



British Columbia

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL

2025–2028 Sector Strategic Plan

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 the system to administer justice and deliver public safety services and programs in a way that is culturally safe for everyone.



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](#).

The Council acknowledges the valuable 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.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The 2025–2028 Strategic Plan sets out the strategic planning priorities for the sector and builds on the 2024–2027 Plan. To help guide the vision for the sector, an Advisory Board of key justice and public safety contributors provided a cross-section of perspectives on and insights into the sector. The Council's plan pulls from past Justice Summits and reflects feedback from partner engagement surveys and from the Advisory Board to highlight some of the sector's top priorities for the next three years.



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.

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.

SAFE

Protects communities by reducing threats

Values the rights of victims, complainants and communities and prevents 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.

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 in Provincial Court reports the median time to conclude criminal adult and youth cases based on the number of days between the case's first scheduled 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

Custodial involvement rate measures the proportion of a specific population experiencing incarceration over a reference period. 1.14% of Indigenous people experienced custody between 2022-2023, compared to 0.12% 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 1,525 in 2023/24 from 1,047 in 2022/23.

SECTOR VALUES

Accountable

**Addresses
Structural Issues**

**Continuous
Improvement**

Community-Centred



JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL 2025-2028 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 reports the median time to conclude criminal adult and youth cases based on the number of days between the case's first scheduled 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 measures the proportion of a specific population experiencing incarceration over a reference period. 1.14% of Indigenous people experienced custody between 2022-2023, compared to 0.12% 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 1,525 in 2023/24 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 (Chair), Ministry of Attorney General
- Tara Richards, Deputy Solicitor General (Vice-Chair), Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Glen Lewis, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policing and Security Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Chris Mah, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer, Information Systems Branch, Ministry of Attorney General
- Jenny Manton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Court Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General
- Colleen Spier, KC, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Justice Secretariat, Ministry of Attorney General
- Taryn Walsh, Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Ministry of 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