

Justice Committee

Terms of Reference

Mandate

The Justice Committee is established by the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) to examine and understand the challenges of addressing rural crime, improve members' collective understanding of how the Canadian criminal justice system functions in relation to rural crime and community safety, and develop criminal justice system-focused recommendations that directly relate to enhancing safety in rural communities. The committee will serve as a forum for research, discussion, and collaboration which will enable RMA members to better navigate justice system complexities and advocate for reforms that support safe rural communities.

Objectives

The intent of the Justice Committee is to apply a rural Alberta municipal lens to the Canadian criminal justice system with the intent of undertaking research and analysis and developing recommendations to enhance community safety in rural Alberta. Specific objectives to support this intent include:

- ◆ **Understanding of Current State – Rural Community Safety:** Undertake research, information-gathering, and analysis to understand the current state of community safety in rural Alberta.
- ◆ **Understanding of Current State – Criminal Justice System:** Undertake research, information-gathering, and analysis to understand the current state of the criminal justice system and how criminal justice policy impacts community safety in rural Alberta.
- ◆ **Identifying Rural-Relevant Criminal Justice Policy Reforms:** Criminal justice in Canada is a complex web of legislation, policies, service delivery agents, and governance structures, with involvement at the federal, provincial, and local levels. To be effective in advocating on behalf of RMA members, it is crucial that the Committee identify opportunities within the system that will directly relate to enhancing safety in rural communities.
- ◆ **Practical recommendations:** Identify existing gaps in legislation, policy, funding, and processes that undermine rural community safety and develop practical, solution-oriented recommendations in response.

Composition

The Justice Committee will consist of the following members:

- ◆ A member of the RMA Board of Directors to act as chair
- ◆ One (1) elected official from each RMA District, nominated independently with support from their municipality and selected by the RMA Board.
- ◆ External subject matter experts as identified by the committee will be invited to present to the Committee as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

- ◆ RMA Chair
 - ◇ Provide leadership, set meeting agendas, facilitate discussions, and ensure reporting to the RMA Board.

- ◆ Committee members
 - ◇ Actively participate in meetings, contribute local perspective, review research, and assist in developing recommendations.
- ◆ RMA staff support
 - ◇ Provide administrative support to the committee
- ◆ External subject matter experts
 - ◇ Provide technical knowledge and insights on justice system processes, rural crime trends, policing realities, and potential reforms.

Decision-Making

- ◆ Decisions will be made by consensus when possible.
- ◆ If consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of members present.

Committee Deliverables

- ◆ A comprehensive final report that includes a summary of findings, analysis, recommendations, and advocacy strategies.
- ◆ Host plenary address or workshop at RMA Convention.
- ◆ Participation in webinars, advocacy campaigns, or other outreach activities as identified by the Committee.

Meetings and Communication

- ◆ The Committee will meet once per month, with additional meetings scheduled as required.
- ◆ Meetings may be held in person at the RMA office or virtually, depending on availability and resources.
- ◆ A quorum will consist of a majority of committee members.
- ◆ The Committee will provide updates to the RMA Board as necessary.
- ◆ A final report will be presented to the RMA Board for approval at the conclusion of Committee meetings.

Timeline and Process

- ◆ The Committee will begin meetings no later than September 2026.
- ◆ The Committee will establish priority areas of interest and base further research, engagement, and meetings on these priority areas.
- ◆ The final report will be launched no later than Spring 2027.
- ◆ A further advocacy campaign will be launched following the release of the initial report.

Resources and Support

- ◆ RMA will provide administrative support, including the coordination of meetings, scheduling, and document preparation.
- ◆ Per diem costs associated with participation in an RMA Advisory Committee will be borne by the member municipality. A letter of support from each committee member municipality is requested indicating recognition that per diem costs will not be borne by the RMA.
- ◆ The RMA shall reimburse committee members for travel, accommodation, and meal expenses related to attendance of committee meetings.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

Any changes or amendments to these Terms of Reference must be presented to the Committee members for review and approved by the Chair. All amendments will be communicated to all members to ensure transparency.