



Victim Impact Statements, Community Impact Statements, and Victim Statements in Canada's justice system: A national overview of available data

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Executive Summary

This report provides a national overview of available administrative data on Victim Impact Statements (VIS), Community Impact Statements (CIS), and Victim Statements across Canada's justice system. These tools allow victims and communities to describe the impacts of crime and have those impacts considered in justice system decision-making. Together, they support victim participation in the justice system, including participatory rights under the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR).

Developed in collaboration with federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) partners, this study draws on data from Statistics Canada's Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS); federal corrections and conditional release data from Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and the Parole Board of Canada (PBC); and provincial and territorial administrative data from victim services, court services, Crown prosecution services, and review boards. Findings are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions, as definitions, coverage, and collection practices vary.

Key observations include:

- VIS were recorded in a minority of cases with a finding of guilt, increasing modestly from 5% in 2016/2017 to 8% in 2022/2023 among the five ICCS-reporting jurisdictions: Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories. VIS were proportionally more common in youth court than in adult criminal court cases in 2022/2023 (11% versus 8%) and across 2016/2017 to 2022/2023 (10% versus 6%).
- No jurisdictions currently report CIS data to the ICCS, and the survey does not capture whether VIS were presented in court.
- Beyond the ICCS, provincial and territorial administrative VIS data were available from eight jurisdictions, but measures and recording practices varied. Data on VIS in review board cases, CIS, and statement presentation were more limited.
- The number of Victim Statements in the federal corrections context remained relatively stable from 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, while presentations of Victim Statements at conditional release hearings increased.
- Statements were most often associated with violent offences, including assault, sexual assault, homicide, and intimate partner violence (IPV). In most cases with a recorded VIS, the victim knew the accused, often as a current or former intimate partner. Where gender information was available, recorded VIS and Victim Statements were most often associated with female victims, while data on Indigenous and racialized identity remained limited.

This report helps clarify what is currently known about VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements from available administrative data, and where important gaps remain. Differences in how these statements are collected and recorded limit comparability across jurisdictions. More consistent and comprehensive data, including disaggregated data on Indigenous and racialized identity where appropriate, would support a clearer understanding of access to these tools. Continued collaboration among FPT partners will be important for strengthening national data, supporting future research, and monitoring victims' participatory rights under the CVBR.

1 Introduction

Victims have the right to participate in Canada's criminal justice system. Under the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR), this includes being able to present a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) and have it considered. Victims also have the right to share views about decisions that affect their rights and have those views considered. VIS, Community Impact Statements (CIS), and Victim Statements are tools through which victims¹ and communities can describe, in their own words, how crime has affected them, including physical, emotional, psychological, financial, community, and safety-related impacts.

VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements are used at different points in the justice process. VIS are used at sentencing and may also be considered in review board proceedings where an accused is found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder (NCR). CIS allow a community representative to describe the broader impacts of an offence on a community and must be considered by the court at sentencing. Victim Statements are used in the federal corrections and conditional release context under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) (Text box 1).

VIS were introduced into the *Criminal Code* in 1988 under section 722. The *Criminal Code* was later amended to provide for CIS, first in fraud cases in 2011 and then for all offences at sentencing in 2015 under section 722.2. Amendments that came into force in 2015 also introduced standardized VIS and CIS forms and expanded options for presenting statements, including through testimonial aids such as a support person, a screen, or closed-circuit television.

Across Canada, provinces and territories have processes in place to support VIS, including victim services or other justice system supports that help victims understand the VIS process, prepare and submit statements, and access information, referrals, and court-related supports. In the territories, Crown Witness Coordinators with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC) provide court-based support to victims and witnesses, including information about the court process and assistance related to VIS. These services play a key role in helping victims navigate the statement process and exercise their participatory rights.

In the federal corrections and conditional release context, victim participation is also supported through Justice Canada, Correctional Service Canada (CSC), and the Parole Board of Canada (PBC). Justice Canada's Victims Fund provides financial assistance to help registered victims attend PBC hearings. CSC and the PBC jointly deliver victim services, supporting registered victims through engagement, information sharing, and assistance with the preparation and submission of Victim Statements. CSC provides updates on the offender's status, while the PBC supports victims in relation to conditional release hearings.

Despite the long-standing availability of these victim participation tools, national information on their use remains limited. In the court context, Statistics Canada collects VIS information through the Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS), but only five jurisdictions currently report VIS data through the survey. The ICCS also includes a variable for CIS, but no jurisdictions currently report CIS data. The Canadian

¹ Across the contexts covered in this report, "victim" generally refers to a person who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage, or economic loss as a result of an offence or alleged offence. Certain family members, guardians, dependants, or other representatives may act on a victim's behalf when the victim is deceased or unable to act on their own behalf.

Victim Services Indicators (CVSI) Pilot Study also identified broader challenges in producing comparable national data on victim services, including VIS-related indicators, because jurisdictions use different data systems, terminology, coverage, and recording practices (Allen, 2019).

At the provincial and territorial level, administrative data—information collected through the routine delivery of programs, services, and case processes—are maintained by victim services, court services, Crown prosecution services, and review boards. However, definitions, coverage, and collection practices vary. For this reason, findings in this report are presented descriptively and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions.

This study was conducted by Justice Canada’s Research and Statistics Division (RSD) in collaboration with the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Working Group on Victims of Crime – Sub-Committee on National Victims Data, Statistics Canada, CSC, the PBC, and provincial and territorial justice partners, including victim services, court services, Crown prosecution services, and review boards. It provides a national overview of available administrative data on VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements, identifies key data gaps and limitations, and supports broader FPT work to improve national data and monitor victims’ participatory rights under the CVBR.

Text box 1. Victim participation tools in Canada

Victim Impact Statement (VIS): A written statement describing the physical or emotional harm, property damage, or economic loss suffered by a victim of an offence, as well as the impact of the offence on the victim, including any fears for their safety or security or that of family and friends. More than one VIS may be submitted in a case where more than one person has been affected by the offence. The court must consider a VIS at sentencing, and a VIS may also be considered in review board proceedings where an accused is found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder (NCR). A VIS submitted to the court may also be considered during federal corrections and conditional release decision-making.

Community Impact Statement (CIS): A written statement describing the harm or loss an offence has caused to a community. A CIS recognizes that the effects of crime can extend beyond individual victims. It allows a community representative to describe broader impacts, such as effects on safety, cohesion, or public trust. A community may be defined by geography, identity, or shared experience (e.g., neighbourhood, organization, cultural group). The court must consider a CIS at sentencing.

Victim Statement: A written statement submitted in the federal corrections and conditional release context describing the continuing impact of the offence, any safety concerns, and any requests for special conditions on an offender’s release. Victim Statements may be submitted to Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) after sentencing and at any time during a federal offender’s sentence for consideration in offender case management and release decisions.

2 Literature review

2.1 Participation and submission trends

Canadian research suggests that Victim Impact Statements (VIS) are identified in a small proportion of cases. In a multi-site criminal court processing study, VIS were identified in 9% to 11% of eligible cases (Lindsay, 2015). Earlier research found similar patterns: judges surveyed in three jurisdictions reported that VIS were submitted in approximately 8% of cases in British Columbia, 11% in Manitoba, and 13% in Alberta (Roberts & Edgar, 2006).

Community Impact Statements (CIS) appear to be used infrequently and are not systematically tracked. A national case law review identified 77 reported decisions discussing CIS between 2015 and 2022 (Manikis, 2022). No prior research was identified on the use of VIS in review board proceedings involving accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder (NCR).

At the federal corrections and conditional release stage, Victim Statements also appear in a small proportion of conditional release reviews. A PBC study found that 8.6% of completed conditional release reviews between 2018/2019 and 2022/2023 had a Victim Statement on file, compared with 29.8% that had a VIS on file from sentencing (Clark, 2026). Among reviews with a VIS on file from sentencing, 19.2% also had a Victim Statement on file. This suggests that statement participation at sentencing and at conditional release are distinct processes, and that victims may not remain engaged or submit updated information at later stages. Over the same period, the number of reviews with a Victim Statement on file increased by 94.6%, while reviews with a VIS on file increased by 35.3% (Clark, 2026).

Available research suggests that VIS and Victim Statements are more likely to be submitted in serious cases and are often associated with violent offences, particularly assault, sexual offences, and offences involving death (Clark, 2026; Dufour et al., 2023; Lindsay, 2015).

2.2 Barriers to submission

Although VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements can provide an important opportunity to participate in the justice process, not all eligible victims choose or are able to submit a statement. For some victims, not submitting a statement may reflect agency and informed choice; for others, it may reflect emotional, practical, or procedural barriers.

Reported barriers include fear, safety concerns, reluctance to revisit the offence, uncertainty about how the statement will be used, and concern about whether submitting a statement will make a difference. Victims may also face limited preparation time, insufficient help, and literacy or language barriers (Clark, 2026; Dufour, 2021; LePage, 2022). Some victims may also worry about re-traumatization or about personal information being disclosed to the offender.

Earlier Canadian research identified implementation barriers such as inconsistent notification practices, limited follow-up, and concern about defence objections or cross-examination (Prairie Research Associates Inc., 2004; Roberts, 2008). In the federal corrections and conditional release context, victims have reported similar concerns, including believing that their Victim Statement would not affect the decision, not wanting the statement shared with the offender, and finding it emotionally difficult to

write or update the statement (Clark, 2026; Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime [OFOVC], 2025).

Awareness of these participation tools and related rights also remains limited. Earlier Canadian polling found limited public knowledge of VIS: 40% of respondents reported having no knowledge at all, and another 30% reported having only a little knowledge (McDonald & Scrim, 2011). More recent findings suggest that awareness of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR) remains low among both the general population and victims and survivors of crime. In the 2022 National Justice Survey, only 17% of all respondents reported being aware of the CVBR before taking the survey, and 42% of respondents who identified as victims or survivors of crime said they had not been aware of it beforehand (Fayyaz & Badets, 2023). At the conditional release stage, a survey of victims registered with the PBC found that 28.6% of those who did not submit a Victim Statement were unaware that this option was available (Clark, 2023).

Research on statement forms and processes also points to accessibility barriers. Readability, form usability, unclear instructions, and broader access constraints may all affect participation (LePage, 2022; Roberts, 2008). These issues may be particularly important for victims who need support to understand, complete, or submit statement forms, or who require more flexible and trauma-informed supports (LePage, 2022; OFOVC, 2025).

2.3 Victim experiences

When victims and communities are able to describe the impacts of crime in their own words and have those impacts considered, the process can be meaningful, validating, or empowering for some participants (Clark, 2023; De Mesmaecker, 2012; Manikis, 2015). Positive experiences are often linked to clear and timely information, practical help preparing statements, regular contact, and supportive interactions with justice system personnel (Clark, 2023; Prairie Research Associates Inc., 2004).

However, some victims describe the process as emotionally difficult, frustrating, or disappointing, particularly where support, preparation, or follow-up are limited (Clark, 2023; De Mesmaecker, 2012; OFOVC, 2025). Recent work focused on survivors of sexual violence highlights concerns about late notice, limited help with preparing statements, excessive redaction, and tensions between privacy and participation, particularly in post-conviction contexts (OFOVC, 2025). Overall, the literature suggests that these tools can provide a meaningful opportunity for participation, but victims' experiences vary depending on the process, available supports, and the stage of the justice system.

3 Methodology

3.1 Study design

Justice Canada's Research and Statistics Division (RSD) conducted this study in collaboration with federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) partners. Data collection was coordinated through the FPT Working Group on Victims of Crime – Sub-Committee on National Victims Data, with support from Statistics Canada's Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) and the Heads of Court Administrators – Courts Statistics Information Sub-Committee (HoCA-CSI). Partners

were asked to provide available administrative data for 2010/2011 to 2023/2024, where possible, to capture trends before and after the CVBR came into force in 2015. Requested information included counts of VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements; whether and how statements were presented; offence and sentence type; and victim or community characteristics, where available. The analysis describes what information is currently available, how it is recorded, and where key data gaps and limitations remain.

3.2 Data sources

The analysis draws on three main data sources: Statistics Canada's Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS); provincial and territorial administrative data from victim services programs, court services, Crown prosecution services, and review boards; and federal corrections and conditional release data from Correctional Service Canada (CSC), the Parole Board of Canada (PBC), and Public Safety Canada's Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview (CCRSO).

Statistics Canada's Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS)

The ICCS collects information from provincial and territorial court administrative systems on completed adult criminal court and youth court cases.² For this study, the analysis was limited to cases with a finding of guilt, including guilty pleas and findings of guilt by the court. VIS data were available for five jurisdictions—Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories—for 2016/2017 to 2022/2023. The ICCS VIS variable records whether a VIS was submitted to the court in a case (yes/no); only one VIS can be recorded per case, and presentation in court is not captured. Variables related to CIS and adjournments to allow time for VIS preparation are not currently reported. ICCS data were linked to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey to obtain additional information on victims of violent crime, including age, gender, and relationship to the accused.

Provincial and territorial administrative data

Provincial and territorial justice partners—including victim services programs, court services, Crown prosecution services, and review boards—provided administrative data on VIS and CIS for 2010/2011 to 2023/2024, where available. Depending on the jurisdiction, counts may refer to statements or packages that were offered, distributed, completed, received, registered, submitted, or filed. These data reflect administrative activity rather than a standardized measure of court filings and are not directly comparable across jurisdictions.

Federal corrections and conditional release data

CSC provided data on Victim Statements for federal offenders by offence type and available victim demographics (age, gender, Indigenous or racialized identity) for 2019/2020 to 2023/2024. Demographic information, including Indigenous and racialized identity, is voluntarily self-reported by victims and is therefore not always provided. Public Safety Canada's CCRSO was also used to provide historical context on the number of Victim Statements received for consideration in release decisions. Data on victim presentations at PBC hearings from 2020/2021 to 2024/2025 were drawn from the PBC's Performance Monitoring Report Summary 2024–25. Presentation counts may exceed the number of hearings because more than one victim may present a statement at a hearing.

² For more information on the ICCS, see Surveys and statistical programs: <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3312>. Court information is recorded through court dockets and maintained in provincial and territorial court databases.

Text box 2. Interpreting data across jurisdictions and data sources

Findings in this report describe available data and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions. Justice system partners use different administrative systems, definitions, recording practices, and service delivery models, which affect how VIS and CIS are counted and reported. For example, the ICCS VIS variable records whether a VIS was submitted to the court in a case, with only one VIS recorded per case, while some provincial or territorial systems may record multiple statements in a single case. Jurisdictions may also record statements at different stages of the process, such as when they are offered, completed, received, registered, submitted, or filed. These differences can reflect how statements are managed or recorded, rather than differences in the actual use of statements. Population size, court volume, and data coverage can also affect reported counts.

Information provided by New Brunswick suggests that its ICCS figure may capture VIS records created in the provincial case management system rather than completed VIS submitted to the court. Because New Brunswick accounts for a large share of recorded VIS in the ICCS data, this context should be considered when interpreting ICCS findings.

3.3 Limitations

Data availability, definitions, and recording practices varied across jurisdictions, limiting the ability to produce consistent national information on the use of VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements. Provincial and territorial administrative data should be understood as descriptive measures of administrative activity, rather than standardized measures of statement use. Some of these limitations also apply to ICCS findings, which may be affected by jurisdiction-specific recording practices.

For this study, ICCS data were limited to completed cases with a finding of guilt. This means ICCS data do not capture statements that may have been prepared or submitted in cases that did not result in a finding of guilt. In addition, ICCS data were limited to the most serious offence and sentence in each case, which may not correspond directly to the offence or sentence associated with a VIS. Victim demographic and victim-accused relationship information was available only for a subset of cases (69%) through linkage to the UCR Survey and was further limited to single-victim, single-accused incidents. Information on VIS and CIS presentation, as well as victim characteristics, particularly Indigenous and racialized identity, was limited and not consistently available across data sources.

4 Findings

4.1 Use of Victim Impact Statements, Community Impact Statements, and Victim Statements

4.1.1 Victim Impact Statements – ICCS data from five jurisdictions

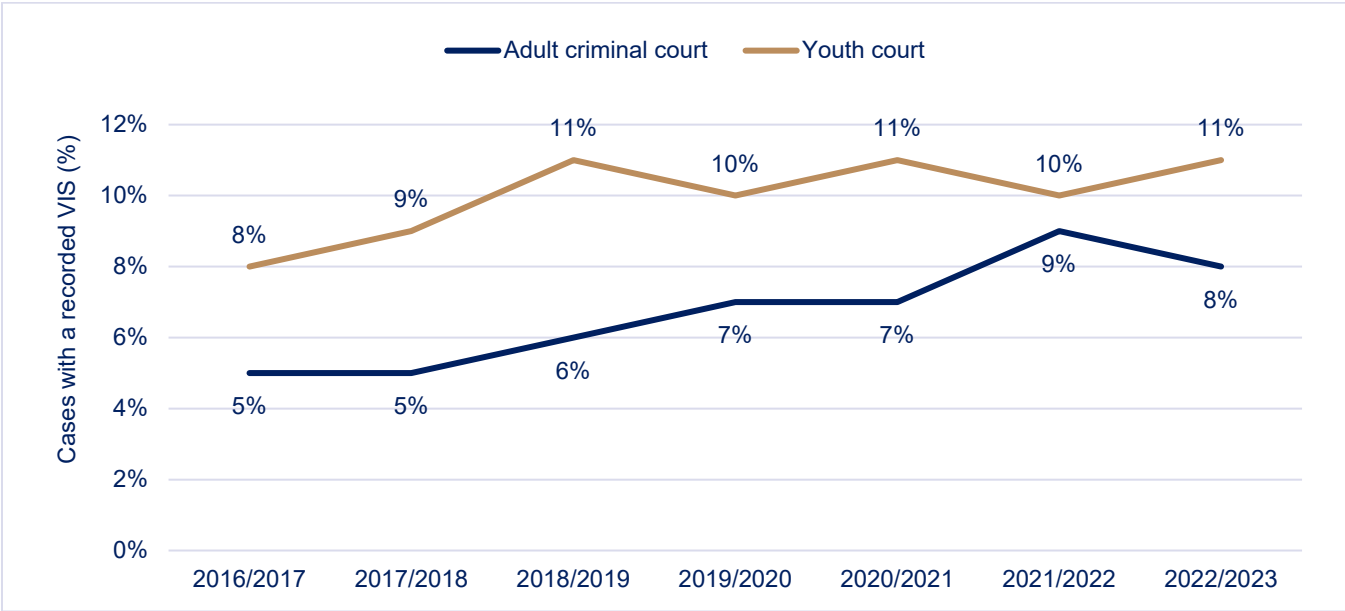
In 2022/2023, Statistics Canada's Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS) recorded 2,049 cases with a finding of guilt³ and a recorded VIS across five jurisdictions: Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories. This represented approximately 8% of cases with

³ Cases with a finding of guilt include guilty pleas and findings of guilt by the court.

a finding of guilt, up from 5% in 2016/2017. Of the 2,049 cases with a recorded VIS in 2022/2023, 1,911 were adult criminal court cases and 138 were youth court cases. As noted in Text box 2, New Brunswick accounts for a large share of recorded VIS in the ICCS data. Its ICCS figure may capture VIS records created in the provincial case management system rather than completed VIS submitted to the court.

VIS were proportionally more common in youth court than in adult criminal court in 2022/2023 (11% versus 8%). This pattern was also observed over the full period from 2016/2017 to 2022/2023, with VIS recorded in 10% of youth court cases and 6% of adult criminal court cases. Over time, the proportion of cases with a recorded VIS increased gradually in both adult criminal court and youth court (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of cases with a finding of guilt that included a recorded Victim Impact Statement, by court type, five ICCS-reporting jurisdictions, 2016/2017 to 2022/2023



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Integrated Criminal Court Survey.

Note: Cases with a finding of guilt include guilty pleas and findings of guilt by the court. Data are limited to the five jurisdictions that reported VIS data to the ICCS: Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories. New Brunswick data may capture VIS records created in the provincial case management system rather than completed VIS submitted to the court.

Table 1 presents the number and proportion of cases with a finding of guilt and a recorded VIS in 2022/2023 for the five jurisdictions reporting VIS data to the ICCS. Across these jurisdictions, the proportion of cases with a recorded VIS ranged from 2% in Alberta and Nova Scotia to 42% in New Brunswick. New Brunswick had a much higher proportion than the other reporting jurisdictions. Information provided by New Brunswick suggests that this may reflect how VIS are recorded in the provincial case management system; specifically, the ICCS figure may capture VIS records created in the system rather than completed VIS submitted to the court. These findings are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions, as differences in court processes,

administrative systems, recording and reporting practices, and victim service delivery models may affect how and when VIS are recorded.

Table 1. Recorded Victim Impact Statements in adult criminal court and youth court cases with a finding of guilt, five ICCS-reporting jurisdictions, 2022/2023

Jurisdiction	Number of cases with a recorded VIS	Percentage of cases with a recorded VIS
Alberta	338	2%
New Brunswick	1,555	42%
Nova Scotia	92	2%
Prince Edward Island	36	5%
Northwest Territories	28	7%
Total (five jurisdictions)	2,049	8%
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Integrated Criminal Court Survey.		
Notes: Cases with a finding of guilt include guilty pleas and findings of guilt by the court. Data are limited to the five jurisdictions that reported VIS data to the ICCS: Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories. Figures should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions. Jurisdictional differences may reflect variations in court processes, administrative systems, recording and reporting practices, and victim service delivery models. New Brunswick data may capture VIS records created in the provincial case management system rather than completed VIS submitted to the court.		

While the ICCS is the only national court data source that currently includes recorded VIS information, coverage is limited to the five jurisdictions reporting VIS data to the survey. The national picture would be clearer if additional jurisdictions reported VIS data.

4.1.2 Victim Impact Statements – provincial and territorial data

Provincial and territorial administrative VIS data were available from eight jurisdictions. Annual counts for 2023/2024 are presented in Annex 1, Table A1. Depending on the jurisdiction, these data were drawn from victim services programs, court services, or Crown prosecution services, and may reflect statements or packages that were distributed, completed, received, registered, submitted, or filed. Because definitions, timing, and recording practices vary across jurisdictions, these results are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons.

In 2023/2024, reported figures included 3,381 VIS submitted through Ontario’s Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP), which primarily serves victims of violent crime, and 161 combined VIS/CIS submitted to the court in Prince Edward Island. British Columbia reported 21,523 VIS packages distributed by Crown prosecutors; this figure reflects packages distributed rather than completed statements. Across the available years, reported VIS activity was relatively stable within reporting jurisdictions, with some year-to-year variation.

The New Brunswick data also included information on the source of VIS-related referrals. Court referrals remained the primary source of VIS-related records, while police referrals increased over time. This may suggest a growing role for police in referring victims to the VIS process in New Brunswick.

4.1.3 Victim Impact Statements in review board cases – provincial and territorial data

Administrative data on VIS in review board cases were available from six jurisdictions. Annual average counts are presented in Annex 1, Table A2. Because case volumes, reporting practices, and data availability vary across jurisdictions, these results should not be interpreted as direct comparisons.

Overall, the available data suggest that VIS in review board proceedings remain modest in number and unevenly captured. Among reporting jurisdictions, Quebec reported an annual average of 40 review board cases with a VIS between 2010/2011 and 2023/2024. In 2023/2024, VIS were recorded in 3% of Quebec review board cases involving an accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder (NCR). New Brunswick reported an annual average of 23 VIS filed with the review board. Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba reported smaller annual averages, ranging from 1 to 3 VIS-related review board records.

4.1.4 Community Impact Statements – provincial and territorial data

Community Impact Statements are not currently reported through the ICCS, and administrative data were available from five provincial and territorial sources. Annual average counts are presented in Annex 1, Table A3. In some jurisdictions, administrative systems do not distinguish CIS from VIS. Because coverage and recording practices vary, these results are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons.

Overall, the available data suggest that CIS remain uncommon and less systematically captured than VIS in administrative data. Among reporting jurisdictions, Manitoba recorded an annual average of 11 CIS between 2022 and 2024. Alberta and Nova Scotia each reported annual averages of 6 CIS, while Ontario and New Brunswick reported annual averages of 2 CIS. The higher number reported in Manitoba may partly reflect jurisdiction-specific outreach, referral, or administrative practices. More broadly, low counts may reflect limited use, differences in awareness or referral practices, and inconsistent administrative tracking.

4.1.5 Victim Statements – federal corrections data

Following sentencing, registered victims of federal offenders may submit or update a Victim Statement for consideration by CSC and the PBC in correctional and conditional release decision-making. CSC and the PBC may also consider a VIS submitted to the court if it is included in the offender's case file.

In 2023/2024, CSC received 1,570 new or updated Victim Statements, consistent with recent years. From 2018/2019 to 2022/2023, the number received for consideration in release decisions ranged from 1,398 to 1,557 (Public Safety Canada, 2025). Overall, approximately 10% of federal offenders had at least one Victim Statement on file in 2023/2024, up from approximately 7% in 2019/2020.

4.2 Case characteristics

4.2.1 Offence types

Available data indicate that VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements are most commonly associated with violent offences. Based on ICCS data for 2016/2017 to 2022/2023, 47% of adult criminal court cases with a finding of guilt and a recorded VIS involved violent offences, compared with 34% for property

offences and 19% for administration of justice and other offences. Among youth court cases with a finding of guilt and a recorded VIS, 56% involved violent offences, followed by property offences at 34%.

Provincial and territorial administrative data show similar patterns, with VIS most often associated with violent offences, including assault, sexual assault, homicide, and intimate partner violence (IPV). CIS were also most often associated with violent offences. In federal corrections, from 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, Victim Statements were most often associated with offences causing death (43%), sexual offences (24%), and assault (9%).⁴

4.2.2 Sentence types

Among adult criminal court cases with a recorded VIS from 2016/2017 to 2022/2023, custody was the most common sentence (44%), followed by probation (29%) and conditional sentences (11%).

However, when examined within each sentence type, VIS were proportionally more common in cases resulting in community-based sentences than in custody cases. A recorded VIS was present in 15% of conditional sentence cases and 11% of probation cases, compared with 7% of custody cases.

Among youth court cases with a recorded VIS, probation was the most common sentence (52%), followed by other community-based sentences (20%) and custody (16%).

4.2.3 Victim-accused relationship

Based on linked ICCS–UCR data for 2016/2017 to 2022/2023, the victim knew the accused in 82% of cases with a finding of guilt and a recorded VIS. Of these cases, 41% involved a current or former intimate partner relationship, 29% involved another known relationship, such as a friend, neighbour, or acquaintance, and 13% involved another family relationship. By comparison, 18% involved an accused who was a stranger.⁵

These findings suggest that recorded VIS are commonly associated with offences involving an accused known to the victim, particularly an intimate partner or family member. This highlights the importance of trauma-informed, safety-focused supports that consider the victim's relationship to the accused.

4.3 Victim characteristics

Based on linked ICCS–UCR data for 2016/2017 to 2022/2023, 65% of cases with a recorded VIS were associated with female victims.⁶ Victims aged 25 to 44 represented the largest group (44%), followed by victims aged 45 and older (25%). For Victim Statements submitted in the federal corrections context from 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, 79% of victims were female and 77% were aged 41 or older.

Information on victim identity, including Indigenous and racialized identity, was not available through the linked ICCS–UCR data and was not consistently collected at the provincial and territorial level. Limited identity information was available from New Brunswick and CSC.

⁴ Excludes cases where the offence type was unknown.

⁵ Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

⁶ Excludes cases where the victim's gender or age was unknown.

In New Brunswick, approximately 5% of VIS recorded between 2010/2011 and 2023/2024 involved victims identified as Indigenous. Among CIS recorded between 2016/2017 and 2023/2024, 23% involved victims identified as Indigenous.

In the federal corrections context, approximately 8% of victims who submitted Victim Statements to CSC between 2019/2020 and 2023/2024 self-identified as Indigenous. This proportion reflects only victims who submitted a statement and chose to provide identity information; it does not represent the broader victim population.

4.4 Presentation of statements

VIS and CIS may be presented in court or review board proceedings, and Victim Statements may be presented at PBC hearings. Victims may read their statement aloud themselves or have it read by another person, such as a victim services worker or Crown Witness Coordinator. Statements may also be presented using testimonial aids such as a support person, a screen, or closed-circuit television. Victims may include expressive materials, such as a drawing, poem, letter, or photograph, to help describe the impact of the offence.

Few jurisdictions systematically record whether or how VIS or CIS are presented in court or review board proceedings. Where data were available, only a small proportion of statements were recorded as presented. In some cases, the data reflected victims' stated intentions rather than confirmed presentation. In 2023/2024, approximately 11% of filed VIS in both Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island were reported as presented. In Nova Scotia, 31% of VIS and 38% of CIS were intended to be read in court, based on victims' stated intentions. More detailed information on how statements were presented was not available.

At the conditional release stage, Victim Statement presentations at PBC hearings increased from 293 presentations at 171 hearings in 2020/2021 to 386 at 238 hearings in 2024/2025 (Parole Board of Canada, 2026).

5 Discussion

The findings in this report should be understood in the context of how VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements are submitted, recorded, and reported across justice system contexts and jurisdictions. Not all eligible victims choose or are able to submit a statement, and administrative systems do not record statement activity in the same way. The ICCS analysis was limited to cases with a finding of guilt. The ICCS VIS variable records whether a VIS was submitted to the court in a case, with a maximum of one VIS recorded per case. As a result, statements prepared or submitted in cases that did not result in a finding of guilt are not captured, and cases involving multiple statements are counted only once.

National data on participation through VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements remain incomplete and uneven. The ICCS provides the only national court data source that currently includes recorded VIS information, but coverage is limited to five jurisdictions, and the CIS variable is not currently reported. Provincial and territorial administrative data provide additional insight, but they come from different systems and vary in scope, definitions, and recording practices.

Within the available ICCS data, VIS were recorded in a minority of cases with a finding of guilt, although the proportion increased gradually over time. In the federal corrections context, the number of Victim Statements remained relatively stable over the past five years, while presentations of Victim Statements at conditional release hearings increased modestly.

Across justice system contexts, statements were most often associated with violent offences, including assault, sexual assault, homicide, and IPV. Based on linked ICCS–UCR data, most cases with a recorded VIS involved victims who knew the accused, often as intimate partners, family members, or acquaintances. These patterns highlight the relational and emotional context in which victims may participate through these statements and underscore the importance of trauma-informed and safety-focused supports throughout the justice process.

Important data gaps remain, particularly for CIS use, statement presentation, and victim identity characteristics. CIS are not currently reported through the ICCS and are less systematically captured than VIS in provincial and territorial administrative data. Few jurisdictions systematically record whether VIS or CIS are presented in court or review board proceedings, such as whether they are read aloud or presented by another person. Information on presentation methods, including the use of testimonial aids, was not available. Information on victim identity, particularly Indigenous and racialized identity, is also not consistently collected across data sources. These gaps make it difficult to understand whether different groups of victims have similar opportunities to use VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements. Ongoing work led by Statistics Canada to strengthen the collection of police-reported Indigenous and racialized identity data through the UCR Survey may improve the availability of this information in future research (Statistics Canada, 2025).

The findings point to the need for continued collaboration among FPT partners to improve the availability, consistency, and quality of data on participation through VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements. More consistent definitions, recording practices, and reporting approaches would support a clearer understanding of how these tools are used, who is able to access them, and where additional supports or data improvements may be needed.

6 Conclusion

This report provides a national descriptive overview of available administrative data on VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements across Canada's justice system. Although these forms of victim participation have been embedded in legislation and practice for many years, national information on their use remains incomplete and uneven across jurisdictions.

The available data show that VIS were recorded in a minority of cases with a finding of guilt, but increased gradually over time in the jurisdictions currently reporting VIS data to the ICCS. Across justice system contexts, statements were most often associated with violent offences. In most cases with a recorded VIS, the victim knew the accused. Provincial and territorial data also show that VIS are tracked in different ways across jurisdictions, while data on VIS in review board proceedings and CIS remain limited. In the federal corrections and conditional release context, the number of Victim Statements remained relatively stable over the past five years, while presentations of Victim Statements at conditional release hearings increased.

The findings highlight important data gaps, including limited information on CIS use, statement presentation, and victim identity characteristics, particularly Indigenous and racialized identity. Continued collaboration among FPT partners to improve data availability, consistency, and quality will be important for building a clearer national picture of participation through VIS, CIS, and Victim Statements. This work will also support future research and ongoing monitoring of victims' participatory rights under the CVBR.

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Annex 1: Provincial and territorial administrative data on Victim Impact Statements and Community Impact Statements

Administrative data on VIS and CIS were provided by provincial and territorial justice partners, including victim services programs, court services, Crown prosecution services, and review boards. These data are separate from the ICCS data presented in the Findings section. Because administrative systems and reporting practices vary across jurisdictions, the data may reflect different stages of the statement process, such as the distribution of forms, receipt of completed statements, or statements filed in court. The figures presented in Tables A1 to A3 are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions. For CIS and review board data, annual average counts were used, where appropriate, to reduce the effect of year-to-year fluctuations in low-volume data and to account for differences in data availability.

Jurisdictions may record VIS and CIS at different points in the process. For example, in New Brunswick, victims are invited to submit a statement after conviction, while in Newfoundland and Labrador VIS and CIS are typically held in sealed envelopes until a finding of guilt. In Nova Scotia, counts are recorded by police incident rather than by number of court cases. These differences can affect how statements are counted in administrative records.

Table A1. Victim Impact Statements (VIS): provincial and territorial administrative data, 2023/2024		
Jurisdiction	Administrative measure reported	Count
British Columbia	VIS packages distributed by Crown prosecutors	21,523
Manitoba	VIS submitted to the Crown or court	500
New Brunswick	VIS filed with the court	676
Newfoundland and Labrador	VIS registered with the court	206
Nova Scotia	VIS filed in court	675
Ontario	VIS submitted to the Crown through V/WAP	3,381
Prince Edward Island	Combined VIS/CIS submitted to the court	161
Yukon	Combined VIS/CIS filed with the court	15
Source: Provincial and territorial submissions to Justice Canada from the British Columbia Prosecution Service, Manitoba Prosecution Service, Ontario's Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP), Yukon Court Services, and victim services programs in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, 2024/2025. Notes: - Figures are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions. - Provincial and territorial data reflect administrative activity rather than a standardized measure of court filings. Administrative practices vary across jurisdictions and may capture VIS at different stages, including distribution, receipt, completion, or filing. - British Columbia figures represent <i>Victims of Crime Act</i> (VOCA) packages distributed by Provincial Crown prosecutors only, which include VIS forms and related materials; they do not represent completed statements. - Manitoba figures reflect calendar year 2023 rather than fiscal year 2023/2024. - Ontario data reflect cases supported through the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) and primarily relate to violent offence cases. - In Prince Edward Island and Yukon, VIS and CIS are not distinguished in the available administrative data.		

Table A2. Victim Impact Statements (VIS) in review board cases: provincial and territorial administrative data, annual average counts

Jurisdiction	Administrative measure reported	Reference period	Annual average count
Manitoba	Review board files with a VIS submitted	2010–2023	1
New Brunswick	VIS filed with the review board	2010/2011–2023/2024	23
Newfoundland and Labrador	VIS registered with the review board	2023/2024	3
Nova Scotia	VIS filed with the review board	2016/2017–2023/2024	2
Quebec	Review board cases with a VIS	2010/2011–2023/2024	40
Saskatchewan	Review board cases with a VIS	2015–2024	2

Source: Provincial and territorial submissions to Justice Canada from the Manitoba Prosecution Service; victim services programs in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan; and review boards in Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2024/2025.

Notes:

1. Figures are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions.
2. Provincial and territorial data reflect administrative activity rather than a standardized measure of review board filings.
3. Counts reflect VIS submitted in review board cases involving accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder (NCR), based on the administrative measures available in each jurisdiction.
4. Figures represent annual average counts based on the most recent years of available data. Annual averages were used to reduce the effect of year-to-year fluctuations in low-volume data.
5. Reference periods vary because data were not available for the same years across jurisdictions.

Table A3. Community Impact Statements (CIS): provincial and territorial administrative data, annual average counts

Jurisdiction	Administrative measure reported	Reference period	Annual average count
Alberta	CIS submitted to the court	2020/2021–2023/2024	6
Manitoba	CIS submitted to the court	2022–2024	11
New Brunswick	CIS filed with the court	2016/2017–2023/2024	2
Nova Scotia	CIS filed in court	2017/2018–2023/2024	6
Ontario	CIS submitted to the Crown through V/WAP	2022/2023–2023/2024	2

Source: Provincial and territorial submissions to Justice Canada from the Alberta Court of Justice, Manitoba Judicial Services, Ontario's Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP), and victim services programs in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 2024/2025.

Notes:

1. Figures are descriptive and should not be interpreted as direct comparisons across jurisdictions.
2. Provincial and territorial data reflect administrative activity rather than a standardized measure of court filings.
3. Figures represent annual average counts based on the most recent years of available data. Annual averages were used to reduce the effect of year-to-year fluctuations in low-volume data.
4. Reference periods vary because data were not available for the same years across jurisdictions.