

Adult and youth correctional statistics in Canada, 2017/2018

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Fewer adults and youth were under supervision by correctional services in Canada in 2017/2018 compared with five years earlier. However, the number of adults in remand awaiting trial or sentencing continues to be greater than the number in sentenced custody.

In 2017/2018, the number of people being supervised by correctional services in the provinces and territories was 8% lower among adults (excluding New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Alberta and Yukon) and 36% lower among youth (excluding New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Alberta and Yukon) compared with 2013/2014.

New data released today in the *Juristat* article "[Adult and youth correctional statistics in Canada, 2017/2018](#)" highlight how correctional service populations have changed over time and provide information on the characteristics of people admitted to correctional services. This information can be useful to policy makers looking to address issues such as overcrowding and overrepresentation of certain vulnerable populations in correctional services.

Adult and youth incarceration rates continue to decline

In 2017/2018, there were 38,786 adults on average in provincial/territorial or federal custody per day in Canada. Of this number, 24,657 adults were in provincial/territorial custody serving sentences of less than two years, while 14,129 were in federal custody serving sentences of over two years. The national incarceration rate was 131 adults per 100,000 population, down 4% from the previous year and a 9% decrease from 2013/2014.

There were 792 youth aged 12 to 17 in custody in the 11 reporting jurisdictions (excluding Quebec and Yukon) on average in 2017/2018. This represented a rate of 4 youth per 10,000 population, down 12% from the previous year.

In 2017/2018, there were on average 39,578 adults and youth in custody per day, representing an incarceration rate of 108 persons per 100,000 population. Canada's incarceration rate was the lowest in North America. In 2018, the rate was 655 per 100,000 population in the United States and 164 per 100,000 population in Mexico.

Most adults and youth are under community supervision

There were, on average, 94,904 adults under provincial/territorial community supervision such as probation, conditional sentences and provincial parole in the 10 reporting provinces and territories (excluding Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Yukon) in 2017/2018. There were 9,043 adults under federal community supervision such as day parole, full parole and statutory release. Adults under community supervision, which includes probation, accounted for 80% of the provincial/territorial correctional population and 39% of the federal correctional population.

The rate of adults under provincial/territorial community supervision was 337 per 100,000 population in 2017/2018, up 1% from the previous year but down 14% compared with five years earlier. The rate of adults under federal community supervision was 31 per 100,000 population, up 4% from the previous year and 11% higher compared with 2013/2014.

On average, there were 6,296 youth aged 12 to 17 under community supervision in the nine reporting provinces and territories (excluding Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Yukon). This represented a rate of 36 youth per 10,000 population, down 6% from the previous year and 35% lower compared with five years earlier. Youth under community supervision accounted for 89% of the youth correctional population.

More adults continue to be in remand than in sentenced custody

On a typical day, there were about 50% more adults in remand than in provincial/territorial sentenced custody (14,812 versus 9,543) in 2017/2018. Remand is the detention of an adult temporarily in custody, while awaiting trial or sentencing.



From 2013/2014 to 2017/2018, the rate of adults in provincial/territorial sentenced custody decreased 18%, from 39 to 32 adults per 100,000 population, while the rate of adults in remand edged up from 46 to 47 adults per 100,000 population. Every year since 2004/2005, the average number of adults awaiting trial or sentencing (remand population) has been greater than the number of adults in provincial/territorial sentenced custody.

Indigenous adults and youth are overrepresented in custody

An admission to correctional services is counted each time an individual begins any type of custodial or community supervision program. In 2017/2018, Indigenous adults accounted for 30% of adult admissions to provincial/territorial custody and 29% of adult admissions to federal custody, while representing approximately 4% of the Canadian adult population. A decade earlier, Indigenous adults accounted for 21% of admissions to provincial/territorial custody and 20% of federal custodial admissions, indicating that the percentage of Indigenous peoples in custody has increased over the past decade.

In 2017/2018, Indigenous youth made up almost half of youth admissions to custody (48%) in the nine reporting jurisdictions (excluding Nova Scotia, Quebec, Alberta and Yukon), while representing about 8% of the Canadian youth population.

In Saskatchewan, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics now has the capacity to report the number of unique persons who have entered custody to get a more accurate indication of the proportion of people who come into contact with custodial services. Over a three-year period, the number of Indigenous persons who entered custody in Saskatchewan increased 1%, from 5,145 in 2015/2016 to 5,178 in 2017/2018. In contrast, the number of non-Indigenous persons who entered custody over the same period decreased 3%, from 1,787 to 1,725. The number of persons of unknown Indigenous identity decreased 25%, from 343 to 258.

Operating expenditures for adult correctional services rise slightly

Operating expenditures for adult correctional services in Canada increased 7% (after adjusting for inflation) from a year earlier to over \$5 billion in 2017/2018.

The costs for keeping adults in custody are typically higher in the federal system. On average, custodial services expenditures amounted to approximately \$330 per day or \$120,571 annually per adult in federal custody in 2017/2018, compared with \$233 per day or \$84,915 annually per adult in provincial/territorial custody.

Note to readers

The provincial/territorial correctional system supervises adults serving custodial sentences of less than two years, as well as those being held in pre-trial custody (remand) or serving community sentence such as probation. The federal correctional system supervises adult offenders serving custodial sentences of two years or more, and those on conditional release in the community including parole.

Corrections officials typically perform daily counts of persons in their facilities and monthly counts of persons under community supervision. These data are used to calculate the annual average daily custody and community counts as well as incarceration rates.

Admissions are counted each time a person begins any period of supervision in a correctional institution or in the community. These data describe and measure the number of times a person moves from one type of correctional supervision to another. The same person may be included several times in the admission counts when moving from one correctional program to another (for example, from remand to sentenced custody) or re-entering the system later in the same year.

The number of unique persons who have entered custody is defined as the count of individuals entering into custody during a specific time period. Persons are counted only once regardless of their number of contacts with custody within the referenced time period.

Changes in rates are calculated using unrounded numbers and therefore may not be equivalent to the change of the presented figures.

"Indigenous" refers to persons under correctional supervision who identified with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who identify as First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

Available tables: [35-10-0003-01](#) to [35-10-0009-01](#) , [35-10-0012-01](#) to [35-10-0024-01](#) , [35-10-0118-01](#), [35-10-0154-01](#) and [35-10-0155-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3306](#), [3313](#), [3323](#) and [5251](#).

The article "[Adult and youth correctional statistics in Canada, 2017/2018](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* ([85-002-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).