

The Call for Reform

In 2012, the provincial government launched a Justice Reform Initiative. The Criminal Justice Branch (the Branch) responded with a comprehensive list of innovative “Proposals for Reform” that were specific to B.C.’s Prosecution Service. Many of these Reforms were subsequently embodied within government’s White Papers on a “*Modern, Transparent Justice System*” (Parts I and II), and implementation began.

Three years later, the “Proposals for Reform” have been substantially completed, bringing sustainable change and increased efficiency to B.C.’s Prosecution Service. This is a high-level ‘report out’ on the changes made.

Improvements to Business Processes in the Prosecution Service

- Enhanced ‘file ownership’ by Crown Counsel to reduce file churn and support a Provincial Court redesign of the way it schedules criminal cases;
- Province-wide Quality Standards (or best practices) for proactive case management, including front-end completion of prosecution disclosure obligations and online charge assessment;
- Policy direction on increased early file resolution, greater flexibility for the principled use of Direct Indictments and enhanced victim and witness support;
- Training materials for police on disclosure practices;
- Technology improvements to information-flow between police, the Prosecution Service and the defence, and electronic enhancements for Crown Counsel’s file management practices;
- Established a Quality Assurance Audit Committee to review case management practices and identify areas for improvement;
- Electronic file closing survey for use by Crown Counsel to gather business intelligence on material process and file developments;
- Introduced a Major Case Management Model, with a project-management approach for the Branch’s largest cases, and worked with other system participants to establish a framework for ongoing, cross-sector dialogue on best practices in this area;
- Robust internal communication on innovation, system betterment, and staff engagement in reform;
- Increased business intelligence capacity for planning and educational purposes; and,
- Proactive external communications to enhance transparency in Branch decision-making on high-profile prosecutions, and increase public awareness.

Monitoring Progress for Long-Term Sustainability

- Monitoring progress made as a result of the Branch’s reforms is essential for modifications as needed, and to ensure that continuous improvement of file management practices remains a priority for B.C.’s Prosecution Service.
- To support sustainability, a monitoring and evaluation framework has been established specific to Crown file ownership and the Branch’s new Quality Standards. This includes tracking the number of court appearances made per case, rates of early file resolution, time to case disposition, and the number of Crown Counsel appearing on a file.

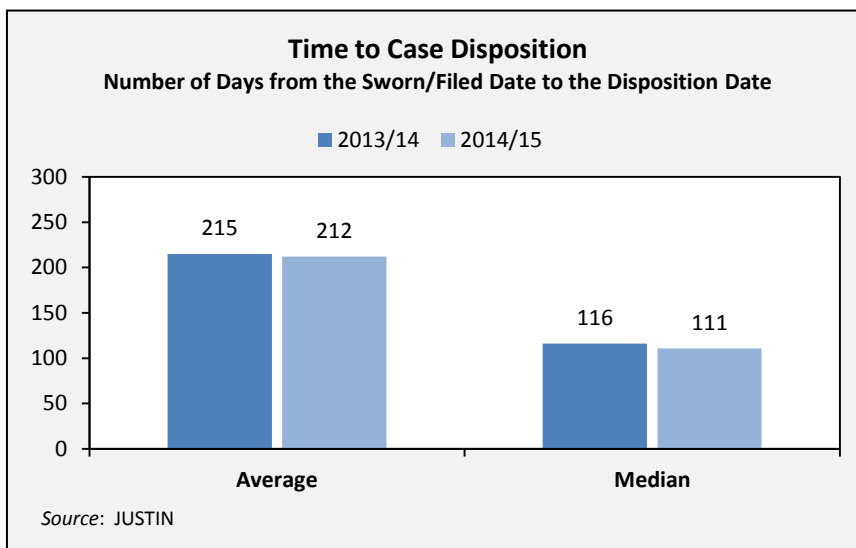
Branch Vision

Courageous, Fair and Efficient – A Prosecution Service that has the Confidence of the Public

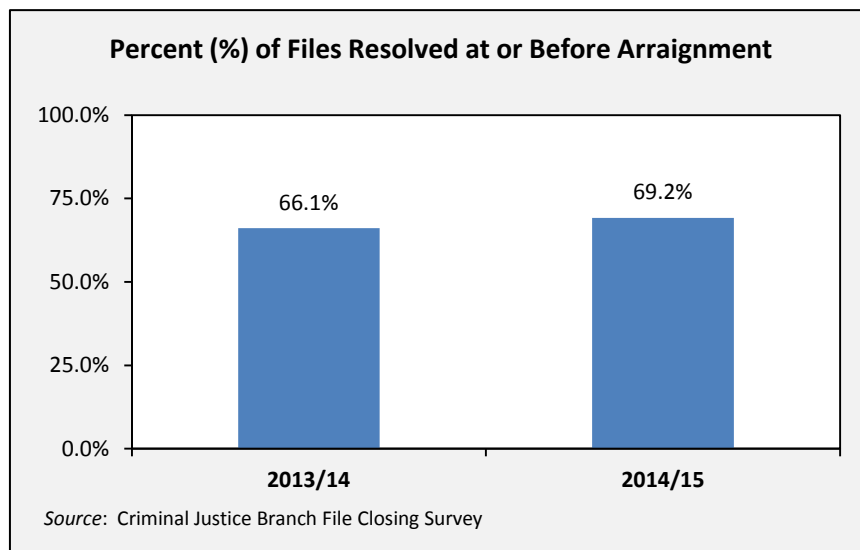
Indicators of Progress over Time

- In 2013/14, the Branch developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess progress towards its strategic goals and organizational vision.
- Although these are early days, the 2014/15 results show positive trends. The full series of KPIs are included in the [B.C. Prosecution Service 2014/15 Annual Report](#), which is available online.

This indicator measures how many days it takes for a prosecution file to conclude, from the date it was sworn or filed in court to the date it was concluded.



Percent (%) of Files Resolved at or Before Arraignment



This indicator measures the percentage of prosecution files where Crown Counsel indicated that it resolved at the initial appearance phase or at arraignment (a hearing in front of a Judge or Justice of the Peace where the accused decides whether to plead guilty or have a trial).

The Difference that People Make

The Criminal Justice Branch was able to achieve its Reforms through the commitment and professionalism of its workforce. Managers, Crown Counsel and the Branch’s administrative staff were actively engaged in implementing these changes while simultaneously delivering on core responsibilities. The enduring strength of the B.C. Prosecution Service is directly attributable to the hard work and daily excellence demonstrated by its people.