

**THE HONOURABLE LOUIS SEBERT  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

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**PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO INMATES IN NWT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

Mr. Speaker, our government committed in its mandate to pursue innovative ways to prevent and reduce crime. Today, I want to share with you progress on this work, as well as offer clarity about the way programming is provided to both sentenced and remanded inmates here in the Northwest Territories.

Following the release of the 2015 Auditor General's report on the Corrections Service, the Department of Justice underwent a full review of the programs and services provided to individuals in the care and custody of the Corrections Service. In this review, the Department considered feedback from Members of the Legislative Assembly, past and present inmates, and the recommendations from the 2015 Auditor's report.

This review highlighted programs being delivered in our facilities needed more attention to address the reasons individuals found themselves in contact with the criminal justice system. We also found that substance abuse is the most prevalent issue requiring intervention. As well, violence, sexual offences and relationship violence were issues also identified. Most importantly, we found that the lengthy programming being provided based on federal correctional designs did not meet the needs of our inmates and offenders due to the short time most of them are in our facilities. As a result of these findings, the Corrections Service made fundamental changes to create a new program model in 2016, including ensuring that both remanded and sentenced offenders were able to access programming. Programs were designed to target areas of substance abuse, violence and relationship violence.

The new model addressing the likely causes to criminal behavior was developed to be delivered not only in Corrections facilities, but also throughout the territories in the Community Probation offices. Programs at our corrections facilities recognize the importance of Indigenous cultures and traditions. The Substance Abuse Management, Violence Prevention, Living without Violence, and the Respectful Relationships programs, are all evidence-based programs aimed at supporting inmates to become aware of the triggers that lead them to engage in unhealthy and unsafe behaviours. All NWT Corrections programs integrated Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered. This is accomplished through the input of Elders, Traditional Liaison Officers and Indigenous staff.

Since 2016, over 500 participants have successfully completed programs using this new model. Community probation offices have delivered 47 programs in 12 different communities in the NWT, which has resulted in 133 community clients successfully completing programs to target their identified needs.

Since its launch in 2016, the Substance Abuse Management program has been delivered 64 times, including 30 times in probation offices in Yellowknife, Behchokò, Whatì, Hay River, Fort Providence, Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Inuvik, Fort Good Hope and Fort McPherson. The Corrections Service also delivers these programs specifically for women; at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Women's Unit and the Yellowknife Probation Office.

Since its launch in 2017, the Violence Prevention and Living Without Violence program has been delivered 38 times, including 12 times in probation offices in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, Inuvik, Fort Good Hope and Fort McPherson.

Since its launch in 2017, the Respectful Relationships program has been delivered 21 times including 10 times in probation offices in Yellowknife, Behchokò, Hay River, Fort Liard, and Inuvik.

As of March 2019, the Department has implemented the Northern Addictions Sessions at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre. Reports and feedback has been positive for this delivery model. Work is currently underway in the development of the Northern Violence Prevention and Northern Healthy Relationships sessions which will be delivered with the Living Without Violence and Respectful Relationships program.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of providing a method of continuous learning, development and practice of cognitive, behavioural and social skills programming, which is why our dedicated staff have developed a maintenance program targeting those offenders who have completed one or more of the programs that address the causes of criminal behaviour.

Changes have been made to the release planning process that make it possible for case managers to look for community programming options for inmates upon release. Where possible, clients are matched with similar programming so that they can continue to build the skills that are needed to prevent and reduce crime and harm in their lives.

We recognize the importance of offering programs and opportunities that support inmates in meeting their educational goals. Inmates have access to programming that includes; adult literacy, basic education and upgrading, high school and exam preparation, trades exam preparation, life and employment ready skills, and assistance with pursuing or registration into post-secondary studies.

I am pleased to report that over the past year approximately 130 inmates have accessed the educational programming available within our adult correctional facilities.

Mr. Speaker, our goal is to prepare inmates for their rehabilitation and reintegration back into their communities. The Department of Justice continues to ensure that the programming and supports that we offer help to address the individual needs of offenders. Through the efforts of our dedicated Corrections Service staff and the continued partnerships we have with other departments and stakeholders, we are making a difference in lives of Northerners and are helping to create safer, healthier communities in the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.