

Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

2

Main points	20
Introduction	21
Financial overview	21
Audit conclusions and findings	22
Control of cash needed.....	22
Revenue policies and procedures need improvement.....	23
Business continuity plan required	24
Better control over employees' pay needed	25
Processes to rehabilitate adult inmates	26
Background	26
Audit objective, conclusion, and recommendations.....	27
Findings—rehabilitating sentenced adult inmates	29
Identifying evidenced-based practices to rehabilitate inmates	29
Using rehabilitation strategies relevant to inmate needs.....	30
Delivering rehabilitation programs at the right time.....	32
Selected references.....	34
Status of other outstanding recommendations of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.....	35

Main points

The Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing (Ministry) needs to follow its policies and procedures to promptly reconcile its recorded bank balances to the bank's records. The Ministry also needs to develop policies and procedures to record its revenues accurately and completely. It needs to control employees' pay and complete its business continuity plan.

In Saskatchewan, the crime rate is high and former inmates often re-offend after their release into the community. The Ministry delivers programs and services to rehabilitate inmates and reduce re-offending.

We audited how the Ministry rehabilitates adult inmates who have been sentenced to a term in a provincial correctional centre. We found the Ministry selects rehabilitation programs based on research evidence showing that the programs can be effective. The Ministry uses evidence-based case management processes but needs to improve their timeliness and consistency. The Ministry monitors whether inmates re-offend but does not monitor whether inmates completed (before their release into the community) all the rehabilitation programs agreed to in inmates' case plans. We made four recommendations related to consistent use of the Ministry's policies and monitoring rehabilitation programs.

Introduction

The mandate of the Department of Corrections and Public Safety (Ministry) (effective November 21, 2007 the Department became the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing) is to promote safe communities. It promotes safe communities:

- ◆ by delivering effective programs for individuals in conflict with the law, and fire prevention and disaster assistance programs
- ◆ through emergency planning and communication, monitoring of building standards, and licensing and inspection services

The Ministry focuses on activities in four main areas: Adult Corrections, Young Offenders Programs, Licensing and Inspections, and Protection and Emergency Services.

The Ministry's public performance plan sets out its goals and objectives. It reports progress against these goals in its annual report each year. Exhibit 1 sets out its three key goals.

Exhibit 1

1. Government and its partners work together to promote and maintain safe communities
2. Re-offending behaviour is reduced due to rehabilitative interventions with offenders
3. Safe, healthy and respectful departmental work environments that support learning, diversity, excellence and accountability

Source: *2007-2008 Provincial Budget Performance Plan – Saskatchewan Corrections and Public Safety* (available at www.finance.gov.sk.ca) (23Apr 2008)

Financial overview

In 2006-2007, the Ministry had revenues of \$12.7 million and spent about \$163.1 million. About 53% of its revenues are from the Federal Government for cost-sharing programs. Table 1 details the Ministry's spending. Its *Annual Report 2006-2007* sets out reasons for major differences between its actual financial results and estimates.

Table 1

	<u>Original Estimates</u> ¹	<u>Actual</u>
	(in millions of dollars)	
Central Management & Services	\$ 14.6	\$ 14.0
Adult Corrections	68.6	74.3
Young Offenders Programs	42.9	40.9
Public Safety	5.8	15.3
Regina Provincial Correctional Centre	14.7	10.8
Replacement Services during Work Stoppage	0.0	20.0
Capital asset acquisitions	(17.2)	(12.5)
Capital asset amortization	<u>0.2</u>	<u>0.3</u>
	<u>\$ 129.6</u>	<u>\$ 163.1</u>

Audit conclusions and findings

In our opinion, for the year ended March 31, 2007:

- ◆ **the Ministry had adequate rules and procedures to safeguard public resources except as described in this chapter**
- ◆ **the Ministry complied with the authorities governing its activities relating to financial reporting, safeguarding public resources, revenue raising, spending, borrowing, and investing except as described in this chapter**

In this chapter, we also report on the adequacy of the Ministry’s processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates within provincial correctional centres.

Control of cash needed

In our 2007 Report – Volume 1, we reported that the Ministry needs to follow its policies and procedures to promptly reconcile its recorded bank balances to the banks records.

¹ Saskatchewan Finance, *Saskatchewan Estimates 2006-07*. The Estimates’ total does not include the additional \$13.5 million authorized through the *2006-07 Saskatchewan Provincial Budget - Supplementary Estimates November* and \$20.2 million authorized through the *2006-07 Saskatchewan Provincial Budget - Supplementary Estimates March 2007* for Corrections and Public Safety (Vote 73).

The Financial Administration Manual requires ministries to follow certain policies and procedures for cash handling and payment processing. *The Correctional Services Trust Account Regulations* sets restrictions for the use of trust money and requires adequate accounting records for trust money. The Ministry needs to follow its policies and procedures to ensure it complies with these authorities to control money held in its inmate trust accounts.

The Ministry's policies and procedures require employees to agree (reconcile) its recorded bank balances to the bank's records each month. They also require management to review and approve the reconciliations. Regular reconciliation of recorded bank balances to the bank's records provides a check that all charges to the bank account are proper and all money has been received and deposited in the right account. It also provides a check on the accuracy and reliability of the Ministry's accounting records.

The Ministry holds cash of about \$300,000 on behalf of adult inmates in 17 bank accounts.

During the year, the Ministry implemented changes to its policies and procedures for preparing bank reconciliations to ensure employees correctly prepare and review the reconciliations. However, the bank reconciliations for five adult corrections individual inmate accounts were not prepared or reviewed adequately during the year.

On June 25, 2007, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) considered this matter and agreed with our recommendation.

We continue to recommend that the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing follow its policies and procedures to promptly reconcile its recorded bank balances to the bank's records.

Revenue policies and procedures need improvement

The Ministry needs adequate written policies and procedures to ensure it completely and accurately records its revenues.

Written policies and procedures help reduce the risk of errors, fraud, and breakdowns in control. The Ministry does not have adequate written

policies and procedures to ensure revenue recorded in interim and year-end financial reports is accurate and complete.

This lack of adequate written policies and procedures resulted in an error in revenue for the Provincial Disaster Recovery Program (PDAP), a program administered by the Ministry. PDAP provides financial assistance to eligible claimants due to a substantial loss or damage to uninsurable, essential property caused by a natural disaster. The Federal Government shares the cost of PDAP and reimburses the Ministry based on expense claims from the Ministry. The Ministry did not record PDAP revenue for the 2006-07 claim year in its financial records for the year ending March 31, 2007, resulting in a \$7.4 million understatement of revenue and accounts receivable. As a result, revenue reported in the Ministry's annual report for 2006-07 and in the 2006-07 Public Accounts – Volume 2 was also understated by this amount. In June 2007, the Ministry corrected this error in its financial records.

- 1. We recommend that the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing develop policies and procedures to record its revenues accurately and completely.**

Business continuity plan required

In our 2007 Report – Volume 1, we reported that the Ministry needs to complete, approve, and test its business continuity plan.

The Ministry needs to complete its business continuity plan² to help ensure that it can continue to deliver its critical services in the event of a disaster.

The Ministry performs several critical services including adult corrections, young offender programs, and protection and emergency services. The Ministry works with many key partners to provide its services.

The Ministry must provide these services even if a disaster disrupts its ability to operate and provide services in the normal manner. Without a BCP, the Ministry is at risk of not being able to provide critical services.

² **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** - Plan by an agency to respond to unforeseen incidents, accidents, or disasters that could affect the normal operations of the organization's critical operations or functions.

At March 31, 2007, the Ministry does not have a complete BCP. The Ministry has an emergency plan that documents emergency procedures for use in the event of a disaster. It has complete individual business continuity plans for its critical business functions. It has developed a strike contingency plan for use in the event of an employee strike. It is completing its detailed major infectious disease (e.g., pandemic) plan. The Ministry needs to complete and test its overall BCP to ensure that it can manage and coordinate its plans in the event of a disaster.

Management told us that during the year it had successfully invoked its strike plan. Based on this, the Ministry has set up a process to review the effectiveness of the plan and make improvements.

Management told us that the Ministry plans to complete its BCP during 2008. Starting in April 2007, the Ministry began to use the Information Technology Office (ITO) for its information technology (IT) service delivery. In order to complete and test its business continuity plan, the Ministry will need to consider any impacts from ITO providing IT services.

On June 25, 2007, PAC considered this matter and agreed with our recommendation.

We continue to recommend that the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing complete and implement its business continuity plan.

Better control over employees' pay needed

The Ministry needs to better control employees' pay.

During the year, the Ministry reviewed its payroll costs during its review of monthly financial reports. However, the Ministry did not adequately review the accuracy of key payroll data for each pay period prior to paying employees. As a result, employees' pay has not been approved in accordance with *The Financial Administration Act, 1993*.

This weakness increases the risk that employees may be paid incorrect amounts.

- 2. We recommend that the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing adequately review the payroll for accuracy prior**

to paying its employees to ensure that all employees' pay is approved in accordance with *The Financial Administration Act, 1993*.

Processes to rehabilitate adult inmates

In Saskatchewan, the crime rate is high and former inmates often re-offend after their release into the community. The Ministry delivers programs and services to rehabilitate inmates and reduce re-offending.

Saskatchewan's provincial correctional centres house inmates sentenced for terms of less than two years. The average sentence is 5.25 months while the average time served is about 3.5 months after reductions for good behaviour, etc. About 35% of inmates have a further probationary term in the community. Before releasing inmates into the community, the Ministry must address the needs of inmates in a way that will reduce the risk of danger to the community. This audit examined how the Ministry rehabilitated adult inmates as of January 2008.

Background

The Correctional Services Act and The Correctional Services Administration, Discipline and Security Regulations, 2003 govern the delivery of services to inmates.

The Ministry spent approximately \$74 million on adult corrections services in 2006-07 including approximately \$61 million at its four correctional centres. During 2006-07, the Ministry supervised an average daily count of 1,354 inmates in custody and over 5,900 participants per day in community correctional programs across the province.³ Services to rehabilitate inmates vary slightly by location in response to inmate needs, the infrastructure, and resources available.

Since the 1980s, international research shows that jails and other sanctions do not, on their own, reduce crime. Factors found to reduce criminal behaviour include assessment of risk and needs, timely and effective services, and community supervision. Since 2005, the Ministry has been actively updating its adult correctional services to better align

³ Saskatchewan Corrections and Public Safety *2006-2007 Annual Report*, pp 5 and 36.

them with research findings. While enforcing sanctions, the Ministry aims to rehabilitate inmates with various services. Rehabilitation services include programs to influence social behaviours and reduce criminal thinking, treat addictions, enhance education, and increase skills for employment. The Ministry must provide these services in a secure environment and during the period of sentencing or supervision in the community as ruled by the courts.

Rehabilitated inmates have more opportunities to return to work and contribute to their community. If inmates do not receive rehabilitation services that meet their needs at the right time, they may commit further offences.⁴

As an indicator of correctional program effectiveness, the Ministry monitors the percentage of offenders who have completed custody and later are re-admitted to any corrections program. During 2006-07, 50% of inmates had re-offended within 24 months, up slightly from 48% in 2001-02.⁵ Not all provinces report the rate at which inmates re-offend but in a comparison done by the Ministry, Saskatchewan's re-offending rates are about 8% lower than those reported in a 2004 Ontario study.

Audit objective, conclusion, and recommendations

The objective of this audit was to assess whether the Ministry had adequate processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates within provincial correctional centres as of January 31, 2008. We based the criteria set out in Exhibit 2 on various literature including reports of other auditors and consultations with management. Management agreed with these criteria.

Exhibit 2 – Inmate rehabilitation audit criteria

To have adequate processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates within provincial correctional centres, the Ministry should:

- 1. Identify evidence-based practices to rehabilitate inmates**
 - 1.1. assess external research to identify evidence-based practices
 - 1.2. partner with external experts to validate selected practices
 - 1.3. evaluate rehabilitation strategies used in Saskatchewan

⁴ Canadian Criminal Justice Association. (2005). *Prison overcrowding and the reintegration of offenders*.

⁵ Corrections and Public Safety information system.

- 2. Use rehabilitation strategies relevant to inmate needs**
 - 2.1. assess inmates' rehabilitation needs consistently
 - 2.2. use case management processes
 - 2.3. allocate resources to priority rehabilitation strategies including core correctional practices
 - 2.4. train staff to use relevant strategies
 - 2.5. partner with other agencies
- 3. Deliver rehabilitation programs at the right time**
 - 3.1. establish priority programs for inmate target groups
 - 3.2. monitor timely access to priority programming
 - 3.3. revise programs based on inmates' progress

Our audit conclusion is that as of January 31, 2008, the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing had adequate processes to rehabilitate sentenced adult inmates in provincial correctional centres except for completing timely assessments and case plans, and monitoring the delivery of rehabilitation programs.

- 3. We recommend the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing consistently comply with its policies to assess inmates' needs (primary and secondary) and plan relevant programs.**
- 4. We recommend the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing facilitate inmates' access to key programming related to their offence prior to their release into the community, particularly if the offence was related to assault or bodily harm.**
- 5. We recommend the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing monitor the proportion of inmates accessing planned rehabilitation programs before the inmates are released into the community and enhance access to rehabilitation if required.**
- 6. We recommend the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing monitor re-offending rates in relation to rehabilitation programs to better evaluate its rehabilitation of inmates.**

Findings—rehabilitating sentenced adult inmates

We highlight what we expected (our criteria) in italics below each heading, followed by our significant findings. We followed *The Standards for Assurance Engagements* established by The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants in carrying out this audit.

Identifying evidenced-based practices to rehabilitate inmates

We expect the Ministry to identify evidence-based practices to rehabilitate inmates by:

- ◆ *assessing external research to identify evidence-based practices*
- ◆ *partnering with external experts to validate selected practices*
- ◆ *evaluating rehabilitation strategies used in Saskatchewan*

The Ministry identifies evidence-based practices through its assessment of external research. Senior staff obtain research on practices that have been validated and found effective for rehabilitating inmates. The research comes from various sources, primarily North American universities and public institutions.

From this research, the Ministry identifies the key elements of best practice by conducting its own evaluations of proposed programs (e.g., *Thinking for a Change*⁶). The Ministry develops evaluation criteria through literature reviews and discussions with experts. To complete the evaluation process, the Ministry adjusts the program for use in Saskatchewan correctional centres and does pilot tests.

To support its evaluation of rehabilitation practices, the Ministry also works with a Research Forum⁷ and external experts such as criminologists and psychologists. These partners help the Ministry to validate the effectiveness of selected practices in Saskatchewan. For example, the Ministry is working with the University of Regina to research spousal-assault risk assessments.

⁶ *Thinking for a Change* is a problem-solving program including cognitive self-change and social skills.

⁷ The Research Forum includes members from the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, the Saskatoon Health Region and the Saskatoon Regional Psychiatric Centre. The forum meets to share research information and to discuss current issues.

The Ministry also evaluates programs using a standardized program evaluation tool, the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory.⁸ The Ministry trains selected staff to evaluate programs using this tool.

Using rehabilitation strategies relevant to inmate needs

We expect the Ministry to use rehabilitation strategies relevant to inmate needs by:

- ◆ *assessing inmates' rehabilitation needs consistently*
- ◆ *using case management processes*
- ◆ *allocating resources to priority rehabilitation strategies including core correctional practices*
- ◆ *training staff to use relevant strategies*
- ◆ *partnering with other agencies*

A key rehabilitation strategy used by the Ministry is integrated case management. The Ministry designed case management to help prepare inmates to return to the community successfully, thus contributing to the overall safety of the community.⁹ Case management supports a coordinated team approach to rehabilitation.

Supervisors assign four to six inmates to each case manager. The case manager collaborates with others to do intake, information gathering, risk/needs assessment, and case planning for each inmate. The case manager also coordinates action on case plans, monitors inmates' progress, and arranges for transfers or assessment prior to closure.

The Ministry's policies require timely case management. The Ministry requires supervisors to assign a case manager within three days of admitting an inmate to a correctional centre. Within 28 days, the Ministry expects case managers to obtain information, complete assessments of risk and needs, and prepare case plans using standardized forms.

In our audit sample, case managers had completed the primary risk/needs assessments and case plans for 96% of inmates. Of the inmates sentenced for partner abuse and sexual or general assault, only

⁸ The Correctional Program Assessment Inventory is an instrument that examines program descriptions and operations in relation to more promising approaches to reducing re-offending as identified in research literature. It assists in programs development, program evaluation and refinement, and staff training.

⁹ Saskatchewan Corrections and Public Safety. (2005). *Integrated Case Management Policy*. p. 1.

17% received the required secondary assessment estimating the risk that an inmate will re-offend. Case managers need these assessments to plan priority access to relevant programs such as anger management for these inmates. Without these assessments and attendance at priority programs, inmates are more likely to re-offend and again assault or injure others.

The Ministry does not consistently comply with its policies for timely case management to identify inmate risks/needs and arrange access to relevant programs. For example, in our sample, only 30% of inmates had a case manager assigned within three days of admission to the correctional centre. Staff had timely access to the information required to do the case plans, but only 57% of inmates had a case plan within 28 days of admission. For case plans that were late, it took case managers about 49 days to complete the primary risk/needs assessment and case plan. In our audit sample, inmates' sentences varied but most commonly were 6-12 months as we excluded short-stay inmates to enable a fair test of timely case management. Without timely case plans, inmates are at greater risk of not receiving the programs that would contribute to their rehabilitation.

The Ministry directs its staff to use core correctional practices as a priority rehabilitation strategy. Core correctional practices are behaviours used by corrections staff to help rehabilitate inmates (e.g., problem solving, dealing with resistance, relationship factors, and effective use of authority).

The Ministry allocates resources to train its staff in the key areas of risk/needs assessments, integrated case management, and core correctional practices. The Ministry uses qualified, certified instructors to deliver programs. The Ministry also provides specific training to program staff. For example, the Ministry trained instructors for the new Emotions Management program at the Pine Grove Correctional Centre.

Through case management processes, case managers should identify specific needs for each inmate. The Ministry expects correctional centres to offer relevant programs targeted to meet identified inmates' needs. The Ministry delivers some programs directly (e.g., Violence Prevention Program) and contracts with community agencies to provide other programs. For example, the Ministry has contracts with health regions to

deliver addictions services and with the Prince Albert Healing Lodge to provide programming related to the First Nations culture and spirituality.

Delivering rehabilitation programs at the right time

We expect the Ministry to deliver rehabilitation programs at the right time by:

- ◆ *establishing priority programs for inmate target groups*
- ◆ *monitoring timely access to priority programming*
- ◆ *revising programs based on inmates' progress*

To deliver rehabilitation programs at the right time, the Ministry's policies require the use of inmates' risk/needs assessments and case plans to determine priority programs. As mentioned previously, these may not be timely. Inmates assessed as being at risk are allowed to participate in programs that target identified needs. For example, an inmate may need to participate in programs to improve anger management skills, treat addictions, and build skills to increase employability.

The Ministry offers programs to inmates after considering inmate needs and co-operation, security, seating availability, and scheduling issues. Program facilitators and counselling coordinators at the correctional centres maintain program schedules and waitlists for programs. The length of time in custody influences whether an inmate will complete programs for identified needs.

Through the integrated case management process, case managers complete progress reports every 60 days and update inmates' case plans. Case managers record programs taken and identify new needs or additional programs required. Case managers may refer inmates to community programs to address ongoing needs after their release.

Based on program evaluations and progress reports that re-assess inmate needs, the Ministry revises its programs as necessary. In addition, the Ministry annually reviews inmate records to assess overall whether staff use case management effectively.

The Ministry's senior management receives various reports throughout the year. For example, the Ministry reports the number of inmates in custody by location using the average daily census and related staffing

issues. Annually, the Ministry reports the number of inmates taking part in specific programs and new initiatives.

These reports to senior management do not analyze inmates' access to programs. The reports do not identify the number of inmates waiting to attend specific programs or the proportion of inmates who have access during their time in custody to all the programs required by their case plans. The reports do not explain why inmates might not attend required programs (e.g., inmate behaviour or illness, secure custody, short time in custody).

Thus, the Ministry does not know whether its rehabilitation programs meet performance expectations. The Ministry does not know whether most inmates receive priority programs prior to their release to the community. Reports to senior management should provide meaningful analysis. For example, reports to management should explain the percentage of inmates completing priority programs before release, the timeliness of access to programs during custody, and the percentage of inmates who the Ministry refers to relevant community programs if inmates do not attend the required programs during their time in custody.

The Ministry selects rehabilitation programs based on research evidence that the programs will reduce re-offending. The Ministry monitors the percentage of offenders who complete their term in custody and later re-offend. However, the Ministry does not have a way to monitor re-offending rates in relation to participation in rehabilitation programs overall or specific to individual programs. This information would strengthen program evaluations and help the Ministry revise its programs to rehabilitate inmates effectively.

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Status of other outstanding recommendations of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The following table provides an update on recommendations previously made by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) that are not yet implemented and are not discussed earlier in this chapter.¹⁰

PAC REPORT YEAR¹¹	OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
Department of Corrections and Public Safety		
2007	PAC concurs: 10-1 that the Department of Corrections and Public Safety... should analyze and report quarterly to executive managers the department's progress toward planned outcomes.	Not implemented A follow-up is planned for 2008-09.

¹⁰ For the definitions of the key terms used in the table, see our 2007 Report – Volume 3, Chapter 25 – Standing Committee on Public Accounts, pp 398 to 399.

¹¹ PAC Report Year refers to the year that PAC first made the recommendation in its report to the Legislative Assembly.

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