

Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project

**A study of Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences as they relate to
community supervision provided by probation officers in Alberta**

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1. ABSTRACT

“...I think we need more help for our people”
Aboriginal offender

In Alberta, there has been little research to identify the prevailing cause of the disproportionately high number of Aboriginal people incurring administration of justice charges compared to non-Aboriginal people. The literature shows that Aboriginal offenders in Canada have much longer criminal histories and higher recidivism rates than non-Aboriginal offenders. The Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences (AAJO) Research Project was initiated in response to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders with AAJOs and the corresponding toll the processing of these types of offences takes on both people and resources.

There are numerous factors that influence this over-representation. Substance abuse, including alcohol, is the single greatest issue for Aboriginal people under community supervision. Lack of education and difficulty in finding employment are also major contributing factors in Aboriginal offenders breaching the conditions of their probation. Canadian studies have shown that Aboriginal people have more difficulty in adhering to sentencing conditions than non-Aboriginal offenders and that inappropriate conditions, more stringent enforcement and less support and resources all contribute to lower success rates.

In examining this issue, the research project considered AAJOs as they relate to the community supervision provided by probation officers and the variables that contribute to success or failure. Project findings point to protective factors such as support programs and counseling, and placing importance on building and maintaining good relationships as key components in fostering healing and building resilience. The findings provide valuable insight into the complexity of this issue and can be used as a catalyst for further discussions around developing strategies to help Aboriginal people in Alberta deal more successfully with the challenges they face in the justice system.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2008, Alberta Justice and Attorney General and Solicitor General and Public Security initiated a joint research project to gather information about the incidences of Aboriginal administration of justice offences (AAJO), and to identify risk and protective factors as they relate to Aboriginal offenders.

The Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project was intended to provide a starting point for discussions around strategies to reduce the rate at which Aboriginal people incur administration of justice charges and reduce the time the Provincial Court of Alberta devotes to hearing these charges. The goal of the study is to enhance understanding of the risk factors that contribute to AAJOs in Alberta and inform strategies to address the issue.

The Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project Working Group consisted of members from Alberta Justice and Attorney General (JAG), Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security (SGPS), Alberta Aboriginal Relations, Native Counseling Services of Alberta and Yellowhead Tribal Council.

The Research Project included a literature review, a statistical report based on data from the Corrections Offender Management System and Alberta Community Offender Management System, and two surveys: the Probation Officer Survey and the Aboriginal Probation Client Survey.

The Probation Officer Survey explored probation officers' perceptions of factors that contribute to Aboriginal offenders committing AAJOs and how these offences and the offenders could be managed effectively and efficiently in the future. The Aboriginal Probation Client Survey, conducted by BearPaw Research, explored risk and protective factors as they relate to offenders on probation.

The research project confirmed Canadian studies on Aboriginal offender groups that suggest substance abuse is the single greatest issue for Aboriginal offenders. The project findings suggest more flexibility and understanding in the setting of conditions for Aboriginal offenders may help them be more successful in completing the terms of their supervision. Counseling, alcohol and addictions programs, and positive recreational programs were indicated to be valuable components in deterring AAJOs. However, accessibility of programs is sometimes problematic.

The project findings also suggest support of family and friends is critical to the success of Aboriginal offenders completing their terms of community supervision. Support includes providing a place to live, transportation to meeting and reporting and providing encouragement to do what they need to do. These factors contribute to building family and community resilience.

3. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In Alberta, there has been little research to identify the prevailing causes of the disproportionately high number of Aboriginal people incurring administration of justice charges compared to the non-Aboriginal offender population. The purpose of the Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project was to gain an understanding of the risk and protective factors within the Aboriginal client group as they pertain to incurring AAJOs related to breach of community supervision orders and the variables contributing to success or failure. The goal of the study is to enhance understanding of the risk factors that contribute to AAJOs in Alberta and inform strategies to address the issue.

4. INTRODUCTION

In late 2008, Alberta Justice and Attorney General and Solicitor General and Public Security initiated a joint research project to gather information about the incidences of administration of justice offences and how they are processed, and to identify risk and protective factors as they relate to Aboriginal offenders. The study looked at a subset of AAJOs as they relate to the community supervision provided by probation officers and the variables that contribute to success or failure. It should be noted that breach charges laid by either probation officers or the police are not the only AAJOs that exist in Alberta. Other AAJO charges may include Failure to Appear in Court, Breaches of Undertakings to a Justice, and Failure to Comply with a Recognizance. AAJO charges in these categories are not included in the study.

In early 2009, the Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project Working Group (the Working Group) was formed, consisting of members from Alberta Justice and Attorney General (JAG), Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security (SGPS), Alberta Aboriginal Relations, Native Counseling Services of Alberta and Yellowhead Tribal Council. A comprehensive Literature Review and a Statistical Report based on Aboriginal offender charge information from the Corrections Offender Management Information System (CoMIS) and Alberta Community Offender Management system (ACOM) was completed in 2009. The main focus of the project was the Probation Officer Survey and the Aboriginal Client Survey, which were developed and administered in 2010-11.

5. BACKGROUND

Canadian studies show that Aboriginal offenders are highly represented in the criminal justice system, and they are particularly overrepresented with regard to AAJOs. Many Aboriginal offenders are entrapped in a cycle of recidivism for relatively minor administration of justice offences due to conditions that may be inappropriate relative to the offender's lifestyle and a lack of appropriate supports

and services. Data collected by Aboriginal Court Workers in Alberta shows a high proportion of Aboriginal offenders receive services in relation to AAJOs. The *Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project Literature Review* (the Literature Review) confirms Aboriginal Court Worker program data, showing that Aboriginal offenders are highly represented in this offence category. The literature on recidivism rates of Aboriginal offenders shows that they have much longer criminal histories and higher recidivism rates than non-Aboriginal offenders. In a 1997 study on re-offending of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders, Bonta et al. found that Aboriginal offenders had a recidivism rate of 65.9% versus 47.8% for non-Aboriginal offenders. A 2006 study by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) on the outcomes of probation and conditional sentences found that Aboriginal offenders breached community supervision orders more than non-Aboriginal offenders (52% v. 33% in Alberta). This difference may reflect an Aboriginal population that very likely had more high and moderate risk offenders than were in the non-Aboriginal population.

The Literature Review incorporates a number of studies that show there are a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system compared to non-Aboriginal people. The number of Aboriginal admissions to correctional facilities in western Canada is higher than elsewhere in the country. For example, the 2006 CCJS survey reported 76% of adult sentenced custody admissions in Saskatchewan were Aboriginal; 71% in Manitoba; and 38% in Alberta. Overall, the number of administration of justice offences (AOJO) in Alberta has been increasing for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. In 2003/04, 51% of released cases had an AOJO; in 2008/09, 56% of released cases had an AOJO. Aboriginal offenders are more likely than non-Aboriginal offenders to be incarcerated as a result of AOJO. The analysis of releases from provincial custody between 2003/04 and 2008/09 shows that 41% of cases released that have at least one sentenced AOJO involve Aboriginal offenders; whereas only 23% of cases released that have no AOJOs involve Aboriginal offenders (Statistical Report, 2011).

Studies have shown that Aboriginal offenders face more difficulty in adhering to conditions than do non-Aboriginal offenders. In examining federal offenders, the *Task Force on the Reintegration of Aboriginal Offenders as Law-Abiding Citizens* (SGPS, 1988) argued that inappropriate conditions, more stringent enforcements, and less support and resources all contribute to lower success rates.

6. METHODOLOGY

The Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offence Research Project was divided into three components: the Literature Review, the Statistical Report, and the Probation Officer and Client Surveys.

The Literature Review comprises research material collected from sources such as academic journal articles, academic and non-academic papers, and past studies related to Aboriginal offenders and AAJOs. Several electronic databases were utilized in the research such as Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, Criminology: a SAGE Full-Text Collection, and Juristats: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

The Statistical Report presents information regarding sentence length, inmate age, gender, ethnicity and offence types for offenders who were released from custody during the six year period from 2003/04 to 2008/09. Cases were grouped into the following categories for analysis: cases that involved an AOJO; cases that did not involve an AOJO; and cases that had both AOJOs and non-AOJOs. The Corrections Offender Management System (CoMIS) and Alberta Community Offender Management System (ACOM) databases were used to generate statistics for this report.

The Survey component consists of two surveys: The Probation Officer Survey and the Aboriginal Probation Client Survey. The Probation Officer Survey explored probation officers' perceptions of factors that contribute to Aboriginal offenders committing AAJOs and how these offences and the offenders could be managed effectively and efficiently in the future. The survey, conducted over a four-week period in late 2010, was made available online to all probation officers employed by SGPS and includes both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 122 of Alberta's 264 probation officers completed the survey, a response rate of 46%.

The Probation Officer Survey was intended to:

- Identify the challenges in gathering Aboriginal offender pre-sentence information for the Courts;
- Identify the type of community-based programs or treatment services that Aboriginal offenders most frequently are referred to or frequently utilize while on supervision;
- Identify risk factors (causes) that contribute to Aboriginal offenders incurring AAJOs; and
- Identify protective factors that contribute to Aboriginal offenders successfully completing a term of supervision order without incurring AAJOs.

The results were compiled into the *Probation Officer Survey Summary Report*, which was provided to the Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Working Group (the Working Group) in May 2011.

The Aboriginal Probation Client Survey was conducted over a period of approximately four months in 2010 - 2011 by BearPaw Research, part of Native Counselling Services of Alberta. The goal of the Aboriginal Client Survey was to:

- Identify risk factors that contribute to Aboriginal offenders incurring AAJOs;
- Identify protective factors that contribute to Aboriginal offenders successfully completing their terms of supervision order without incurring AAJOs;
- Identify community-based programs or treatment services Aboriginal offenders most frequently are referred to/ utilize while on supervision; and
- Identify potential opportunities to reduce the number of AAJOs, which would involve either decreasing the likelihood of re-offence or preventing these offences from occurring.

Initially, 300 Aboriginal offenders on probation were to be interviewed for the survey; however, due to difficulties in finding willing volunteers, the Working Group agreed to a reduced sample base of 150 offenders. The Working Group also agreed to include in the study individuals incarcerated at provincial correctional institutions who had been on probation in the recent past. At the time of the study, 58% of clients were incarcerated. There was no distinction made in the report between clients who were incarcerated and those under community supervision. Clients in correctional institutions were asked to respond to questions about their experiences while on probation only; however, it should be noted that there are likely to be higher risk factors in clients in jail as compared to those under community supervision.

There was also a regional distinction in terms of client numbers. Of the 150 clients interviewed, 81% were from Edmonton and North, while 19% were south of Edmonton. Clients were not separated by geographic location in the study.

Although the project began with a pre-set number of interviews (300 at the start of the project; 150 as the final pre-set goal), during the process of data analysis, saturation of data was achieved. Data saturation entails bringing new participants into the study until the point at which no new information is being added and data begins to be replicated. For this study, data saturation occurred during analysis, when data could be grouped into the existing structure of categories and sub-categories and no new categories were needed. The data was analyzed using pre-packaged qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 9).

The *Aboriginal Probation Client Qualitative Research Report* was provided to the Working Group in June 2011.

7. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The reports produced from the research project provide some insight into the reasons behind AAJOs and the protective factors that may help deter Aboriginal offenders from incurring AAJOs. The research confirmed the literature findings that substance abuse is the single greatest issue for Aboriginal offenders. It was

suggested that more flexibility and understanding in the setting of conditions for Aboriginal offenders may help them in successfully completing the terms of their supervision. Program participation, in the form of counseling, alcohol and addictions programs, as well as positive recreational programs are seen as valuable components in deterring AAJOs. However, accessibility of programs is critical to their success.

*“I was in a Native program and it was all Native people and we talked about all this kind of stuff, what we are talking about right now, and I think we need more help for our people.” Client Survey**

The research shows that Aboriginal offenders highly value their ability to provide for their families. Some of the research suggests that a lack of education has a profound effect on Aboriginal offenders in terms of their ability to comprehend and adhere to the conditions of probation, as well as their ability to find employment and thus manage their obligations and responsibilities.

Support of family and friends is also seen as critical to the success of Aboriginal offenders successfully completing their term of community supervision. Support includes providing a place to live, transportation to meeting and reporting and providing encouragement to do what they need to do. These factors contribute to building family and community resilience.

“Just my girlfriend. And my parents. My grandmother. I have uncles that help me, one of my uncles does a sweat, he carries a pipe and stuff like that and I help out with the family tradition. We do a ghost dance and a feast.” Client Survey

Former Ontario Assistant Crown Prosecutor, Rupert Ross, in his 2009 discussion paper *Building Healing Alternatives to Custody*, suggests that promoting the building of relationships between offenders and victims is a more successful approach to rehabilitation than are stricter and more punitive measures. He notes that healing programs, such as the Red Path program, available in some Alberta communities, are more successful in deterring administration of justice offences.

8. SUMMARY OF ABORIGINAL CLIENT AND PROBATION OFFICER SURVEYS

Pre-Sentence Risk Identification

Most Aboriginal offenders are on probation more than once, and often for multiple offences. The Client Survey indicates that 88% of Aboriginal offenders had been on probation two or more times. Reporting on the circumstances

**Quotes used in this report are for illustrative purposes only.*

surrounding the lives of Aboriginal clients is seen as a means to help the judiciary better understand a client's situation for sentencing. Probation officers who are given the opportunity to prepare pre-sentence reports feel their input to be relevant and useful. However, not all probation officers are provided the opportunity to complete pre-sentence reports, and the material included depends entirely on the information provided by the client and collateral contacts.

Probation officers report on a number of aspects of a client's background. For example, participation in traditional Aboriginal cultural and spiritual ceremonies is seen as significant, with 79% of probation officers always or frequently reporting this in pre-sentence reports. The majority (75%) of probation officers always or frequently provides information on an offender's previous involvement with child welfare, family functioning and participation in foster care, and 56% report on the background of the Aboriginal community in which clients resided in their formative years. As well, probation officers always or frequently report intergenerational trauma 51% of the time.

The most predominant risk factors for incurring AAJO charges identified by probation officers in pre-sentence reports are substance abuse, with 84% of probation officers always or frequently identifying this as a risk; low levels of education (63%); lack of employment skills (55%); and criminally entrenched associates (54%). Lack of support, from both family and the community, is also always or frequently identified as a risk factor by about 40% of probation officers.

Low levels of literacy and, sometimes, difficulty with English as a second language may contribute to an apprehension and mistrust of the justice system. The *Aboriginal Legal Education Needs Survey* (Native Counselling Services of Alberta, 2007) identified the first barrier and most prevalent issue for Aboriginal people in criminal court to be a general apprehension of the system itself. A lack of understanding about the system may also contribute to a sense of apathy about an offender's own terms of supervision. The Client Survey indicates Aboriginal clients consent to conditions most often in order to get out of or avoid jail, or because they perceive no choice or "want to get it over with." Only 6% of clients interviewed responded the conditions were given "to help." It should be noted that 15% of clients surveyed were confused about their conditions or could not remember them.

Factors Impacting Compliance

Probation officers typically lay AAJO charges for only a portion of the breaches incurred by offenders. These include failure to report to supervisor (57% always or frequently lay this charge), failure to abstain from intoxicants (52%) and failure to attend counseling (36%). The police typically lay the majority of AAJO charges, which include failure to abstain from intoxicants (88% always or frequently lay this charge) and failure to appear in court (50%). 58% of police also always or frequently lay charges for a breach as an additional charge when a client has incurred a new charge.

It is widely recognized that substance abuse is a major contributing factor to an Aboriginal person's struggles with the justice system. Both the Probation Officer Survey and the Client Survey results show the single most significant risk for AAJO is a return to substance abuse, with 84% of probation officers surveyed identifying a return to substance abuse as always or frequently a risk factor in incurring AAJO charges, and 54% of clients interviewed in the Client Survey feeling that drugs and drinking are the things most likely to get them into trouble.

"I don't know, I guess I can't shoot my arrow straight. It wasn't me talking, it was alcohol talking. Alcohol gets me in trouble. Alcohol is trouble." Client Survey

Association with criminally entrenched associates is another highly rated risk factor in breaching the conditions of probation. Over 53% of probation officers responded that association with the wrong peer group was always or frequently a factor in breaches of probation. The Client Survey supports this view, as 44% of participants felt being with the wrong people or friends who had a negative influence and 36% felt that being forced (or helpless not to) interact with a person they had a no contact order with were significant risk factors to re-offend. The majority of charges for breaches in this category are laid by the police

Failure to report was also identified by probation officers as a risk, as almost 59% of probation officers felt that failure to report is always or frequently a risk factor in incurring AAJO charges. Most charges laid by probation officers are for breaching this condition. Data collected in the Client Survey provide a glimpse into underlying conditions that may contribute to this breach. Many participants in the Client Survey volunteered additional information that indicates when probation conditions interfere with the probationer's ability to work, some individuals will choose to work rather than jeopardize their employment.

*"...he threatened to breach me cause I was skipping AADAC but we were coming up short on our rent and I had to work and he was pushing me to keep employment so I quit my programs and thought I have to make rent, if he breaches me, whatever."
Client Survey*

The Client Survey presented findings that indicate conditional sentences can be more effective when formulated in a culturally sensitive manner. For example, requiring offenders to abstain from drugs and alcohol without taking into consideration the availability of treatment programs can be setting offenders up to fail.

"...when you have no driver's license you can't do anything, you have no transportation at all. I ain't going to walk 20 miles to go to an AA meeting." Client Survey

Managing Risks While on Probation

Of the clients interviewed, 79% reported having a positive perspective on at least one aspect of their probation. Many of these felt that probation gave them the opportunity to stay out of trouble and get away from drugs and alcohol.

“They helped me out in the long run. The drugs and alcohol for instance, that was something I wanted to get out of, so this is helpful” Client Survey

However, 45% discussed negative feelings about probation and the justice system, with 33% having negative opinions specifically about their conditions.

“No contact order – no alcohol – there were so many I can’t remember. When you break one you break a bunch of them you don’t get one charge you get a lot. I didn’t even bother to see the PO.” Client Survey

Support of family and friends

Data from both the Probation Officer Survey and the Client Survey show the support of family and friends is a strong indicator as to whether an individual will successfully complete his or her term of community supervision. Positive relationships were seen as important, with 71% of probation officers surveyed indicating that developing a positive, non-criminal peer group is always or frequently a factor in successful completion of community supervision. The Client Survey found positive relationships, particularly family relationships, were a key positive contributor in assisting probationers in upholding their probation conditions. Of the 150 clients interviewed, 89% indicated family and friends support “worked and was positive” in their lives. Having a stable living arrangement is seen by probation officers as the single most important factor in completing their term of supervision, with 86% seeing this as always or frequently a positive factor.

“Like for myself, I had a hard time when I first stopped drinking – without my kids, my grandson or my mom I know I would not have been able to do it. I had a lot of support.” Client Survey

Of interest to note, however, is only 11% of probation officers felt the Aboriginal clients they supervise always or frequently have family members who are actively involved in assisting the client, and only 14% feel their clients always or frequently have a positive community role model. The majority of probation officers indicated their Aboriginal clients only sometimes have active family (63%) or community role model (59%) support.

Employment

Employment and/or going to school are also significant factors in helping to ensure successful completion of the term of community supervision. Sixty-five participants in the Client Survey indicated employment or school was a positive factor. Similarly, 60% of probation officers found clients’ ability to meet parental

or familial obligations was a factor in the successful completion of the term of community supervision.

“Positive? My work, I got a job that’s positive.” Client Survey

However, the ability to gain employment is often a problem. Only 9% of probation officers surveyed find clients always or frequently have sufficient skills to gain employment, whereas 28% feel clients rarely or never have employable skills. In addition, only 18% of probation officers feel employment opportunities are available in their clients’ communities.

Access to programs and services

The Client Survey indicates a significant protective factor identified by clients is the opportunity to attend programs and other opportunities that address the core issues that prevent them from moving on with their lives. The majority of clients described programs that provided counseling, personal development opportunities or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) as being helpful or good. Others focused on the importance of sobriety, or on cultural healing and spirituality as being beneficial.

“I see the psychologist. Twice a month and I will be attending a domestic violence program starting in February and then I go to the elder here on the reserve. [The programs help you] become aware of what is happening in your own life and make positive concrete decisions. But I am fortunate – my probation office is wonderful and has an open mind.” Client Survey

However, accessibility of programs was a problem for many clients. Only 33% of probation officers surveyed felt that Aboriginal clients had access to non-residential substance abuse treatment services within five kilometers of their residence, and 28% felt their clients rarely or never had access to such services. Access to mental health facilities was similarly problematic, with only 24% indicating mental health treatment services were always or frequently available within five kilometers of residence and 33% indicating such services were rarely or never available.

While over half of the participants in the Client Survey stated transportation to programs was an issue, most indicated they had taken some type of program during their probation. The majority were involved in AA, Cocaine Anonymous (CA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) (32%), Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) (29%) or counseling (17%), while 27% of clients stated that they did not participate in any programs. When asked about programs that were needed, 57% indicated a need for programs to deal with core issues, including substance abuse, domestic violence, anger management, counseling/therapy and healing programs (cultural and spiritual). Although not specifically asked, 25% of Aboriginal clients felt positive recreation programs would help them successfully complete their term of community supervision.

Recreational and other healthy programs were also seen as positive by some probation officers.

Flexibility

The majority of probation officers surveyed agree that some flexibility is important in managing the terms of community service for their clients. Flexible reporting options are seen as positive motivation, with 89% of probation officers indicating that they can motivate clients to report by allowing them to occasionally reschedule appointments, and 83% indicating telephone reporting can be beneficial for some clients. However, fewer respondents felt increasing home or field visits or offering appointment times outside of office hours were as effective (56% and 35% respectively). Punitive measures were also seen as relatively ineffective, with only 47% of respondents finding threats of disciplinary action were effective motivators to report.

While 82% of probation officers agree that permitting clients flexibility for completing programs can motivate them to continue, and 90% feel substituting program requirements to better meet client needs is a motivating factor, probation officers are unlikely to vary a supervision order. Fewer than 4% of probation officers always or frequently vary a supervision order. The most likely instance in which an order may be varied is due to a condition being unenforceable, with 10% of probation officers always or frequently varying such a condition.

Protective Factors

The Client Survey found probation conditions that support family connections and do not create barriers for maintaining and renewing parent-child connections are paramount to the successful conclusion of probation. Of clients surveyed, 89% agreed that relationships with family, and the support of family and friends was important to their success.

“I have a lot of support. My uncles are very culturally active...My father-in-law, he is a councilor here. I will talk to him and he isn't mad at me, he doesn't hate me for what I've done – it's more like he understands. He told me you have to smarten up, your family needs you.” Client Survey

Data from the Probation Officer's Survey also indicates relationships are important in successfully meeting the conditions of probation. Probation officers agree building relationships through adapting communication styles (99%) and allowing for freedom of expression (94%) is important, and 80% of probation officers also agree they spend more time talking with Aboriginal clients in order to build rapport. Significantly, 79% of probation officers surveyed felt participation in cultural or spiritual ceremonies is also a factor in their clients' potential for success.

The Client Survey indicates the ability to self-determine is critical to long-term success for Aboriginal offenders on probation. When probationers are able to

provide for their families and make positive choices for themselves, they feel more successful.

“I would like to get my H2S course and go out North and work on the pipelines and get off reserve but probation is stopping me from doing those kinds of things. I would like to get off the reserve.” Client Survey

However, the quality of self-determinism is not always easy to achieve. Probation officers surveyed found Aboriginal clients lack self-motivation to comply with the terms of their supervision, with only 10% indicating their clients were always or frequently motivated to comply, and 26% indicating clients were rarely or never motivated to comply. A number of probation officers (41%) also indicated their Aboriginal clients required more direction to ensure compliance with their orders than non-Aboriginal clients.

9. CONCLUSION

The Aboriginal Administration of Justice Offences Research Project provides a starting point for discussions around strategies to reduce the rate at which Aboriginal people incur administration of justice charges and reduce the time the Provincial Court of Alberta devotes to hearing these charges. Aboriginal Albertans represent a high percentage of adult admissions to custody; many are also charged with one or more AAJO's, adding to remand centre population pressures. The project also provides an opportunity to create partnerships designed to increase the capacity within the justice system and the Aboriginal communities to address this issue.