

**Young Adults and How Their Needs Are Being  
Served in Canada's Correctional System  
Kick-off Workshop  
Meeting Report  
Ottawa, March 12, 2020**

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**Annex I: List of participants**

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## Section 1: Introduction

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### 1.1 Overview

Representatives from federal, provincial, and territorial governments met in Ottawa to discuss the state of young adults in Canada's correctional and broader justice system. In addition, two members representing British Columbia's Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies attended.

The one-day meeting provided an opportunity to discuss lessons learned and possible steps to achieve better outcomes for young adults transitioning into the adult justice system and young adults entering the adult system directly. This report provides the key points from each of the major discussions and, most critically, Sections 6 & 7 (Future Strategies and Next Steps) provide a compelling preliminary vision for young adult justice reform and innovation, and sketch out the first steps toward making this vision a reality.

### 1.2 Attendees

See Annex I for a full list of attendees.

### 1.3 Meeting Objectives

- Share perspectives and ideas to understand the major issues facing young adults in the justice system
- Identify barriers and pathways toward solutions, including federal, provincial and territorial levers
- Begin to build the ideas and team that will lead change in this area

### 1.4 Agenda

1. Strategic Context – What We Know & Our Changing Environment
2. DISCUSSION: The Youth System
  - What is working well?
  - What challenges do we face?
  - Significant lessons learned
3. DISCUSSION: The Adult System
  - How do young adults differ from those of adults?
  - What is working well today?
  - Challenges faced by young adults in the adult system?
  - General issues in the adult system that impact young adults?
4. DISCUSSION: Barriers & Challenges
  - Political? Jurisdiction and coordination? Information? Resources? Other?
- 5: DISCUSSION: Future Strategies
  - What does positive change look like?
  - Pathways to change
  - Who needs to be involved and is now the time?
6. Next steps

## Section 2: Strategic context

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### 2.1 Understanding the context

Laurie Wright, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Sector, Justice Canada, welcomed participants and extended her appreciation to everyone for coming together to discuss the issues and challenges affecting young adults in Canada's correctional and broader justice system. She noted the success of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) and the timeliness in having this discussion.

Setting the stage for the discussion, Danièle Ménard, Director & General Counsel, Youth Justice and Strategic Initiatives Section, Policy Sector, Justice Canada, provided a brief overview of what is known to date about the state of young adult issues in Canada. See : **Youth and Young Adults in Canada's Correctional System: Context and Background** at Annex II for more detail. Some highlights:

- The YCJA came into force in 2003 and is supported by three Justice Canada-administered funding programs (Youth Justice Services Funding Program, Intensive Rehabilitative Custody and Supervision Program, and the Youth Justice Fund). It has been a long-term national success story, contributing to a steep decline in youth incarceration rates across the country.
- Today's youth criminal justice system provides numerous supports for persons transitioning out of the system and into the community. However, this is not always the case for young adults, such as those aged 18 to 25, transitioning into the adult justice system or those entering the adult system directly. These young adults often bear many of the same distinguishing factors / challenges that youth experience (i.e. those under 18 years of age): continuing brain development, emotional maturity, social supports and other factors.
- Based on available data, in 2017/2018, young adults aged 18 to 24 represented 35.1% of the total admission population to federal custody. Indigenous persons are overrepresented amongst this population. In 2017/2018, at the federal level, Indigenous young adults, aged 18 to 24 represented 20.8% of the total admission population and non-Indigenous young adults represented 14.3%.
- At the provincial/territorial level in 2017-18, young adults aged 18 to 24 represented 20% of the total admission population (breakdown by Indigenous identity not available at PT level).
- Through federal-provincial-territorial forums (FPT), provinces and territories have expressed interest in exploring how to better support young adults, either entering the adult system directly or ageing out of the youth system.
- Internationally, various jurisdictions are beginning to grapple with this challenge with concepts like "emerging adults", extending youth justice programs to a broader age range, and creating specialized facilities for young adults.
- Our information at this stage is incomplete, but there is promising work being done around the world and a growing sense that new justice approaches for young adults can reap major benefits for offenders, victims, and societies.
- Canada is a global leader on youth justice innovation and has an opportunity to play a similar role with respect to young adults.

## Section 3: Understanding the youth criminal justice system

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Workshop participants discussed the state of the youth system in three dimensions: What is working well? What challenges remain? What can we learn and apply to young adults in the adult system? Discussions highlights are as follows:

### 3.1 What is working well today in the youth system? Models to learn from?

- The **Intensive Rehabilitative Custody and Supervision Program** is working well, providing funding to provinces and territories to provide treatment for serious high risk, high need youth.
- The **legislative framework** for youth justice and **mandatory consideration of diversion** in particular has made the system take it up in a serious and sustained way.
- **Culture of collaboration** amongst justice system actors: there has been a major cultural change in terms of the various actors within the system working together for shared positive outcomes, and not just handing off challenges to the next person in line.
- **Holistic approach**: today's youth system takes a broad view of the issues, factors, and pressures driving youth behaviour and an equally broad view of ways to address systemic issues and help individuals.
- **Addressing mental health**: mental health is taken seriously, and resourced, so that issues can be addressed at their root.
- **Importance of funding for youth services**: changing attitudes and approaches are supported by the resources necessary to make change happen and sustain it.
- **Reduced use of custody**: custody is no longer the go-to solution and is reserved for the most serious offences.
- **Youth engagement in the community**: incentives for youth to engage their communities and reduce disconnectedness.
- **Education of justice actors such as** police officers, judges, prosecutors, program and service providers and others have made a major difference in building a collaborative community with a shared understanding and shared goals.
- **Section 34 assessments** (for mental health) are very helpful.
- **Involvement of social supports and relationship-based models**: parents, families and caregivers being actively involved makes a major difference (and distinguishes the adult approach).

### 3.2 What major challenges do we face?

- Changes in our approach to youth justice administration have not remedied the **overrepresentation of vulnerable youth, including Indigenous (particularly girls) and Black youth**.
- There is **overlap with child welfare system** because the youth justice system is effective and comparatively well-resourced. Young people can be directed into the justice system inappropriately. For instance, the criminal justice system is often used as a substitute for child protection, mental health or other social measures.

- **Increasingly complex cases:** as our understanding of issues evolves and perspective broadens, we find ourselves dealing with more complex cases involving far more coordination. For instance, individualized responses for young persons with variable needs typically require the involvement of many.
- **Continuity:** there is no way to continue offering services and monitoring youth post-sentence, or when youth age out.
- **Coordination:** lack of coordination with other service providers, and particularly low levels of information sharing between the youth and adult systems.
- **Current funding options for service providers** means they have to devote resources to grant writing and other functions just to secure resources to do the job.
- Lack of **culturally relevant programming for Black Canadians and Indigenous youth.**
- Gangs/organized criminals view **youth as targets for criminal recruitment** because they view the system as relatively lenient for those who are under 18 of age, placing additional pressure on vulnerable youth.
- **Lack of transitional housing** for youth.
- **Access to service in remote communities:** an ongoing challenge as resources and programming are concentrated in population centres.
- **Data:** a lack of reliable evidence of what approaches and programs are most effective, and tools for measuring the success of programs.
- **Low custodial population** has led to underutilized facilities, with questions around what to do with those facilities; there is a risk that youth justice is viewed as being in a “mission accomplished” state and resources – required for sustained success – are re-profiled to other areas.

### 3.3 Major takeaways that can inform making a difference for young adults?

- **Separate placement works.** Ensuring that youth are in settings designed to meet their needs and not to exacerbate their vulnerabilities has had a major impact. This lesson could certainly be applied to young adults (as is happening in the UK now).
- **Resources matter.** Having the funding and tools necessary to address the needs of young people transitioning, whether out of the system or from one system to another.
- **Changing actions first, perceptions later.** The YCJA is prescriptive in nature, and does not ask justice system actors to make major changes in how they view youth justice issues. Instead, it gives clear guidance on how those actors must behave. This has been critical in bringing about a widespread cultural shift, as change is not optional or dependent on changing mindsets first.
- **Implementation of the YCJA legislative regime was deeply supported and communicated.** Everyone involved was made clearly aware of the intent behind the legislation, and how it functioned, well in advance of its coming into force. This has had long-term positive effects.
- **Information sharing has improved.** While still an area for improvement, information sharing and collaboration amongst connected parties (e.g., probation officers, service providers) and institutions has been important.

- **Building a culture of specialization.** The extra attention and resources devoted to youth justice have engendered a culture of youth justice specialists who are equipped to deal with the unique challenges the subject presents, and who treat youth differently as a matter of course.

## Section 4: Understanding the adult justice system

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Workshop participants discussed the state of the adult system in three dimensions: How do the needs of young adults differ from older adults? What is working well today? And, what major challenges do youth and young adults face in the adult system? Discussion highlights are as follows:

### 4.1 How do the needs of young adults differ from those of the adult population generally?

- **Difference in brain development.** Young adults do not transform when they reach age 18, of course. Their brains are still malleable and developing, and are susceptible to both positive (intervention) and negative (older peers) influences in ways that older adults are not.
  - The science is fairly clear, and practitioners in the field “get it” – however there remains a gap for widespread acceptance of the science and its implications on program design and approaches.
  - The above notwithstanding, there is emerging public understanding of the differences in developing brains. As an example, recent education around cannabis legalization involved an understanding of that drug’s varying effect on still-developing brains compared to older adults.
- Young adults have **differing educational needs**, much more akin to youth than older adults, including educational, employment and life skills development.
- **Defining young adults** – we do not have a common and agreed upon definition, but the line might even be drawn at age 30, not 25 as is commonly used. There is clearly a dividing line, but useful guidance is to be determined.
- Young adults still generally **need more support from family members**, mentors, and other important people in their lives, similar to youth.
- Young adults have **less familiarity with the adult correctional system**. They have a greater need to understand the legal and correctional systems, and a need for communication targeted to them.

### 4.2 What is working well today in the adult system, from a youth and young adult perspective?

- **Enhanced bail supervision.**
- **Behaviour-based programs.**
- **Direct supervision model.**
- **Nova Scotia is piloting a separate housing approach** for those aged 18-21, benefiting from a now unused youth facility.
- There exists a **significant volume of research** on the adult system generally, which provides larger volumes of data to inform policy and programs.



- **Shift from recidivism to desistance** – moving away from a binary statistical focus (did this person reoffend or not?), to more comprehensive actions to help offenders rehabilitate and learn to become law abiding.
- **Strong intake assessment processes**, which enable individualized correctional plans that respond to the needs of each offender and a continuity of care approach.
- The adult system is larger and does not feature the same “age-out” that the youth system inevitably does. Therefore, the **adult system benefits from a certain economy of scale** that allows for programs and specialized resource allocation that would not be possible in a smaller system.

### 4.3 What are the major challenges young adults face in the adult system?

- **Privacy is a barrier.** Young adults need support from families, but have privacy rights that can bar family involvement.
- The adult system features **less specialized programming**, and programs in place are not geared to young adult needs.
- There remains **significant stigma around young adults and criminality**, and this can be a barrier to progress for individuals seeking community integration.
- There are **significant gaps between services**, in ways that differ importantly from the youth model. For example, young adults must be formally charged to access correctional programming, creating an incentive to charge that might serve no other purpose. In addition, different services (e.g., housing, education, etc.) are not connected to each other.
- Need to **evaluate programs** to see what is actually working or not, our information is limited.
- **Ageing-out of support.** Needs of young adults do not disappear when individuals turn 18, but supports do.
- Adult system has a **practice of using short sentences** as a form of punishment, which can be very negatively disruptive, and is at odds with the principles of the youth system.
- Similarly, some judges may occasionally impose lengthier sentences in order to allow offenders (particularly Indigenous offenders) access to federal programs and services. This reflects a mistaken understanding that this is better for the individual or that the relevant provincial or territorial system does not offer adequate support.
- Young adults experience **different outcomes for the same behaviour**. Once young adults enter the adult system there is no learning curve and the rules and practices of the youth system no longer apply.
- **Workload.** We often know what to do, but do not have the time or dedicated resources to do it.
- **Remand.** In some jurisdictions, an individual might serve a significant or all time in remand, without any access to programming. This is potentially productive time effectively lost in limbo.
- **Using restorative justice differently.** There is a perception that restorative justice is an option for less serious crimes, when in fact it can be most impactful for serious and violent crimes.
- **Blanket conditions applied at parole** sometimes set-up people for failure.

## Section 5: Barriers and Challenges

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The workshop's focus moved beyond the specific youth and adult correctional systems to examine the larger systemic issues and challenges that any solutions must be designed around. This conversation included political factors, jurisdictional and coordination issues, data gaps, resources, and more. Highlights of the discussion:

### 5.1 What are other systemic barriers that can block or slow down progress?

- **Communication risk:** that taking a more innovative, and age-appropriate response to young adult issues in the justice system is seen by important decision-makers and/or the public as being permissive or “soft on crime”. This is, of course, not the intent, but without clearly communicating the story, and the benefits that society would accrue, selling a new approach can be difficult. Absent a compelling story, risk aversion may win the day and systemic innovation will not be viewed as desirable.
- Today, the various **actors in the system do not share a common goal**; each has their own metrics for success, like arrests, convictions, diversion, program enrolment, and so on. This can make it difficult to unite people with different interests and incentives behind a larger outcome-focused approach.
- **Adult offenders may be seen more as a political priority**, to the exclusion of youth and young adults.
- **Ensuring effective FPT consultation and co-development.** Because of the inter-jurisdictional connections across the justice system, an effective forum and process for sustained collaboration will be critical. No party can go at it alone.
- **Incorporating the voice of lived experience:** policy analysis and research are important, but ensuring that lived experience informs our work is also critical. This will mean making efforts to bring this perspective into the conversation.
- **Filling research gaps.** Building momentum and making the right design choices will depend on solid research - important research gaps exist today.
- **Tension between research and privacy.** Because individuals in the justice system interact with many different offices and authorities, it can be difficult to build a comprehensive research picture and link appropriate data. Doing so, however, runs up against privacy considerations (both hard limits and de facto practices), which can make linking data sets difficult. Linked data is essential for telling the story, and particularly for telling the positive story of good outcomes for individuals that are blurred when looking only at how they transit through disconnected programs.
- **Integration with the education system.** Being able to intervene in schools and address issues within the educational system before they reach the criminal justice system is important, and is a major point of integration and coordination that may not exist uniformly across the country.
- **Need to intervene early.** Today's system for young adults too often mobilizes intervention later in an offender's story, when they have been charged, or are in custody already. Changing this will represent both a cultural and institutional shift.
- **Managing caseloads.** YCJA cases are more complex and take longer to resolve than other cases, and this requires serious resources to do properly. Simply changing the current approach to young adult justice without a concomitant shift in resources would not achieve the goals we share.

- **Legislative change beyond age limits.** Making the type of major changes we envision will involve more than just re-defining an age bracket. For example, there may be significant revision of the *Criminal Code* required to fully realize a comprehensive approach to young adult justice reform.
- **Rethinking our symbols and language.** How we present and talk about the criminal justice system has profound effects on the scope of the “art of the possible” and what Canadians view as acceptable. For example, when we use courthouses as symbols of justice, we build implicit assumptions that trials and punishment are the purpose of the system.
- **Arming our allies to be advocates.** We have a wide array of current and potential allies, but they are often ill-equipped to advocate for change. We can do a better job of informing and building coalitions.
- **Working with academia to focus on solutions.** Research can have a negative focus, highlighting problems more so than recommending solutions or testing possible approaches. We can work with the academic community to focus on research questions and programs that build toward success.
- **Resources for those on the front line.** Society’s evolving understanding of the impact of frontline work means doing more to support staff, prevent burnout, bolster mental health, and treat trauma.
- **Preparatory funding.** As with the YCJA, it is important to build support for and understanding of change, not just to flip a switch with the coming into force of a piece of legislation. Advance funding will be important to benefit from this example and build the support, knowledge, and infrastructure necessary to make a lasting difference.

## Section 6: Future Strategies

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In the final group discussion, participants considered the future in terms of: What would positive change look like? What are pathways to change? Who needs to be part of the team going forward? And, is now the time to move forward?

Discussion highlights:

### 6.1 What does positive change look like? What could we achieve?

- Universal recognition that young adults are different than adults and have different needs.
- A cultural shift to move away from a focus on punishment.
- Sweeping federal legislative change to create the structures for dealing with young adults in fundamentally different ways, akin to the youth approach.
- Broad consultation – bigger than Justice Canada's Criminal Justice System Review roundtables, and involving both management and practitioners.
- Collective, meaningful strategic planning based on a shared vision.
- Incremental change now, not just waiting to solve everything at once later.
- Talking about success: celebrating our achievements and building a positive story.
- Continuing the conversation on an ongoing basis, and enabling continuous improvement, together.

### 6.2 What are some pathways to change? Areas where we most want to make a difference

- Federal leadership and funding, as with the YCJA approach, to lay the foundation.
- Collaboration that brings in everyone involved: operational, policy, and across the many disciplines that touch on young adult justice issues.
- Planning that spans timelines larger than election cycles: something that gives us a long-term lens and structure for action.
- Using our successes to build political will for further change.
- Telling the story and showing the data to change public perception.
- Improved data collection to be able to demonstrate successes and tell the story effectively. This includes patient/client-informed research.
- Use technology more effectively, and have technology serve our businesses, not the other way around.

### 6.3 Who needs to be part of the team? What stakeholders and interests should be engaged and involved?

The group discussed the critical importance of building and sustaining a coalition involving all of the system actors who play a critical role in administering young adult justice programs and the supports throughout the system that enable success. In this discussion, workshop participants concluded that everyone needs to be involved to an

appropriate degree, but this does not mean that everyone needs to be involved on everything, all the time. This list is the emerging blueprint of the future coalition, with the understanding various players will be involved as required / interested. No one wants to create an unwieldy consultation monster. The defining characteristic of who needs to be involved was suggested as “people who are ready to think differently”.

- Federal / provincial / territorial colleagues.
- Indigenous governance bodies.
- Legal professionals: judges, crowns, police, counsel and others.
- Young adults.
- Indigenous and Black families / responsible persons.
- Persons with lived experience.
- Frontline staff.
- Leaders.
- Service providers: e.g. health and education professionals.
- Advocacy groups.
- NGOs that provide services.
- Grassroots community groups.
- FPT political actors and key policy influencers.
- Academics and researchers.
- Thought leaders and influencers.

## **6.4 Is now the time?**

- **Yes!**

## Section 7: Next Steps

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To conclude, we asked the group what next steps might look like. This discussion and its conclusions were informed by the understanding that we are at a very preliminary stage in this process. No organization was asked to commit to any policy direction, devote resources, or any other action beyond some limited exploratory work. The group acknowledged that we are in the building stage, and that future decisions in this area will, of course, involve senior officials and political direction. The prevailing intent from the workshop is to stimulate and inform those discussions, and not to pre-empt them.

### 7.1 Where can we go next?

- **Keep and use this group.** Workshop participants signalled a desire to maintain this working group and use it to drive the conversation. Post-meeting evaluation indicated, most importantly, that participants found the exchange of ideas useful and informative, and valued the spirit of co-development that underlies the working group. It is a forum for all parties to work together.
- **Use technology to enable closer collaboration.** This point was made during the workshop, and was thrown into much sharper relief by the subsequent COVID-19 crisis. It goes without saying that collaboration will be effected online in the future, and the working group will want to build the tools and fora it needs to continue the conversation effectively.
- **Conduct a more detailed environmental scan.** The group determined that, as a first step, there would be great value in a more detailed scan of what is happening in the area of young adult criminal justice, both in Canada and internationally. This would include understanding the latest research, legislative approaches, and innovative programming currently being tested. The idea is to have a more complete understanding of the possibilities and pitfall, and a general platform of shared knowledge from which to work. Furthermore, the group suggested that working group participants should develop this environmental scan together.
- **Short communiqué on the workshop results.** Workshop participants need a clear document describing the results of the conversation and the way forward, to help build understanding and support within their organizations. *Attached at Annex III.*

# ANNEX I

Young Adults and How Their Needs Are Being Served in Canada's Correctional System  
Kick-off Workshop, March 12, 2020  
Participants List

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## ANNEX II

### Youth and Young Adults in Canada's Correctional System: Context and Background

#### ISSUE

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) is the legislative authority for youth between 12 and 17 years of age. Beyond that, young adults are subject to the *Criminal Code*.

Youth and young adult offenders (e.g., 18-25 year olds) transitioning from the youth justice system into the adult system and those entering the adult system directly as young adults experience a range of challenges different from the broader adult population. Research indicates that brain development continues into early adulthood, yet the current legislative framework does not reflect the particular situation of this age group. Furthermore, current programming options in the adult system may not be suitable to the needs and vulnerabilities of young adults.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVE

The objective would be to better support youth and young adult offenders in the criminal justice system through a framework suitable to their needs, bearing in mind their maturing brains and continued development. Enhanced support to the target population, including addressing vulnerabilities such as mental health and substance use issues, should positively influence their well-being, rehabilitation and reintegration back into society upon completion of their sentence.

#### BACKGROUND

The YCJA applies to youth between the ages of 12-17. Federally funded youth justice programs and services fall under the federal Youth Justice Initiative and are restricted to youth between 12-17 years of age, in accordance with the YCJA.

Youth justice is a shared responsibility between the federal government and provincial/territorial governments. The federal government is responsible for the YCJA while the provinces and territories are responsible for its administration, including the provision/delivery of youth justice programs and services. Justice Canada supports this work through the Youth Justice Initiative, which consists of three funding programs: Youth Justice Services Funding Program, Intensive Rehabilitative Custody and Supervision Program, and the Youth Justice Fund.

In 2017/2018, young adults aged 18 to 24 represented 35.1% of the total admission population to federal custody (Indigenous young adults in the same age group represented 20.8%, and non-Indigenous young adults represented 14.3%). At the provincial/territorial level in 2017-18, young adults aged 18 to 24 represented 20% of the total admission population (breakdown by Indigenous identity not available at PT level).

There is much evidence that reflects ongoing development from adolescence to early adulthood in areas such as brain development, maturity, impulse control, cognitive decision-making, executive functioning and emotion regulation.

While the current youth justice system supports young persons as they transition out of the system and into the community, there may be service and programming gaps for young persons (e.g., 18-25 year olds) transitioning from the youth justice system into the adult system. This is similarly the case for those entering the adult system directly as young adults.

The Ashley Smith inquiry pointed to a number of issues with respect to youth transitioning to adult facilities, including the application process for transferring a youth, especially those with mental health issues, to an adult facility (s. 92 of the YCJA). The Inquiry also led to the recommendation that youths under the age of 19 who are in adult facilities should be held separately from adult inmates.

At the same time, with youth incarceration rates going steadily down, many youth correctional facilities are under-utilized.

Several provinces and territories have expressed interest in exploring how to better support young adults (e.g., aged 18-25) who are ageing out of the youth system and young adults entering the adult system directly and initial exploratory discussions to examine its scope have taken place. At the last meeting of the FPT Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials – Youth Justice and Cost-Sharing, there was agreement among provinces and territories to further collaborate, including following-up with the heads of corrections to help better understand the issue. Some of the questions raised by provinces and territories to date include:

- What could adult system learn from the way the youth side approaches service-delivery for young persons?
- What are the issues with young adults?
- Who is best positioned to foster improved responses?
- What are the programming issues / solutions?
- What are the legislative issues / solutions?
- What is being done elsewhere?

## INDIGENOUS

Indigenous persons are overrepresented amongst the population in question. In 2017/2018, at the federal level, Indigenous young adults aged 18 to 24 represented 20.8% of the total admission population and non-Indigenous young adults represented 14.3%.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL

The federal government is responsible for criminal law, including the *Criminal Code* and the YCJA, while the provinces and territories are responsible for its administration, including the provision of youth justice programs and services. A national strategy to address this issue would be helpful.

## INTERNATIONAL

A preliminary international scan has shown that U.S. states and other countries have or are considering frameworks, policies and/or legislation that supports special consideration for young adults up to 21 or older, whether in prison or on probation. Literature refers to the concept of “emerging adults” and the U.S. and some European countries have identified this as a “developmentally distinct group” requiring special treatment. Some examples include:

- California passed a statute in 2017 that extends youth offender parole eligibility to individuals who committed offences before the age of 25.
- Vermont in 2018 passed legislation to expand juvenile court jurisdiction to include 18 year olds by July 2020 and 19 year olds by July 2022.
- Connecticut introduced legislation in 2018 proposing to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 21 (the legislation did not pass in the 2018 legislative session).
- Illinois introduced legislation in January 2019 to amend its Juvenile Court Act to change the definition of a “delinquent minor” to include minors up to 21 years of age at time of offence.
- The Florida *Youthful Offender Act* permits alternative sentences for youth under the age of 21.
- Hawaii defines “young adult defendant” as a person convicted of a crime under the age of 22. Young adult defendants receive “specialized and individualized correctional and rehabilitative treatment as may be appropriate to the young adult defendant’s needs.”
- In Alabama, the law permits courts to designate certain offenders under the age of 21 as “youthful offenders”, thereby providing access to sentencing options, such as a suspended sentence, fine, probation or a term of incarceration not to exceed 3 years.
- In the United Kingdom, young adults aged between 18-25 sentenced to prison are housed in separate facilities that are not part of the regular adult prison system. Level of maturity/age has also been listed as a mitigating factor in sentencing guidelines and must be considered by the court when deciding on the type of sentence. A screening tool also appears to be in place to assess a young adult’s level of psychosocial maturity.
- In Germany, the *Youth Courts Law* applies to young persons between 14-20 years of age and specialized youth courts have jurisdiction over juveniles between 14 and 21 years.