

Chapter 16

Corrections and Policing, and Justice and Attorney General—Leading the Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative

1.0 MAIN POINTS

By January 2019, the Ministries of Corrections and Policing, and Justice and Attorney General improved some of their processes to lead the Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative and, in particular, to better support the 14 Community Mobilization Hubs located across Saskatchewan. This initiative aims to reduce crime by having agencies voluntarily work together to respond to at-risk, marginalized, and vulnerable individuals and families.

The Ministries confirmed that the agencies deciding to participate in a Hub (like local policing services and school divisions) accept and understand their roles within the initiative. Also, the Ministries gave Hubs additional direction and staffing support.

The Ministries need engaged participating agencies for the initiative to be successful. Confirming participating agencies accept and understand expectations increases the likelihood of connecting acutely-elevated risk individuals or families to necessary services, and addressing the root causes of crime.

Further improvements are underway. The Ministries were working on determining how best to measure the success of the Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative, and its impact on increasing safety of Saskatchewan communities. The Ministries expect to make this determination in the spring of 2019.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Saskatchewan has historically, and continues to have, one of the highest crime rates in Canada and requires a focused approach to crime reduction in addition to enforcement. The Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime approach was launched by Government, in 2010, to address the urgent need for new approaches to crime in Saskatchewan as desired by police, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the public.¹

The overall goal of Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime is to reduce crime by using a risk-driven crime reduction partnership approach. The combined approach, efforts, expertise, information, intelligence and resources of the justice system and human services system contribute in deliberate and co-operative ways to address the full spectrum of crime reduction: prevention, intervention and suppression. The overall focus of this approach is on reducing victimization and improving community safety outcomes.²

¹ www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/plcng/cnmcs-plcng/ndx/dtls-en.aspx?n=154 (11 February 2019).

² Ibid.



On February 2, 2018, Cabinet split the Ministry of Justice into two separate Ministries: the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing.

The Ministries rebranded the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime initiative in 2017 to the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative to more accurately reflect the collective work that is taking place across sectors. This initiative is part of Integrated Justice Services. Integrated Justice Services is responsible to both the Ministry of Corrections and Policing and the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General.

As of January 2019, there were 14 Community Mobilization Hubs in Saskatchewan serving 14 communities located across Saskatchewan and 1 Centre of Responsibility located in Prince Albert.^{3,4}

The main objective of a Hub is to proactively provide an integrated response to at-risk, marginalized, and vulnerable populations, based on an understanding of composite risk factors, while improving community safety and well-being. The focus of a Hub is to identify individuals or families with acutely elevated risk factors that cannot be addressed by a single agency alone, and to mobilize human service agencies toward a targeted and timely response specific to individual and/or family need.⁵ Each Hub has a chairperson and a steering committee.

Community Mobilization Hubs are comprised of agencies specific to the needs of their community who agree to participate (participating agencies). Examples of participating agencies include ministries of Social Services and Health, policing services, and school divisions.

Steering Communities are responsible for guiding its local Community Mobilization Hub, discussing systemic issues within the Community Mobilization Hub, and responding to identified issues. A steering committee is comprised of senior officials of the participating agencies within the Community Mobilization Hub.

The Centre of Responsibility focuses on data collection, research, and quantitative analysis to identify systemic gaps and opportunities for improved community safety and wellness.⁶ The Centre of Responsibility is comprised of human service professionals.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

Our *2016 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 10 concluded that the Ministry of Justice did not have effective processes to lead the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime initiative. We made four recommendations.

This chapter describes our first follow-up of management's actions on the recommendations we made in 2016.

³ The Hubs are located in Weyburn/Estevan, La Ronge, Prince Albert, Nipawin, Melfort, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Yorkton, North Battleford, Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, Île-à-la-Crosse, and Regina.

⁴ The Prince Albert community steering committee announced April 2, 2019 that the Centre of Responsibility will cease operations June 28, 2019.

⁵ www.results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LandscapeCS_Canada_4.pdf (16 February 2019).

⁶ Ibid.

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministries' progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministries' management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To carry out our audit engagement, we interviewed related staff of each Ministry, Centre of Responsibility staff, and participants of the Saskatchewan Community Mobilization Hubs and Steering Committees; reviewed Steering Committee minutes and relevant documents; and assessed the reasonableness of supporting documentation.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at January 31, 2019, and the Ministries' actions up to that date.

3.1 Ministries Confirm Agencies Accept and Understand Their Roles and Provide Additional Direction and Tools

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing confirm agencies, who decide to participate in a Community Mobilization Hub, accept and understand their roles within the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative.^{7,8}

(2016 Report – Volume 1, p. 106, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Implemented

The Ministries confirm that the agencies participating in individual Hubs accept and understand their roles within the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative by signing an information-sharing agreement. This agreement sets out the information-sharing process and the responsibilities of participating agencies.

As of January 2019, all 14 Hubs had signed information-sharing agreements with participating agencies. These agreements sufficiently set out the responsibilities for how and what information participating agencies share (e.g., collection, use and disclosure). The agreement also sets out the purpose, definitions and content of Hub records.

Hubs need engaged participating agencies to be successful. Confirming participating agencies accept and understand expectations increases the likelihood of connecting acutely-elevated risk individuals or families to necessary services, and addressing the root causes of crime.

⁷ Ministries formerly known as the Ministry of Justice.

⁸ Formerly known as the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime initiative.



We recommended that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing provide additional direction and tools to support members of the Centre of Responsibility and Community Mobilization Hubs.⁹ (2016 Report – Volume 1, p. 110, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Implemented

The Ministries clarified their support to Hubs by setting out responsibilities in the information sharing agreements signed by all participating agencies, and increased the support they provide to Hubs.

Since 2016 (the time of our initial audit), the Ministries increased their support staff from one to three full-time equivalent positions. As of January 2019, about three full-time equivalent ministry consultants were responsible for giving support to Hubs and their participating agencies, and members of the Centre of Responsibility. Ministry consultants periodically attend meetings of Hubs. From January to December 2018, we found they attended approximately 60 meetings.

In addition, the Ministries encourage Hubs and members of the Centre to request additional direction or tools (e.g., answer questions about specific issues, and provide leadership about how the process works) from ministry consultants. The consultants also are in contact with Hub and Steering Committee Chairs to answer questions, give guidance on the process, and schedule attendance at meetings. In addition, the Ministries continue to give Hubs access to a database.¹⁰

In addition, the Ministries hold a yearly symposium/seminar for the Chairs of Hubs. Since the 2016 audit, the Ministries have held two annual symposiums/seminars. At January 2019, they were in the process of planning the 2019 symposium/seminar.

In May 2018 (the most recent annual symposium/seminar), the Ministries shared general concepts of the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative, statistics on discussions and interventions, and provincial statistics (e.g., Hub discussions by area, total Hub discussions) with the 29 attendees. Attendees included Steering Committee members, Hub chairs, and members representing 11 of the 14 Hubs.

Having additional support of Ministries' staff increases participating agency engagement in the Hubs, and likelihood of success of the overall work of the Hubs.

⁹ Ministries formerly known as the Ministry of Justice.

¹⁰ The Hub database tracks key information pertaining to the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative (e.g., number of referrals by Hubs, number of people that accept services).

3.2 Ministries Need to Identify Additional Measure(s) of Success

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing identify how to measure the success of the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative.^{11,12}

(2016 Report – Volume 1, p. 108, Recommendation 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Partially Implemented

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing in collaboration with the Centre of Responsibility and Community Mobilization Hubs, analyze and report on the success of the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative.^{13,14}

(2016 Report – Volume 1, p. 111, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Not Implemented

As of January 2019, the Ministries were working on a project with the Centre of Responsibility to determine how best to measure success of the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative, and its impact to Saskatchewan communities on increasing community safety. The Ministries expect to make this determination in the spring of 2019.

As of January 2019, the Centre of Responsibility was revamping its strategic plan. This involved determining how the Centre of Responsibility will measure its success. Also, the Centre of Responsibility was developing a project proposal to determine how to measure success of the Community Mobilization Hub model.

The Ministries are currently using the number of Hub discussions and connections to services as an indicator of success for the Community Mobilization Hub model, and to lead discussions with the Steering Committees (about Hubs' activity). Also, the Ministries reported this information on their visibility wall.¹⁵

Measuring overall success would support the Ministries' goal of increasing community safety, and addressing the root causes of crime. Without determining how to measure the success of the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative, the Ministries cannot make adjustments to the Community Mobilization Hub model, understand if the initiative is making a difference on addressing the root causes of crime, and report on the success (or failure) of the initiative. Also, without this information, the Ministries cannot determine the value of agencies participating in the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative.

Collaborating to develop a process to analyze results will assist in consistent analysis and reporting of the Community Safety and Well-Being initiative results. This will allow the Ministries, the Centre of Responsibility, and Hubs to utilize the information to inform decision making, address systemic issues, and report on the success of the initiative.

¹¹ Ministries formerly known as the Ministry of Justice.

¹² Formerly known as the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime initiative.

¹³ Ministries formerly known as the Ministry of Justice.

¹⁴ Formerly known as the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime initiative.

¹⁵ A visibility wall is a digital location to view the work (e.g., data charts) of the organization or unit.

