

Terms of Reference Niagara Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (Niagara HSJCC)

Revised September 22, 2021

Background

In June 1997 A Provincial Strategy to Coordinate Human Services and Criminal Justice Systems in Ontario, was approved by the Human Services and Justice Coordination Project: a cooperative project of the Ministries of the Attorney General, Community and Social Services, Health and Long Term Care, Solicitor General and Community Safety and Correctional Services. It was developed to improve coordination of resources and planning for people with mental health in conflict with the law.

In July 2001, stakeholders from the Region of Niagara held initial meetings to discuss the feasibility of establishing a court diversion program. Over a period of two years members from health services, police, the Crown Attorney's Office, other legal professionals and consumers prepared a community proposal called the "Niagara Region Court Diversion Program". The proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in August of 2002.

In December 2003 the Ministry of Mental Health and Long Term Care released the Central South Mental Health Implementation Task Force Final Report. The report specified the need for district; regional, and provincial coordination mechanisms to facilitate cross sectoral communication and problem solving. As the result the Niagara Human Service and Justice Coordinating Committee was formed. The initial meeting of the Committee was held on March 10, 2004.

In May 2005 the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care formalized the structures of the Human Service and Justice Coordinating Committees at the local, regional, and provincial levels. Recommendations regarding terms of reference for these various committees were provided and the Niagara Human Service and Justice Coordinating Committee (a local committee in ministry terms) adjusted it's terms of reference.

The Niagara Committee reports to the Regional Committee, located in Hamilton, which in turn reports to the Provincial committee located in Toronto.

In 2016, a standardized reporting template and structure was developed to offer more consistency and accountability.

Function/Purpose

- To coordinate and develop resources, to make recommendations and whenever possible, to take action to address gaps and barriers to effective service for individuals with complex needs who are involved with the criminal justice system in the Niagara area.

Scope

Identify service gaps, barriers to access, needed resources or system improvements pertaining to the service of individuals in the Niagara Region who:

- Are involved with or are at risk of becoming involved with the Criminal Justice System
- Fall into any age group (children, youth, adults and seniors); and
- "individuals with complex human services needs, which may include, but are not limited to those living with mental health issues, substance use concerns and/or behavioural dependencies, or neurodevelopmental and neurocognitive disabilities including developmental disabilities and dual diagnosis."

Goals

- 1) To develop seamless service delivery recommendations
- 2) To develop system design recommendations
- 3) To complete system case reviews for the purpose of evaluation and improvement
- 4) To coordinate communication and establish linkages between criminal justice, health, and social agencies with respect to common clients
- 5) To educate professionals, politicians, and the general public on individuals with complex needs who are involved in the criminal justice system
- 6) To conduct research to identify best practices

Meetings

The larger committee will meet bi-monthly with agreement of the membership.

Every effort will be made to preschedule all meetings at the beginning of the year to ensure adequate notice and higher attendance.

Working groups will be established to accomplish work plan objectives. Working groups will meet as necessary to accomplish the objectives within the allotted time frame.

Membership

Members of the Niagara HSJCC Committee agree to:

- Attend meetings regularly
- Participate in establishing the annual work plan
Participate in working groups related to an area of interest or where their expertise is required
- Provide input and feedback regarding committee decisions including the annual budget
- Receive and review all committee correspondence by email
- Submit notices of updates and events for inclusion on the website

Members are able to request sponsorship for Professional Development opportunities offered through the Committee i.e. trainings or conferences as available.

The Committee should strive to include representatives from the following organizations or sectors as members:

- Persons with Lived Experience
- Family Members or Care Givers
- Niagara Region Police Service
- Crown attorney's office
- Defense Council
- Legal Assistance Organizations
- Niagara Detention Centre
- Probation and Parole
- Federal Corrections
- Other Justice Related Agencies
- Court Support Workers
- Niagara Health:Mental Health and/or Emergency Department
- First Nations, Metis or Inuit Organizations
- Community Mental Health Agencies
- Addiction Agencies
- Developmental Service Agencies
- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)
- Primary Health Care (e.g.CHCs)
- Housing and Homelessness
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Members organizations should collectively provide services to individuals who reflect the diversity in our community including all age categories; race; religion; culture; sexual orientation, gender identity.

Co Chairs

The Committee will be Co-Chaired by a Person with Lived Experience/Family Representative and/or a Human Service Agency Representative and/or a Criminal Justice Representative.

Members may either volunteer to take on the role of a Co-Chair when a position becomes vacant, or, in the event that there is more than one party interested in the position, the Co-Chair will be chosen through an election process by full members.

The Term of a Co-Chair shall be limited to 3 years to ensure continuity and consistency, as well a fresh perspective.

Representation on Regional HSJCC

The Co-Chairs are responsible for representing Niagara HSJCC on the Regional Human Service and Justice Coordinating Committee. This includes attending regular meetings and providing regular updates to the Regional Chair.

Decisions

Decisions will be made by consensus of the membership as often as possible. Where consensus is not possible, majority rules. Some decisions will be made at meetings by only those in attendance. For other decisions, such as those related to the development of the work plan or budgetary decisions, an attempt will be made to seek the opinion of all members in making these decisions. In the event of a tie vote, the Co-Chairs will be responsible for making the final decision.

Work Plan

A full committee meeting will be held in January or February of each year to develop the work plan for the next year.

The Co-Chairs are responsible for submitting the Work Plan on the required template to The Regional HSJCC Chair prior to the annual March 1st due date.

Budget

A budget will be established and submitted with the annual work plan to the Regional HSJCC Chair by March 1st annually.

A portion of the budget can be allocated for administrative costs involved in scheduling meetings, planning training events, completing minutes, completing the work plan, completing reports and submitting required reports and updates to the Regional and Provincial HSJCC.

Reporting

The Chair is responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to Regional and Provincial HSJCC in accordance with the Provincial reporting schedule

Minutes

Minutes will be completed after each meeting. The minutes will be circulated to all members for approval by email.

Website

The Co-Chairs are responsible for ensuring the following items are approved by membership, submitted and kept up-to-date on the Provincial HSJCC Website:

- Goals & Objectives
- Terms of Reference
- Work Plan
- Progress Reports
- Final Report
- Meeting Minutes
- Completed Research
- Personal Stories
- Relevant Event or Conference Information