

INITIATIVES TO MODERNIZE AND STREAMLINE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Manitoba Justice has implemented several important initiatives to modernize and improve the performance of the criminal justice system.

Crown Policies

New policies and procedures were put in place for Crown attorneys in August 2017 to review files earlier and make prompt decisions about whether it needed to proceed in the criminal justice system or be handled through restorative justice. In addition, the number of cases reviewed by the Crown before charges are laid has expanded, to more than 4,700 in 2018 from approximately 2,500 in 2017. Crown attorneys are also increasing the use of direct indictments so more matters can proceed to trial more quickly. The number of direct indictments has increased to 45 in 2018 from 17 requests in 2017.

Responsible Reintegration Initiative (RRI)

The RRI was established in October 2017 to help ensure individuals being released from provincial custody have the proper supports to ensure they effectively reintegrate back into society. The goal of the RRI is to help reduce recidivism by connecting offenders with supports like housing, education, employment and addictions treatment. As of March 2019, 194 individuals have been released into the community with these supports. Although it is too early to measure recidivism rates, initial results are promising.

Community Mobilization

Manitoba Justice continues to invest in community mobilization projects throughout the province and has created the Manitoba Community Mobilization and Safety Initiatives Network as a mechanism for continuous learning and improving services. Youth, families and other individuals who come into conflict with the law are often engaged with multiple service providers or face barriers in accessing support. Community mobilization brings together these agencies resources to help people in crisis, which has been effective in improving their ability to address the issues that contribute to their criminal behaviour and support the overall well-being of the community.

The province has also recently launched a comprehensive review of the youth justice system and its connections to the child welfare system, with the goal of ending cycles of crime and enhancing access to treatment and support.