



# Out of the Silos: Implementing Solutions Together

## JUSTICE SUMMIT – CENTRAL

### SUMMARY REPORT

**Prior to the event, participants were asked to come prepared to discuss:**

- What issues are causing challenges for the criminal justice system to work effectively and efficiently in the Central region?
- Why are these issues occurring?
- What are the solutions to addressing these issues and who would be part of implementing those solutions?

The Department of Justice and Public Safety organized a Justice Summit on the criminal justice system in the Central region. The theme for the Summit was “Out of the Silos: Implementing Solutions Together.” The forum provided a space where various stakeholders could participate in an open dialogue about how the criminal justice system is working in the Central region and how challenges can be overcome through collaboration.

Approximately 48 invited stakeholders attended the event. Participants included, but were not limited to, representatives from Indigenous organizations, Supreme Court of Canada, Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, Provincial Court, court administration, Victim Services, RNC, RCMP, Office of the High Sheriff, Adult Probation, Correctional Services Canada, Provincial Crown, Federal Crown, Legal Aid, members of the legal community, community groups and women’s organizations.

**The day-long event began as follows:**

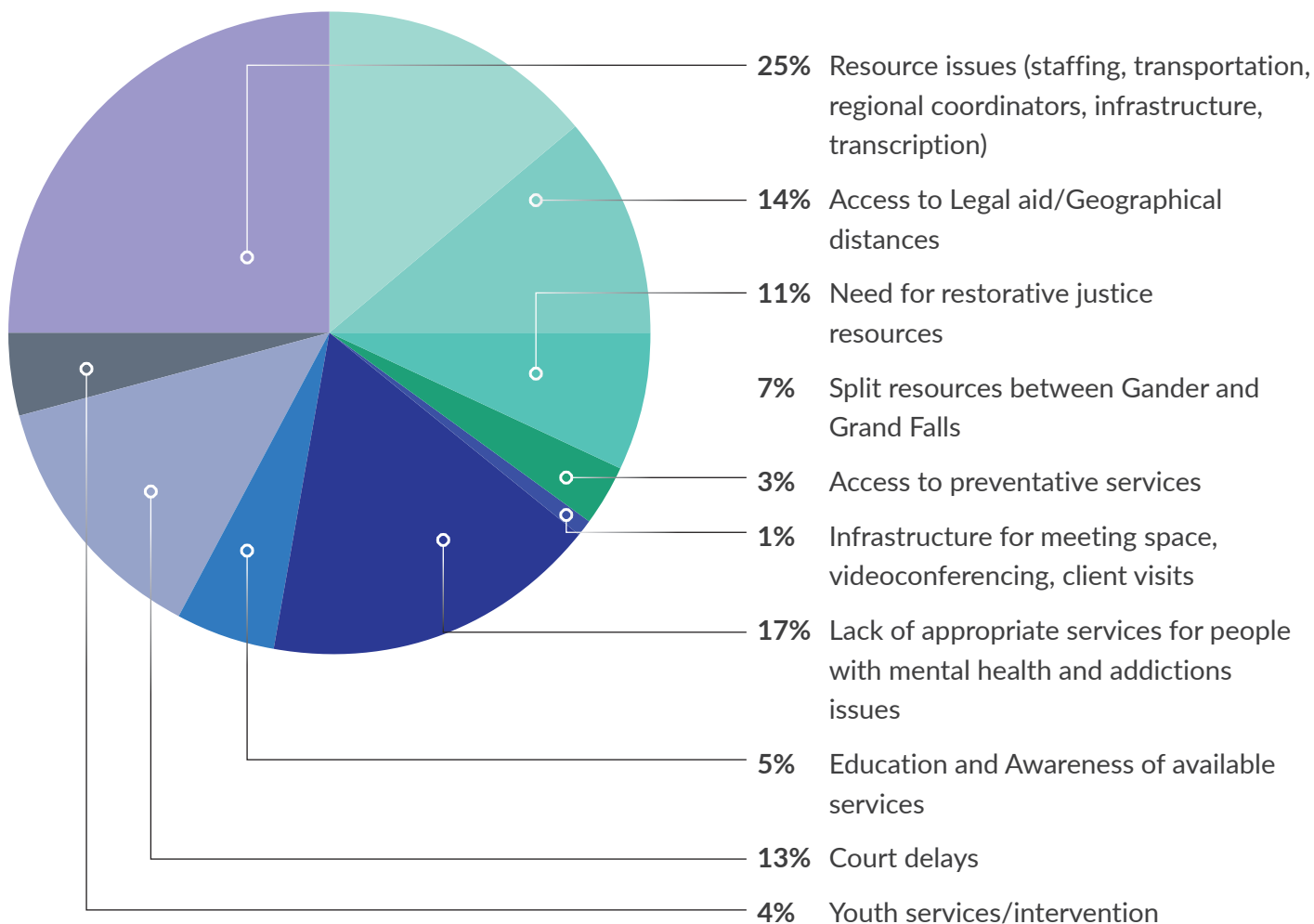
- Chief Mi’sel Joe of the Miawpukek First Nation began with an opening prayer;
- The Honourable Andrew Parsons, QC, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General, welcomed participants and discussed the purpose of the event;
- Kendra Wright, ADM Courts and Corporate Services, Department of Justice and Public Safety provided a brief overview of the criminal justice system in the Central region.

Participants then engaged in facilitated small-table discussions to identify the top issues they each felt need to be addressed in the criminal justice system in the Central region. The top issues identified by participants were:

1. Resource issues (staffing, transportation, regional coordinators, infrastructure, transcription)
2. Access to Legal aid/Geographical distances
3. Need for restorative justice resources
4. Split resources between Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor
5. Access to preventative services
6. Infrastructure for meeting space, videoconferencing, client visits
7. Lack of appropriate services for people with mental health and addictions issues
8. Education and Awareness of available services
9. Court delays
10. Youth services/intervention

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Participants then voted on the top three issues they wanted to discuss for the remainder of the day. The results are shown below:



Based on the results of the polling above, the three issues selected for discussion for the remainder of the day were:

1. Resource issues (staffing, transportation, regional coordinators, infrastructure, transcription)
2. Lack of appropriate services for people with mental health and addictions issues
3. Access to Legal aid/Geographical distances

Participants discussed each of these issues and were asked to focus on what challenges need to be addressed in relation to those issues and what possible solutions exist. All comments and ideas expressed by participants were compiled, with the following common themes emerging for each.

## Issue 1: Resource issues, including staffing, regional coordinators, infrastructure and transcription

### Challenges identified by participants

- Understaffed in many areas of the system (victim services, probation, policing, court staff)
- Recruitment and retention (salaries, benefits)
- Lack of services for inmates
- Lack of correctional infrastructure (overcrowding)
- Transportation of prisoners
- Staff training
- Need for increase in addiction services

### Potential Solutions Identified by participants

- Partnerships and dialogue (sharing space and support staff)
- Amalgamation of prisoner transport services
- Increase salaries in order to retain professionals (slowing turnover)
- Cross training of support staff/fluidity of resources
- Better use of existing resources (staffing and infrastructure)
- Increase victim support services and correctional staff
- Have floater positions
- Better use of technology
- Better community supports on release from prison
- Regional coordinator position
- Looking to other jurisdictions for innovative solution/best practices

## Issue 2: Lack of appropriate services for people with mental health and addictions issues

### Challenges identified by participants

- Lack of mental health court outside of St. John's
- Lack of resources to address mental health issues
- Lack of training for staff to identify and address mental health and addictions issues
- Overburdened staff and little time for training
- Lack of affordable housing and emergency shelters
- Insufficient community resources
- Lack of awareness of available supports
- Treating offenders with mental health and addictions the same as all others
- Information sharing/confidentiality

### Potential Solutions identified by participants

- Different options need to be provided (mental health court, drug treatment court, preventative services, hospitals vs. prisons)
- Supportive transportation, housing and other services
- Support for staff
- Focus on health and treatment vs. punitive measures
- Continuous education and training
- Stakeholder consultation on what works and what does not work
- Mandatory mental health training for judges
- Engage frontline staff as well as management

## Issue 3: Access to Legal Aid/Geographical Distances

### Challenges identified by participants

- Transportation
- Legal aid is understaffed for the volume of clients (recruitment and retention, delays in finding representation)
- Locations of circuit court
- Safety concerns – carrying around equipment, movement of staff to different locations
- Access to broadband
- Financial eligibility for legal aid creates access issues
- Notifications - cancellations due to weather, contacting clients
- Application process for legal aid complicated

### Potential Solutions identified by participants

- Hiring incentives - Competitive pay and compensation packages
- Contracting retired lawyers
- Transportation fund/provision of transportation
- Better use of communication i.e. videoconferencing
- Implement adult diversion/alternative justice
- Manageable caseloads

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The Department of Justice and Public Safety is reviewing opportunities to address challenges and implement solutions suggested by participants at the event. Further details related to progress will be made available throughout 2018/19.

### For more information:

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