



CANADIAN MUNICIPAL  
NETWORK ON CRIME  
PREVENTION

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

RÉSEAU MUNICIPAL  
CANADIEN EN PRÉVENTION  
DE LA CRIMINALITÉ

Ensemble pour des villes canadiennes plus sécuritaires

# **Parliamentary Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance**

## **House of Commons**

### **2018 Pre-Budget Consultations**

**Submitted by:**

**Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) is pleased to provide this submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance as part of its consultations in advance of the 2018 federal budget.

The partnership between CMNCP and the Government of Canada is based on aligned objectives, including a commitment to build a more prosperous and competitive Canada. For any country to be prosperous and competitive, it must be safe. A critical component of achieving this is investing in people-centred and evidence-based social crime prevention programs. Many of these programs not only stop crime and victimization before they happen, but also improve education outcomes, provide job training, and enhance general social welfare leading to a better quality of life for Canadians.

In the words of Kathy Rogers (MLA for Moncton-South, Minister of Finance): “if we had a Preventions Canada we might not need a Corrections Canada.”

To support the Government of Canada, CMNCP outlines four recommendations for meaningful and critical actions to significantly lower the financial and human burden of crime and violence. These recommendations are directed at supporting all Canadians through the delivery of municipal and community-based crime prevention initiatives.

Our recommendations are designed to deliver supports to the provinces, territories, municipalities, and communities starting in 2018 with the goal of creating a safer, healthier, more inclusive, and, ultimately, more prosperous and competitive Canada now and in the future. We recommend that the Canadian government:

- Establish a National Crime Prevention Office to align social and justice efforts, create partnerships, mobilize evidence, support practitioners, and oversee the allocation of crime prevention funding.
- Fund an annual Safer Canada Conference to share practices and evidence and to accelerate the widespread adoption of crime prevention among Canadians.
- Increase government spending on crime prevention to reach a minimum 5% of the current expenditures of policing, courts, and corrections to reduce the harm of interpersonal violence to victims by up to 50% by 2025.
- Establish a permanent and flexible matched funding program for municipalities across Canada to resource collaborative community safety planning and strategic investment in evidence-based crime prevention.

## BACKGROUND

Victimization surveys by Statistics Canada (2014) indicate that one in five Canadians aged 15 and over have been a victim of a common crime in the previous 12 months, such as a physical assault.

Crime and victimization have significant economic costs and impact both the productivity and competitiveness of Canadians in their workplaces and their communities. The estimated annual costs of crime in Canada are \$82 billion (the equivalent of about 5% of Canada's GDP): \$14 billion are attributed to loss of property and income and \$68 billion are related to costs such as loss of quality of life, health care, etc. Furthermore, the combined costs of policing, courts, and corrections in Canada are approximately \$22 billion annually.

Initially establishing Canada's commitment to preventing crime, the Horner Parliamentary Committee<sup>i</sup> recommended in 1993 that "the federal government, in cooperation with the provinces and municipalities, take on a national leadership role in crime prevention" and that "Canada should spend 5% of the current federal criminal justice budget on crime prevention." The Bordeleau Committee for the Province of Quebec (1993) made similar recommendations. Leading international and national research suggests that investing as little as 0.1% of Canada's GDP in evidence-based prevention strategies that address the causes of crime (i.e., adverse economic, social, and family conditions<sup>ii</sup>) can reduce the harm of interpersonal violence to victims by up to 50% by 2025<sup>iii</sup>. This would save Canadian taxpayers money and create a safer, healthier, more inclusive, and, ultimately, more productive Canada.

Research shows that, in order to make communities safer, governments have to invest in reducing harms and improving social well-being. Examples of evidence-based programs include: helping parents with positive techniques to raise children (Triple P); preventing alcohol and drug misuse (Life skills, Project Alert); preventing sexual violence in schools by learning about consent, respect, and bystander intervention (Fourth R, Safe Dates, GreenDot); outreaching to vulnerable youth with mentors (Youth Inclusion Programmes, Big Brothers Big Sisters); and interventions based on data analysis in hospital emergency rooms (Cardiff Violence Prevention Program). Rate of return for those programs range from \$4 to \$82 for every \$1 spent. Also important is the continuation of working towards the elimination of poverty and the implementation of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

While increased government commitments such as the review of the criminal justice system and the increased use of restorative justice processes have led to some progress, there is a strong need for sustained and strategic investment in crime prevention through social development. Therefore, CMNCP suggests:

- The federal government play a key role as a leader, partner, and funder of activities that advance the prevention of crime nationally and in collaboration with municipalities and communities.
- Funding for crime prevention be increased and integrated to successfully prevent crime in Canada's communities.
- The federal government acknowledge municipalities as a significant contributor in the prevention of crime because municipalities are well positioned to lead the integration of diverse sectors with areas of greatest need as long as sufficient resources are available. While the actions are best implemented at the local level the savings are realized by all orders of government.

## **FEDERAL LEADERSHIP: MEASURES TO FURTHER CRIME PREVENTION**

Crime prevention through social development is increasingly gaining momentum in Canada and abroad (e.g., UN, WHO, UNODC). At the federal level, crime prevention is not only vital for the prosperity and competitiveness of Canada, but also for achieving the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. In particular, Sustainable Development Goals 3 (health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 11 (sustainability cities and communities), and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) as well as the Canadian reconciliation called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

#### **Establish a National Crime Prevention Office (\$5 million annually with a 10-year mandate)**

Crime prevention in Canada plays a significant role in many local communities. While communities have shown they are capable of producing innovative and evidence-based solutions, these efforts remain fragmented at best. Canada needs a National Crime Prevention Office to play the role of catalyst for improving crime prevention across the country, coordinating efforts, creating partnerships, bringing together the best and most influential minds in the crime prevention community, mobilizing evidence, supporting practitioners, and overseeing the allocation of crime prevention funding across Canada (see recommendation 3).

### **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

#### **Fund an Annual National Safer Canada Conference (\$500,000 annually for 10 years)**

Today we have compelling evidence that, by investing more in the services that address the causes of crime, crime can be prevented. Across the country and the world, a number of innovative solutions are in varying stages of development – some programs are still being researched, others are undergoing trials, while some have been proven effective. Canada needs a platform to share the practices and the evidence for crime prevention to accelerate the widespread adoption of crime prevention among Canadians and international leaders.

## **INCREASING FUNDING FOR LOCALIZED CRIME PREVENTION**

Canada's provinces and territories are struggling to meet the safety needs of their populations despite the overall increases in spending on policing (at a rate of 43% above inflation since 2000). The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has called this rise of policing costs unsustainable<sup>iv</sup>. Rather than further increasing spending on enforcement at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels, the federal government can realize immense savings in financial and human terms through a strategic and future-focused investment in evidence-based crime prevention programs.

The Horner Parliamentary Committee, as far back as in 1993, recommended that the government of Canada significantly increase spending on crime prevention through social development to the equivalent of 5% of the current expenditures on policing, courts, and corrections.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

#### **Increase Government Spending on Crime Prevention to Reach a Minimum 5% of the Current Expenditures of Policing, Courts, and Corrections (\$1 Billion Annually)**

Canada spends approximately \$22 billion annually on policing, courts, and corrections combined. Based on international and national research, we have the knowledge that investing as little as 0.1% of Canada's GDP (i.e., \$1.5 billion) annually in evidence-based prevention strategies can reduce the harm of interpersonal violence to victims by up to 50% by 2025. Doing so would save Canadian taxpayers up to 40 billion annually and create a more prosperous and competitive Canada.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

#### **Establish a Permanent, Sustained, and Flexible Matched Funding Program for Municipalities Across the Country (funding see recommendation 3)**

Intergovernmental agencies (e.g., UNODC, WHO, UN Habitat) and Canadian organizations (e.g., Council of Canadian Academies) are calling for multi-sector crime prevention strategies where police are one important sector, yet the focus is on tackling risk factors at multiple levels (e.g., exclusion, income disparities, historic inequities) to prevent crime. A wide variety of parliamentary, provincial, and municipal taskforces suggest that municipalities are well positioned to direct services to where they are most needed. However, in order to successfully implement evidence-based programs, Canada's municipalities require financial and other support from other orders of government.

It is time for the government of Canada to recognize the vital role of Canadian municipalities within a national crime strategy and, in partnership with the provinces and territories, offer a permanent, sustained, and flexible matched funding program (similar to the Homelessness

Partnering Strategy) for municipalities to resource collaborative community safety planning and implementation that guide strategic investment in prevention.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish a National Crime Prevention Office (\$5 million annually with a 10-year mandate)
- Fund an Annual National Safer Canada Conference (\$500,000 annually for 10 years)
- Increase Government Spending on Crime Prevention to Reach a Minimum 5% of the Current Expenditures of Policing, Courts, and Corrections (\$1 Billion Annually)
- Establish a Permanent, Sustained, and Flexible Matched Funding Program for Municipalities Across the Country (funding see recommendation 3)

## THE CANADIAN MUNICIPAL NETWORK ON CRIME PREVENTION

The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) is a growing network of Canadian municipalities committed to increasing the use of effective and collaborative crime prevention. With representatives of 14 municipalities, the National Municipal Network for Crime Prevention was launched in 2006. CMNCP adopted its new name and vision in 2015.

From 2006 to 2009, CMNCP benefited from federal funding and a partnership with the University of Ottawa to produce “Canadian Strategies and Practices” (2008) on what is needed for municipal crime prevention.

From 2009 to 2015, the strong commitment of the members of the National Municipal Network (now CMNCP) continued to develop knowledge and share experiences and expertise highlighting the capacity of municipalities and communities to play a vital role in crime prevention.

In 2015, the commitment of members led to federal funding for the project *Building Municipal Capacity to Harness Evidence to Prevent Crime*. The project is a partnership between CMNCP, the University of Ottawa, and Public Safety Canada. The project has established CMNCP as a community of practice to harness evidence to prevent crime akin to other national networks of this nature. CMNCP has captured the attention of UN Habitat for its distinctly Canadian grassroots developments.

In 2017, the member municipalities of CMNCP represent 35% of Canada’s population.

**Vision:** Safe, healthy and inclusive Canadian communities free from crime and violence.

**Mission:** To build capacity and mobilize Canadian municipalities to prevent and reduce crime and foster community safety and well-being.

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<sup>i</sup> Horner, B. (1993). *Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward a National Strategy*.

<sup>ii</sup> Causes of crime include adverse economic, social, and family conditions. Economic conditions may include lack of: financial resources, employment options, housing, etc. Social conditions may include inequality, lack of family or community support, etc. Family conditions may include dysfunctional family conditions, parental criminality, abuse, etc.

<sup>iii</sup> Waller, I. (2014). *Smarter Crime Control: A Guide to a Safer Future for Citizens, Communities, and Politicians*. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield.