

**Policy Internships and Fellowships Program
Final Report**

**Working Towards Greater Public Involvement
in Policy Development:
Some Reflections**

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Background

Home Organization: John Howard Society of Ontario

The John Howard Society (JHS) is an organization of citizens who accept responsibility for understanding and dealing with the problems of crime and the criminal justice system.

The mission of the agency is: *Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes.*

In furtherance of its mission, the JHS Ontario:

1. Provides for the effective integration into the community of those in conflict with the law, and provides, or encourages others to provide, services to those in conflict with, or affected by, the criminal justice system;
2. Promotes changes in social policy, the law and the administration of justice which will lead to more humane and effective treatment of individuals;
3. Promotes citizen awareness of the problems of crime and its causes, acceptance of responsibility to respond to these problems, and involvement in the delivery and management of justice-related programs; and
4. Promotes the fair and humane treatment of all incarcerated persons and seeks to ensure that all forms of detention and imprisonment comply with relevant legal and human rights standards.

JHS in Ontario traces its roots back to religious classes taught in Toronto's Don Jail in the late 1800s. In a more formal way, the organization was founded in 1929 by Brigadier General Draper, then the Chief of Police in Toronto. Draper recognized the futility in much of the work being done by police, trying to solve crimes and apprehend offenders, when prisoners were being released from jail without even minimal resources to make a constructive start possible.

Over the years, JHS in Ontario has expanded into 17 communities in Ontario. Each local JHS is governed by its own Board of Directors, which directs how the mission is implemented in its particular community. While all affiliates continue to this day to provide aftercare services to men coming out of prison, the nature and scope of services have expanded to reflect the changing needs of society generally and the specific needs of the community served by the affiliate. A wide range of services is now offered to adults and youth currently involved with, or at risk of involvement with, the criminal justice system.

The 17 affiliates constitute the membership of the provincial organization, JHS Ontario. The connection between the affiliates and the provincial body and their relative authorities are defined by an Agreement of Association. Generally, the affiliates are responsible primarily for direct service and the Society takes the lead in community education and reform activities beyond local issues and concerns. JHS Ontario also provides support to the affiliates in: the administration of benefits; the development of policies that apply to the affiliates (such as minimum standards of service); a peer-review system; funding for, or the delivery of, province-wide services (transportation for families of prisoners and institutional services); and professional development.

JHS Ontario is governed by a 25-member Board of Directors, which comprises one representative from each of the affiliates and eight members-at-large. There is a staff of five, including the Executive Director. The budget of JHS Ontario is \$1.1 million. Funding sources include donations, affiliate fees, a federal government sustaining grant (through the JHS Canada), and provincial government and federal government support directed specifically at the families' transportation service (which is also supported by riders' fees).

The policy interests of the provincial Society target the laws, policies and procedures of both the federal and the Ontario provincial government that impact our mission.

Host Organization: Department of the Solicitor General, Corrections Directorate

The Department of the Solicitor General is part of the Portfolio of the Solicitor General Canada.

The Solicitor General Portfolio has, as its mission, the responsibility to protect Canadians and to help maintain Canada as a peaceful and safe society.

The Portfolio consists of the Department and four agencies: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) and the National Parole Board (NPB). There are also three Ministry review bodies, the RCMP External Review Committee (ERC), the Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP (CPC), and the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI), which ensure accountability and full respect for the rule of law. The entire portfolio has a budget in excess of \$3.2 billion and over 38,000 employees.

The Department's role within the Portfolio is to support the Solicitor General in giving effective direction to the agencies. In practical terms, this means supporting him in directing the work of the entire portfolio, encompassing policing and law enforcement, national security, corrections and conditional release. The Department has approximately 350 employees.

Within the Department, the Corrections Directorate provides advice and support to the Solicitor General in his direction of the Correctional Service of Canada and in his accountability to Parliament for the National Parole Board. In consultation with other levels of government, departments and non-government organizations (NGOs), the Directorate develops legislative and policy initiatives that are inter-jurisdictional in scope. Further, the Directorate works with CSC, NPB, the Department of Justice and with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on innovations and adaptations of the correctional system with respect to Aboriginal peoples.

The Corrections Directorate consists of the Corrections Policy Division and two specialized units - the Aboriginal Correctional Policy Unit, which tests and evaluates innovative, community-based, restorative approaches to healing for Aboriginal offenders and the Research Division, which conducts research and development aimed at providing sound, empirical information to support policy development in priority corrections areas for the Department and the Portfolio.

Introduction

I am currently the Director of Policy Development for the JHS of Ontario and have been in this position since 1992. My educational background includes a Master of Social Work (1973) and a Master of Public Administration (1989). My entire career has been in social services and, since 1976, almost exclusively with JHS. I have worked in a variety of capacities with JHS over the years, including direct service, management and administration at the affiliate level and policy development at the provincial level with JHS Ontario.

I have had a firm commitment to the correctional client and to creating a service and policy framework within which those in conflict with the law can become productive, contributing members of society. Working within the voluntary sector was a definite choice from the beginning of my career and remains so to this day - I have never worked directly for government. Primarily, I have always felt most "at home" working: at the community level, in an organization that is governed by members of the community; with others in the community who share my values and my vision; and, to the extent possible, with clients in a voluntary capacity (as opposed to those who are mandated for service).

I value the voluntary sector. I have seen first-hand, not only through my work with JHS but also through the myriad volunteer activities in which I have participated outside of my work, how the sector enriches communities. I have seen the difference that it can make in the lives of people who are struggling with issues that have marginalized them. Furthermore, I believe strongly in the importance of giving voice to the concerns and needs of the marginalized and the unpopular.

To work in the voluntary sector does, however, mean working with government. My perception of that relationship and of experiences working with government, both at the federal and provincial levels, has been both positive and negative. There were times and circumstances favourable to working together, sharing resources and expertise to meet common goals, particularly in the area of service delivery. Agencies like the JHS, however, were often favourite targets for cutbacks in support for these services at times of restraint (e.g., Program Review at the federal government level in the 1990s) or when there was a change in the party in power (i.e., the election of the Conservative government in Ontario in 1995). Finding appropriate and effective ways to input into the policy process was often frustrating as well. A group with a special interest became a "special interest group", a derogatory term used to disparage the positions that we put forward.

At the same time, some public servants welcomed and encouraged our participation as we could put forward a position that they shared and felt should be part of the policy dialogue.

With no principles to guide the relationship, one worked in the voluntary sector most often feeling undervalued, subject to what seemed to be the ever-changing whims of government, and frustrated and angry with the rhetoric of "partnership".

So understandably, I knew of, and watched with great interest, the work undertaken by the coalition of national voluntary organizations that formed the Voluntary Sector Roundtable, specifically the *Report on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary*

Sector. Interested observers, like myself, watched to see where the report would lead and were cautiously optimistic when the federal government joined the talks. It appeared from what I had heard from people who were involved, that the federal government was indeed serious and had demonstrated commitment through the involvement not only of very senior public servants but also of a significant number of members of Cabinet. I was heartened by the tone and the language of the discussions, with reference to the importance of the voluntary sector in maintaining democracy and a civil society.

I viewed the signing of the Accord as a major development and looked forward to commitments with respect to the codes of good practice on funding and to policy dialogue and initiatives geared to building a new relationship, building capacity and improving the regulatory framework.

Shortly after the announcement of the Policy Internships and Fellowships (PIAF) Program, I received the information and an application for the program from Graham Stewart, the Executive Director of JHS Canada. Graham Stewart, who had been actively involved in the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) as a member of the Accord Table and with whom I have worked closely over the past 25 years, identified me as a person within JHS who was capable and currently able and qualified to be a serious candidate for the program. He knew that, given the right match with a government department, I was open to applying, albeit with some trepidation about possible implications both personally and for the work of the Society.

Graham Stewart was also instrumental in laying the groundwork for the match. He was aware that Lynn Cuddington, the Director of the Corrections Policy Division, Solicitor General Canada was interested in the program, in terms of offering an opportunity in a host capacity. While I had not worked with Lynn directly, I knew of her and others in the Directorate because of their solid reputation in the policy field, their long history of support of the voluntary sector and their promotion of the values and principles that underlie effective corrections.

Lynn Cuddington and I worked jointly, and very quickly and easily, to develop the proposal, which I took as an indicator of how we would work together for the duration of the project. Her commitment to the program was also demonstrated by the fact that she advocated, and was able to provide additional funding from the Department of the Solicitor General, for an allowance that would permit me to work in Ottawa during the week.

My home organization was very supportive and, seeing the benefits that could accrue to the Society from my participation, accommodated my request for a leave of absence and developed plans to reorganize accordingly.

My placement as an intern with the Corrections Policy Division of the Department of the Solicitor General Canada began on September 16, 2002. The Division consists of a Director, six senior policy analysts, one policy analyst, administrative support staff and a student. Also sharing the same general area is the Director General of the Corrections Directorate and the other two Divisions, Research and Aboriginal Corrections. Right from the beginning, I was fully integrated into the work of the division and given the title and responsibilities of a Senior Policy Analyst, with the appropriate security clearance.

As outlined in the original proposal, the primary "file" assigned was the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)* and the reforms to the Act currently in process. To add some scope to my experience, I was also assigned two other files: the Corrections Roundtable (the organization of bi-annual meetings with the National Voluntary Organizations [NVOs] that receive a sustaining grant from the Department), and Crime Prevention (to monitor activities in crime prevention and to be the Corrections representative on the Department's Working Group). The placement was for nine months, to end in mid-June 2003, after which I was to return to resume my position and responsibilities as the Director of Policy Development with JHS Ontario.

The Context

Crime is a "hot topic". Although its prominence in the minds of Canadians fluctuates somewhat, crime always seems to be somewhere on the list of the top ten concerns of Canadians, according to surveys and polls. Despite more than a decade of falling crime rates, the fear of crime continues unabated. The high level of fear may be due to the fact that crime is largely random and, given that victimization studies indicate that approximately one-quarter of Canadians have been a victim of crime (primarily less serious and non-violent), a high percentage of Canadians have had direct or indirect experience with its consequences.

Crime is ripe for misinformation. Media reports are full of stories about crime, primarily those of a sensational nature. If one's information about crime is limited to media reports, as is the case for most Canadians, one would be led to believe that crime is ever increasing, primarily violent, and largely committed by those who have just been released from prison. Crime is also a favourite subject in popular entertainment vehicles, with offenders demonized in movies and books and portrayed as highly intelligent, crafty "predators".

Crime is also ripe for the "quick, easy solution". Imprisonment appeals to people intuitively. Most believe in its deterrent value and therefore hold the view that more imprisonment and longer and tougher sentences must be even better. This belief persists despite solid research evidence to the contrary. The political temptation to promote a "quick-fix" is great. Criminal justice issues have become highly politicized, with "common sense" rather than facts and research evidence driving the agenda.

Working in the correctional field, to promote "good corrections" in policy and in operations, is a challenge.

Under the Canadian Constitution, responsibility for corrections is divided between the federal and provincial governments. The provincial government is responsible for probation and for offenders sentenced to terms of imprisonment of less than two years. The federal government is responsible for the management of offenders sentenced to a term of imprisonment of two years or more.

The legislation that governs the detention of federally sentenced offenders and the operation of the Correctional Service of Canada, conditional release and the operation of the National Parole Board is the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*. This Act is relatively recent (1992) and can be described as generally progressive, in that it reflects important legal and human rights principles. The policy interest of the Society is to ensure that the integrity of the Act is maintained, not eroded, through amendment and

that proposed amendments reflect principles of good corrections. Another piece of legislation of import to corrections is the *Criminal Code*, as it defines what is a crime and the punishment for the offence. The definition of crime, sentencing and corrections are obviously intertwined and the policy interest of the Society is in ensuring that the criminal law is used with restraint and that the punishments are not unduly harsh.

My work, as Director of Policy Development with the JHS Ontario, was to identify issues of concern to the Society, assess government response and find ways to ensure that our position on issues was heard and considered. While the work must include community education (which includes education of, and relations with, the media) and working with other agencies and organizations in the corrections field to build consensus within the sector, policy dialogue with government is an essential component. Having some rules to guide the process of policy dialogue, having a commitment to following the rules and knowing the government environment - the policy process within government, the actors and where the influence lies - are an important part of being able to participate effectively in the dialogue. While work was being done through the VSI to identify elements of good practice in policy dialogue and to get a commitment to adhere to good practice principles, more understanding of the policy process, the environment and the actors was needed for the Society to become a more equal player. It was felt, therefore, that the policy capacity of the Society could be significantly advanced by the kind of learning experience offered through PIAF.

Prior to the internship, my work focused primarily on the actions, policies and procedures in corrections proposed or undertaken by the Ontario government. It was a time of rapid and profound change. Almost every action - the building of superjails, privatization of prisons, the closure of halfway house and the introduction of electronic monitoring, measures associated with the implementation of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* - seemed to be contrary to the JHS vision for an effective, just and humane correctional system for Ontario and to the research evidence on effective corrections. Despite the scope of change to corrections in Ontario, there was little opportunity for meaningful policy dialogue. While we did take part in committee hearings, wrote briefs and submissions on a variety of proposed initiatives, attended consultation meetings whenever we were invited (or asked to be invited), any input we could offer seemed to take place after the decisions were made and seemed to be more for effect than substance. It is also important to note that the Ontario government, in 1995, withdrew its grant to JHS Ontario (funding had been given for many years to support its work). Policy capacity with respect to provincial corrections was limited not only by the lack of venue for dialogue but also by available resources.

The policy work of the JHS Ontario also involved matters relating to federal corrections. Generally, this took the form of supporting the work of JHS Canada relating to the actions of the federal government in corrections and I took the lead for the JHS Ontario in these efforts. I worked on matters such as the amendments to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, the creation of new youth justice legislation and a sex offender registry, through contributions to the preparation and writing of submissions and briefs to government, research support and the development of community education materials.

At the federal level, there appeared to be more hope and opportunity for the voluntary sector to contribute to policy development in corrections. Not only had the federal government made some commitments to the voluntary sector overall through the VSI, but also the Department of the Solicitor General had for many years been providing

some degree of financial support to those national voluntary agencies considered as its partners and it seemed to be committed to having some avenues for ongoing policy discussions.

The Department of the Solicitor General has a Sustaining Funding Program that provides grants to 14 NVOs, one of which is JHS Canada. The purpose of the grant is to support the overall capacity of these voluntary organizations, rather than contracting for direct service to clients (in fact, the terms of the grant prohibit use of the funds to provide direct service). The grant to JHS Canada supports its work at the national level as well as the work of John Howard Societies at the provincial level across Canada. The portion of the grant that JHS Ontario receives has always been directed at our community education and reform activities, thereby supporting our capacity to contribute to public policy.

The Department also hosts a Corrections Roundtable that brings together the 14 NVOs twice a year. The NVOs include: National Associations Active in Criminal Justice; Elizabeth Fry Society of Canada; John Howard Society; St. Leonard's Society of Canada; Salvation Army; Seven Steps Society of Canada; Canadian Criminal Justice Association; Church Council on Justice and Corrections; Block Parents Program of Canada; Conflict Resolution Network of Canada; Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police; and the Canadian Training Institute. The Roundtable is designed as an avenue for ongoing policy discussions. It permits: the Department to inform the NVOs of current and upcoming policy issues and to share, within government confidence requirements, the status of current initiatives; the NVOs to provide input on issues and give feedback on current initiatives; and both to consider ways in which they might collaborate in areas of mutual interest.

The Corrections Roundtable can also have an indirect benefit in terms of strengthening the relationship among the NVOs. It encourages the NVOs to get to know each other better, to understand each other's concerns, interests and positions and to work together on areas of mutual agreement. Distance, time and financial constraints are factors that limit opportunities to meet.

The Corrections Directorate appeared to welcome and encourage input from the NVOs outside of the formal meetings as well. While the voluntary sector often did not agree with the results of the policy process, it had a sense that its positions were heard and considered by the Directorate.

As well, the Department has sponsored a significant number of projects under the VSI to enhance public policy, including the John Howard Society of Canada Policy Analysis Enhancement Project. Through this program, JHS staff across Canada, as well as staff in other organizations in the voluntary sector that share the interests of JHS, have the opportunity to enhance their capacity to participate in criminal justice policy-making through activities targeted at knowledge development, skills training and consensus building.

The Department and specifically the Corrections Directorate seemed to present a favourable environment in which I could learn about the policy process in government.

Summary of Internship

Project Design

The project was designed to enhance my understanding and participation in the public policy development and identify ways to strengthen knowledge transfer specific to policy development.

Activities during the internship would allow participation in the policy process in terms of creating a Bill, seeking funding through the Treasury Board process, and managing the legislative process through the House of Commons and the Senate. The vehicle chosen was reforms to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*. Responsibilities would include the preparation of briefing notes, briefing books, speeches and other materials in support of the Departmental staff, the Minister and other politicians. By undertaking these activities, I would be able to experience first-hand how government policy is developed and carried through to its implementation stage and to know better how, when and through whom to intervene.

The internship would also permit me greater access to the expertise within the Department and to its resources such as its research department and library resources. Being exposed to new ideas and different perspectives, increasing my knowledge of what was available and how to access materials and gathering information and documentation relevant to correctional issues and the government policy process would be invaluable to my work with the JHS.

The benefits of the internship were not to be only one-sided. I am a senior staff member of JHS, with a long history of involvement in direct service with the correctional client and with the agencies and organizations that provide such services. It was acknowledged that I would bring to my work with the Department a current understanding not only of the circumstances of, and matters of interest to, the correctional client, both in prison and in the community, but also of the (perspective of) agencies and organizations that provide services to these clients. It was anticipated that the internship would enhance the Department's understanding of the impact of public policy on clients, agencies and organizations and communities.

Activities

Right from the beginning, the intent of the host organization with respect to my duties and responsibilities was clear – I was to be integrated to the extent possible. I was given the same orientation as any other new employee. I was given the job title of Senior Policy Analyst, with the same level of security clearance as other analysts within the Division, and assigned to "files" (although with a reduced file load, so as to accommodate tasks related to PIAF and the need to maintain contact with my home organization).

My major file was the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, specifically work related to proposals for enhancements. By the time that I arrived, much of the preliminary work had been done. The policy interests of the concerned agencies (CSC and NPB) and review bodies (OCI) had been considered, consultations with other federal government departments and stakeholders completed and the Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) prepared (and awaiting submission to Cabinet for approval).

My initial task was to analyze the MC and to understand the process for taking the MC forward. I spent a lot of time reading, most notably the government publication, *Guide to Making Federal Acts and Regulations*, and asking other staff about next steps in the process.

Drafting of the proposed bill was in process, led by a Senior Policy Analyst in the Corrections Division who has the legal training and experience necessary for such a task. Lawyers from the Department of Justice are “contracted” to draft the bill, with direction from the Department and representatives from CSC and NPB. As my role was to prepare the Briefing Book for the bill, which includes the clause-by-clause analysis, it was suggested that I begin immediately to participate in the drafting sessions. I also participated in meetings with the CSC, NPB and the OCI held to resolve policy issues that had surfaced previously or arose during the drafting sessions.

During the drafting process, I began working on the clause-by-clause analysis, focusing on those sections that had been completed in the sense that there were no outstanding legal or policy issues. This meant first reviewing past examples of Briefing Books and deciding on an appropriate format. Doing the clause-by-clause analysis required that I understand not only what was being proposed but also the effect of the changes proposed in terms of the current legislation. Fortunately, I was familiar with the CCRA and the operations of corrections and conditional release systems. This familiarity enabled me to “unpack” the proposed legislation and to describe what current legislation requires and specify the effect of the changes in relatively plain language.

Activities on the CCRA file also included preparing an update on the status of government actions on the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in its May 2000 report on the review of the CCRA. While I was familiar with both the Standing Committee's report and the Government Response from my work with JHS related to the review of the CCRA, I needed to re-read the documents from a different perspective and understand them for a different purpose this time. I also analyzed the original status report prepared by the Department in May 2002 with a view to identifying what needed to be updated. I met with the Agencies to come to a consensus on what needed to be done, contacted others within the Department for additional information required, wrote and distributed the drafts and negotiated revisions to produce a final version that was satisfactory to everyone. It then had to go through the various stages of approval, requiring me to write a memo to the Deputy Solicitor General (DSG) outlining the background and purpose of the report.

I was asked to write a piece on the 10th Anniversary of the CCRA. My article was published in *The Bulletin* of the Canadian Criminal Justice Association in December 2002.

I was also assigned to two other files: the Corrections Roundtable (previously described) and Crime Prevention.

I was responsible for organizing the two meetings of the Corrections Roundtable that were held during the term of my internship (November 2002 and May 2003). Activities included making the initial connection with the NVOs, determining the agendas in consultation with other departmental staff and the NVOs, arranging for speakers and general administrative tasks. While I knew most of the organizations and their

representatives, having worked with them over my years with JHS, I was less familiar with a few of the 14 NVOs. The experience gave me more exposure to these organizations and encouraged me to explore our mutual interests.

The Roundtable also gave me the opportunity to prepare the briefing notes and talking points for the new Assistant Deputy Solicitor General (ADSG) who had been invited to make some welcoming remarks. I took this as an opportunity to address the value of the voluntary sector to the work of the Department and to refer to the work of the VSI, the Accord and the Portfolio's Policy on Relations with the Voluntary Sector. The ADSG, however, did not seem to need any talking points – she spoke with a great deal of understanding and knowledge of the value of the voluntary sector, generally, to Canadian society and, more specifically, to the work of government. She was also very familiar with the work of the VSI, the Accord and even the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue* and on *Code of Good Practice on Funding*, which had just been released. She also spoke of her personal commitment to maintaining and, when possible, expanding the involvement of the voluntary sector in the work of the Department. All in attendance, both NVOs and department staff, felt very encouraged.

Also present at the November 2002 meeting was the recently appointed Solicitor General, who asked to attend to make some remarks at the end of the meeting. This gave me the opportunity to write for the Minister and again the opportunity to highlight the messages about the value of the voluntary sector. The Minister's remarks, while brief due to other commitments, were encouraging.

Activities related to the Crime Prevention file included attending meetings of the Portfolio Crime Prevention Working Group as the Corrections Policy Division representative and monitoring and responding to (crime prevention) activities of interest to the Division. This exposed me to those groups within the Department working on the development and implementation of policy in the areas of policing and law enforcement, Aboriginal policing, and Aboriginal corrections, as well as to the National Crime Prevention Council. I was also tasked with developing a vision paper outlining the role of corrections in crime prevention. At the time of writing this final report (on my PIAF experience), I had not progressed beyond a basic literature search; however, I hope to produce a draft document before the end of the internship.

My exposure to the work of the Corrections Policy Division was not limited to the files assigned to me. Through the formal structure of staff meetings and informal discussions with other analysts, information about other work in progress was shared and discussed.

While in Ottawa, I took advantage of ease of access to attend Supreme Court hearings and hearings of the Standing Committee of Justice and Rights relevant to my work responsibilities. Often I accompanied the analyst from the Corrections Policy Division who was tasked with attending these hearing in order to monitor and report back on matters of interest to the Directorate. I also took advantage of the learning opportunities provided by the Department, such as the Colloquium Series – presentations by well-known and respected national and international academics and researchers in the criminal justice field – and a conference sponsored by the Department focusing on conditional release and reintegration. And, last but not least, the Solicitor General Canada library, with a most complete collection of resources related to the criminal justice field, complemented by an extremely knowledgeable staff, is housed on the same floor as the Corrections Directorate.

Many more learning opportunities were available to me than I could access, e.g., in-house training through the Human Resources Division of the Department and the Armchair Discussions sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

There were also a number of activities undertaken outside of the job-related responsibilities, specifically:

- attendance at conferences and forums providing me the opportunity to learn more about the VSI and about research resources focused on voluntary sector/non-profit organization issues;
- regular meetings with my mentor and work with the research assistant assigned to me;
- structured interviews with public servants, both within the Department and with other Departments, focusing on: background and history with the public service; views on the value of the voluntary sector to their work and their experience with the voluntary sector; lessons learned from that experience; and views on what needs to be done to improve the relationship; and
- maintaining contact with my home organization by attending Board meetings, affiliate Executive Directors meetings, a conference organized by JHS Canada, and maintaining a degree of connection with my work there by attending meetings of the JHS affiliate within Collins Bay Penitentiary and continuing to work with an individual prisoner.

Accomplishments

Enhanced understanding of the policy process in government: There is no better teacher than direct experience. Actually participating in government policy work has deepened my level of understanding and knowledge: I now not only have a sense of the theoretical what, how, when, why and by whom, but also have acquired the knowledge and understanding of the dynamics, having experienced the actual process of policy-making.

Fully integrated into the work of the Corrections Policy Division: I was able to do - and was seen as capable of doing - the job of a senior policy analyst and to carry out the responsibilities assigned to me. I did what I was asked to do and did it on time (the timeliness of work is seen to be equal in importance to quality). There was a lot to learn in a short period of time.

Building relationships and developing contacts: My co-workers in the Corrections Directorate and I have developed a mutual respect and trust. Through informal and formal discussions, I have greater understanding not only of the values and attitudes of individuals but also of the values and the approach to corrections promoted within the Directorate. I also believe that I have gained the respect of my co-workers for the knowledge and experience that I brought with me from the voluntary sector. On a more general level, my contacts have certainly widened. I now know, and am known by, more staff at various levels within the Portfolio of the Solicitor General.

Contributing to breaking down myths and stereotypes: Those working in government and in the voluntary sector have misperceptions of “the other side”. I know that my experience has challenged me to remember to meet people with an open mind and I trust that I have helped to break down some of the myths and the stereotypes of the voluntary sector, held by some working in government.

Bringing a different perspective and a different set of facts: I brought with me and have maintained a direct connection with agencies and organizations providing direct service and with people in prison and on conditional release. Staff seemed to value hearing my stories. Linking that direct experience to policy in formation and providing the “human face” deepen one’s understanding of, and commitment to, good (and grounded) correctional policy.

Taking advantage of a variety of learning opportunities: I expanded on the regular tools of learning (on-the-job experience, reading, workshops and conferences) by undertaking structured interviews with public servants from whom I felt I had something to learn about working in government and relations with the voluntary sector.

Promoting the work of the Voluntary Sector Initiative: I made a special effort to bring notions of or reference to the VSI, the Accord and the Codes into my work and into discussions with others wherever possible (e.g., I have encouraged the Human Resources Division to include a reference to the Accord, the Codes and the Portfolio’s Policy on Relations with the Voluntary Sector, in future orientation sessions for new staff of the Department).

Challenges

Acclimatizing to change: I had to adapt to a new work environment and culture, different processes and procedures and different interests.

Accepting what I could not change: There were policy initiatives that did not appear to be principle-driven or reflective of effective corrections. Like many public servants, I had to come to terms with moving ahead with a policy, often one that was politically driven, while attempting to find ways to implement it in a manner that would minimize the damage. It was an exercise in more fully understanding the limitations and constraints on the work of public servants.

Staying connected with the voluntary sector: This took time and effort and the demands of my work with the Department often made it difficult to find the time and make the effort.

Identifying ways to transfer the knowledge gained from this experience to my home organization: I have had little time or real opportunity to work on this aspect of my project. It seems, however, to be an objective that is best worked on after my return to JHS Ontario. I plan to work with my Executive Director, upon my return, to review the activities of the JHS Ontario in light of what I have learned about the policy process and to identify ways to contribute more effectively to the process. I also plan to identify venues - within JHS, at the local, provincial and national level, and in conjunction with other voluntary sector agencies - for presentations and further discussions on the policy-making process and how to contribute more effectively. As well, I need to develop a structure to maintain important contacts that I have made in the Department.

Learning Tools

The summer institute, which preceded the internship, was a major learning tool as was the package of readings provided, which proved to be a useful resource throughout the assignment.

The summer institute was an intensive two-week program consisting of seven modules:

Module One:	The Ways of the Voluntary Sector and Government
Module Two:	The Policy Making Process
Module Three:	Getting and Spending Money
Module Four:	Advocacy and Ethics
Module Five:	Stakeholders
Module Six:	Performance Management and Accountability
Module Seven:	Issues in the Voluntary Sector and Government

There were presentations by instructors who came from a variety of backgrounds – academics and former senior federal and provincial civil servants. Case studies, group work and role-playing were also used extensively.

As well, arrangements were made for the interns and fellows to visit the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver and tour the Carnegie Centre, a community centre offering programs and services to those living in this distressed neighbourhood. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the impact of past policy decisions on the life of a community and to consider the policy choices needed to repair the damage.

The summer institute also provided an opportunity to learn from the other interns and fellows. We represented a variety of interests – corrections, international development, child development, the environment, volunteerism, and community development – and came from both government and the voluntary sector. The two-week session allowed us to get to know each other, begin to get beyond our own specific interests and the “great divide” that has often characterized voluntary sector/government relations and to speak about our similarities and differences.

During the initial period of my internship, I sought out some tools to assist in my orientation to the Department and, more generally, to the machinery of government. I used the Internet extensively. Government websites, specifically the Department’s intranet site and the websites of the Privy Council Office and Treasury Board, were the most helpful source of information in this regard. Also, the Department has recently resurrected its orientation session for new staff and I attended the one in March.

My initial focus, in order to prepare for my work on the *CCRA* file, was to understand the law-making process. *The Guide to Making Federal Acts and Regulations*, which I was given immediately upon my arrival, seemed to be the most useful source of information in this respect and I continued to refer to it throughout my placement. I would encourage those in the voluntary sector who are involved in policy development to review, and become familiar with, the information in this document (now available on-line on the Department of Justice website). Reading was, however, only part of the process of learning. The benefits of participating in the policy process (even part of it, as I did) and

of being able to constantly ask questions and get clarification (as I did) cannot be overestimated.

The Department provides, through its Human Resources Division, training sessions on a variety of topics. Of particular interest was a half-day session on Policy, divided into two major sections – Policy and Government (Machinery of Government, Government Decision-Making, Understanding the Centre and Moving Your Issue through the System) and Policy Development: Ten Steps. The handouts provide a good basic overview. I also reviewed other useful documents provided by Human Resources, such as the *Senior Analyst Competency Profile* and the *Resource Guide for Analyst and Senior Analyst Competencies*. While the Profile outlines the knowledge and skills required, the Resource Guide offers a list of resources aimed at developing or sharpening these competencies, with suggested on-the-job activities, self-study materials (audio, video, print) and seminars/workshops/courses.

Fortunately, the subject areas pertaining to the file work I was assigned were not unfamiliar to me. My job as Director of Policy Development with JHS Ontario required that I keep up-to-date on the laws, current issues, research and literature pertaining to corrections. I continued to do so during my internship, a task that was made easier because of the additional resources available within the Department. It can only be described as a luxury to be provided with a clipping service, briefing notes on hot topics, regular distribution of information of note/interest, articles and journals, a specialized library just down the hall, regular notice of new acquisitions including an overview of the contents of journals received and a library staff knowledgeable in the subject area and extremely interested in assisting clients in their search for information, both from the collection and on the internet.

Further, I attended all of the presentations offered through the Colloquium Series. Topics included: community corrections; restorative justice; Aboriginal legal issues; “what works” in corrections research; and plea bargaining and systemic racism in the criminal justice system. The presenters were well-known experts, both from Canada and other countries, and the structure allowed for questions and discussion following the presentations. Background reading was prepared and available prior to each session. I also attended a two-day conference, “What Works in Conditional Release and Community Reintegration”, organized and sponsored by the Department. Here again, I was exposed to experts, academics and researchers in the field of corrections from Canada, the U.K., the U.S., France and Germany and increased my knowledge of current thinking, practice and research on effective ways to support the successful reintegration of offenders. I particularly found value in the presentation by Dan Gardner, a Canadian journalist with a special interest in criminal justice issues, who spoke on effective means of communicating “what works” to the public.

My learning was also related to voluntary sector/non-profit organization issues. I was able to attend the Voluntary Sector Assembly, held in Ottawa in October 2002, to look back on the accomplishments of the VSI to date and find out more about a new structure for moving the VSI into its next stage. With other voluntary sector representatives from across Canada, I participated in discussions and debates on the process for involving organizations, identifying pressing national issues and getting them to the top of the political agenda and looking at what needs to be done to continue to build and engage the voluntary sector.

PIAF also provided me with the opportunity to attend two conferences relating to research on the voluntary sector: the Conference of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) and the “Moving Forward” National Symposium. As a result, I now have access to more papers and studies by researchers and practitioners on issues such as advocacy, board governance, fundraising and the role of NGOs in policy – all of which are important to the work of my home organization.

I did have a specific interest in learning more about consultation and collaboration on policy matters and what needs to be done to improve the processes, both by government and by the voluntary sector. I read extensively – academic papers, manuals produced by government departments, etc. I watched – observing consultative exercises in action. And I asked questions– both in my structured interviews with public servants and in informal discussions with colleagues, both in government and in the voluntary sector.

Working Towards Greater Public Involvement in Policy Development: Some Reflections

In a manual currently being prepared for the Capacity Joint Table of the VSI, the levels of public involvement in policy development are identified along a continuum:

- Level One: Public education
- Level Two: Consulting to obtain feedback
- Level Three: Involving the public in decision-making
- Level Four: Collaborating
- Level Five: Empowering

My own experience, the experience of others and the literature all inform me that the voluntary sector has most often felt that its role has typically been relegated to the lowest two levels of involvement in policy development. The voluntary sector representatives were at the table either to receive information about an initiative or to give feedback on an initiative to which the government was already committed. Frequently, there was a lack of clarity about the government’s purpose for involving the voluntary sector, with the voluntary sector having expectations of participating in the decision-making process when the decision had already been made. Being consigned to such limited roles and the lack of clarity left the voluntary sector representatives angry, frustrated and cynical about the entire process of public involvement in policy development.

Having said this, there were pockets of good practice, even prior to the VSI and the signing of the Accord. Some public servants always had a good understanding of the value of the voluntary sector and a commitment to involving their voluntary sector partners to the greatest extent possible in the policy process, within the constraints of maintaining Cabinet confidence. Many of us in the voluntary sector were fortunate to have had connections with such champions.

The voluntary sector was not entirely blameless for the troubled relations between the voluntary sector and government with respect to policy development. What I consistently heard in my interviews with public servants were the following criticisms of the voluntary sector, for:

- not taking the time to understand the machinery of government and the process of policy-making within government (some put it in the context of lack of resources);
- not understanding the limits imposed on the work of public servants (“shooting the messenger”)
- not speaking loudly enough about policy initiatives that we opposed;
- rarely speaking out when supportive of policy initiatives;
- not speaking in one voice; and
- too often despairing and terminating action or no longer sitting at the table.

But now, we have the promise of the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue* (the Code). Both the government and the voluntary sector have made commitments with respect to good practices at the various stages in the policy process. The overall reaction of those I have talked to in both sectors about the Code has been extremely positive. If there is substantive adherence to the Code, relations between the sectors will improve considerably and this will ultimately be reflected in better policies for Canadians.

The Code is based on moving towards level three of the continuum described previously – involving the public in decision-making – as the standard of practice for the federal government. Government will still make the final decision. Government, however, has committed to making the decision only after the views of the voluntary sector have been sought out and heard, through ongoing or issue-specific dialogue, and after the implications, for the voluntary sector, of new initiatives have been recognized and considered. Further, the government has made commitments with respect to addressing capacity issues for the voluntary sector (access to information, planning and coordinating dialogue) and providing feedback and opportunities for dialogue on the relationship between the sector’s input and the policy option chosen. Needless to say, it would represent a major step forward and would lay the groundwork for moving to the next (fourth) level of involving the voluntary sector in decision-making (i.e., collaboration).

The voluntary sector has also made commitments. These commitments include: acquiring knowledge and skills in order to participate more effectively in the policy-making process, including gaining an understanding of the government policy process; seeking out the diversity of views within its organizations; representing the views of constituents and articulating important positions; ensuring and documenting mechanisms to dialogue and canvass views on positions within organizations; maintaining ongoing dialogue with policy-makers; and pursuing opportunities to identify and raise emerging issues. Again, these would be major steps forward. Working toward these commitments would solidify the voluntary sector’s legitimacy and credibility in the policy-making process.

Making further progress with respect to the Code will no doubt be challenging. The initial challenge is to make the Code known and understood in terms of implications for the work of both sectors. My internship experience within government suggests that familiarity with the Code is currently limited - to those individual public servants who were involved in the VSI or who have maintained an ongoing interest in, and connection with, the voluntary sector and to the senior levels (Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy

Minister) of the public service. It is significant to note that the performance reviews of public servants at this level contain a section relating to steps that they are taking within their Departments towards meeting the government's VSI commitments.

All who are committed to moving the Code forward can begin by helping to make it known and understood within both sectors. Making reference to it in discussions whenever relevant and ensuring that copies of the Code are distributed can be a first step. Adding it to the agenda of a staff meeting or a Board meeting will further advance the objective. It may also be possible to include it in staff training initiatives, such as orientation sessions for new staff or ongoing learning sessions.

Beyond these preliminary steps is the tough, long-haul job of operationalizing the Code within our own work. It means analyzing policies and practices and reworking and revising them to be more consistent with the Code. It means the voluntary sector holding the government accountable for its practices and, likewise, government holding the voluntary sector accountable for its practices. Finally, it means both sectors must be open to challenge.

On a personal note, I plan to contribute to moving the Code forward by taking to my home organization some of the lessons learned during this internship. These lessons and follow-up actions include:

- *The value of the work of the VSI and the importance of actively promoting an awareness and an understanding of the Accord, the Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue and the Code of Good Practice on Funding.*
I hope to "spread the word" not only within my home organization but also to other voluntary sector organizations with which we share a connection. I am also interested in testing out the notions of the Code with the provincial government.
- *The importance of ensuring that the organization's policies and practices are consistent with the Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue.*
This suggests an organizational review, an initiative which my home organization would support.
- *The value of enhanced understanding of how government works and of the formal and informal policy development process.*
I would look for opportunities to share my knowledge within my home organization (e.g., workshops, presentations). Staying in touch with government contacts to keep up-to-date on process changes is important.
- *The importance of maintaining contacts with policy-makers.*
My experience has reinforced my long-standing views on the importance of ongoing dialogue. Cross-sectoral communication challenges our myths about each other and promotes respect and trust, even though we may disagree on a course of action.

I need to recognize that maintaining contacts, not only with those I have encountered through the internship but also with other policy-makers, is an important part of my job. I would like to develop mechanisms to enhance my abilities to maintain these contacts.

- *The value of the contributions of the voluntary sector to the policy-making process.* I have grown more confident about reflecting direct service experience when presenting positions, given the value the government places on concrete examples/ individual stories.

My home organization can be encouraged to be more vocal when it opposes a government direction.

My home organization can be encouraged to give positive feedback concerning government actions it supports (e.g., by writing letters to the Minister and contacting public servants).

The lessons that I have learned have also led me to suggest actions the government can take to help move the Code forward. I would recommend greater attention to establishing formal venues (such as the Corrections Roundtable) for ongoing policy dialogue with voluntary sector partners and to providing the resources to enable their participation. We need more general policy discussion and debate, not just dialogue that is issue-specific or that occurs only when consultation is required in order to proceed with a given policy process. I would also suggest the encouragement of informal policy dialogue with voluntary sector partners, down to the level of the policy analyst, so that dialogue can occur much earlier in the policy development process.

The government could also contribute by paying more attention to sharing more of its information resources with the voluntary sector. It may be as simple as including voluntary sector partners on e-mail distribution lists for clippings, articles and research, and extending invitations to staff training workshops or events such as the Colloquium series. I know that I would like to continue to receive this information when I return to my home organization and will be looking for ways to be kept “in the loop”. With respect to Solicitor General Canada specifically, more could be done to promote access to, and use of, its library by its voluntary sector partners.

Any review that the government undertakes with respect to its commitments around the Code should include a more critical look at the MC process. Recognizing that there are circumstances where a high level of secrecy is legitimate, the requirement for such a high level in all cases seems excessive and unnecessary. Given the barriers to policy dialogue inherent in the MC process, more research in this area is clearly needed.

Research on government policy-making that exemplifies the practices in the Code should be undertaken. I believe, for example, that there are lessons to be learned through a case study of the Youth Justice Renewal Initiative, including the practices of the responsible policy-makers in the Department of Justice (e.g., the consultation process undertaken in the development of the Initiative).

Conclusions

To conclude such a report is difficult. I cannot easily or briefly summarize my experiences or what I have learned throughout the internship. I have acquired new knowledge and skills and have developed contacts, which will undoubtedly increase my capacity to do my job as Director of Policy Development with the John Howard Society of Ontario. I also plan to work on ways to transfer the knowledge about the policy

process within my organization. Perhaps the best way to conclude is just to say that I did a lot and learned a great deal. All in all, in my case, the Policy Internships and Fellowships Program seems to have accomplished what it was designed to do.

I want to end by thanking the Department of the Solicitor General, and specifically Lynn Cuddington, and the John Howard Society of Ontario for making the internship experience possible.