



COMMUNITY SERVICES

see what's possible...

Vancouver Coastal Youth Justice Annual Program Report 2022-23

About us

Our Youth Justice Services are primarily community-based alternatives to custody for youth aged 13-19 who are sentenced. These services are complemented by the KidStart Mentoring Program, which provides prevention services. These integrative programs provide each youth with an individualized service plan that is tailored to their strengths, needs, goals and circumstances.

Youth Justice Services are available in Vancouver, Richmond and on the North Shore. In addition to these communities, the Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) is available on the Sunshine Coast and within the Sea to Sky communities. Our Q (Urban Employment) Program is also available to the Sea to Sky communities, Burnaby and New Westminister.

Our services are consistent with the requirements of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and support youth justice program principles including safety, rehabilitation and minimizing the use of custody. Our aim is to help youth develop the attitudes, skills, and relationships they need for a future that does not include involvement in the court system.

Our youth justice services are funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and we accept referrals from Probation Officers.

Who we served

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of cases ¹	268	290	414	413	417	411
# of youth	204	212	219	308	294	315
% young women	28	31	34	23	32	31
% young men	68	67	65	76	67	69
% self-identified as transgender	3	2	1	1	1	-
% self-identified as Indigenous	37	37	35	47	35	34
Average age when cases were opened	16	16	15	16	16	16

¹ # of cases is greater than the # of youth because some youth received multiple services or were re-referred.

How we did...service delivery

Turnaround...

Turnaround provides placements for young people aged 12 and above involved in the youth criminal justice system who are under supervision or court ordered conditions and who are not able to live at home due to family conflict or lack of support. Youth are supported through a family care model that helps them remain connected to the community by providing individualized services and support to help them achieve their goals. Services are consistent with the requirements of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and support youth justice program principles including safety, rehabilitation and minimizing the use of custody. Turnaround offers longer-term placements up to 90 days in length and operates in a family care home setting.

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# of cases ²	1	1	2	5	3
# of youth	1	1	2	5	3
% young women	0	100	100	40	33
% young men	100	0	0	60	67
% self-identified as transgender	-	-	-	-	-
% self-identified as Indigenous	0	100	50	60	33
Average age when cases were opened	16	15	16	16	15
Average # of days in program by discharged case (N= number of discharged cases)	30 (N=1)	108 (N=1)	47 (N=1)	57 (N=5)	154 (N=1)
% bed utilization	18	12	10	26	33

The Turnaround Program supported one youth this year. This young person was able to reside in the family care home for an additional 30 days with an approved extension by MCFD Team Leaders due to available bed space and consideration for the youth's ongoing youth justice requirements. The participant was able to stabilize while addressing their court matters, which included a lengthy trial and sentencing process, and had many impacts on their personal and mental wellbeing. Thankfully, the youth successfully transitioned from the PLEA bed to supported housing and continues to do well in community. Turnaround continued to be an option to many youth, however most referrals were needed for the shorter-term Bail and Respite Program.

Bail & Respite...

Our Bail & Respite services provide short-stay residential placements in a family care home setting for youth on a conditional court order, including a Bail Order or Sentencing Order. These 30-day beds are for youth who need a safe place to live while planning takes place to identify other appropriate residential placements.

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# of cases ³	7	9	2	10	13
# of youth	5	9	2	10	11
% young women	0	33	50	30	8
% young men	100	67	50	70	92
% self-identified as transgender	-	-	-	-	-
% self-identified as Indigenous	43	56	100	50	62
Average age when cases were opened	16	16	16	16	16
Average # of days in program by discharged case (N= number of discharged cases)	23 (N=6)	44 (N=9)	21 (N=2)	35 (N=10)	29 (N=12)
% bed utilization	32	49	6	26	28

Although the Bail and Respite and Turnaround program operates as a 4-bed resource, we were only able to offer 2 beds throughout the last fiscal year due to ongoing challenges to find suitable family caregiver homes in the Vancouver Coastal Region. This is reflected in the number of youth who accessed our services this year. Our agency continued to see a demand for the Bail and Respite Program, and although intermittent at times, we were able to fill 1-2 bed spaces for the latter half of the year. Some youth were re-referred, as reflected in the number of cases, while others were able to transition to independence, including some returning to their family home. These short-term stays were helpful in providing a safe home while establishing a plan for transition and more long-term housing options for youth and their families.

Intensive Support & Supervision Program

ISSP is a community-based 1:1 service for youth who are medium-high risk, and who have been sentenced to a court order. The program is an alternative to custody. Participants can be referred either voluntarily while on bail or other diversion orders, or as a part of a court mandated order or condition of their order. ISSP Workers provide intensive support and supervision which complements the case management and supervision provided by the referring Probation Officer. There is daily capacity to support 95 youth.

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# of cases ⁴	111	128	143	124	116
# of youth	107	124	118	117	112
# of youth who were extended	57	59	62	56	64
% young women	17	17	21	22	20
% young men	81	82	79	77	79
% self-identified as transgender	2	1	-	1	1
% self-identified as Indigenous	33	37	42	45	45
Average age when cases were opened	16	16	16	16	16
# of direct service hours	5837	6200	6961	5964	6581

The ISSP program continues to be a valued and well utilized program. Our referrals were slightly lower than previous years', a reflection and outcome of decreased caseloads in Youth Probation overall. A trend which has continued to develop over the last couple of years is the number of short-term files referred on a voluntary basis. In the previous service year, we supported 60% voluntary and 40% mandatory files (those with a court ordered condition to participate in ISSP). Whereas in the 2022-23 year, numbers increased to 75% voluntary and 25% mandatory. This data is interesting as it reflects the way in which service is delivered to young people accessing our program, as well as our ability to meet direct service hour deliverables. Service plans and goals are tailored on a more short-term basis as a result. We also continued to see a rise in youth with Community Work Service (CWS) Hours and Extra Judicial Sanction (EJS) orders. We are still seeing post Covid-19 after-effects which have impacted the court process in general, such as delayed court proceedings, lengthy bail terms, as well as many personal impacts on young people's mental and physical wellbeing and their ability to cope.

Q (Creative Urban Employment) Program

Q provides work experience, employment opportunities, and an employment and life-skills training curriculum for youth who are not in school. Typically, the program runs over a 6-month duration.

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of cases ⁵	48	47	49	49	45	47
# of youth	44	44	48	47	40	43
% young women	19	28	21	20	25	16
% young men	77	72	79	80	72	84
% self-identified as transgender	4	-	-	-	3	-
% self-identified as Indigenous	48	43	31	32	53	33

Average age when cases were opened	17	17	17	17	17	17
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N= number of cases discharged)	112 (N=36)	130 (N=37)	104 (N=36)	106 (N=38)	130 (N=32)	107 (N=34)
# who found employment	29	29	25	26	24	30
# of participating employers	27	28	23	36	28	31
# of new employers	15	22	10	23	20	15

The Q Program continues to create additional options to youth with barriers to employment. Yardworks has become a useful option for youth building skills towards a goal of market employment. Many youth are working on a part-time basis while also attending school, and some have solely pursued job readiness training.

KidStart Mentoring

KidStart is a volunteer-based mentoring program for youth on probation or diversion, including those who may be transitioning out of other services. Volunteer Mentors serve as positive adult role models who provide consistent support and engage their mentee in activities that will foster a sense of positive achievement and community connectedness; outcomes include some young people successfully disengaging from the youth justice system.

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of cases ⁶	52	50	75	77	76	85
# of youth	48	43	52	61	60	62
% young women	60	66	63	64	63	58
% young men	37	30	37	36	37	42
% self-identified as transgender	4	4	-	-	-	-
% self-identified as Indigenous	25	26	27	18	25	27
# of new referrals	54	44	41	41	48	55
% relationships lasting for more than 1 year	81	22	76	40	34	72
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N = number of cases)	307 (N=25)	564 (N=24)	619 (N=29)	319 (N=27)	374 (N=29)	389 (N=36)
Average # of days wait for a mentor	213	131	156	133	257	86
Average monthly active caseload	31	28	33	37	32	36
Average age when cases were opened	13	13	14	14	14	14

It was great this year to get back to usual programming after Covid-19 restrictions were eased. In person training, group activities and mentoring were able to take place in person! We did see a decrease of the length of matches as a result of Covid-19 altering the commitments of our mentors. We hope to find more stability and long term matches next year.

Genesis Schools

There are three Genesis School Programs, each staffed with a teacher from the Vancouver School Board (VSB) and a Youth Worker from PLEA. The programs operate in collaboration with the VSB and provide students who are 16 to 18 years old with a flexible, positive learning environment that encourages youth to identify and pursue their goals. The schools have been designated as vocational learning centres.

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of cases ⁷	50	54	64	68	71	81
# of youth	50	52	63	68	68	79
% young women	34	34	33	25	25	25
% young men	60	59	65	74	74	75
% self-identified as transgender	6	7	2	1	1	-
% self-identified as Indigenous	44	37	35	31	31	37
# who graduated from high school	18	19	15	9	11	9

# who found employment	24	18	16	8	12	15
Average age when cases were opened	16	16	16	16	16	16

The Genesis team continue to keep youth engaged with learning life and vocational skills by engaging in Yardworks, sewing, art projects, workshops, Environmental Youth Alliance, working out, yoga and much more. We continue to see a lot of success with youth graduating and going on to find employment, a focus on life skill development and transition to independence remain a focus for the schools.

How we did...against last year's goals

1. Improve assessments and transition/discharge plans as a part of Service Planning across programs.

Assessment forms and transition discharge plans have been updated Agency wide to be more comprehensive. Training will roll out in June 2023. This will help teams to understand the needs of each participant to help prepare them for their transition to independence or out of PLEA services at the resolution of their court order or completion of the program. Staff understand that transition planning starts at intake as we never know how long a young person will be in our programs and we need to prepare them once they leave our services.

2. To continue to provide opportunities for youth to create their own music with the support of industry professionals as well as for staff to be trained on music equipment housed at AR Lord to help youth continue with their projects.

Funding was renewed for another year to help youth tap into their musical talents, either by recording their own lyrics and beats, or learning the engineering side of song creation. Youth continue to be offered opportunities to meet with musical professionals to record their songs and learn the technical portion in the studio. Our interest this past fiscal year has decreased and we still have some funding remaining as we begin our new fiscal year in 2023/24. Young people have also been connected to the music program that is offered by Directions Youth Services.

3. We work hard to support youth, save space, and take the lead from them as to how they wish to celebrate, learn, inquire, and live their culture within their daily lives. A focus for the coming year will be to collaboratively work with Youth Justice professionals, as well as our in-house Knowledge Keeper, to adapt our programming to include specific Indigenous culturally appropriate and relevant services. This may include cultural events, 1-1 experiences for participants or cultural experiences for the Youth Justice team and their youth.

The ISSP and Q programs were able to participate in a unique opportunity in the Squamish Valley to attend a ceremony to gather willow tree branches and grandfather stones for PLEA's Waypoint Sweat Lodge. Our programs were able to include a program participant, who is a Squamish Nation youth, which offered a special opportunity for this youth to connect with their culture on the land. ISSP and Q staff were greeted by Knowledge Keeper, Charles Lafferty, and VPD Indigenous Liaison, Constable Rick Lavallee, and the group engaged in cultural work and ceremony prior to harvesting the willow tree branches and grandfather stones. PLEA staff and participants learned the importance of being stewards of the land, the notion of reciprocity and how to care for mother earth and each other.

An asset to the ISSP team are the staff who speak Arabic, Punjabi, French and African languages, who can help youth who have recently immigrated to Canada and to also provide family support. Some black participants have been supported to attend hair-braiding courses, which led to one wanting a career as a barber. Many youth have been supported to try cultural foods, attend events and experiences they haven't had exposure to before to build their community connections.

Genesis continues to grow tobacco with students in the classroom. Students participate in planting, watering and harvesting tobacco which is used for gifting Elders. Genesis also held cedar weaving workshops for students. Next year we look forward to hosting educational workshops on Indigenous history, culture, and practices. One youth is learning

Haida language as part of reclaiming their oral history/traditional language and is using as part of school credit/learning plan. Another student received help obtaining a hunting license, and the school purchased a dehydrator to make Elk jerky after the student went hunting with their caregiver.

4. To work closely with PLEA's Communications Team to try and secure a second home, which ideally would include a bed for those youth have sexual related offending.

In January 2023, our caregiver providing 2 beds moved to PLEA's adult serving program. We are continuing to try to recruit two Family Caregivers for the Youth Justice residential program. Our Program Manager and Director have been in contact with PLEA's Communications Team, as well as our Community Assessment Team to elevate the urgency of finding new homes. The cost of living in Vancouver has been a challenge to find new families. The two-bed family home was a great asset to the program's success this year.

5. To create an outcomes measurement tool for youth justice program participants.

Last year we partnered with Simon Fraser University to create a literature review as well as an outcomes measurement tool for our Youth Justice Programs. PLEA is rolling out an updated assessment tool in May 2023, Youth Justice programs will explore adding outcomes measurement questions in addition to the new assessment questions.

Selected accomplishments

1. We supported countless youth to complete their Community Work Services (CWS) hours, including a few youth who had extensive hours of up to 50 total to complete.
2. Supported youth to explore their artistic talents and engaged in artwork projects, painting canvasses, making bracelets, oil drips, painting ceramics and other work.
3. Youth were provided opportunities to give back to the community by supporting PLEA in making deliveries of care packages to various donors, community supporters and board members.

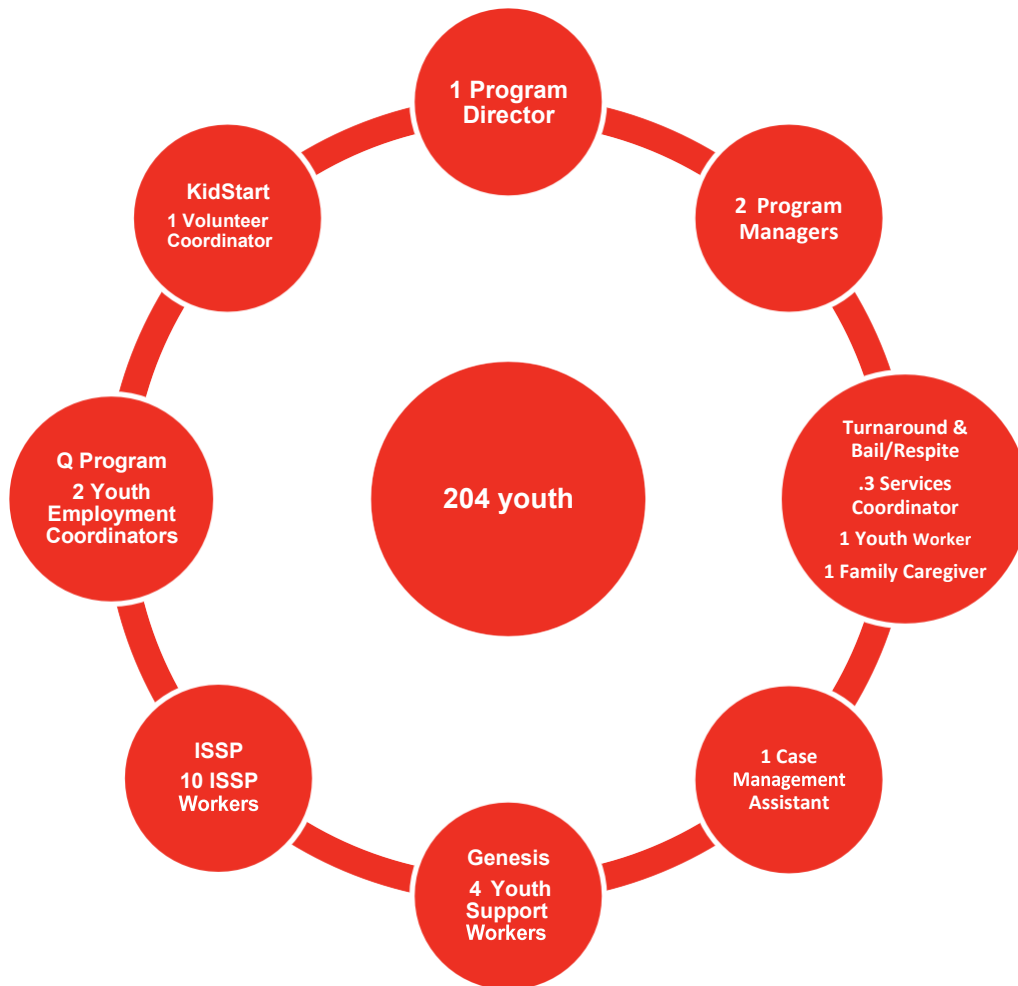
Selected stories⁸

1. The ISSP and Q programs have assisted Johny* with an abundance of support in many facets of his life. Johny came to our programs with very serious charges and with a heavily involved negative peer group. He was facing many risk factors of being recruited into a gang. Our staff worked diligently to provide wrap around support, multiple times a week, to help Johny get connected to positive resources and community care. He was supported to attend, weekly games and practices which included evenings and weekends,. He was supported to participate in the Q program and was enrolled in a work training program to complete barber school. ISSP supported him to attend this program and he graduated with the knowledge and skills to barber professionally. He was supported to achieve many other service goals such as: riding bikes, playing football and going bowling. He is eager to learn about his culture and has consistently engaged with his worker to get his hair braided and to learn the basics of how to braid and care for his hair-type. He plans to combine these skills with his barber skills to gain employment in the future. As a result of the efforts of Johny to change the trajectory of his life, and the staff connected to him, he has successfully abstained from obtaining any breach charges or new charges throughout the duration of his time in our program.
2. Cherie* is a Genesis student and a Q participant. She has been successful at forming a strong relationship with the school when she had previously not been attending for years. Cherie displays a great aptitude for trades, and recently started working part-time in carpentry for a company offering room for apprenticeship and advancement. Cherie feels she is finally working towards a career and is starting to plan for her transition to independence from care as a result.
3. Silas* grew up in poverty and lived in various areas of Downtown East Side of Vancouver. Often there is no food in his family home and his family struggles with substances. He has been accessing PLEA services and the ISSP program for over two years. When he first began, he rarely attended school. He would wake up around 2:00pm daily and attend school for 30 minutes a couple times a week. He was suspected of drug dealing and was connected to some dangerous folks. Over the last year, he has made major efforts to focus on his schooling and get connected with a trades program. He began showing up for school daily at 8:15am and is now working as an apprentice plumber, waking up at 5:00am to get to work on time. Silas reports he wants to continue to focus on this new healthy lifestyle and stay on the straight and narrow. Silas reports facing challenges with old friends and associates who don't always have the best intentions, but he is dedicated to completing high school and staying out of trouble.

* Names and certain details have been altered to protect the privacy of the people we serve

Challenges

1. Staff turnover and breaks in service continues to be an ongoing issue across programs. We had a couple workers retire this year and their knowledge, presence and abilities has been hard to replace.
2. We continue to see increases in voluntary youth referred to our ISSP program. This has affected our ability to meet program deliverables for our direct client contact hours. As young people are not required to participate and the onus on Youth Probation Officers to build a case to breach young people with mandated condition continues to be more challenging, youth are less likely to feel pressure to engage in services if they are not actively looking to make changes in their lives.



Our team...learning

Youth Justice Staff were provided with several training opportunities this past year. New Employees to PLEA were offered various onboarding trainings such as: Introduction to PLEA, Privacy and Information Sharing, Strengths Based Practice, Mandt Training, Trauma Informed Practice, LivingWorks – Suicide Risk Assessment, Naloxone Training, Basic ISSP Training, SANYAS Indigenous Cultural Safety Training, and Gender Pronouns Training.

Some of the learning modules that were covered this past year included: Cyber Security Training, Preventing Communicable Diseases, Respectful Workplace Training, Domestic Violence Training,

A couple of staff in our Turnaround Program completed the Medication Assistance Training to support youth living in our PLEA homes.

The ISSP and Turnaround teams were also invited to participate in two offsite trainings. One was with the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU) – End Gang Life Presentation Training and with RCMP E Division, BC ICE (Integrated Child Exploitation) Unit. These workshops were informative regarding resources and supports that are available to the participants we serve. Our team also attended this year's Gangs and Guns Symposium which was offered remotely online over 2 days. Lastly, PLEA organized for several PLEA programs to participate in "The Village" training with Kathi Camilleri to continue the learning process and impacts of colonization and reconciliation.

In July, the ISSP and Q teams came together for a full day of learning, sharing, remembering, and connecting. We were supported on the day by Elder, Mike Kelly, and PLEA's Knowledge Keeper, Charles Lafferty.

The intention of this day was to have an open, safe, and welcoming space for our team to reflect on our work with participants and to have conversations about continuing to decolonize our practice. The day included a portion of working through some of the past losses that our programs experienced last year, after the passing of three program participants; while also looking forward to the future, celebrating not only the resilience of the participants we work with, but also our staff. The day was an opportunity to lean into together, to reconnect, and to work towards our commitment to indigenizing our practice and focusing our service delivery to incorporate the commitments of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Our Elder Mike Kelly then lead the group in a smudge ceremony outside the building. Elder Mike showed the team the Eagle feather and smudging bundles used and its importance to Indigenous culture. We were then welcomed back into the room for another break and time to decompress. We spent time debriefing the day and letting go of any past hurt or trauma we felt. Elder Mike then offered the opportunity to participate in a more private and individual cedar brushing in a quiet room. Several staff took the opportunity to experience this unique and magical moment.

Our team...new relationships

1. The ISSP program made a connection with a local Indigenous chef, Tracy Spence, who is the owner of a small independent business, [Ban]-[Uhk] Canteen. Tracy sells pre-made Bannock mix but also offers private culinary sessions and was excited to join us in our space at AR Lord to offer a cooking class for youth, to prepare Bannock two different ways. It was a great opportunity for a few youth to learn traditional teachings and prepare Bannock they could take home to their families. We are looking forward to our next cooking session with Tracy.
2. New relationships were formed with the folks working at the Qwum Qwum Xxii Xxaa (QQXX): Youth Restorative Program, which is offered by the IRSSS (Indian Residential School Survivor Society). The program is in partnership with the Department of Justice Canada and works one-on-one with youth aged 12-18 who are in the criminal justice system in the Metro Vancouver area. ISSP workers and QQXX Youth Workers have worked collaboratively with mutual clients to provide court support, advocacy, recreational activities, and other supports. ISSP workers have also been invited to participate in cultural connections and programming, such as attending cultural days at Cates Park, playing bone games, and other traditional teachings and events.
3. The ISSP team has expanded their connections and relationships with the staff at Game Ready, sporting program which is offered by CFSEU as part of their gang exiting program. We have made connections in Surrey and in the North Shore and youth have been supported to attend basketball programming weekly.

Next year's goals...

- 1. To create an outcomes measurement tool for youth justice program participants.**
- 2. To create a wellness program for youth which will run weekly out of our AR Lord building. These sessions will be offered by an ISSP worker and will promote healthy routines, such as healthy eating options, weight training and personal goal setting relating to a healthy lifestyle.**
- 3. ISSP Team to participate in cultural connections, such as an experience at the Waypoint Sweat Lodge and learning about different cultures which reflect the populations we serve.**
- 4. To establish more community connections for youth to complete their Community Work Service hours.**
- 5. To explore outreach education for Genesis students who are not attending school in person due to mental health, trauma or substance use.**

For more information...

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