

# In expenditures on corrections (-9%) while provincial

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In Canada, prisons are a pure publicly financed and publicly provided public good. The Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is the Canadian federal government agency responsible for the incarceration and rehabilitation of convicted criminal offenders sentenced to two years or more. Some statistics on the incarcerated population of Canada as for the year 2015-2016 are as follows: There were on average 120, 568 adult offenders on a given day, in either custody or in a community program. Prison population rate (per 100, 000 of national population) is 438. The adult incarceration rate for Canada, which represents the average number of adults in custody (sentenced custody, remand and other temporary detention) per day for every 100, 000 adults in the population was 139 inmates per 100, 000 adults.

Official capacity of the prison system is 38, 771. Occupancy level is therefore 103. 5% In 2015/2016, adult correctional services operating expenditures in Canada totalled over \$4. 6 billion, a decrease of 2% from the previous year after adjusting for inflation. This decline is the result of the decrease in federal expenditures on corrections (-9%) while provincial and territorial spending increased by 6%.

Custodial services (services for the inmates in sentenced custody only) accounted for 80% of all correctional expenditures in 2015/2016, even though the custodial population accounted for 63% of the total correctional services population. Community supervision services expenditures accounted for only 15% of total expenditures. While Canada has never been internationally notorious for its flawed prison system like other countries have, it is in fact bogged down by a criminal justice system that is biased, unjust and commits egregious human rights violations. The prison system in <https://assignbuster.com/in-expenditures-on-corrections-9-while-provincial/>

Canada does not offer any benefits to society, it in fact is the root cause of several negative externalities which are illustrated in more detail below. The majority of prison inmates in Canada are on remand—denied bail and incarcerated even before trial and therefore, are legally innocent. 60% of people incarcerated in Canada are on remand. The mean cost of bail is \$3004 in Ontario which is unaffordable for low-income citizens. Extensive research in this field also show that black people are 1.

5 times more likely than white people to be detained even before their trial. Also, accused persons denied bail and sent to remand are less likely to have the criminal charges against them withdrawn, more likely to be convicted and receive a sentence longer than those who were released on bail.

Moreover, because remand is seen as temporary, remanded prisoners rarely have access to educational programming or vocational training. Prisons with a high number of remanded inmates are maximum security, and are often overcrowded and understaffed. This evidently means that almost 60% of Canada's incarcerated do not have any access to programs that could help them rehabilitate. There is a gross overrepresentation of black and indigenous peoples in the prison population. This only highlights the racial profiling and over-policing of certain communities that occurs in Canada's criminal justice system. Data collected by the Toronto Star (2009-2010) indicated that black people were 3.

2 times more likely to be carded in Toronto than white people--stopped by the police on the street, asked for identification, and having their personal information catalogued in a database—despite not being suspected of a

crime. Incarcerated people have an internationally recognized right to education; yet remanded prisoners often have no access to it. Though the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) states on their website, that educational opportunities are available “ through a variety of partnerships,” it is not legally mandated that correctional institutions provide educational programming for prisoners.

Thus prisoners on remand in Ontario often experience an acute lack of access to educational programming, argues a 2014 research paper from academics at Ryerson University—one of very few publicly available documents on access to education for remanded prisoners. The authors cite research noting that religion and addiction support programs are the only consistently implemented programs in Ontario’s detention centres. Coming to the question of whether the federal government should use taxpayers money to shelter and feed criminals, the answer with reference to Canada is not very straightforward. Crime and criminals are a public bad, and cause harm to society. Hence it is important to manage this ever-present problem with as much efficiency and cost-effectiveness as possible.

The government owes it to its citizens to protect them from bad elements such as criminals, and research has shown that imprisoning them may not be the best way to do so. Research has shown that access to education and vocational training is both cheaper and more effective at keeping criminals from returning to prison than longer sentences or punishments like intensive surveillance or electronic monitoring. Thus, criminals are not only less likely to commit an offence again, thereby reducing the overpopulation problem in

Canada's prisons, but it also saves taxpayers' money. A 2004 study by the UCLA School of Public Policy and Research found that a \$1 million investment in incarceration would prevent 350 crimes, while a \$1 million investment in prison education would prevent more than 600 crimes. Similarly, a 2013 report found that formerly incarcerated people who participated in education programs had 43 percent lower rates of being rearrested, and that each dollar spent on prison education translated to four dollars of cost savings in the first three years post-release.

Compare these findings with the fact that it costs Correctional Service Canada an average of \$111, 202 annually to incarcerate one man (and twice as much to incarcerate one woman), with only \$2950 of that money spent on education per prisoner. In conclusion, while it is the responsibility of the government to protect society from criminals, and the taxpayers who enjoy a crime-free society must pay tax for that benefit, it is certainly worthwhile to evaluate the current policies to ensure that the taxpayers' money is used effectively and not wasted. Increased spending on education and vocational training leads to multi-pronged benefits to society as a whole - decrease in incarceration spending, reduction in crime rate as well as decrease in racial discrimination in the prison system.