



# Social Return On Investment (SROI) Case Study: Calgary Youth Justice Committee Program

Investing to strengthen society

## Fast Facts

### About the Calgary Youth Justice Society:

**Vision:** Calgary communities actively participate in the youth justice system to effectively reduce youth crime by focusing on the success of youth.

**Web site:**  
www.calgariyouthjustice.com

**Subject of SROI:** Calgary Youth Justice Committees (YJCs)

**SROI Overview:** Youth Justice Committees offer a community-based approach to youth crime by involving the young person, their parents/family, victims, the justice system and the community.

YJCs help youth to understand and be accountable for the impact of their actions and to recognize the value of living a crime-free life.

**1-yr SROI:** \$1 to \$5.52

**3-yr SROI:** \$1 to \$10.13

### By the Numbers :

- 300+ volunteers operate 24 YJC's in 140 Calgary communities
- 12,000 hrs donated annually
- 8,000 cases have been diverted from the formal youth justice system
- 90% rate of completion
- 80% are not charged again in the following 3 yrs
- \$15,000 collected (2007 only) in restitution to victims

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*"(The volunteers) were nice and understanding, and they told you the truth. Making sure that the future of kids is good and helping them make the right choice... It's better than going to court 'cause they would just tell you that you are guilty and you don't learn anything. (The volunteers) choose appropriate programs because they understand."*

*- Young person after successful completion of YJC sanctions*

## Background on Youth Justice Committees:

Section 18 of the Youth Criminal Justice Act provides an opportunity for citizens to become directly involved in the administration of youth justice by forming Youth Justice Committees.

These Committees are an alternative to the court system.

Community volunteers work with young people, their families, victims, the legal system and the community in order to find appropriate, meaningful consequences for a young person who has committed a crime.

Youth Justice Committees are a proven, effective response to youth crime as they hold young people accountable for their actions while at the same time giving them an opportunity to turn things around.

Over the past 12 years, 25 Youth Justice Committees have been established and are serving 140 Calgary communities. Nearly 8,000 Calgary youth have been diverted from the formal court system.

Statistics from the Solicitor General's Office show that 90% of young people successfully complete the requirements set out for them by a YJC, often including financial restitution from the offender to victim. Only 20% of youth have been charged again within three years.

## Social Value Created

More than 300 volunteers donate 12,000 hours annually for Youth Justice Committees.

Volunteers design individual responses for each young offender, which correlate to the type of offence committed and the social challenges that they face.

The young people referred to the program are between 12-18 years of age, they have accepted responsibility for their actions and it is often their first or second offence. Their crimes are considered to be 'minor', such as theft under \$5k, common assault, property damage, mischief etc.

To make amends for their actions, young people are often asked to participate in community service, attend a program, make a charitable donation, or provide personal service or restitution to a victim.

### Theory of Change

*If young people in conflict with the law have access to a meaningful alternative to the formal justice system and an opportunity to feel supported by their community to learn from their mistakes, they are much more likely to succeed as law-abiding citizens.*

Funding provided by:



Learning with:

**SIMPACT**  
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Convened by:





# SROI Case Study: Youth Justice Committees

## The Social Value of a community-based approach to youth crime

Research shows that the sooner youth are engaged after committing a crime, the more directly they will relate consequences to their offence. YJCs expedite the process of young people being held responsible, thereby attaching meaning to the process and to the consequences given. The Committees are designed to provide a supportive and significant experience; one which greatly reduces the likelihood of re-offence.

The work of Calgary Youth Justice Committees creates social value in two ways:

- By providing an efficient, effective response to youth crime;
- By preventing future crime. 80% of our young people are not charged again within 3 years of completion.

Prior to being caught, most youth have not fully considered how a minor, first-time offence resulting in a criminal record can affect future employment and career prospects,

education, and travel outside of the country. By successfully participating with a Youth Justice Committee, young people can avoid a formal youth record.

Avoiding a criminal record keeps doors open to opportunities such as volunteering, admission to higher education, access to employment, and out of country travel which are all relevant to leading a productive life.

Without Youth Justice Committees, the 8,000 cases that have been managed by Calgary's YJCs since 1997, would have been dealt with by formal youth justice system processes. YJCs handle approximately 70% of the Extra-judicial Sanctions caseload for the entire city of Calgary.

*"The situation which brought us to the YJC was not wonderful but the committee was great...they seemed to be the first group of adults who actually listened to \*\*\*\*\*. (The volunteers) were of extreme value, you could tell they cared about us and were intent on doing the right and best thing.*

*– Parent of a young person*

## Calculating the SROI of Calgary Youth Justice Committees

In 2007, 701 young people in conflict with the law were diverted from the formal justice system to YJCs in Calgary. Annually, the Calgary Youth Justice Society allocates \$162,000 of direct program expenses to the YJC program. The value of diverting 701 young people through YJC's rather than managing their cases through the justice system offers a social return of \$5.52, per dollar invested. Based on provincial government statistics, 90% of young people referred to the program (i.e. 631 youth in Calgary) successfully complete the requirements designed for them by the Youth Justice Committee.

If those same 631 young offenders had gone through the youth court, 28% (177 youth) within that group would likely have re-offended within a range of 2 to 4 more times. A further 16% (100 youth) would become chronic offenders, engaging in 5 or more incidents. That would represent a total of 277 re-offenders within the group of 631 who successfully complete the YJC program.

Over the years, the re-offending rate among youth successfully completing the YJC program has remained

**Table 1:**

Social Value Calculation: One Year, 701 Young Offenders				
SROI Indicators Included:		Indicator Code	Total Value YR 1	Notes
1	Police calls (avoided)	CSP	\$0	The annual SROI for the Youth Justice Committees has been calculated based ONLY upon the difference in cost between an alternative and the formal Alberta Youth Court System
2	Police investigations (avoided)	J8	\$0	
3	Police attendance at court (avoided)	J9	\$0	
4	Youth Court Process (avoided)	J1	\$893,775	
5	Probation supervisor (not required)	J2	\$0	
6	Cost of incarceration (avoided)	J7	\$0	
<b>Annual Social Value Created through YJCs:</b>			<b>\$893,775</b>	
<b>Total investment in Year 1:</b>			\$162,000	
<b>Total number of youth in co-hort:</b>			701	
<b>Total investment per person:</b>			\$231	
<b>SROI Year 1:</b>			<b>5.52</b>	

constant at 20% (i.e. 126 of 631 youth). This is a 24% lower rate of re-offending than what would normally occur among young offenders who go through the court system.

Therefore, the SROI for Calgary's Youth Justice Committees includes the social value created annually by the diversionary program (see **Table 1**) and a lower re-offending

# SROI Case Study: Youth Justice Committees

rate achieved (100 youth).

As illustrated in **Table 2** below, we assumed that all repeat offences would occur within one year after youth participate in the YJC program, and that chronic offenders would be identified by the justice system by the end of year 3. While there may be additional, on-going costs associated with this group of re-offenders, the SROI for the Youth Justice

Committees does not extend beyond year three in order to keep the calculation as conservative as possible.

When the difference in re-offenders and chronic offenders is factored into the SROI for the Youth Justice Committees, the social value generated through the approach and ongoing success rate of youth Justice committees grows from **1 : 5.52** in the first year to **1 : 10.13** on a three year basis.

**Table 2:**

Social Value Calculation: Three Year, 701 Young Offenders, 100 re-offenders, 30 chronic offenders						
SROI Indicators Included:		Indicator Code	Total Value YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	Notes
1	Police calls (avoided)	CSP	\$0	\$64,500	\$19,969	\$625 per call for 100 calls
2	Police investigations (avoided)	J8	\$0	\$197,318	\$61,090	\$1912 per investigation
3	Police attendance at court (avoided)	J9	\$0	\$32,921	\$10,192	\$319 per attendance
4	Youth Court Process (avoided)	J1	\$893,775	\$131,580	\$40,737	\$1,275 per young offender diverted to YJCs
5	Probation supervisor (not required)	J2	\$0	\$123,840	\$38,341	\$1,200 per year. \$25.86/hr for Probation Officer
6	Cost of incarceration (avoided)	J7	\$0	\$91,250	\$28,251	\$250/day x 365 = \$91,250 (1 youth only)
<b>Annual Social Value Created through YJCs:</b>			<b>\$893,775</b>	<b>\$641,409</b>	<b>\$198,580</b>	Calculated to reflect inflation @ 3.2%.
<b>Present value of social value created: (over 3 years):</b>			\$1,641,421			Interest rate 3.5%
<b>Total investment in Year 1:</b>			\$162,000			
<b>SROI Year 1:</b>			<b>5.52</b>			
<b>3-year SROI:</b>			<b>10.13</b>			

CSP = Citable source in process, currently from reliable source.

## It takes a Community

Community Volunteers are the heart of this program. When young people commit a crime, they need to be held accountable and understand the impact of their actions on themselves and others, but most importantly they need an opportunity to turn things around. Volunteers support young people to make amends and get back on track. As a result, everyone benefits!

The Calgary Youth Justice Society can't do it alone. The success of the Youth Justice Committee program in Calgary

is attributed to the involvement of many community partners, investors and government agencies offering programs and opportunities for youth, supporting program operations, and providing in-kind and financial support.

*"It had meant so much to her (young person) to realize that three people from her community, who didn't even know her, would care enough to try to make a difference in her life."*

- YJC Volunteer

For more information



family & community support services  
www.fcssaa.ab.ca

For more information



www.simpactstrategies.com

For more information



ADVANCING NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT  
www.thecentrepoint.ca

For more information



www.calgaryyouthjustice.com