

Part II: Institutional Hearings on Government Services

Panel on Victim Services

Government of Saskatchewan

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1. HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT

The current and future well-being of Indigenous women and girls, their families and communities, must be built upon the foundation of reconciliation recommended by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission defined reconciliation as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relations.

Since the 1980s, a focus for Saskatchewan's Ministry of Justice has been to engage directly with First Nations and Métis groups to improve services for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan. The Ministry has sought to involve Indigenous organizations and communities to inform, lead, and partner with the Ministry of Justice to be more responsive to the needs of Indigenous people and communities.

While Saskatchewan recognizes and acknowledges that more work must be done, the existing work has included the following actions:

1. Saskatchewan's early efforts to engage Aboriginal groups on Aboriginal Justice issues in the 1980s through to the establishment of an internal Aboriginal Justice Committee in the 1990s.
2. The creation of the Saskatchewan Indian and Métis Justice Review Committees in 1991. These committees marked the beginning of direct discussions between Indian and Metis groups and federal and provincial officials on Aboriginal Justice issues and eventually laid the groundwork for the development of a community-based justice approach and a model of collaborative decision making with Aboriginal organizations and communities. Many of the recommendations made by those committees were implemented, including the reinstatement of the Courtworker program.
3. In 1995, the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Courtworker Program was reinstated following an evaluation of need and partner engagement. This reinstatement included creating a Program Advisory Board that featured an independent Aboriginal Chair and First Nation and Metis representation. The reinstatement included commitment to status blind service delivery to all Aboriginal people.
4. From 1990-1997, the Ministry reviewed its existing victims services programs to better assist Aboriginal victims and families, resulting in the development of the Aboriginal Resource Officer and Aboriginal Family Violence initiatives.
5. During this entire period, Saskatchewan was increasingly embracing a community justice approach to the delivery of its justice programs, emphasizing crime prevention and alternative measures and collaboration with Aboriginal communities. A number of court locations were moved onto reserve locations and other efforts were made to try to improve service to Aboriginal communities such as creation of the Cree Court Party in 2001. This was an innovative model established as a result of interest from First Nations communities and the judiciary. A second Aboriginal Court Party was established in 2005-6.

6. In 2002, the Indian and Metis Peoples and Justice Reform Commission was created to identify reforms to the justice system. Many of the recommendations of the Commission were acted upon by the province, including the development of Aboriginal courts and the creation of the Elders Advisory Committee, which is a group of Indigenous elders who advise the Ministry of Justice on matters of relevance. Also arising out of this work was the development of courts specifically to address drug treatment, family violence, and mental health. The Ministry increased its focus on cultural awareness training, employment equity goals, and continued to expand its victim services programming.

Further to the recommendations of these bodies, Saskatchewan has undertaken activities to address the root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls, deal directly with victimization and offending issues, and address systemic issues.

2. MISSING PERSONS

Since 2005, Saskatchewan has been a leader in using innovative approaches to address the challenge of missing persons in the province. The Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (“PPCMP”) is an approach that has been recognized and affirmed through the Coordinating Committee of Missing Women in Canada and through a specific recommendation of the Oppal Report.¹

a. Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons

In 2005, the Saskatchewan Government announced a plan to confront the systemic and institutional challenges of preventing and responding to cases of missing persons. Three primary issues were identified, which then became the primary drivers of the missing persons’ strategy:

1. Increased resources to support police investigations;
2. The development of a province-wide policy and protocol to standardize how reports of missing persons are received and investigated; and,
3. A strengthened partnership among government, police agencies, Indigenous and community organizations to support families and communities when identifying and responding to missing persons cases.

Working with a broad range of partners, agreement was reached to create the PPCMP in 2006. At the time, the partnership was comprised of over 20 organizations, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous community agencies, police, Justice, Health, and Social Services representatives.² It was and continues to be a partnership of equals. While Ministry of Justice

¹ The Honourable Wally Oppal, QC, in *Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*, British Columbia, November 19, 2012 at 166 [“Oppal Report”]. <http://www.missingwomeninquiry.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Forsaken-ES-web-RGB.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

² The original members included Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice (both Policing and Policy areas), Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Women’s Commission; Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women’s Circle Corporation; Child Find Saskatchewan; STOPS To Violence; Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan; Métis and Family Community Justice Services Inc.; Search and Rescue Saskatchewan; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police. Over the last decade, membership has grown as more organizations contribute to this important work, including the Office of the Chief Coroner;

officials have co-chaired the PPCMP since its inception, each member is responsible for developing and supporting the partnership by sharing the workload and contributing resources and expertise, and is also responsible for reporting back to its organization on the work undertaken by the PPCMP.

b. Characteristics of Missing Persons in Saskatchewan

In 2006, the provincial Government funded research to analyze the characteristics of all reports of missing persons made to the police, research which provided baseline information to help the partnership understand the nature of the problem and the issues that needed to be further explored in its work.³

At the time, Saskatchewan's researcher (Dr. Pfeifer) found that the majority of missing persons' reports involved children aged nine to 18 (2005).⁴ Many reports dealt with young persons who repeatedly were reported missing, and were considered runaways.⁵

The data also revealed that of those whose ethnicity was known – about 1/3 of all reports - about 55% were Indigenous persons. While Dr. Pfeifer's research has not been repeated to date, there is no reason to expect that the numbers and characteristics of those reported missing have changed.

Over 99% of missing persons cases are resolved, often within a few days. Unfortunately, long term missing person's cases, defined as missing over six months, still occur. Although long term police investigations into missing persons reports are sometimes called "cold cases", they remain open and under investigation until solved.

As of May 2018, police-based records show 130 long-term missing persons since 1940 (94 males and 36 females), in addition to nine cases involving unidentified human remains and 29 located persons.⁶ There are 36 missing women (18 being Caucasian and 18 Aboriginal).⁷ Of the 94 missing men in Saskatchewan, 52 are Caucasian, two are visible minority and 40 are Indigenous.

Prior to the PPCMP's establishment, the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police (SACP) had developed and launched the province-wide missing persons website. The website, which can be found at <http://www.sacp.ca/>, contains photos and information about persons who have been missing for more than six months, as well as unidentified human remains. It also contains information created by the PPCMP, including a checklist for families and public awareness materials from Missing Persons Week going back to 2013.

Since the SACP started recording long term missing persons in 2006, the number of missing

Victims Services Branch; Greystone Bereavement Centre [now Regina Palliative Care Inc.]; and provincial ministries involved with child protection, education, and government relations.

³ Jeffrey Pfeifer, *Missing Persons in Saskatchewan: Police Policy and Practice* (November, 2006), <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/redirect.cfm?p=76887&i=86185> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁴ *Ibid.* at 8. In 2005 there were 4,496 reports to Saskatchewan police pertaining to 2,956 missing persons.

⁵ *Ibid.* Less than 1% of all missing children cases involve child abduction, usually by a parent.

⁶ Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, Missing Persons Index, <http://www.sacp.ca/missing/index.php> (last accessed May 14, 2018).

⁷ The website uses the terms Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal status where known.

Indigenous women in Saskatchewan has consistently been 50% or more of the total females missing. In comparison, only 11.3% of missing women in Canada are Indigenous. Clearly this shows an overrepresentation of Indigenous women among the missing, particularly when Indigenous women account for only 15.6% of the female population in the province.⁸

c. The Work of the PPCMP

The PPCMP builds trust and cooperation across and among sectors. The PPCMP's mandate is to work towards a future that ensures that when people go missing there is a full response that mobilizes all necessary participants and that recognizes the equal value of every life. The goals within the mandate are:

- To raise awareness of and support public education around the reasons why people go missing;
- To promote prevention strategies;
- To encourage cooperation and partnerships amongst agencies to better support families and communities where someone goes missing; and,
- To enhance capacity to respond to cases of missing persons at the family, community and provincial level.

The PPCMP recognizes that people go missing for a variety of reasons, and acknowledging this, it works to respond specifically to each of these reasons, while addressing the needs of all missing persons and their families.

Soon after its formation, the Committee organized engagement sessions with families of missing persons, as a means of conducting research and interviews with experts. This process resulted in two reports (interim and final) and 20 recommendations. The vast majority of these recommendations have been implemented.

In 2009, the Committee met again with families of missing persons, leading to further recommendations on topics such as the need to work with jurisdictions outside Saskatchewan, the need to support families financially or through networking, and the importance of continuing to build the partnership.

In this same year, Saskatchewan proclaimed *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act* to assist family members and law enforcement in accessing a wider range of information relating to a person who is missing.⁹

Section 8 of the *Act* allows a member of a police service, or of the R.C.M.P., to apply to the Court of Queen's Bench for an order that certain information be disclosed to aid in the location of a person reported missing. The person in relation to whom the information is sought need not

⁸ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview" (2014), <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-national-operational-overview> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁹ This legislation is affirmed by the later Recommendation 8.1 of the Oppal Report, which calls B.C. to "enact missing persons legislation to grant speedy access to personal information of missing persons without unduly infringing on privacy rights".

be a “missing person” as defined in the *Act*, but instead needs to have been reported as missing to the police service or RCMP. Because the application is *ex parte*, it can proceed quickly and without personal appearances in court.

The information ordered can be required from any person or any public body, including the Crown, and may include information about finances, accounts and transactions or identification. It includes:

- Health information (including information about physical or mental health);
- Information about health services provided;
- Information collected in the course of providing health services;
- Registration information; and,
- If information is not specifically listed in section 8, the judge can also order the release of any other information the judge considers appropriate.

The Government enacted amendments to the Act in 2017 to enhance police powers to obtain access to information about a missing person.

In April 2010, the Ministry of Justice created a website to host products from the PPCMP, including:

- A checklist and media kit for families of missing persons;
- An inventory of agencies dealing with missing person cases;
- A research report on youth runaways; and
- All the reports created by the PPCMP in 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2012.¹⁰

In this same year, the Ministry of Justice, together with the SACP, agreed that Police-based Victim Services could provide support to families of missing persons and then in 2011 approved the creation of three missing persons liaison Victim Services workers. The workers are located in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina and provide support both locally and to other Victim Services across the province.

In 2011, the PPCMP hosted a Western Regional Forum with representatives from Manitoba, Alberta, B.C., the Yukon, the North West Territories and the federal government. The purpose of the meeting was to consider how agencies could work better to support the families of missing persons. A report from that forum was shared with all participants. The report recommended identifying champions in each jurisdiction on the issue of missing persons; pursuing partnerships, funding and national attention; and developing a business plan to take this work forward.

The PPCMP then focused on developing a business/Strategic Plan to focus its work. That Plan suggested the PPCMP focus on continuing to improve on working together; on raising public

¹⁰ “Help for Families of Missing or Murdered Persons,” <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/family-and-social-support/help-for-families-of-missing-or-murdered-persons> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

awareness about missing persons' issues and communications with the public to dispel myths around missing persons cases; and finding ways to support families.

Other initiatives were undertaken at the community level by partners. For example, earlier information about youth runaways underscored the need to take action to reduce repeated occurrences of missing young persons. A Regina-based partnership developed the *11 and Under Initiative* ("11UI"), to support children under the age of 12 who exhibit at risk behaviours.¹¹ The program was modelled after a program established in Ontario. Children are referred to 11UI through an early identification process. The partnership then relies on an assertive and integrated case management system to link the children and their families to human service supports and community partners.¹²

d. Updates on the PPCMP

In 2010, the Coordinating Committee of Missing Women in Canada released its report on "Issues Related to the High Number of Missing and Murdered Women in Canada".¹³ In the report, the Committee quoted extensively from the Missing Persons' Report of Saskatchewan's PPCMP, adopting and building on multiple recommendations from the Saskatchewan report.¹⁴ Recommendations 15, 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 26, and 31 of the Coordinating Committee's report explicitly reference and build on the work and research that had been done in Saskatchewan.

In 2012, the Oppal Report was also published, affirming many of the steps already taken by the Saskatchewan PPCMP through its appeal for an "enhanced, holistic, comprehensive approach for the provision of support to the families and friends of missing persons."¹⁵ At the time of the Oppal Report, this very type of approach had already been taking place in Saskatchewan for over six years.

The PPCMP has implemented or made progress towards implementing most of the recommendations arising from its collaborative processes. Some of its concrete actions include:

- In February 2013, the Saskatchewan Police Commission developed and implemented a new comprehensive policy on missing persons' files. The RCMP adopted the policy in Saskatchewan on a voluntary basis;

¹¹ "11 and Under Initiative targets at-risk youth in Regina" (News Release), <https://regina.ctvnews.ca/11-and-under-initiative-targets-at-risk-youth-in-regina-1.1017616> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

¹² "11 and Under Initiative," <http://11andunderinitiative.ca> (last accessed May 3, 2018). The partnership includes commitment from; Regina Public Schools, Regina Catholic Schools, the Regina Police Service, the Ministry of Social Services, the Ministry of Justice, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region Child and Youth Services (Randall Kinship Centre), and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region Mental Health and Addiction Services (Addiction Services).

¹³ Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials: Missing Women Working Group, Report: Issues Related to the High Number of Murdered and Missing Women in Canada http://www.scics.gc.ca/CMFiles/830992005_e1MAJ-2112011-6827.pdf (last accessed May 18, 2018). Note that a more extensive report was released in 2012.

¹⁴ Saskatchewan's Final Report of the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (2007, <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=23748> (last accessed on May 18, 2018).

¹⁵ Oppal Report at 167. The full text of Recommendation 7.9 reads: "That provincial authorities develop an enhanced, holistic, comprehensive approach for the provision of support to the families and friends of missing persons. This should be based on a needs assessment carried out in consultation with the provincial partnership committee on missing persons."

- Missing Persons Weeks have been proclaimed annually in Saskatchewan since 2013. The purpose is to promote public awareness and understanding by addressing myths regarding missing persons, profiling different types of cases from across the province, creating a hypothetical case for people to follow, highlighting the range of services for families, and reaffirming that those missing are not forgotten. Videos from these events can be found on the SACP website;
- On September 19, 2014, the PPCMP dedicated an oak tree in Wascana Centre in Regina to remember all missing persons;
- In Fall 2017, the Ministry of Justice established a Family Information Liaison Unit to support Indigenous families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to locate information they need;
- The SACP and Victims Services Branch agreed upon a new policy to ensure all families of missing persons who need support are referred to police-based Victim Services. In addition, three missing persons liaison workers (in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert) are available to support families and assist Victim Services across the province. Information about Victim Services for the families of missing persons can be found at: <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse>;
- Families of missing persons are supported through programs such as the connecting families program offered by Child Find Saskatchewan and trauma-informed programming on ambiguous loss offered by Caring Hearts [previously known as Regina Palliative Care Inc.];
- The issue of runaway youth has been researched, and community-based organizations have been funded to do work to prevent or respond to this issue (such as Child Find Saskatchewan Alert Youth programming; funding for STOPS to Violence; and funding for the Regina Under-11 initiatives). Policy and protocol work continues in this area;
- Early on in its inception, the PPCMP and its member organizations engaged with the media to improve cultural sensitivity, resulting in concrete changes to media's approach to reporting cases of missing persons.

In 2014, the PPCMP began to focus on supporting families and assisting both service providers and families to understand how the trauma of a loved one's disappearance can affect them. That fall, the PPCMP held a series of workshops for supporting agencies and for families of missing persons about coping with or supporting individuals experiencing ambiguous loss. These workshops were held in Regina and Saskatoon and were broadcast in northern Saskatchewan via the Telehealth network. Since then, further training for over 3,000 service providers has occurred in partnership with Regina Palliative Care Inc and has had a focus on trauma-informed practice.¹⁶

¹⁶ See <http://www.caringheartssk.ca/> and http://www.rpci.org/public/images/Moving_Foward.pdf (last accessed May 8, 2018).

In addition to its activities in Saskatchewan, the PPCMP's recommendations have informed national work regarding missing persons and MMIWG. For example, the recommendation to develop a national police database was acted upon by the federal government with the creation of the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains ("NCMPUR"). The PPCMP's work also contributed to the national dialogue on missing women, informed the report of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Working Group on Missing Women, and was cited as a best practice in the Oppal Report.¹⁷ Moreover, both the PPCMP's work and the FPT report on missing women contributed to the national dialogue on violence against Indigenous women and girls, including MMIWG.

Lastly, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice recently pledged \$100,000 to expand its Most Valuable Network Program in Saskatchewan through its Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund. The Most Valuable Network uses the social media accounts of registered users to instantly notify the public of a missing child, and "leverages the viral power of social media to instantly spread awareness and alert the public of a missing child."¹⁸

3. PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING VIOLENCE

a. Preventing and Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

In October 2012, Federal Provincial Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety tasked Government officials with developing a Justice framework to address violence against Indigenous women and girls. In November 2013, Ministers approved the release of the draft Justice Framework to Address Violence Against Aboriginal Women to support consultation with Indigenous groups and other partners, and provided a public progress report on their work and commitment to move forward.

FPT Ministers of Justice and Public Safety agreed to the following six commitments, and Saskatchewan has responded to each in turn:

Commitment	Response
Take action to change attitudes that lead to violence against women, including Indigenous women.	In response, Saskatchewan proclaimed the first Violence Prevention Week in October 2014, announced legislative and program reforms, and released a revised child abuse protocol.
Monitor and support continuing police efforts to investigate the unresolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.	Saskatchewan supports the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons.
Encourage and support community-led,	The ministry held a collaborative workshop

¹⁷ Oppal Report at 143.

¹⁸ Missing Children Society of Canada, "Search Program," <https://mcsc.ca/search-program/> (last accessed May 8, 2018). The fund is established through *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, 2009* (Part V), <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/redirect.cfm?p=28308&i=35409> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

culturally responsive approaches to prevent and respond to violence, such as community safety planning.	with 80 participants on Community Wellness and Safety in the north to encourage interagency collaboration on initiatives such as community safety planning (February 2015).
Improve responses to violence, through greater integration and coordination of programs and services within government and in the community.	The ministry has worked with partners to develop a Saskatchewan approach to address violence against Indigenous women and girls.
Reach out to other sectors to work on addressing the root causes of violence.	The ministry has promoted training on trauma-informed practices.
Continue to collaborate and share information about promising practices for addressing violence against Indigenous women and girls.	The ministry continues to work with partners both nationally and provincially.

The following timeline highlights the strategic planning done to address violence against Indigenous women and girls:

- 2013: The Justice Framework was released publicly by Federal Provincial Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety in an effort to encourage public discussion.
- 2014-15: The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice held or supported 22 meetings with various groups to discuss a Draft Justice Framework to Address Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls.¹⁹ A total of over 700 people participated in these meetings. The input from those meetings was incorporated into the final Federal Provincial Territorial Framework to Address Violence Against Indigenous Women (released in January 2016).²⁰
- 2014: The Ministry of Government Relations provided \$13,000 to the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation (SAWCC), to collaborate with both the RCMP and family members of two missing Saskatchewan women, to create a "Place of Reflection". The Place of Reflection is located on the grounds of the RCMP Depot "F" Division.²¹
- 2014: The Ministry of Government Relations provided \$49,000 to a partnership between the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) and the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) to

¹⁹ Saskatchewan Report on the Dialogues Regarding the Draft Justice Framework to Address Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls (April 16, 2015). The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation (SAWCC) conducted some workshops with Indigenous groups on behalf of the Ministry.

²⁰ "FPT Justice Framework to Address Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls" (January, 2016), <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/about-bc-justice-system/publications/fpt-justice-framework-english.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018). The Framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable over time.

²¹ See, for example, http://www.missingpeople.net/proposed_memorial_would_be_place.htm (last accessed May 10, 2018).

commission a monument in recognition of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Saskatchewan. The sculpture of a woman dancing on a cloud, her shawl transforming into an eagle's wings, depicts a young woman who went missing in 2005. It was unveiled in front on the Saskatoon Police Service in May, 2017.

- 2015: The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice engaged in a number of discussions with members of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In February 2015, Saskatchewan delegates to the National Roundtable, including First Nations and Métis delegates, met to decide on the appropriate follow up action.²² This led to an agreement to host workshops with Indigenous, community, provincial and federal government participation to review and revise the National Roundtable Principles to address Saskatchewan concerns and to help identify key actions.²³
- December, 2015: Meeting with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to discuss how to move forward with the National Roundtable principles. The following was agreed upon: 1) further revisions to the principles were needed; (2) there should be a focus on action; (3) there should be opportunities to work with and hear from more communities and organizations.
- In 2016, the FPT Justice Framework to Address Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls was presented at the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and helped inform to the work on principles agreed upon at that meeting.
- In June and October, 2017, Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners were engaged in discussions on whether and how to move forward together on a strategic approach to address interpersonal and domestic violence in Saskatchewan.

4. VICTIM SERVICES

a. Expanding Victims Services Province-wide

Police-based Victim Services programs, funded out of the Victims' Fund, work closely with police providing information, support, court preparation, court accompaniment and referrals to victims of crime and traumatic events, in order to help lessen the immediate and long-term effects of victimization.²⁴ The ministry supports 14 police-based Victims Services programs that provide services province-wide, serving over 10,000 clients annually. While programs are available to all victims, Indigenous people account for a significant proportion of the caseload of Police-based victims services.

²² See, for example, <https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/15.02.27-National-Roundtable-on-Missing-and-Murdered-Aboriginal-Women-and-Girls-Framework.pdf> (last accessed May 12, 2018).

²³ Workshop, "Discussion on a Provincial Approach to Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Saskatchewan," June 8, 2015.

²⁴ Programs and services for victims are supported from the Victims' Fund, which mainly includes surcharge revenue from provincial and federal offences. Surcharge revenue makes up 95 per cent of the Victims' Fund's budgeted revenue.

The Saskatchewan Department of Justice (then known) began developing Police-based Victim Services in the early 1990s. By the mid-1990s there was a growing recognition that some of the most vulnerable victims in the province, including Indigenous people, were not accessing Police-based Victim Services. The Department held a review that included community meetings to determine how to assist Indigenous victims and families. This led to the development of the Aboriginal Resource Officer Programs and Aboriginal Family Violence Programs in 1997.

Beginning in 2012-13, the Ministry of Justice expanded Police-based Victim Services coverage to all communities, including 34 additional police jurisdictions in rural and northern Saskatchewan. In northern Saskatchewan, new services were implemented in the Creighton, Deschambault Lake, Fond du Lac, Pelican Narrows, Southend, Waskesiu, and Wollaston Lake RCMP detachments. In addition, five existing northern Police-based Victim Services programs were restructured into one large regional program responsible for the entire northern region of the province.

This reorganization was necessary to address service delivery, supervision and governance issues. It also allowed staff to work as part of a larger team, improve vacancy cover off, create administrative efficiencies and reduce administrative costs. It had the added benefit of reducing time and resource impact on both RCMP and community board members, and resolving several long-standing detachment and Victim Services program boundary conflicts.

In southern Saskatchewan, Police-based Victim Services was expanded into an additional 22 RCMP detachments and five smaller municipal police services.

The second component of the overall expansion involved enhancing Victim/Witness Services. These services provide court orientation and support for child victims/witnesses and other vulnerable witnesses to help reduce fear, anxiety, and further trauma through testifying. The enhancement involved adding two new programs to address high caseloads, increasing the total number of programs from four to six in 2012. New Victim/Witness Services offices opened in North Battleford in July 2012; and in Meadow Lake in September 2012. Prior to that, programs existed in La Ronge, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon. Witness Services staff are co-located in the District Prosecutions offices in these locations.

Police-based Victim Services are now available province-wide. These programs serve all victims, including a significant proportion of Indigenous clients. There are also a number of Victims Services programs that respond to specific needs of victims, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

b. Programs Geared Towards Indigenous Clients and the North

There are specific programs geared towards providing better access to victim supports for Indigenous clients, and for specific types of needs, as noted below.

i. Aboriginal Family Violence Programs

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice works with a number of community-based programs to offer services to support Indigenous victims of crime. Six Indigenous Family Violence Programs provide comprehensive and holistic services to urban Indigenous families. Programs are offered by Indigenous agencies in Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon and Yorkton. The programs are aimed at helping Indigenous families living in urban areas deal with violence and abuse.²⁵ All programs are staffed by Indigenous people and respond to the needs identified in each community. In 2016-17, 1,747 clients were served.

ii. Aboriginal Resource Officer Program

These programs help Indigenous victims of crime and their families by providing information, support and referrals. They also assist police agencies with the development and operation of crime prevention initiatives for Indigenous youth.

There are six Aboriginal Resource Officer Programs in the province: Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Prince Albert, La Ronge and Yorkton.²⁶ In 2016-17, the programs served 1,755 clients. In each location, the Aboriginal Resource Officers work with the Ministry of Justice, the police and the Indigenous community. They provide prevention and early intervention services and help ensure that Indigenous victims and their families receive culturally sensitive information and support during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

iii. Missing Persons Liaison (MPL) Programs

In 2011-12, these programs were created with funding from Justice Canada for a period of five years (renewed to 2020-21). The programs exist in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. Indigenous persons work on teams with members of their respective police services to support families of missing persons, identify best practices, develop training materials, and provide expertise, advice and training to all other police-based Victim Services units in Saskatchewan. There were 150 clients served in 2016-17.

iv. North Sask Victim Services Inc.

North Sask Victims Services serves residents of the Northern Administration District, providing assistance to those in crisis in the immediate aftermath of crime or tragedy.²⁷ The no-fee services include: exploration of support systems and safety plans, assistance with case information, crime prevention, court orientation, referrals, liaison services, and help with victim impact statements and compensation programs. The organization is funded by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Victims Services Branch.

²⁵ These include: Circle Project Association; Indian – Métis Friendship Centre of Prince Albert; Kanawayimik Child and Family Services; Prince Albert Grand Council Women's Commission; Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre; and SIGN.

²⁶ "Help for Aboriginal Victims of Crime," <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse/help-for-aboriginal-victims-of-crime> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

²⁷ "North Sask Victim Services Inc.," <http://northsaskvictimservices.com/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

v. Northern Transportation and Safety Initiative

In 2015, the Ministry of Justice entered into an agreement with North Sask Victim Services Inc. for annual funding to support the Northern Transportation and Support Initiative (NTSI).²⁸ The NTSI is intended to increase access to places of safety and provide transitional support for residents of the Northern Administration District who are fleeing circumstances of interpersonal violence and abuse.²⁹ Individuals and families are provided with emergency transportation, expenses related to the place of safety, and resources to return to the community when the danger is reduced.

There are no transition houses north of La Ronge or Meadow Lake and so the need for transportation is high. Clients assisted in 2016-17 came from a number of northern communities: Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Stoney Rapids, Black Lake, La Loche, South End, Deschambault, Fond du Lac, Creighton, Pelican Narrows, Buffalo Narrows, Sandy Bay, and Wollaston Lake.

c. Addressing Interpersonal and Domestic Violence for all Citizens of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan has also worked to address interpersonal and domestic violence as it affects all citizens, in a general way, as follows:

- June 28, 2017: Government officials engaged with Indigenous, police, community organizations, federal and provincial partners at an all-day meeting to determine support for a strategic approach. 25 partners were in attendance and there was unanimous support. Participants identified the key priorities as being education and public awareness, intervention and service provision; coordination; marketing the approach and addressing root causes.
- October 23, 2017: Follow up meeting held at the First Nations University with about 45 representatives from various sectors to explore the details of a strategic approach and common concerns of participants. Agreement was achieved on key principles and actions in support of a strategic approach.
- 2015: Saskatchewan undertook a pilot Saskatchewan Domestic Violence Death Review to review 45 domestic-related deaths in the province. The purpose was to have a better understanding of why perpetrators kill intimate partners and other family members and of the reasons for the vulnerability of victims.
- A steering committee was established with representation from ministry divisions that deal with domestic violence situations and the police, including: Office of the Chief Coroner, Victim Services Branch, Community Justice Division, Saskatchewan Police Commission, Children's Counsel, RCMP and municipal police.

²⁸ "North Sask Victim Services Inc.," <http://northsaskvictimservices.com/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

²⁹ "NTSI: Guidelines for Delivery of Transitional Support," <http://northsaskvictimservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Northern-Transportation-Support-Initiative.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

- The goal of the domestic violence review process is to help prevent deaths related to domestic violence in the future. The objectives are to:
 - Identify trends, risk factors and patterns in order to inform risk assessment, risk management and safety planning;
 - Identify possible barriers, gaps and points of intervention in community and systemic responses;
 - Recommend domestic violence prevention and intervention strategies; and
 - Facilitate systemic and inter-agency communication and coordination.
- 2017: The Review Panel released an interim report indicating that between 2005 and 2014, 48 domestic violence homicides occurred in Saskatchewan (25 female; 23 male).³⁰ In the same time frame, nine (eight male and one female) domestic violence related suicides occurred. Five female and nine male victims of homicide were 10 years or under; six female victims were between 21 to 30 years; five male victims were between 41 to 50 years; and no victims were over 61 years.
- Over half (27/48) of the victims of homicide were Indigenous, 19 Caucasian and two unknown. Thirteen of the Indigenous victims and seven of the Caucasian victims were male. Fourteen of the Indigenous victims were female and twelve of the Caucasian victims were female. Of the nine individuals who committed suicide, two were Indigenous and seven were Caucasian.

A final report from the Domestic Violence Death Review panel is expected to be released in 2018.

d. Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Programs and Services

The Oppal Report identified the importance of maintaining and improving government support for safe houses and counselling services, particularly those run for and by Aboriginal women and youth.³¹ The following is a summary of the Saskatchewan Government's services and programs available to women and children experiencing the effects of interpersonal violence and abuse.

i. Transition Houses and Sexual Assault Services

Since 2009-10, the ministry has been responsible for interpersonal violence and abuse programs. The ministry's Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Unit supports 40 community-based programs that provide direct services for women and their children who are fleeing violence and abuse. Two of these programs are transition houses that have a primary focus on services for Indigenous women and children. These include the Wichihik Iskewak Safe House in Regina, which is operated by TFHQ Safe Shelter Inc. and the Piwapan Women's Centre (operated by the La

³⁰ "Saskatchewan Domestic Violence Death Review Interim Report" (May, 2017) at 8, <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/9/98849-Interim%20Report%20SDVDR%20FINAL.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

³¹ Oppal Report at 165. Recommendation 6.3 states: "That Provincial Government provide additional funding to Aboriginal women's organizations to provide more safe houses and counselling programs run for and by Aboriginal women and youth."

Ronge Native Women's Council Inc.) In 2010-11, 80% of women and children in provincial transition houses were Indigenous (Status, Non-Status, and Métis). Further, about one in four clients were First Nations women and children who had lived on-reserve immediately prior to their arrival at a shelter.

ii. Sexual Assault Services

The Ministry of Justice funds six Sexual Assault Centres that serve around 7,445 clients annually. These include the Battleford's and Area Sexual Assault Centre, Inc.; Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre Inc.; Regina Sexual Assault Centre Inc.; Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre Inc. (Support for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (ASCSA)); The Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbors Inc.; and the Prince Albert Mobile Crisis Unit Co-operative Ltd.

The Sexual Assault Centres provide direct support for victims of sexual assault. Services include a 24 hour crisis telephone line, accompaniment to medical, legal and social services appointments, referrals, and public education.

The Ministry of Justice also provides funding to support the provincial coordinating body for sexual assault services.

iii. Family Violence Outreach Programs

The ministry's Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Unit supports 17 community-based Family Violence Outreach programs providing assistance to women, men and families living in violent or potentially violent circumstances. This includes direct services and support, public education and the development of support groups. Between 2017 and 2018, over 22,000 clients were provided services through these programs. The programs are located in Battlefords, Estevan, Regina, Saskatoon, Hudson Bay, Melfort, Meadow Lake, Humboldt, Swift Current, Fort Qu'Appelle, Moose Jaw, Kindersley, and Yorkton.

iv. Saskatchewan Legal Advice/Information for Survivors of Sexual Violence

The Ministry of Justice working with the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA) and with funding support from the Department of Justice Canada, is piloting a four year program to provide free legal information and advice to survivors of sexual violence. The pilot program is called the Listen Project.³²

Clients seeking legal information/advice will be referred through PLEA to trained lawyers to receive two hours of legal information or advice per incident and may, on request, receive up to another two hours of legal advice. The term "sexual violence" covers a broad range of incidents.

³² See, *The Province Launches Free Legal Advice Program for Survivors of Sexual Violence*, (April 24, 2018), <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2018/april/24/legal-advice-for-survivors-of-sexual-violence> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

The program is open to anyone of any gender who has experienced sexual violence, provided that the incident took place in Saskatchewan. There is no age limit or income restriction. There are no limitations on the amount of time that has passed since the incident. It is not necessary that the incident be reported to the police.

The program will assist survivors of violence by providing information and advice to assist in understanding and exercising legal options in civil, family, labour, human rights, immigration or criminal law. The program publicly launched in April, 2018.

v. Additional Emergency Recourse for Victims

Although there continues to be room for improvement, legislative enactments have provided more recourse for victims of interpersonal violence in Saskatchewan. For example, *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act* allows for phone access to immediate emergency intervention orders. While the legislation has been used on and off, the use of the emergency provisions related to exclusive occupation of a home is considered by the federal government to be in conflict with federal authority relating to Indian reserves. Although some bands have attempted to adopt the emergency intervention order regime by band by-law, the by-laws have not been approved by the federal government.

Recent amendments to *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act*, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, and *The Residential Tenancies Act* strengthen the scope of protection provided to victims, including by legislating an employment-based domestic violence leave and by allowing victims of interpersonal violence to end a fixed term residential tenancy lease.

e. Other Family Law Related Initiatives

In 2006, the Ministry of Justice funded the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation to conduct consultations on the family law needs and the resiliency of children in Aboriginal families and communities, and in so doing, learned the following:³³

- National Native Alcohol and Drug Addictions Program was one of the most common counselling services used by Aboriginal women, particularly on reserve;³⁴
- There were difficulties in accessing family counselling, particularly on reserve;
- There were difficulties in accessing legal aid either by phone or online and then delays in being approved for and seeing legal counsel;
- Aboriginal courtworkers were easier to access and provided some support in separation and divorce situations or in how to fill out forms or access mediation. This was regarded very positively;
- There were difficulties in accessing counselling for children;

³³ Separation, Divorce, and Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities, Lisa McCallum McLeod with Judy Hughes, March 31, 2006, report prepared for Saskatchewan Justice.

³⁴ "National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program," <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy/funding/national-native-alcohol-drug-abuse-program.html> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

- Participants identified three significant issues when making a decision to leave a spouse when there were children involved: support for children during the separation; financial concerns; and housing;
- Issues of custody and access to children were generally dealt with outside of the court process either by letting the children choose where they wanted to live or by one parent/partner just leaving – generally the father;
- Some people used the courts or maintenance enforcement for child support, but many did not pursue support because of the potential payor's lack of income or fear due to previous violence;
- There was not good understanding about the concept of spousal support;
- Family violence permeated all of the discussions and was viewed as a critical issue to address by the women;
- The women indicated they did not access the court system because they were afraid of it; and,
- Availability, accessibility and cultural sensitivity were gaps identified in the justice system.

In response to the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform (Recommendation 6.20), the ministry has developed a Family Law Line that is accessible province-wide. The ministry has also developed a number of self-help kits in family law matters which are available on-line³⁵ and has worked with the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA) to develop an interactive program to support self-represented individuals.³⁶ There are also a variety of publicly funded in-person supports available in clinic settings in major centres.³⁷

The Family Matters program, funded by the Ministry of Justice, aims to minimize the impact of separation and divorce on all family members – especially children, by providing information and resources to deal with a changing family situation; and assistance to resolve urgent and outstanding issues.³⁸ Intake workers provide clients with relevant information and connect them with services. At their disposal are numerous helpful resources including the Parenting Plan Workbook and Parenting Checklist.³⁹

Finally in response to the report of the Family and Youth Access to Justice Committee, the Ministry of Justice has implemented a Counsel for Children (“CFC”) program.⁴⁰ The program provides counsel for children involved in child protection matters (pursuant to *The Child and Family Services Act* (“CFSA”)), at no charge, through a roster of private bar lawyers managed by a senior counsel in the ministry. As of September 2017, counsel has been appointed to

³⁵ “Represent Yourself in Family Court,” <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/courts-and-sentencing/represent-yourself-in-family-court> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

³⁶ “Family Law Saskatchewan,” <http://familylaw.plea.org/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

³⁷ “Family Matters: Assisting Families through Separation and Divorce,” <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/separation-or-divorce/family-matters-program> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Family Matters: Assisting Families through Separation and Divorce,” <http://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/separation-or-divorce/family-matters-program#resources> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁴⁰ Family and Youth Access to Justice Committee, Final Report (2007), <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/9/32309-Final-Report-Family-and-Youth.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

represent 364 children in these matters. The majority of clients are Aboriginal children aged 10 or older. The program operates province-wide on and off reserve.

Children who have been placed with a Person of Sufficient Interest are within the mandate of the program. For children who reside on reserve, the Children's Counsel works with First Nations agencies to ensure access to the CFC program.

Counsel generally assumes an instructional advocacy role when representing children and youth who are able to express a wish, opinion, or position. Counsel may depart from the role of instructional advocate include where:

- the child is preverbal;
- the child has easily apparent low cognitive functioning;
- the child has mental impairment due to illness or intoxication; and,
- the child is unable to understand the role of a lawyer and the concept of privilege

In most cases, counsel is able to provide services as an instructional advocate and achieve outcomes that are consistent with the child's stated views - oftentimes settled by consent.

f. Other Programs Specific to Children
i. Children Exposed to Violence Programs

Provincially funded Children Exposed to Violence Programs have been offered in several locations since 1993, and some communities have offered services with funding from other sources during the same period. The offerings in individual programs vary depending on the community.

In 2007, the YWCA of Regina applied to Justice Canada for funding to conduct an evaluation of the four existing Children Who Witness Violence Programs in the province of Saskatchewan. The evaluation was conducted in June 2008.⁴¹

The evaluation provided eight recommendations relating to the Children Exposed to Violence Programs. The fourth recommendation proposed the establishment of a Provincial Program Resource/Consultant.⁴² Ideally, the individual would be responsible for the development of a guide for new and existing Children Exposed to Violence Programs, a set of program standards and a resource list for the programs.

The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Victims Services Branch, accepted this recommendation and, in 2010, published *a Guide for Children Exposed to Violence Programs in*

⁴¹Tutty, LeDrew, and Abbott, The Evaluation of Saskatchewan's Children Exposed to Domestic Abuse Programs Final Report, Report Prepared for the Department of Justice Canada Victims of Crime Initiative, June 2008, <http://www.ywcaregina.com/Programs/AbusePrevention/SKChildrenExposedInterReview.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁴² *Ibid.* Recommendation 4 at p v11.

Saskatchewan.⁴³ The guide was intended to assist newly funded programs and to serve as a resource to existing programs or to communities that wanted to develop new services.

Currently, programs for Children Exposed to Violence exist in eight communities in Saskatchewan: Regina, Saskatoon (2 programs), Moose Jaw, the Battlefords, Prince Albert, Buffalo Narrows, La Ronge, and Estevan. The programs provide supports to children and youth to prevent them from becoming victims or perpetrators of violence and abuse in the future. In 2016-17 there were 1,395 clients served, about one-fifth of whom are Indigenous children.

ii. Victim Services Responder (VS) Programs

These initiatives take a multidisciplinary approach to investigating allegations of child abuse involving children. The teams include members of the respective police services and the Ministry of Social Services, serving child victims and their families through the Regina Children's Justice Centre and the Centre for Children's Justice and Victim Services.⁴⁴ The teams provide information, support and referrals from the first interview with a child victim through the entire criminal justice and/or child protection process. The goal is to provide victims with the best choices, to validate those choices, and to minimize trauma to child victims and their families. In 2016-17 there were 104 clients served.

g. Programs through the Courts

i. Domestic Violence Court

The ministry has supported the development of three Domestic Violence Courts that provide early intervention for offenders and support to victims. The Battlefords Domestic Violence Treatment Options (BDVTO) Court was established in 2003, the Saskatoon Domestic Violence Court began sitting in 2005/06, and the Regina Domestic Violence Court held its first sitting in 2007/08. A high proportion of the caseload in all three courts is Indigenous.

These services provide information, support, advocacy and referral immediately following a domestic violence offence and throughout the criminal justice process to minimize re-victimization by involvement in the criminal justice system and promoting healthy relationships.⁴⁵

Specialized Domestic Violence Courts have allowed offenders to quickly access culturally appropriate treatment programs. They have also held offenders accountable for their actions while providing an opportunity to support the healing of victims, offenders and their families. The Battleford Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court provides treatment to offenders to reduce criminogenic risk factors. Family Service Regina provides safety planning, counselling,

⁴³ Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Guide for Children Exposed to Violence Programs in Saskatchewan, 2010, <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/9/97883-Guide%20for%20Children%20Exposed%20to%20Violence%20Programs%20in%20SK.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁴⁴ See, for example, "Public Safety Canada: Regina Children's Justice Centre," <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/plng/cnmcs-plng/ndx/dtls-en.aspx?n=147> (last accessed May 8, 2018); "Saskatoon Police Service: Children's Justice Centre and Victim Services," <http://saskatoonpolice.ca/victim/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁴⁵ "Help from Domestic Violence Victim Services Programs," <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse/help-from-domestic-violence-victim-services-programs> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

assistance with finding a shelter, information about the justice system, and accompaniment to court, police or other appointments.⁴⁶ In 2016 there were 1,696 clients served by these programs.

For information on how the domestic violence court and the drug treatment court work, videos are available for the public to view on the Saskatchewan Law Courts website, available here: <https://sasklawcourts.ca/home/resources/videos>.

ii. Victim/Witness Services

Victim/Witness Services provide court orientation and support for child witnesses and other vulnerable witnesses to help reduce fear, anxiety and further trauma when testifying. Specialists also provide advice and training to Police-based Victim Services Programs regarding court orientation and support for adult witnesses. Six government Victim/Witness Specialists are located in regional prosecutions offices in La Ronge, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon and provide service province-wide. In 2016-17 there were 1,395 clients served.

There are 20 witness rooms and 29 soft rooms across the province. Nineteen witness rooms in court locations double as a venue for children and other vulnerable witnesses to testify from outside the courtroom via video conferencing equipment. Video conferencing equipment will be installed in eight new locations to expand the provision of testimony from outside the courtroom.

In response to the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and with funding from Justice Canada, the Ministry of Justice is increasing witness testimonial aid tools to significantly improve a witness' experience while providing testimony. More than 30 new witness protection screens, manufactured in Saskatchewan, are in the process of being acquired and the number of court locations equipped for video testimonial abilities will be increased.

h. Victims Compensation Program

The Victims Compensation Program provides payments for reasonable expenses resulting from criminal acts of personal violence. In 2016-17, applications were approved for 701 victims of crime. In the same timeframe, a total of \$944,170 in awards was paid to both new clients and some clients from prior years. Compensable expenses include ambulance costs, medical or dental expenses, prescriptions, counselling while the victim is involved in the criminal justice system, and loss of income where it is not covered by Employment Insurance or Workers' Compensation.

The following changes have been made to the Victims Compensation Program over the last few years:

- June 2013: Amendments to Regulations:
 - Regulations were amended to add newly created offences under the Criminal Code, as well as existing violent "crimes against persons" offences that were not

⁴⁶ "Family Service Regina," <https://familyserviceregina.com/abuse/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

already covered by the Regulations. This ensured that victims of crimes in cases such as child pornography and human trafficking would be eligible to apply for supports under the Victims Compensation Program.

- October 1, 2014: Enhancements to Victims Compensation Program:
 - Following a comprehensive review of Saskatchewan's Victims Compensation Program, *The Victims of Crime Regulations, 1997* and program policies were amended to enhance the program for new incidents where an offence occurred on or after October 1, 2014.
- October 1, 2014: Amended Regulations:⁴⁷
 - Extend compensation for counselling to child victims of domestic violence, witnesses of homicide, and immediate family members in cases involving driving-related offences causing death;
 - Allow compensation for loss of wages or other reasonable expenses to be paid to:
 - parents who are required to accompany child victims to medical or counselling services related to their victimization; and,
 - persons who are required to accompany adult victims with physical or mental impairments to medical or counselling services related to their victimization;
 - Increase the maximum compensation payable respecting any one application from \$25,000 to \$100,000; and,
 - Update the maximum compensation payable for counselling services to \$2,000 (special approval for expenses beyond \$1,000 is no longer required).
- October, 2014 to Present:
 - The Manager of the Victims Compensation Program has met with Worker's Compensation Board, Saskatchewan Government Insurance and the Ministry of Social Services to explore the dimensions of these stakeholders' financial programs/provisions and to educate them on the provisions of the Victims Compensation Program. A shared understanding of these agencies' respective provisions, and the issue of "payor of last resort" has enhanced coordination of services and created more effective case management and clear communication with clients.
- February 1, 2016: Enhancement to Victims Compensation Program:
 - Following a review of existing applications and comparable rates in other provinces, the maximum compensation payable for counselling for any one victim was increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000.
- April 13, 2017: Enhancement to Victims Compensation Program:

⁴⁷ See, *The Victims of Crime Regulations, 1997*, V-6.011 Reg 1, <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/redirect.cfm?p=1598&i=2833> (last accessed May 8, 2018); *The Victims of Crime Amendment Regulations, 2014*, <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=71535>.

- *The Victims of Crime Act, 1995* was amended to expand the definition of “secondary victim” to include the parents and siblings of adult victims (for eligibility for counselling).
- Amended program policies include:
 - Increase the maximum payable for funeral expenses from \$3,500 to \$5,000 (2014); and,
 - Direct the Victims Services Branch to collaborate with other ministries, boards, crown corporations, and federal agencies to identify available services for victims of crime, and to provide informed referrals to clients to facilitate their access to eligible benefits provided by those agencies. This work is already well underway.

i. The Provincial Sexual Exploitation Strategy

In 1995-1996, officials within the Saskatchewan government began discussing and planning for a sexual exploitation strategy, which came into being in 1997. The strategy focused on measures pertaining to prevention, outreach, harm reduction, treatment and law enforcement. Specific goals included: an information campaign; targeted outreach services; creation of a tracking and monitoring system; strict law enforcement policy aimed at offenders; and review of existing provincial and federal laws.

Shortly after the creation of this strategy, the Saskatchewan legislature established an all-party committee to consider what additional measures could be taken to combat the problem of sexual exploitation. This Special Committee released its final report in June 2001 consisting of a total of 49 recommendations.⁴⁸ Overall, 44 of the 49 Special Committee recommendations were directly acted upon, four were acted upon indirectly, and just one recommendation was not accepted, being the publication of offender names.

An inter-ministerial committee continues to oversee work on the strategy. The committee has worked with Regional Intervention Committees in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Lloydminster bringing together police and human services workers to review local responses.

Provincial government responses to address the sexual exploitation of children and youth include:

- Legislation to protect children from being sexually exploited, including:
 - *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*, proclaimed October 2002. This legislation enables police, social services, and prescribed community agencies to obtain emergency protective intervention orders from a justice of the peace where it is believed that a child under the age 18 either has been sexually abused by another person or is at risk of sexual abuse from another

⁴⁸ Special Committee To Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade, Final Report (June, 2001), <http://docs.legassembly.sk.ca/legdocs/Legislative%20Committees/AEC/24%20Leg/010627Report-AEC-02.pdf> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

person.

- Such orders can restrict communication or contact between another person and a child. This legislation is intended to target those who prey upon children. As of 2018 there have been 57 applications involving 59 victims.
- *The Highway Traffic Act* was amended in April 2002 to set out a legal framework for the Vehicle Impoundment Against Sexual Exploitation (“VISE Program”) and the “John School” programs. The VISE Program was intended to deter those who cruise the streets for the purpose of buying sexual services. As part of the VISE program under s. 173(2) of the *Traffic Safety Act*, offenders can be referred to a community-based education intervention program as a form of alternative measures. Such programs exist in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. A second set of amendments to *The Highway Traffic Act* were introduced in October 2002 to create an offence of repeatedly driving or parking a vehicle without lawful excuse in an area that is frequented by sex trade workers.
- Police and other community contacts suggest that these changes, which occurred at a time when the sex trade was making increasing use of internet and cellphones, significantly contributed to a decrease in underage sex trade workers on the street, and reduced vehicle traffic in stroll areas.
- In 2004, the implementation of *The Safer Communities and Neighborhoods Act* (“SCAN”) empowered residents to take back their neighborhoods by reporting problem residences or businesses that are habitually used for illegal activities. These activities could include drugs, prostitution, gang or criminal activities, child sexual abuse or the unlawful sale or consumption of alcohol. Anyone wishing to make a complaint to the SCAN unit can do so through the provincial website (<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/scan#step-2>). As of 2018 three such units exist in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert.
- The province has funded additional police positions, prosecutors, Integrated Child Exploitation (“ICE”) Units, outreach and support services for at risk children and youth and regional intervention committees to support coordinated police and social services responses to those at risk.

In 2003, Saskatchewan Justice funded research to increase knowledge of the characteristics of sexually exploited youth in the Saskatchewan cities of Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert as well as their perceptions regarding the kinds of services they need to help them curtail or end their involvement in the commercial sex trade and follow a path to a healthier life.⁴⁹ The primary research methodology involved interviews with key informants. A total of 58 persons, comprised of a mix of child protection workers, police along with 24 children and young adults, were interviewed in Regina, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. About half of the youth acknowledged

⁴⁹ Moyer & Associates, *Sexually Exploited Children and Youth in Saskatchewan: A Research Report*, prepared for Saskatchewan Justice and Community Resources (now the Ministry of Social Services), 2003.

that they worked on the streets and indicated that they had assisted street prostitutes by acting as “spotters”.

The results of the survey were as follows:

- The average age of the total sample was 16.5 years of age, with an average of 17 years for sex workers and almost 16 years for the youth at risk of sex exploitation.
- All of the respondents were Indigenous, three-quarters were status Indian and one-quarter non-status Indian or Métis.
- All but one of the youth said that they or their family had had contact with a child protection agency.
- Eighty percent of respondents said that they had been placed in foster care or in a group home.
- Most respondents had been in the sex trade for two or more years.
- Most sex workers started in the trade between 12 and 15 years of age.
- About half of respondents worked three or more times a week.
- Most youth learned about sex work through the people with whom they associated, such as family, friends and neighbors.
- More than a third had family members who had either “put them out” on the street or who had helped them when they first went to work.
- Two had mothers who had worked in street prostitution.
- Five of the thirteen had sisters, cousins and/or aunts who were involved in the trade.
- At least nine of the workers had acted as “spotters”, an experience that taught them many of the street rules and customs.

The youth identified the need for supports such as a safe home, a 24-hour drop-in centre or shelter.

In 2008, further research was conducted involving interviews with 40 young men with prior or ongoing experience in the sex trade.⁵⁰ The report called for harm reduction strategies, as well as public education and training to explicitly recognize that both males and females are being exploited.

The government has responded through supportive housing for at-risk youth, outreach services and dedicated police resources, including an Internet Child Exploitation unit to investigate persons suspected of preying on young victims through the internet. The Ministries of Justice and Social Services fund several community based organizations that support at risk children and youth. Some of these organizations operate safe houses that are run by Indigenous women and youth, in line with Recommendation 6.4 of the Oppal Report.⁵¹

Examples of such community based organizations include:

- The Safe House operated by the Saskatoon Tribal Council Urban First Nations Services Inc.

⁵⁰ Dr. Susan McIntyre, *Under the Radar, the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*: Western Canadian Edition.

⁵¹ Oppal Report at 165. Recommendation 6.4: “That Provincial Government provide additional funding to Aboriginal women’s organizations to provide more safe houses and counselling programs run for and by Aboriginal women and youth.”

provides a safe, non-threatening, temporary and emergency shelter for children and youth aged 16 and under who are hard to serve.⁵²

- Prince Albert Outreach Program Inc. supports children who are sexually exploited on the street and assists them in leaving the street and gang lifestyle.⁵³
- Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc. (EGADZ) provides a number of programs including street outreach, Operation Help and teen parent outreach support.⁵⁴ The Street Outreach Program supports children who are sexually exploited on the street and assists those children wanting to leave the street lifestyle. It uses an inter-agency approach to address legal, health, security, spiritual and housing needs.
- A number of ministries support the Street Worker's Advocacy Project Inc. (SWAP) in Regina. SWAP has been operational for over 20 years and is ever expanding. SWAP operates a street outreach program, a youth outreach program, HIV outreach program, life skills program, employment preparation program and a drop-in centre for those working in prostitution and for youth who are at risk for street involvement in Regina and surrounding First Nations Communities.
 - The organization also advocates for and assists in the development of appropriate services for the target population, and provides educational presentations to youth, parents, other human service providers, and the general public.
 - In 2013, SWAP in partnership with the Ministry of Social Services, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, and Namerind Housing Corporation introduced Raising Hope – Moving Families Forward ("MFF").⁵⁵ MFF offers continuous (24/7) residential support and programming for women who have an active addiction and are pregnant or who have recently had a baby. This includes supported housing; pre-natal and parenting supports; and assistance with addressing addictions.

Another service that supports at risk individuals is the Battlefords Concern for Youth Inc. which provides street outreach services to sexually exploited youth.⁵⁶ The mission of this non-profit is to "use a proactive approach to assist youth in making responsible decisions, identify the needs of youth, act as a liaison between youth and community programming, and raise the profile of youth issues in the community".⁵⁷

In 2015, the Ministry of Government Relations provided funding to Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc., (EGADZ) to develop a new app to stop sexual exploitation against youth. The free "I Am Not 4 Sale" app has a "help me" button that anonymously directs users to the EGADZ

⁵² "Safe House," <http://www.sktc.sk.ca/programs-services/family-community-services/community-supports/safe-house> (last accessed May 8, 2018). This includes those at-risk of being sexually exploited, living on the street, with no permanent residence, and/or who may be involved in other high-risk behaviours such as drug and alcohol use.

⁵³ "Youth Activity Centre/Outreach Program," <https://www.fyple.ca/company/youth-activity-center-outreach-program-53snspl/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁵⁴ <https://www.egadz.ca/>

⁵⁵ Street Workers Advocacy Project, "Raising Hope – Moving Families Forward," <http://swapregina.org/our-services/>

⁵⁶ "Concern For Youth," <http://concernforyouth.ca/> (last accessed May 8, 2018).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

street outreach program.⁵⁸ The expectation is that use of this app can be expanded to other centres.

In 2015, as part of the interministerial approach to provide public education on issues related to child abuse (including sexual exploitation), the Ministry of Justice along with the Ministry of Health hosted free webinars for human service providers on “Understanding and Responding to Trauma in our Service System”. The webinars were delivered to over 600 agencies. They covered what trauma is, key principles and practices of trauma informed practice, and why trauma informed practice is important to better meet the needs of people with a history of trauma who seek support and treatment in human service systems.

To help educate service providers and the public, the 2017 Provincial Child Abuse Protocol provides more information on what sexual abuse and exploitation means in terms of child protection and identifies a range of examples of harmful contact including: sexual touching, pornography, voyeurism, “grooming”, and actions identified as exploitive under *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*. It also explains the age of consent for sexual conduct.

Lastly, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General designated May 27 to June 2, 2018 as Victims and Survivors of Crime Week in Saskatchewan. This is being held in conjunction with National Victims and Survivors of Crime Week.

⁵⁸ “I Am Not 4 Sale.ca,” <https://www.iamnotforsale.ca> (last accessed May 12, 2018).