

16 July 2014

For the past several years, the John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) has been raising concerns about the tremendous harm and inequality that results from the retention and disclosure of non-conviction information in Ontario.

As the demand for police record checks escalates, a growing number of Ontarians with non-conviction police records face undue exclusion and discrimination; a situation that calls for attention and redress now.

To its ongoing credit, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) has been receptive and responsive to community-based concerns regarding non-conviction disclosure practices across the province, and engaged in a collaborative, consultative process which has resulted in a significant and positive change for Ontario. We strongly support the OACP's updated LEARN Guideline which, if adopted by local police services, will better protect Ontarians from the disclosure of their non-conviction police records and the discrimination and stigmatization that often results from their release.

JHSO endorsed the recommendations presented to the OACP Board in February 2014, in particular the recommendation that non-conviction information presumptively not be disclosed at any level of check. We laud the OACP for amending its Guideline and support its efforts to advocate for legislative change, and thusly call on the provincial government to work with the community and policing stakeholders to develop legislation that protects Ontarians, in statute, from the disclosure of their non-conviction police records.

In our recently released report entitled, [Help Wanted*](#): **Reducing Barriers for Ontario's Youth with Police Records**, JHSO advanced a number of recommendations aimed at preventing the disclosure of non-conviction information police records in Ontario, and several specifically reference the OACP Guideline and the OACP Board's February 2014 resolutions. These include:

- 3.1** All police services in Ontario should endorse and adopt the forthcoming Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's LEARN Guideline and commit to presumptively not disclosing non-conviction information on all levels of police record check.
- 3.2** The provincial government of Ontario, in partnership with policing and community-based stakeholders, should develop legislation protecting Ontarians from the disclosure of their non-conviction police records. (JHSO 2014, p. 38)

JHSO is eager to continue working collaboratively with the OACP and other community partners to advance evidence-based and inclusive policies and practices that serve to benefit all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Paula Osmok
Executive Director
John Howard Society of Ontario