a positive role in the criminal justice system. While this is not exclusively an Aboriginal justice initiative, the idea of community-based justice has many connections to restorative justice, which has its roots in Aboriginal traditions and culture.

Summit on Justice

Since the Alberta Justice Summit was held in January 1999, action has been taken on a number of recommendations from the Summit including those relating to Aboriginal justice.

The purpose of the summit was to provide a forum where members of the public could provide input and share their views on the justice system. Delegates representing stakeholder groups were invited to participate and a number of additional delegates were randomly selected from the public at large. First Nation, Metis and Inuit concerns crossed all of the topic areas.

A status report on government activities in response to the Summit can be found at <http://www.gov.ab.ca/just/ReportCard/intro.htm>

Related Federal Initiatives

Aboriginal Justice Strategy

The Federal Aboriginal Justice Strategy was established on April 1, 1996 for a term of five years as a federal/provincial cost-shared program to assist and support Aboriginal communities in certain justice initiatives. Alberta participates in the federal Aboriginal Justice Strategy via a Memorandum of Understanding that recognizes certain in-kind contributions of Alberta Justice, Alberta Solicitor General, and other departments as Alberta's contribution. The term of the strategy was recently extended until March 31, 2007.

The following community initiatives are currently funded through this federal/provincial cost-shared initiative:

- Metis Settlements General Council/Region 18 Child and Family Services Authority Justice Initiative
- Miywasin Society of Aboriginal Services Justice Program
- Saddle Lake Restorative Justice Project
- Tsuu T'ina Nation Peacemaker-Justice Initiative
- Yellowhead Tribal Custom Advisory Panels

Further information on the Federal Aboriginal Justice Strategy can be found at the following website: canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/ajln/strat.html.

Community Mobilization Program (National Crime Prevention Strategy)

The National Crime Prevention Strategy aims to help communities develop programs and partnerships that will prevent crime and victimization from happening in the first place by focusing on risk factors or the root cause of crime. This approach is commonly referred to as Crime Prevention through Social Development.

Under the National Crime Prevention Strategy, the Community Mobilization Program provides over \$2 million in funding for 2002/2003 to Alberta for community-level crime prevention projects that address the "root causes" of crime. In addition to priorities of children, youth and women's personal safety, the Strategy has a key focus on Aboriginal peoples. Alberta Solicitor General co-administers this program with the federal government. Since 1998, 203 Alberta projects have received over \$7.5 million in funding through the Community Mobilization Program.

The following website provides further information on Community Mobilization Program: <http://www.prevention.gc.ca/>