

Black Justice Navigator Program

Report to: Mr. Kenneth Campbell, President, Jaku Konbit

Legal Information Session – Joyceville Institution, Kingston, Ontario

Date of Session: July 16, 2026

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Purpose

This report summarizes the legal information session delivered at Joyceville Institution in Kingston, Ontario, on July 16, 2026, as part of the Black Justice Navigator Program. The session aimed to increase awareness of justice navigation services, provide legal education resources, and better understand the reintegration and justice-related needs of incarcerated Black individuals.

Session Overview

On July 16, 2026, Gadi Geremew, Social Media & Communications specialist and Andrew Defor, Justice Navigator, delivered a legal information session at Joyceville Institution.

The session was attended by:

- 30 incarcerated participants
- 2 Correctional Service staff members
- Interactions were also made with 2 other library staff members

Participants received an overview of the services available through the Black Justice Navigator Program, including assistance with navigating legal processes and accessing community supports before and after release. Each participant also received a "Know Your Rights" legal education pamphlet designed to improve understanding of their legal rights and available community resources.

The session was highly interactive, with participants actively engaging in discussion, asking thoughtful questions, and sharing their experiences regarding access to justice and successful community reintegration.

Client Needs Assessment Survey

At the conclusion of the session, participants were surveyed to identify priority areas where additional navigation services and community supports would be most beneficial.

The following priorities were identified:

Identified Need	Percentage of Participants
Employment services, particularly apprenticeship opportunities	90%
Entrepreneurship education and business skills	55%
Alternative community-based justice support programs to complement Correctional Service programming	99%

The overwhelming interest in employment and apprenticeship opportunities highlights the importance of providing practical pathways to economic independence following release. Participants emphasized that meaningful employment is essential to successful reintegration and reducing the likelihood of reoffending.

More than half of respondents also expressed interest in entrepreneurship training, indicating a desire to develop self-employment and small business skills.

Nearly all participants supported the development of community-based justice navigation and reintegration programs that operate alongside existing Correctional Service Canada programming. Participants believed these complementary services could help reduce barriers to accessing justice, improve rehabilitation outcomes, and facilitate more timely and successful reintegration into the community.

Participant Feedback

Feedback from both participants and Correctional Service staff was overwhelmingly positive.

Participants expressed appreciation for receiving practical legal information that was relevant to their circumstances and for learning about community-based navigation services available to support them before and after release. Many indicated that the session provided information they had not previously received and encouraged open discussion in a respectful environment.

Correctional Service staff also responded positively to the session and recognized the value of providing culturally responsive legal education and navigation support within correctional settings. As a result of the success of the workshop, the Black Justice Navigator Program has been invited to deliver a similar legal information session at another correctional institution for women in August 2026, representing an important opportunity to expand the program's reach and impact.

Emerging Themes

During facilitated discussions and the anonymous survey, participants raised several recurring concerns regarding their experiences within the correctional and parole systems.

Institutional Placement

A high amount of participants reported that they believed they had experienced racism or unequal treatment in decisions regarding institutional placement. Some participants stated that they felt they had been assigned to institutions they considered less desirable or offering fewer opportunities than those assigned to other incarcerated individuals.

These findings reflect participants' reported experiences and perceptions and identify an area that may warrant further dialogue and examination with relevant stakeholders.

Parole Process

Almost all participants reported negative experiences with parole supervision. Participants described feeling that interactions with parole officers lacked sufficient support, empathy, and a genuine commitment to their rehabilitation. Many respondents also reported perceiving discriminatory treatment during parole-related processes and expressed a desire for a more supportive, rehabilitation-focused approach.

These findings represent participant feedback collected during the session and highlight areas where strengthened collaboration between community organizations and justice-sector partners could improve reintegration outcomes.

Program Impact

The session demonstrated the continued value of the Black Justice Navigator Program in reaching incarcerated Black individuals with accessible legal education and navigation services.

Beyond increasing awareness of available supports, the needs assessment provided valuable insight into the barriers participants perceive as affecting their successful reintegration. Employment readiness, apprenticeship opportunities, entrepreneurship training, culturally responsive justice navigation, and complementary community-based support services emerged as key priorities.

The invitation to facilitate an additional workshop at a women's correctional institution in August 2026 further demonstrates the confidence that correctional staff have in the quality and relevance of the program and reflects growing recognition of the need for specialized legal education and navigation services within correctional institutions.

Recommendations

Based on participant feedback, the following actions are recommended:

1. Expand legal information sessions within provincial and federal correctional institutions across Eastern Ontario.
2. Develop partnerships with colleges, apprenticeship sponsors, employers, and skilled trades organizations to improve employment pathways for individuals preparing for release.
3. Introduce entrepreneurship training and business mentorship opportunities for interested participants.
4. Develop complementary community-based justice navigation and reintegration services that work alongside Correctional Service Canada programming.
5. Continue engaging Correctional Service Canada and community partners to better understand and address concerns raised by participants regarding equitable treatment and rehabilitation supports.

Conclusion

The July 16, 2026, legal information session at Joyceville Institution was a highly successful outreach initiative that strengthened awareness of legal rights and justice navigation services among incarcerated participants. The strong level of engagement, the positive feedback received from participants and institutional staff, and the invitation to deliver a subsequent workshop at a women's correctional institution in August 2026 demonstrate both the quality of the program and the growing demand for culturally responsive legal education within correctional settings.

The participant survey also provided valuable evidence to guide future programming by identifying employment, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, and community-based justice navigation as key priorities for successful reintegration. The Black Justice Navigator Program continues to play an important role in improving access to justice, empowering justice-involved Black individuals with practical legal knowledge, and building partnerships that contribute to more equitable rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes.

It is important the program continues to expand in order to provide these important navigation services to black communities in Eastern Ontario.

Signed

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