



Aboriginal Justice Strategy

The Aboriginal Justice Strategy (AJS) enables Aboriginal communities to have increased involvement in the local administration of justice and, as such, provides timely and effective alternatives to mainstream justice processes in appropriate circumstances. AJS programs are also aimed at reducing the rates of victimization, crime and incarceration among Aboriginal people in communities operating AJS programs, and helping the mainstream justice system become more responsive and sensitive to the needs and culture of Aboriginal communities.

Objectives of the AJS:

- To contribute to a decrease in the rates of victimization, crime and incarceration among Aboriginal people in communities operating AJS programs;
- To assist Aboriginal people to assume greater responsibility for the administration of justice in their communities;
- To provide better and more timely information about community justice programs funded by the AJS; and
- To reflect and include relevant Aboriginal values within the justice system.

The AJS is managed by the Aboriginal Justice Directorate, a component of the Department of Justice Programs Branch. It was created in 1991 as part of an overall federal Aboriginal crime strategy and has been renewed three times: in 1996, 2002 and, most recently, in 2007 for a further five year renewal and expansion. During the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the AJS funded approximately 113 programs that served nearly 400 Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal Justice Strategy is comprised of two funding components:

- The Community-Based Justice Programs Fund; and
- The Capacity Building Fund.

1. Community-Based Justice Programs

Community-based justice programs continue to be the centerpiece of the AJS. The Community-Based Justice Programs Fund provides support to community-based justice programs in partnership with Aboriginal communities. Programs are cost-shared with provincial and territorial governments and are designed to reflect the culture and values of the communities in which they are situated.

The objectives of the Community-Based Justice Programs Fund are:

- to help reduce the rates of crime and incarceration among Aboriginal people in communities with cost-shared programs;
- to allow Aboriginal people the opportunity to assume greater responsibility for the administration of justice in their communities; and,
- to foster improved responsiveness, fairness, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of the justice system with respect to justice and its administration so as to meet the needs



and aspirations of Aboriginal people in the areas of appropriate models for:

- a) diversion;
- b) the development of pre-sentencing options;
- c) community sentencing alternatives (circles);
- d) the use of Justices of the Peace;
- e) family and civil mediation; and,
- f) additional community justice services such as victims support or offender-reintegration services which support the overall goals of the AJS.

2. Capacity Building Fund

The Capacity Building Fund is designed to support capacity-building efforts in Aboriginal communities, particularly as they relate to building increased knowledge and skills for the establishment and management of community-based justice programs.

The objectives of the Capacity Building Fund are:

- to support the training and/or developmental needs of Aboriginal communities that currently do not have community-based justice programs;
- to supplement the on-going training needs of current community-based justice programs, including supporting evaluation activities, data collection, sharing of best practices and useful models;
- to support activities targeted at improved community reporting in AJS communities and the development of data management systems;
- to support the development of new justice programs; and
- to support one-time or annual events and initiatives that build bridges, trust and partnerships between the mainstream justice system and Aboriginal communities.

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