



Parole Board  
of Canada


Commission des libérations  
conditionnelles du Canada

# Parole Board of Canada Outreach Program

APAI, May 17, 2011



# Objectives of session

- PBC's mandate
  - Public perception challenges
  - Overview of PBC national outreach program (key objectives)
  - Role of collaboration and partnerships
  - Examples of outreach
  - Challenges/Best practices
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# Mandate of the Board

- **Independent** administrative tribunal, arm's-length from government
- **Reports to Parliament** through Minister of Public Safety
- Makes quality conditional release and pardons **decisions**
- Guided by **CCRA** and **CRA**

**Public safety is Board's primary consideration**

# Positive Outcomes

- Board makes 25,000 CR decisions annually
- Over the past 10 years:
  - 93% of offenders on **DP** and **FP** have not committed a new offence
  - 99% have not committed a new violent offence
- Over 400,000 pardons granted, 96% still in force

# Openness and Transparency

Canadians very interested in Board's activities:

– In the past 5 years:

- More than 8,500 observers at a PBC hearing
- More than 28,000 PBC decisions released
- More than 1,000 victim statements read at PBC hearings

Contributes to Board's openness and accountability




# Public Perception

Overall, level of public confidence in system low

– Due in part to:

- General public's limited understanding of conditional release and pardons system
- Media coverage focus on high-profile offenders / serious crimes

# Common Misconceptions Among the Public

- Parole is automatic
  - Parole amounts to a reduction of the sentence
  - Parole comes at expense of public safety
  - Offenders on parole free to live as they please
  - Offenders on parole commit new crimes, incl. violent crimes
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# CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Quality decisions



Positive Outcomes



Public Confidence

(on their own)

# CHALLENGE

How to earn and keep public trust in Board's  
ability to fulfill its mandate



**Public Safety**

# Role of Public Education / Outreach

- Provides an opportunity to:
  - Engage and speak directly to stakeholders;
  - Inform them about how the system works, results, and outcomes;
  - Target and reach specific audiences with information (e.g. victims of crime, Aboriginal, criminal justice partners)

# CCRA and Outreach

## *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA):*

- Mandates PBC to deliver public education
- Recognizes its importance to public confidence

### *CCRA:*

*“to enhance Board’s effectiveness and openness through timely exchange of information with other components of the system and through communication of its policies and programs to offenders, victims and the general public.”*

# CCRA (cont'd)

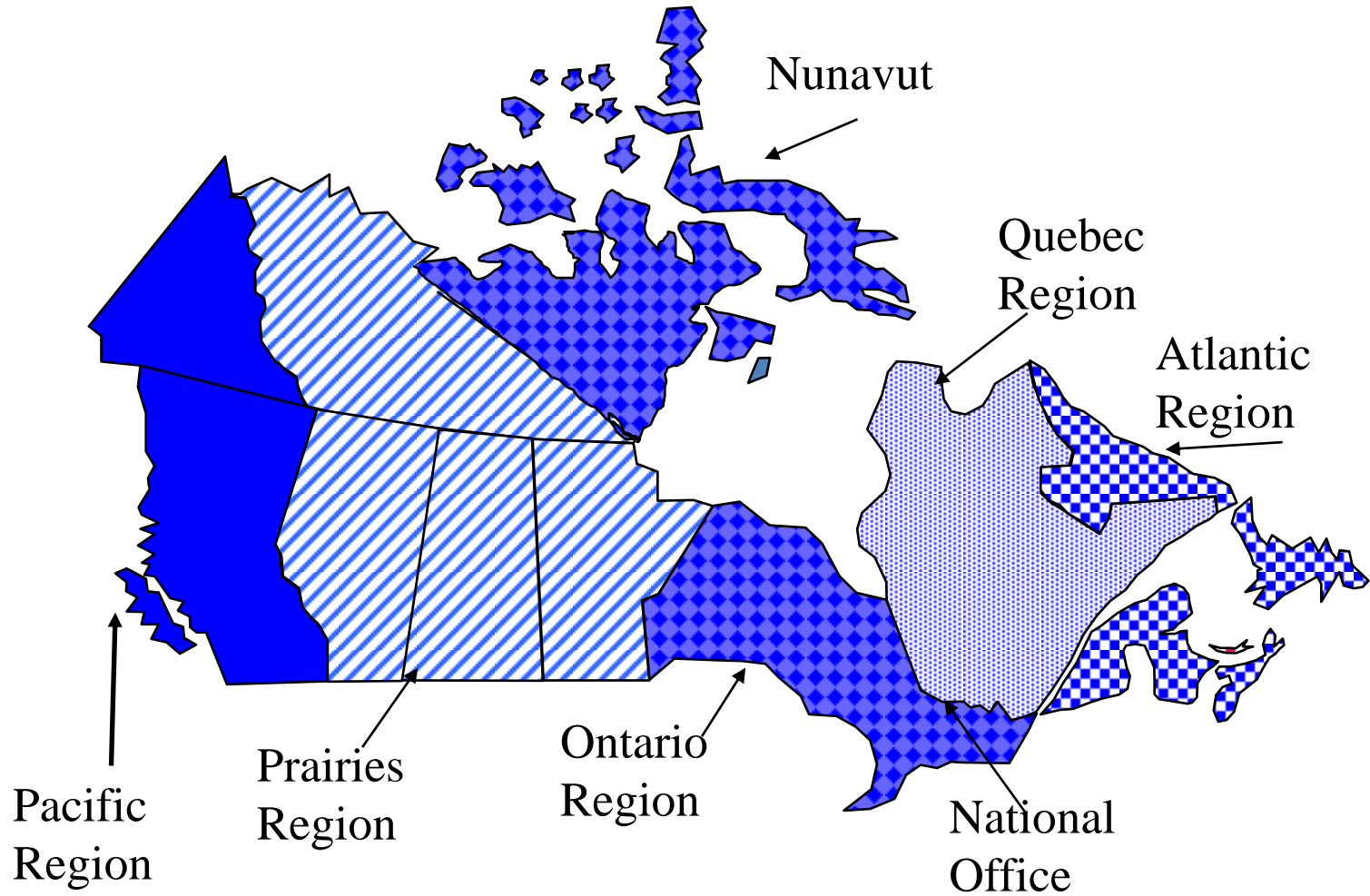
## Also directs PBC to:

- Make its hearings open to the public (Observers at hearings)
- Make its written decisions available to public upon request (Decision Registry)

## GoC Communications Policy:

Directs federal depts. and agencies to provide info. to public on policies, programs and services.

# Outreach and Geographic Distribution of PBC



# Regional Office Structure

## PBC regional offices include:

- Regional Vice Chair (RVC)
  - responsible for Board members and decision-making area
  
- Regional Director General (RDG)
  - responsible for policy and operational side
  - RMCRT (Manager) and team of Regional Communications Officers (RCOs) deliver outreach

# Outreach – a National Approach

To ensure the program's effectiveness the Board:


- Undertook a review of our outreach program in consultation with regions
- Goals of the review
  - ensure program's effectiveness:
    - in meeting intended objectives
    - in reaching key target audiences
    - in fulfilling our legislated mandate

# Outreach – a National Approach (cont'd)


## As a result of the review:

- In December 2009, Board developed a national strategy outlining two key objectives:
  - To establish a planned, targeted, and measurable outreach program;
  - To identify and pursue collaborative and partnering opportunities for outreach


## *Planned*

- National office and regions work together to identify annual strategy, approach and priorities for the program
  - National calendar of outreach events developed and regularly updated
  - Ongoing communications and coordination between NO and Regions
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## *Targeted*

- Selecting activities that effectively reach target audiences and contribute to objectives
  - Critical given limited resources
  - Key target audiences include:
    - Victims of crime/Victim advocacy groups
    - Criminal justice partners (courts, police)
    - Prov/municipal gvt agencies
    - Media
    - Parliamentarians
    - Offenders and offender advocacy groups
    - General public
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## *Measurable*

- Necessary to allow for adjustments, improvements
  - Annual Report developed outlining program's approach, activities and key outcomes (distributed to ExCom members)
  - Informal feedback sought at events
  - Exploring additional ways to measure
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## *Collaboration and Partnerships*

- Key given Board's limited resources
  - Allows Board to maximize efforts
  - Criminal justice a shared portfolio, logical to partner (e.g. Correctional Service)
  - Example: National Victims of Crime Campaign w/ key federal partners
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# Branding (Corporate Look)

## Part of overall strategy

### Goals:

- Give the PBC a recognizable public face
  - Project an image of the Board as a progressive, modern, innovative administrative tribunal
  - Ensure consist brand across the country
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# Flagship Publications

## 3 Key Outreach publications

1. Parole flagship (Jan 2011)
2. Victims Pamphlet (April 2011)
3. Pardons Pamphlet (2011)

+ Fact sheets



# Training

Introduced as part of strategy

Goals:

- Provide staff with information and skills needed to deliver outreach effectively
- To ensure consistent approach in delivery

Examples:

- Training session on media relations and outreach
  - Workshop on outreach tools
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# Atlantic Region



# PBC Outreach mandate

“The Board shall maintain

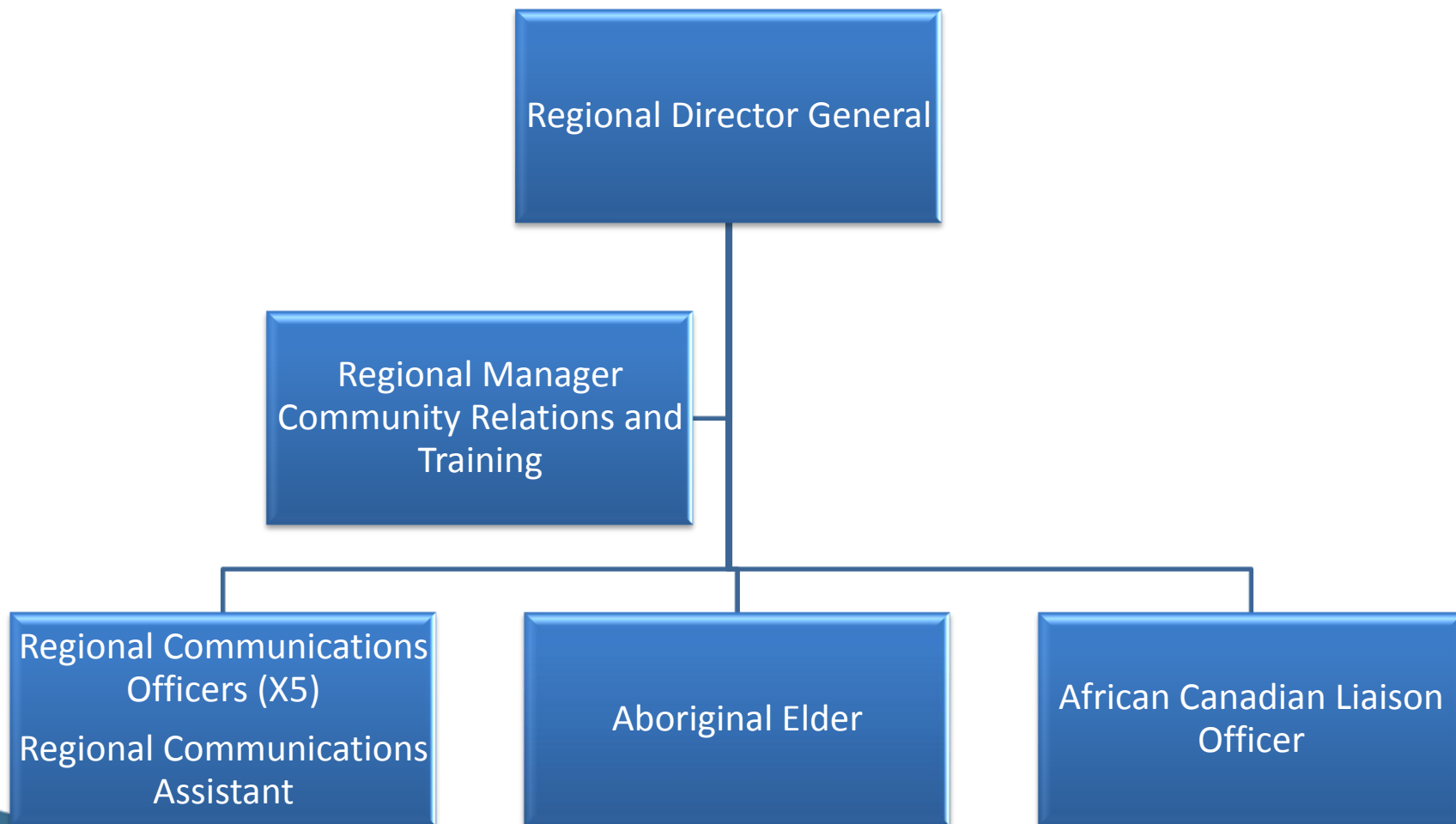
- (a) a program of exchange of information with the other components of the criminal justice system; and
- (b) a program to communicate its policies and programs to offender, to victims of crime, to victims’ groups, to other groups and organizations and to the general public” (CCRA – Section 111)

# PBC Mission

## Core Value 4 – Operating principle

- We acknowledge that the public is entitled to know about our performance and that we have a duty to inform the public, victims of crime and interested individuals of our policies and processes.

## Regional Office – Communications Team



# Partnerships



# PBC & CSC Partnership

- The Parole Board of Canada works in very close partnership with the Correctional Services of Canada in many aspects and particularly in our outreach activities
- We often have the same target groups such as victims, the community agencies, other governments and non-government agencies.

# Observers at hearings

- PBC is open and accountable to the public
- The PBC invites people to attend its parole hearings as observers
- People must apply in writing to the PBC

# Presenting statements at hearings

- Victims of crime can read a “Victim Statement” at a parole hearing
- In person, audio or videotape
- PBC staff must review and approve the statements

# OUTREACH EXAMPLES

# Media

- Decision Registry
- Outreach with media outlets in the region
- Pro-active relationship = great partnership
- Media at hearings

# Aboriginal Communities

- Aboriginal offenders in Canada represent 17% of the offender population while Aboriginals only represent 2.7% of the Canadian population.
- PBC Aboriginal Hearings (circle, smudging, prayers)
- Outreach to Aboriginal communities with our Elder

# African Canadian Communities

- African Canadians represent 2.5% of the country's population while they represent almost 16% of the offender population.
- African Canadian Liaison Officer
- Outreach in communities and with offenders
- Largest African Canadian community is in Preston, Nova Scotia where 69% of the population is African Canadian

# Pardons

- Over 400,000 Canadians have received a pardon since 1970.
- PBC is the only body in Canada who can issue/grant pardons.
- Other agencies (Pardons Canada, Pardon Me)

# Challenges

- Financial resources
- Human resources
- Partnerships – strong, sustained, continuous

**THANK YOU!**

**QUESTIONS**

[www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca](http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca)