

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

CROWN POLICY MANUAL

March 21, 2005

COMMUNITY JUSTICE

PRINCIPLES

For the purpose of this document, community justice provides for the resolution of some types of criminal matters using resources found outside the formal justice system. Community justice processes can supplement or entirely replace the procedures of the formal criminal justice system in some cases including, but not limited to, those involving mentally disordered and/or developmentally disabled offenders.

In many locations across Ontario, community justice programs have been established. These programs offer alternative means of resolving criminal matters that do not require formal adjudication in the court system. The Ministry of the Attorney General endorses community justice programs and encourages and supports Crown Attorneys offices to participate in developing community justice processes to address local needs and conditions.

When, properly resourced and implemented, community justice programs can help fulfill community and individual needs to:

- More actively participate in the justice process
- Accelerate just results
- Promote a sense of community safety
- Encourage concrete action aimed at preventing future offending behaviour
- Allow victims to have meaningful participation in the justice process with safety and dignity
- Encourage offenders to accept responsibility for their actions
- Offer victims reparation for the harm they have suffered.

A justice system open to the use of these complementary programs should allow quicker resolution of offences, permitting the courts, Crown Attorneys offices, and police services to use their resources effectively.

Crown Attorneys offices are encouraged to cooperate in enabling the development of local community justice processes that suit their communities. As the needs and community resources of jurisdictions vary, it is not possible to provide a standard model for all communities. In particular, eligibility criteria for referrals to community justice programs may vary among programs and communities. Generally speaking, however, crimes involving violence, other than minor non-spouse/partner offences, will not be eligible for community justice as an alternative to adjudication.