

## Results at a glance

# Evaluation of the Funding to Support Community Justice Centres

In 2020, the Government of Canada committed \$28.6 million over five years for Funding to Support Community Justice Centres (the CJC Initiative). The CJC Initiative funded Community Justice Centre (CJC) pilot projects in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario. It also assisted other provinces and territories in holding community engagement sessions to explore how the CJC concept could be implemented in their jurisdiction.

Although CJs take different forms, they aim to bring together justice, health, and social services to facilitate a coordinated approach that addresses the root causes of crime, breaks the cycle of reoffending, and improves public safety and well-being. The design of each CJC is driven by individual communities, to enable them to address the unique justice system challenges they face.

In addition, the CJC Initiative featured an Ad Hoc Committee that served as a forum to share information on the development and implementation of CJC pilots and community engagement sessions, as well as information on early outcomes. Insights from the pilot CJs and from provincial and territorial engagement sessions supported progress towards developing a framework for a potential national CJC program.

### WHAT WAS FOUND

- The CJC Initiative addresses ongoing challenges in the criminal justice system by responding to the overrepresentation of certain populations and by targeting the root causes of crime.
- The Initiative supported CJs at various stages of development, from implementation to the expansion of existing services and enabled each CJC to adapt its model to the needs of its target populations.
- The CJC Initiative's design provided the necessary flexibility to support the pilot CJs and the exploration of the CJC approach in other jurisdictions. The design and implementation of the funded CJs reflect best practices in the literature and generated insights to inform the development of a framework for a potential national CJC program.
- The Initiative increased funding recipients' capacity to offer integrated activities and services to target population groups. CJs developed networks that connect justice system actors with a broad range of social service partners in areas

that might not traditionally have a role in criminal justice interventions, such as health, education, employment, and housing.

- The funded CJs increased access to community social supports that address root causes of crime. CJs provide various supports, either directly or through referrals, to address key issues linked to high risks for criminality, such as poverty, trauma, and racism. While limited, there is also evidence that connecting participants to wrap-around community social supports reduced their level of criminal involvement and recidivism rates.
- Available data indicated that CJs support the use of alternative measures and restorative justice, with their role ranging from directly determining approaches, to connecting participants to the relevant community resources.
- The Initiative – through the Ad Hoc Committee – supported progress toward developing a framework for a potential national program. The Ad Hoc Committee also supported capacity development by serving as a forum that facilitates learning from other jurisdictions' experiences, including challenges and promising practices.
- The flexible approach to managing the Initiative, which allowed for adjustments to accommodate emerging issues and delays, enabled it to achieve its objectives within its limited time horizon of five years.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations as the Funding to Support CJs was implemented as expected and there are no identified barriers to the achievement of expected results.

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**ABOUT THE EVALUATION:** The Evaluation of the Funding to Support CJC was conducted by the Department of Justice Canada's Evaluation Branch and covered fiscal years 2021-22 to 2024-25. It examined relevance, design and delivery, and effectiveness in accordance with the Treasury Board's *Policy on Results* (2016).

