



CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

ACTIVITY REPORT #11

Submitted to the
Law Foundation of Ontario
Access to Justice Fund

On behalf of the

CONNECTING OTTAWA NETWORK

DECEMBER 30, 2017

(submitted January 12, 2018)

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INTRODUCTION

This is the eleventh Activity Report describing the implementation and outcomes of the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa project, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO) under the Connecting Region Initiative of the Access to Justice Fund.

The report describes our interim activities and performance milestones for the six-month period July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. Our funding agreement identified the following core activities for the period:

- Connect community legal services and community health and social services in ways that will strengthen the network's capacity to respond to the complex issues often presented by our focus populations;
- Promote the use of a website resource for trusted intermediaries, including staff and volunteers of partner organizations; further develop the site; and evaluate its impact;
- Maintain a pool of volunteer facilitators as trusted intermediaries able to connect clients to community and legal services to which they have been referred;
- Direct the existing PLEI resources of our legal services partners to most effectively reach our focus populations and the trusted intermediaries with whom they connect.
- Share the lessons learned from the program's continued development in order to build upon the strengths of the network in Ottawa and to support similar and complementary initiatives in other communities.

Activities for the period have focused on the continued implementation of the planned activities noted above, distributing our new educational resources developed in the prior period, continuing to develop the capacity of our partner organizations through case consultation and education, effective management of the project, and supporting the evaluation of the program by independent consultants contracted by the LFO. Further, over the period, the project has increased its engagement with partner organizations supporting individuals with communication barriers as a result of a disability or sensory impairment and has increased the number of legal education sessions provided for partner agency front line workers and their clients. The demand for the project and its efforts continues to exceed the capacity of our 2.5 employees, illustrating the unique and essential contribution that Connecting Ottawa offers.

Following a summary of project highlights and a detailed overview of our activities for each strategic priority, this report presents Connecting Ottawa's LFO requested reporting numbers to December 30, 2017 and a financial report to November 30, 2017.

We thank the Law Foundation for their continued support of the Connecting Ottawa Project and our efforts to improve access to justice for those with communication barriers across the Ottawa region.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

CONNECT COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Maintained staffing of 2.5 professionals.
- Maintained and supported active partnership network of 51 agencies.
- Welcomed two new partner agencies to the network.
- Trained 212 trusted intermediaries and served 224 clients of partner agencies through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member.
- Provided case support to 36 independent community agencies both in and outside our partnership network.
- Held 3 “Lunch and Learn” sessions on issues of Housing Law, Refugee Law and Claimant Processes, and Family Law.
- Held 8 training/education sessions with partner agency staff (involving approximately 85 people) related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French or who have a communication barrier as a result of a disability.

PROMOTE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Promoted new CLEO and Steps to Justice resources via Connecting Ottawa communique, website, and social media.
- Initiated discussions to develop a web-based app for partner agency staff to access the Legal Health Check Up resource.
- Maintained and increased a list of social and legal resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites.
- Facilitated stable and steady growth in the use of our website and on-line resources:
 - Increased users to the connectingottawa.com website to 28,039 from 26,319 in the previous period. Users of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 596 from 483 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of sessions of the connectingottawa.com website to 33,568 from 31,038 in the previous period. Number of sessions of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 661 from 555 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of page views on the connectingottawa.com website to 61,835 from 57,406 in the previous period. Number of page views on the connexionottawa.com website increased to 1,032 from 1,001 in the previous period.
 - Increased followers to Connecting Ottawa Twitter and Facebook social media feeds.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS AS TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Reviewed and evaluated the existing volunteer facilitator program.
- Initiated exploration of a new system to expand volunteer facilitator activities and support.
- Assigned facilitators to 5 case assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Held one facilitator training/information session, attended by 7 current and future volunteer facilitators.
- Trained and confirmed 4 new volunteer facilitators to the program.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Participated in the 3rd “Free Law in the Mall” PopUp Legal Clinic at Lincoln Fields Mall.
- Presented 16 individual public legal education sessions in collaboration with partner agencies on issues of social and legal services related to those with a communication barrier.
- Provided input and collaboration to the *Services for Refugee Claimants in Ottawa* toolkit resource.
- Distributed information rack cards at public events and among partnership network.

SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

- Published 6 issues of *Connecting Ottawa Partner Communiqué*.
- Regularly presented and met with partner agencies to discuss Connecting Ottawa’s approach and best practices.
- Invited as a speaker for three University of Ottawa Faculty of Law classes
- Invited as a co-workshop facilitator at the fall training conference for Eastern Ontario community legal clinics, presenting on "Trauma Informed Legal Practice".
- Participated in the Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair.
- Participated in the Law Society of Upper Canada’s Annual Immigration Law Summit.
- Participated in the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership’s Immigration Forum
- Co-coordinated the Newcomer Identification ad-hoc working group of our partner agencies.
- Initiated planning for the 2018 Connecting Ottawa Conference.

PROJECT COORDINATION AND REVIEW

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirements.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate activities.
- Project Manager met regularly with Advisory Group Chair to review operations.
- Welcomed two new members to the Project Advisory Group.
- Held two Advisory Group meetings.
- Provided coordination and support to the Law Foundation of Ontario’s Connecting Ottawa Program Evaluation.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

CONNECT COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES & COMMUNITY HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

OUR CHALLENGE

The challenge was set by Thomson and Kohl:

- Develop a multi-sectorial network of organizations with the potential to build sufficient capacity for legal services to work in closer cooperation with community health and social services, local agencies serving immigrants, and services for disabled persons with a view to ensuring a more integrated service response for clients from the our focus populations, and
- Build the capacity to advocate at a systemic level whenever the system itself has created barriers to accessible legal services.

OUR INTENT

At an inaugural conference in Ottawa in January 2011, Connecting Ottawa developed a multi-sectorial network of local service organizations committed to finding new ways of working to ensure access to justice for our focus populations. They endorsed a plan that would add staff resources to the network: a social services worker and a legal services worker that would be available to advise and consult with front-line providers of information, assessment and referral services to people with issues that would benefit from legal services. The intent of Connecting Ottawa is not to relieve the overflow of demand for case management services, but to strengthen the existing capacity for competent case management among our partners and, where appropriate, support advocacy efforts for system-level changes.

ACTIVITIES

- Maintained staffing of 2.5 professionals.
- Maintained and supported active partnership network of 51 agencies.
- Welcomed two new partner agencies to the network.
- Trained 212 trusted intermediaries and served 224 clients of partner agencies through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member.
- Provided case support to 36 independent community agencies both in and outside our partnership network.
- Held 3 “Lunch and Learn” sessions on issues of Housing Law, Refugee Law and Claimant Processes, and Family Law.
- Held 8 training/education sessions with partner agency staff (involving approximately 85 people) related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French or who have a communication barrier as a result of a disability.

Staffing & Accommodation

During the period, Connecting Ottawa maintained its current staff of two full time front line professional staff and one part time project manager. The front line professional staff includes Alexandra-Marjorie Derisier LLL, LLB, who has an extensive background in labour relations, human rights and refugee law, and Erin Fitzpatrick BSW, MSW, LLB, LLM, who in addition to her social work training has had extensive legal training. Gina Grosenick, Ph.D., serves as the project manager and has an extensive background managing and communicating about community based programs and networks.

With the above staffing mix, Connecting Ottawa maintains the original staffing model of a professional lawyer, professional registered social worker, and project manager with a combined skill set that is exceptionally positioned to address the objectives and mandates of the project. Periodically, Connecting Ottawa co-manages, with one of our partner agencies, legal and social work work-study students. Over the course of the project, Connecting Ottawa has worked with 4 social work students and 7 law students.

Office accommodations and human resources services continue to be provided by our partner agency Centre de services communautaires de Vanier. CSC Vanier is the “employer of record” for project staff, manages payroll and benefits administration, provides personnel policies and other human resources infrastructure, and provides office accommodations.

Community Legal Services of Ottawa/Services juridiques communautaires d’Ottawa continues to be the lead agency for the project, serving as the organization of record for any contracts and overseeing the financial and audit requirements.

Connecting Ottawa Partnership Network

The Connecting Ottawa network of partners currently includes 51 organizations. This network includes 18 community service agencies, 12 agencies serving immigrants, 10 organizations providing legal services, 7 agencies serving people with disabilities, 3 organizations that offer placements to students interested in access to justice issues, and 1 providing interpretation and translation services.

During the period, two new agencies were welcomed to the partnership: Refugee 613 and the Disability Action Network of Eastern Ontario (DANEO).

Refugee 613 is a coalition of citizens, settlement agencies, sponsorship groups and community partners working to provide refugees with the building blocks of successful integration. Refugee 613 was activated to coordinate Ottawa resources to serve the Syrian refugee influx of early 2017. They have since solidified into a well-regarded community agency actively sought out by newcomers and sponsors to help with issues related to refugee community and integration.

DANEO/RAIPHEO grew out of United Families of Eastern Ontario (UFEO), which started in 2008 to unite families and organizations in the Eastern Region of Ontario to act as “one voice” to advise on upcoming changes in developmental services and to support those labelled with disabilities. DANEO is an active organization that works with its target population and their families to provide information and assistance to address the many issues faced by individuals with disabilities, including those who have communication barriers as a result of a sensory disability.

The project also reaches out to additional organizations that could contribute to successful outcomes and liaises with other networks and coalitions including the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program (SPP), Local Agencies Serving Immigrants [LASI], the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership [OLIP], Ottawa Public Library, Refugee Network of Ottawa (ReNoo Group) Crime Prevention Ottawa, and the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, to name just a few. Connecting Ottawa is a regular participant and contributor to the inter-agency luncheon coordinated by the Somerset West Community Health Centre. The inter-agency lunch brings together service providers once per month to share information and discuss issues related to clients in need in the community.

To better manage our relationship with the network we have subjectively categorized the partners according to the quality and extent of their engagement (Levels 1-3). Organizations in Category 1 are fully engaged in decision-making processes and contribute time and resources to the project. Organizations in Category 2 communicate regularly with the project, frequently consult concerning clients, and share their perspectives about our focus and direction. Organizations in Category 3 have expressed an interest in our activities and wish to be kept informed about access to justice issues and opportunities for cross-sectorial collaboration.

All organizations receive our communications (information, newsletters, events calendar, etc.), have access to the web site, and are invited to our annual conference and other learning opportunities. Our staff and project manager meet and communicate with partner agencies on a regular basis.

Capacity building via one-on-one case consultation

A primary means of developing capacity within the partnership network is working one-on-one with front line staff to address the legal needs of our target populations. Staff members primarily respond to requests for service but our lawyer and our social worker are also co-located with consultation hours weekly for one half-day at Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI) and one half-day at Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO): two partner agencies that have a high demand for our services.

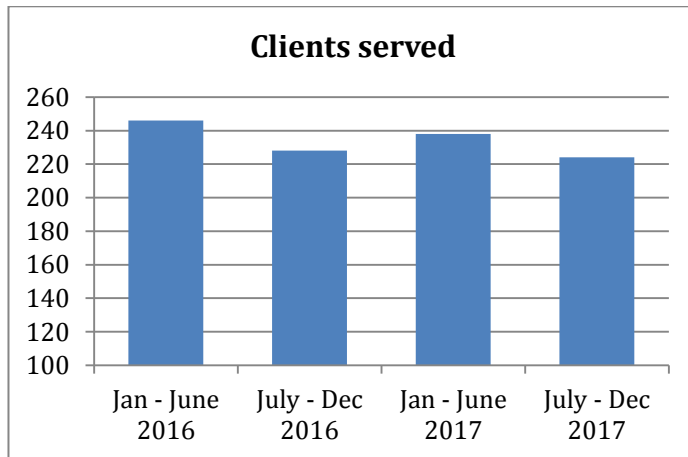
Partner organizations consult with us about hard-to-serve clients who face barriers to communication. The eligibility for a client to be received for a consult by either staff is that the client must have a legal problem and a communication barrier. We provide information and advice, help assess the legal issues and communication challenges, help to connect the client with needed information and services, and identify an ongoing case manager before

terminating our involvement. The daily workload of our front line staff remains dominated by these casework activities. Our intent is not to increase the legal services available in the community; instead, we view case consultation as an opportunity to build the referring organization's capacity to better respond to the needs of our focus populations, or provide legal services for partners whose clients fall into gaps existing within the current legal support system.

All consultation activities are logged, with source and reasons for referral, legal and communication issues tracked, and case notes maintained. The extent of our involvement varies greatly: in some instances we are consulted without clients being identified; sometimes briefly to affirm a course of action; or, in many other instances our staff is extensively involved with researching a legal issue, determining appropriate connections to services and other time-intensive support activities.

During the period there were 224 clients of partner agencies served and 212 trusted intermediaries trained by Connecting Ottawa staff through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member. The cases presented a full range of legal and social issues. A total of 36 independent partner agencies referred cases or sought assistance from our professional staff to assist them with client needs. Of interest during the period was an increase in referrals from legal organizations both within and outside the partnership network suggesting that the project and its benefits is gaining recognition within the local legal community. The majority of the referrals and case consultations continue to be from settlement and immigration agencies working with Connecting Ottawa; reflecting the increased need as a result of growing sponsorship and government activity in this area. Please see the appendix for two examples of cases that Connecting Ottawa assisted with.

The graph below expresses the relative consistency in the number of partner agencies' clients served in each reporting period over the past two years. This consistency is due to our staff working at maximum capacity in their ability to provide consulting support within the network. At the same time, the demand for services continues to increase.



Capacity building via education.

In addition to one-on-one case consultations, Connecting Ottawa develops capacity within our network to provide access to justice for our target populations through education. In an effort to address the increased demand on our services, Connecting Ottawa staff have actively sought to increase its educational activities. During the period, Connecting Ottawa staff hosted 3 “Lunch and Learn” sessions and held 8 training/education sessions with partner agency staff related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French or have a communication barrier as a result of a disability. 34 trusted intermediaries attended the Lunch and Learn sessions and approximately 85 trusted intermediaries were in attendance for the training/education sessions. These sessions are in addition to the 16 public legal education sessions provided in conjunction with partner agencies (reported under Public Outreach and Education below).

The Lunch and Learn sessions are one hour informational sessions provided by our front line staff on a topical issue of law related to our target populations. The Lunch and Learn sessions are promoted to our partner agencies and front line workers are encouraged to attend to develop knowledge to support their clients. The presentations focus on understanding legal issues, ways to identify issues, and the resources available to support clients with these issues. The topics of the fall Lunch and Learn sessions were Housing Law, Refugee and Claimant Processes, and Family Law. In addition to providing valuable, timely information to partner agency staff, these get-togethers offered opportunities for networking and shared learnings.

The 8 professional development information sessions with partner agencies spanned a range of issues and topics, including:

- Conflict of Interest
- Refugee Law & Legal Issues
- Mental Health Law
- Connecting Ottawa Services
- Holistic Approach to Supporting Legal Requirements of Clients
- Social Context of Legal Problems
- How to Find Legal Services in Ottawa

Connecting Ottawa also partnered with and promoted training and educational sessions led by other organizations in on various issues and topics, including:

- Canada Tax and Financial Support Workshops (ACORN)
- 28th Annual One World Film Festival (Refugee613)
- Immigrant Women's Small Business Expo
- Powers of Attorney and Guardianship (Citizen Advocacy)
- A French-language legal workshop for immigrant women (Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario)
- Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Program Workshops (Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity)

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- A French-language workshop on human rights and accommodation in the workplace (Centre francophone de Vanier)
- Ottawa Immigration Summit. (Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership)
- A French-language workshop on domestic violence against woman (Centre francophone de Vanier).
- Q&A forum on the new Portable Housing Allowance (Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre and City of Ottawa)

PROMOTE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

OUR CHALLENGE

There are excellent public legal education and information (PLEI) resources available, especially given the leadership of Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) and their web site initiative Steps to Justice. However, the fact remains that navigation of the legal system remains challenging for many front-line service providers in Ottawa.

OUR INTENT

Develop a local web site and electronic resources that includes comprehensive and current information about local legal services, and promote its use by project partners to ensure access to justice by for focus populations.

ACTIVITIES

- Promoted new CLEO and Steps to Justice resources via Connecting Ottawa communique, website, and social media.
- Initiated discussions to develop a web-based app for partner agency staff to access the Legal Health Check Up resource.
- Maintained and increased a list of social and legal resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites.
- Facilitated stable and steady growth in the use of our website and on-line resources:
 - Increased users to the connectingottawa.com website to 28,039 from 26,319 in the previous period. Users of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 596 from 483 in the previous period.
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 - Increased followers to Connecting Ottawa Twitter and Facebook social media feeds.

PROGRESS

Connecting Ottawa's websites have been maintained in both English (connectingottawa.com) and French (connexionottawa.com). The domain registrations have been extended until April 2018 and we have arranged for hosting services through a monthly agreement with a hosting

service. Connecting Ottawa also has an agreement with a digital media studio to help maintain the technical aspects of the site. Connecting Ottawa also hosts a twitter feed (@connectottawa) and a Facebook page (Connecting Ottawa) .

Provide current information about local legal and social services

The Connecting Ottawa website offers current and relevant information about local legal and social services for use by partner agencies, other community group and the public.

Connecting Ottawa maintains its agreement with the Community Information Centre of Ottawa (CICO) 211, maintaining the feed of the CICO database on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites and promoting 211 Eastern Ontario as the default information, assessment and referral resource in Ottawa. During the period, the management at the Community information Centre of Ottawa (CICO) turned over, resulting in Connecting Ottawa not receiving regular updates to the website. As of late fall 2017, the staffing has stabilized and Connecting Ottawa will be working in early 2018 to ensure more timely updates for the information posted on the site.

In addition, Connecting Ottawa promotes and integrates the following resources via our website and social media efforts:

- Connecting Ottawa Legal Health Check Up
- Steps to Justice and Your Legal Rights websites
- CLEO Resources
- PLE Learning Exchange
- *Services for Refugee Claimants in Ottawa* toolkit
- Power of Attorney form
- Affidavit/Commissioner of Oath Resource
- Connecting Ottawa multi-lingual rack cards on legal issues
- Various tools/resources on immigration and refugee processes
- Various tools/resources specific to assisting those with disabilities
- Bedbug/Pest Legal and Social Service Resource
- Trauma Informed Care Case Based Learning Scenarios

Over the past year, Connecting Ottawa has been in discussions with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) to deeply integrate the new Steps to Justice resource into our website and to expand the resource to include more information on Refugee and Disability rights – two areas important to Connecting Ottawa’s target populations. Late in 2017, an interface that will integrate with our website has become available and we are working to facilitate the full integration in the early months of 2018.

During the period, Connecting Ottawa explored an opportunity to offer our Legal Health Check Up resource in an independent user friendly web-based format that would also be connected to our site. Discussions were held with faculty members at Thompson Rivers University

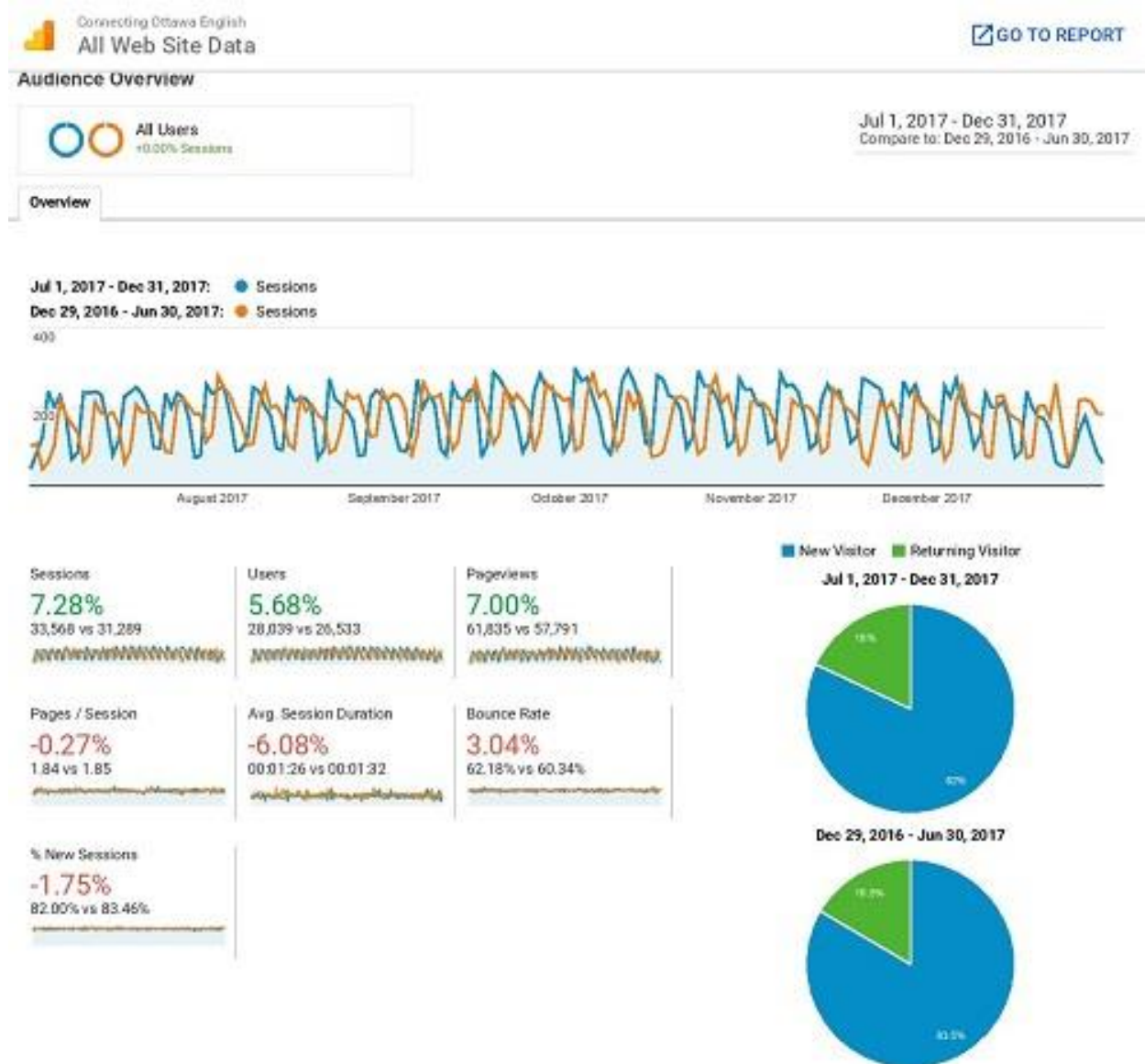
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Faculty of Law and University of Ottawa, Centre of Law, Technology and Society to explore the development of a mobile application as part of a student hands-on learning initiative related to law and technology. We were unable to finalize the project in time for the fall 2017 semester but continue discussions with the programs.

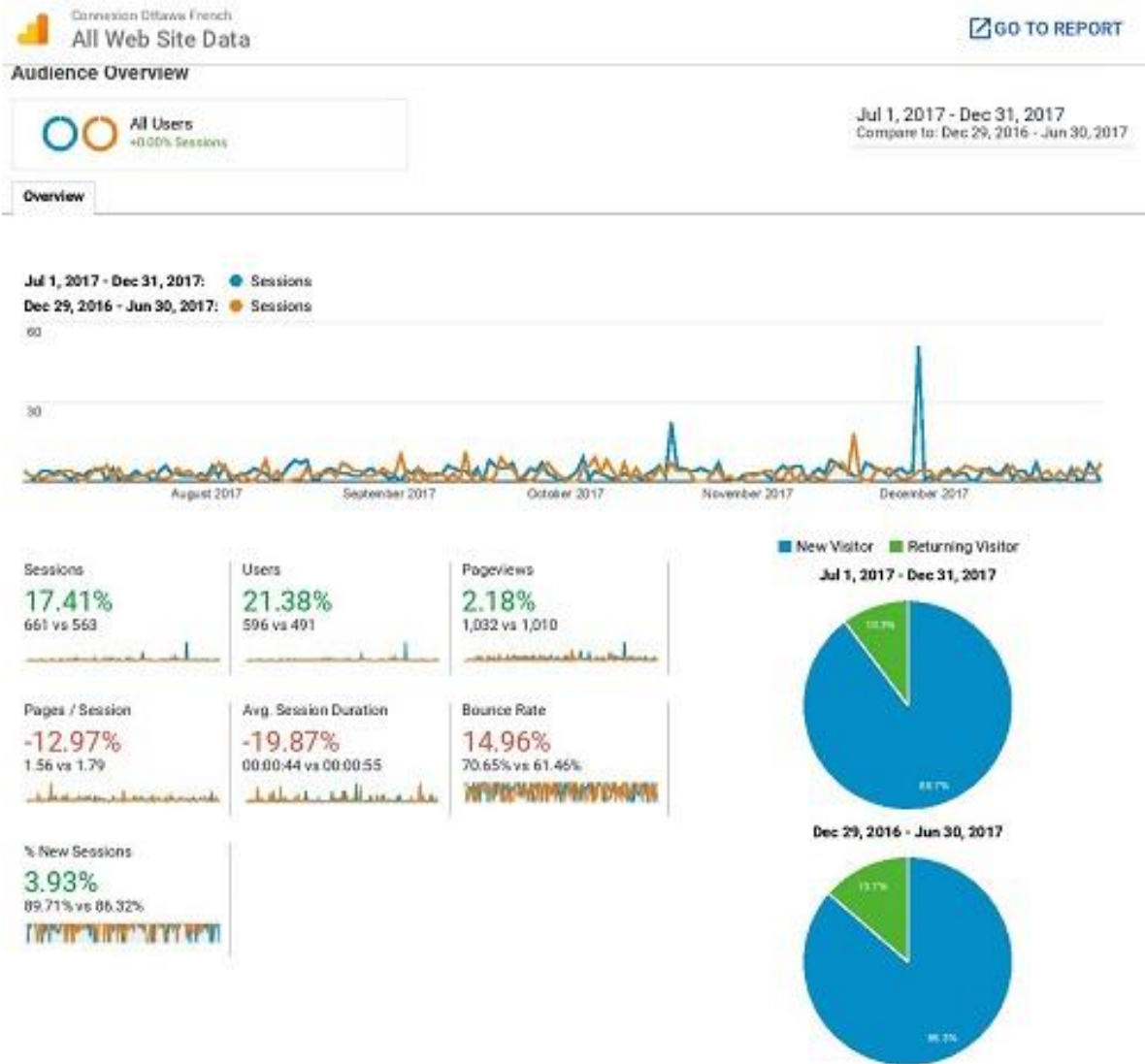
Website Traffic

Google Analytics informs us that traffic continues to grow on both our English and French websites. Our traffic for this year (blue) compared with data from the previous year (orange) is displayed below.

ConnectingOttawa.com



ConnexionOttawa.com (FR)



Number of Users and Page Views

When compared to the previous six month period (January 1 – June 30, 2017), the number of users of the English web site has increased from 26,533 to 28,039; the number of users on the French web site increased from 491 to 596.

The volume of page views showed a similar trend – an increase of 7% (English) and a 2.18% (French) respectively. 82% of traffic to the English site and 89.7% of traffic to the French site is comprised of new users.

Most Viewed Webpages and Topics

Viewer behaviour showed a wide range of information on resources and services being accessed from our website. The top ten pages accessed during the period were:

Webpage / Topic	Number of Page Views (July 1 – December 31)
Resource: Ottawa Court House – Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General	5,477
Welcome to Connecting Ottawa	2,259
About Connecting Ottawa	2,241
Resource: Family Law Information Centre	2,036
Resource: 311 – Ottawa City Operations	1,741
Contact us Connecting Ottawa	1,394
Resources Connecting Ottawa	1,312
Resource: Partner Abuse Services	1,287
Resource: Champlain Community Care Access Centre	1,036
Resource: Immigrant Women’s Services Ottawa	1,023

Social Media

Connecting Ottawa maintains a Twitter and Facebook feed to share news and information related to our project and partnership network, information on our focus populations, access to services, and emerging legal issues. Although work on developing these channels was not a priority during the reporting period, we increased our “followers” on Twitter from 530 to 587 and our “likes” on Facebook to 113.

Social media platforms like Twitter can be important tools for Connecting Ottawa to promote the project and deliver PLE messages and resources.

DEVELOP & SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS AS TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

OUR CHALLENGE

For many clients – and particularly among our focus populations - a gap can exist between the point of referral and the point of legal services delivery; clients never actually connect with the services to which they have been referred. This gap can be bridged by trusted intermediaries who are volunteer facilitators trained and supported to problem solve with the client to systematically overcome the barriers to connection.

OUR INTENT

Connecting Ottawa will recruit, train, and pay honoraria to a pool of volunteer facilitators who can be effective trusted intermediaries and who can be matched with clients on the basis of gender, culture, languages spoken, and availability.

ACTIVITIES

- Reviewed and evaluated the existing volunteer facilitator program.
- Initiated exploration of a new system to expand volunteer facilitator activities and support.
- Assigned facilitators to 5 case assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Held one facilitator training/information session, attended by 7 current and future volunteer facilitators.
- Trained and confirmed 4 new volunteer facilitators to the program.

PROGRESS

Program Review and Evaluation

The volunteer facilitator program is an important opportunity to engage the larger community in the Connecting Ottawa program and to support its impact. The concept and goal of trained facilitators to support clients' access to needed services is highly regarded by our community partners; however internally, the appropriate process to facilitate requests, on what is often a quick timeline and within Connecting Ottawa's capacity proved difficult to identify.

During the period, the Project Manager reviewed the program and connected with a number of partners and existing volunteer facilitators to discuss and explore opportunities related to the program. Partners are interested in accessing the program but require more certainty that their requests for support can be accommodated. Volunteer facilitators are extremely motivated to be part of the program and want to be more involved.

The outcome of the review was a strong recommendation to continue with the program and to identify a process that utilizes volunteers more deeply in the activities of Connecting Ottawa and maintains a more engaged relationship with them. To this end, we are currently exploring opportunities to utilize our volunteer facilitators, in addition to their client support role, as Connecting Ottawa ambassadors at newcomer events and to identify a peer mentor among the volunteer facilitators that will maintain regular communication with our group of volunteer facilitators.

Program Facilitation

During the period, the program coordinated 5 client assignments, connecting volunteer facilitators with clients identified by our partners to assist them in accessing needed services such as applying for identification cards or requesting required documentation from a government agency.

Following the review of the program, Connecting Ottawa put out a call for new volunteer facilitators and hosted an Information and Training Session at the end of November. 7 current and prospective volunteer facilitators attended and 2 others expressed interest but could not attend. The training and information session provided an overview of the project and role of the volunteer facilitator, provided training on active listening, problem solving, cultural competencies, privacy and confidentiality, maintaining personal boundaries, and roles and responsibilities. Following the session, 4 new volunteers committed and signed a Volunteer Agreement and are currently completing required documentation (e.g. police record check) to participate in the program. The Project Manager is following up with the other interested parties and identifying a volunteer peer mentor to assist with the program.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

OUR CHALLENGE

Our legal services partners have the mandate, experience, and resources to present public legal education and information at events throughout Ottawa. PLE materials have already been developed on a number of legal issues. However, PLE resources are not often directed to our focus populations in regularly accessed locations such as libraries, community centres, newcomer centres, rehabilitation centres and peer support groups for persons with disabilities.

OUR INTENT

Work with our partnership network to provide outreach and education opportunities to effectively reach our focus populations and the trusted intermediaries with whom they connect. Connecting Ottawa will become the local clearinghouse for PLE events that target linguistic minorities, a convener, and provider of logistical supports (when necessary) to enable regularly scheduled events at accessible locations.

ACTIVITIES

- Participated in the 3rd “Free Law in the Mall” PopUp Legal Clinic at Lincoln Fields Mall.
- Presented 16 individual public legal education sessions in collaboration with partner agencies on issues of social and legal services related to those with a communication barrier.
- Provided input and collaboration to the *Services for Refugee Claimants in Ottawa* toolkit resource.
- Distributed information rack cards at public events and among partnership network.

PROGRESS

To assist in our public outreach, Connecting Ottawa created a pop up banner to highlight our services to the community. Connecting Ottawa staff set up the banner alone or as part of an information table to inform individuals about our program and services.

In partnership with Avant Law and the University of Ottawa, Connecting Ottawa participated in the 3rd pop-up clinic, “Free Law in the Mall” at Lincoln Fields Mall. At this event, members of the community received legal information, legal advice, and were referred to other social and community service resources, if required. This event is part of the Social Justice Option at the Faculty of Law which receives funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario.

Connecting Ottawa is becoming a sought after provider of legal education and information sessions by our partnership networks. During the period, Connecting Ottawa provided 16 individual presentations in collaboration with our partner agencies on the following topics:

- Refugee Preparatory Classes (3 sessions)
- Refugee 101 – Convention Refugee or Protected Person? (2 sessions)
- Canadian Legal System & Legal Resources
- Sponsorship
- Employment Law
- What Parents Should Know about the Youth Criminal Justice Act
- Respecting Rights Workshop (3 sessions)
- Family Law (4 sessions)

During the period, in response to the lack of clear information surrounding the services available for refugee claimants in Ottawa, a working group was organized by Refugee613 to develop a “Services for Refugees in Ottawa” Toolkit. Connecting Ottawa was invited to participate on the group and contributed extensively to the project. The first draft of the tool kit was released in November of 2017 and a user-friendly brochure is expected to be released in early 2018.

In June of 2017, Connecting Ottawa printed sets of public information rack cards, translated into Arabic, Farsi, Somali, Spanish, English and French, on issues of Housing Law, Family Law, Criminal Law, and Immigration Law. During the reporting period, we actively promoted and distributed these cards as resources for clients among our partnership network and at public events and public legal education events.

SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

OUR CHALLENGE

To share our experience – good and not so good - with peers and colleagues so that the system of legal services is strengthened and is more readily accessed by our focus populations.

OUR INTENT

- Host an annual conference for network partners and interested stakeholders
- Seek out conferences, symposia and other opportunities to make presentations, participate on panels and offer workshops, to audiences of our peers and colleagues in community services, especially legal services.
- Share information and news with our network of partners

ACTIVITIES

- Published 6 issues of Connecting Ottawa *Partner Communique*.
- Regularly presented and met with partner agencies to discuss Connecting Ottawa's approach and best practices.
- Invited as a speaker for three University of Ottawa Faculty of Law classes
- Invited as a co-workshop facilitator at the fall training conference for Eastern Ontario community legal clinics, presenting on "Trauma Informed Legal Practice".
- Participated in the Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair.
- Participated in the Ottawa Immigration Forum.
- Participated in the Law Society of Upper Canada's Annual Immigration Law Summit.
- Participated in the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership's Immigration Forum
- Co-coordinated the Newcomer Identification ad-hoc working group of our partner agencies
- Initiated planning for the 2018 Connecting Ottawa Conference.

PROGRESS

Connecting Ottawa Communique

Connecting Ottawa's newsletter *Communique* is distributed electronically to members of our partnership network, other service professionals, as well as attendees from our previous conferences and education workshops. Newsletters include pertinent news and information relevant to access to justice for linguistic minorities and those with communication barriers, upcoming events, and resources most beneficial to those supporting clients with communication barriers. The communique is sent monthly. During the reporting period the July, August, September, October, November and December issues were developed and distributed.

Presentations

During the period, Connecting Ottawa participated in various opportunities to make presentations, participate on panels, and offer workshops to audiences of our peers, students, and colleagues in community and legal services.

Connecting Ottawa's Erin Fitzpatrick has developed a close relationship with the University of Ottawa's Law Program and is regular invited expert to participate in class and workshop activities. During the period, she presented on three occasions on the topics of

- Mental Health Law
- Holistic Approach to Access to Justice
- Social Context of Legal Problems

Ms. Fitzpatrick was also invited to participate as a co-workshop facilitator at the fall training conference for Eastern Ontario community legal clinics presenting on the issue of "Trauma Informed Legal Practice".

Connecting Ottawa also participated in various community and professional events including the 2017 Ontario Immigration Forum, the 2017 Fall Social Work Fair at Carleton University, and the Law Society of Upper Canada's Immigration Law Summit. These events provided the opportunity to share information about the Connecting Ottawa project and educate these groups about the legal issues that are faced by our target populations.

Regularly, Connecting Ottawa meets with partner agencies to detail, share and hone Connecting Ottawa's approach and best practices. During the period, the settlement managers from the largest two settlement agencies left their positions, resulting in new staff being appointed. Connecting Ottawa ensured that we met with the new managers, educated them about the program and partnership, and ensured continuity of the relationships.

Newcomer Identification Working Group

Following a need identified by one of our partner agencies, Connecting Ottawa's facilitated and was a co-coordinator, with OCISO, of an ad hoc working group to explore ways to assist newcomers to replace lost citizenship and immigration documentation. During the period an open meeting was held with other agencies to share lessons learned and research was conducted to understand challenges and activities surrounding the issue in other jurisdictions.

Annual Conference

Connecting Ottawa's 7th annual conference will be held in May 2018. This conference has always been well received and regarded as an opportunity among our partnership network for staff professional development as well as community networking and sharing of lessons learned.

During the period, Connecting Ottawa brainstormed topics and secured the location for the 2018 event.

PROJECT COORDINATION AND REVIEW

OUR CHALLENGE

To manage a project that will move from being “a good idea” to being a demonstration of “good practice” and excellent outcomes.

OUR INTENT

Our purpose is to strengthen the capacity of network partners without creating another organization, by resourcing and coordinating activities, evaluating performance and outcomes, ensuring that all partners understand their contribution and role over time, and communicating regularly and effectively with our network partners and other stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirements.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate activities.
- Project Manager met regularly with Advisory Group Chair to review operations.
- Welcomed two new members to the Project Advisory Group.
- Held two Advisory Group meetings.
- Provided coordination and support to the Law Foundation of Ontario’s Connecting Ottawa Program Evaluation.

PROGRESS

Administration

The project manager coordinates and maintains the effective and efficient management of the project. She coordinates the project, liaises with the Advisory Group, oversees project staff activities, approves all project expenditures, works with the bookkeeper to ensure the project’s financial health, and coordinates all project communication and planning.

Regular staff meetings and semi-regular meetings with the Advisory Group Chair have been implemented to ensure effective communication and coordination of activities. Staff meetings are held approximately every month - 6 weeks and include discussion of timely issues and sharing of information and activities for the upcoming period. Meetings with the Advisory Group Chair have been implemented to address and regularly review issues related to funding, finances, staffing, project manager oversight, and Advisory Group planning.

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group met on two occasions during the reporting period and is an essential resource to ensure that the programs and activities of the project meet the needs of the various groups within our partnership network.

Due to staff changes at our partner agencies, we expanded our Group by one member and welcomed two new representatives to the Group. The current membership of the Advisory Group is:

NAME	SERVICES SECTOR	PARTNERING ORGANIZATION
Lois McIntyre	Community	Canadian Hearing Society
Mohamoud Hagi-Aden	Community	South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
Daniel Gagnon	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa
Siffan Rahman	Community	Somerset West Community Health Centre
Françoise Magunira	Immigrant	The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC)
Christine Sharp	Community	Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
Michel Fournier	Community	Community Information Centre of Ottawa / 211
Gary Stein	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa
Arber Zaplluzha	Immigrant	Catholic Centre for Immigrants – Ottawa
Basia Mair	Immigrant	Ottawa Community Immigrant Settlement Organization

Project Review

In January, 2017, following a call for proposals, the Law Foundation of Ontario commissioned CAP Consulting to evaluate the Connecting Ottawa Project and provide recommendations on its achievements and impacts as an Access to Justice initiative. Connecting Ottawa has been integrally involved in the review process, with the project manager and Advisory Group Chair participating on the evaluation committee, arranging for interviews with key stakeholders, and providing data and support as needed.

During the period, Connecting Ottawa assisted the project review through:

- Reviewing and commenting on various surveys and evaluation mechanisms.
- Assisting with the distribution of surveys and encouraging responses.
- Arranging for office space for evaluators to use during trips to Ottawa.
- Assisting with the identification and coordination of interview participants.
- Providing documentation, as required.
- Meeting with evaluators, via phone or in person to answer questions or provide further assistance.

We are looking forward to the report and recommendations coming out of this process and sharing these with our community members.

Financial Report

The financial report to November 30, 2017 is below. The report for the full six month period, to December 31, 2017, will be available in late January. Expenses for the first five months of the 2017/18 grant are approximately 31% of budget and are in line with expectations. We respectfully request the balance of our funding to be forwarded for the operations of our project for the subsequent six months of the current project grant.

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

CONNECTING OTTAWA		
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		11a
FOR THE FIVE MONTH PERIOD ENDED NOVEMBER 30, 2017		
	Budget	Actuals
REVENUE		
2.0 Law Foundation of Ontario		
412 Received During Year	256,560.00	128,280
412 Holdback receivable		-
	256,560.00	128,280
EXPENSES		
3.2 Website Hosting, Management and Administration		
595 Translation	-	-
625 Website Hosting, Management and Administration	6,500.00	1,515
	6,500.00	1,515
3.3 Facilitators to Connect Clients and Legal Services		
590 Training	400.00	-
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	1,200.00	200
550 Meeting Costs		-
595 Translation		-
510 Printing/Supplies		-
615 Travel		-
	1,600.00	200
3.4 Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection		
515 Accommodation	12,000.00	4,875
530 Cloud/Mobile Services	1,800.00	813
540 Equipment Purchases	300.00	-
545 Materials and Supplies	800.00	284
550 Meeting Costs	500.00	10
557 Professional Fees		-
558 Liability Insurance		-
56X Salaries and Benefits	165,200.00	48,768
562 Resource Development	1,000.00	-
585 Staffing Costs		-
590 Training/Professional Development	1,800.00	-
595 Translation/Interpretation	1,500.00	66
615 Travel	2,500.00	913
626 Web Communication/Social Media Support		-
699 Sundry		-
	187,400.00	55,730
3.6 Secretariat		
510 Administration		-
545 Materials and Supplies	400.00	42
550 Meeting Costs		40
560 Project Co-ordinator	50,000.00	16,667
595 Translation/Interpretation		-
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria		-
615 Travel	400.00	5
	50,800.00	16,753
3.7 Shared Lessons Learned		
520 Annual Conference	2,500.00	-
545 Materials and Supplies		-
546 Materials and Supplies: Rack Cards		-
550 Conferences, etc		-
595 Translation/Interpretation		-
615 Travel	750.00	235
	3,250.00	235
3.8 Administration		
542 Lead Agency Stipend	5,000.00	5,000
527 Bookkeeping	1,000.00	260
525 Bank Charges		36
522 Auditing	800.00	-
699 Sundry		-
799 Contingency		-
	6,800.00	5,296
Total Expenses	256,350.00	79,729
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES		
(EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	210.00	48,551

LFO REPORTING STATISTICS

Organization: Connecting Ottawa	Grant file #: CONRE-09-16
Project title: THE CONNECTING REGION -- CONNECTING OTTAWA	

	Total #	Notes or comments
PLEI		
# of print resources produced, updated	1	
# of online text resources produced, updated	*note B	CO website is continually updated and used as a resource within the community
# of video or audio resources produced, updated	0	
# of PLEI training sessions	16	
# of people with legal needs or members of the public trained	*note A	
# of trusted intermediaries and / or frontline workers trained	350+/*note A	
# of sessions / page views	34,229/62,867	
# of print resources distributed	300	rack cards, CLEO information, other PLE information
# of online text resources downloaded		
# of video or audio resources viewed, downloaded or distributed	*note B	
Legal Services		
# of clients served	224	
# of clients provided legal advice or brief services	224	Our mandate is not to represent clients but to provide advice, education and limited services
# of clients represented	0	
# of services to support people through legal processes (e.g. court navigator)	0	
Pro bono		
# of students engaged in pro bono work	4	Note: Unpaid, limited internships
# of paralegals engaged in pro bono work	1	Note: Social Worker with LLB LLM, not paralegal
# of lawyers engaged in pro bono work	1	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by lawyers	0	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by students	0	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by paralegals	0	

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

Growing the non-profit justice sector		
# of books, reports, oral histories or other significant legal research or policy work	0	
# of staff employed in the sector (full-time)	2	
# of staff employed in the sector (part-time)	1	
# of students employed in the sector	0	
# of professional development and learning events	1	
Building a culture of law and understanding of rights		
# of training events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	18	Primarily among partnership network
# of participants in events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	*note A	
# of student/youth participants	*note A	
# of adult participants	*note A	
Encouraging partnerships and collaboration		
# of organizations you partnered with	60	

- Note A: We are unable to report specific numbers at this time. We have adapted our reporting system to collect these numbers for future reports.
- Note B: We have no means to collect this information at this time.

APPENDIX

Case Studies

Our staff members present case studies at every meeting of Connecting Ottawa's Advisory Group, in order to provide the Advisory Group members with a clear picture of Connecting Ottawa's role in assisting the clients of our partner agencies. Two recently presented case studies are set out below. All identifying information about the clients has been changed.

Case Study #1

In the Spring of 2017 Mr. Mohammed", and two acquaintances (all Syrian refugees - former GARS) were criminally charged with "uttering a forged document" after presenting their Syrian, International driver's and Ontario (G1) licenses at the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in Kingston, ON. The reason for attending at the Kingston MTO/Service Ontario offices was based on communications/rumours within the Syrian newcomer community that it is "easier" to get Syrian and International licenses recognized in Kingston compared with Ottawa's office. Mr. Mohammed worked as a commercial driver in Syria and was hoping to seek work in this area in Ottawa upon the receipt of his necessary Ontario licences.

Mr. Mohammed was referred to Connecting Ottawa by one of our partner agencies. The two acquaintances were subsequently referred to Connecting Ottawa by a different partner agency. The three individuals maintained throughout that they did nothing wrong and that none of their three licenses (Syrian, International, Ontario) were forged to their knowledge. Since the charge was a hybrid offence and the clients are permanent residents, the implication of the potential outcome of the cases was recognized as particularly challenging and serious from the outset.

As recent refugees, all three individuals and their families were entirely reliant on government support. Further, each had limited English language ability. It was not possible for any of the three individuals to comprehend the legal issues in English. Each individual and their families had significant biopsychosocial challenges in addition to the usual settlement challenges. One of the individuals suffered a very serious medical event in the summer of 2017, which he and his family attribute to "the false charges".

Connecting Ottawa, working with the criminal lawyer (once he was retained) and frontline workers at our partner agencies:

- Provided legal information regarding the charge and criminal procedure in plain language to clients via translation
- Supported capacity building of frontline workers regarding the charge and criminal procedure (provided Arabic criminal legal information to be used with clients to reinforce content in appointments) requiring significant communication to ensure understanding of the severity of situation.

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

- Reinforced and ensured that clients understood the necessity of attending for fingerprinting, pre-court date, and the implication of failure to attend (overcame resistance and misinformation).
- Researched and advocated for criminal representation for all three clients. Other than duty counsel, legal aid (clinic or certificate) was not available. Owing to the complexity and the consequences of a finding of guilt and the position of the clients, the option of duty counsel seemed less than ideal.
- Secured pro bono private bar criminal law representation in Kingston via support of Queen's Legal Aid Clinic.
- Led teleconference meetings with clients and criminal lawyer and clients to transition cases. Connecting Ottawa remained involved throughout since criminal lawyer was acting pro bono and located in Kingston
- Advocated and worked with criminal lawyer to have fingerprints moved to Ottawa and date changed so client would not have to incur expense of two trips to Kingston.
- Provided ongoing legal information and case management as cases moved through the court process (i.e. translation services at court appearances, the implications of the charge on day to day life of clients, their settlement, and job opportunities with clients).

The charges were withdrawn for all three clients in late 2017. However, Connecting Ottawa remains involved with the clients since The Kingston Police are unwilling at this point to return the driver's licenses of any of three clients' despite multiple requests. Most recently, correspondence indicated that they may destroy the license despite the position of the court. We are hopeful that a positive resolution can be reached with continued advocacy.

Case Study #2

“Mr. Stavros”, came to Canada from Greece as a refugee claimant in 2012. He failed to obtain refugee status at that time and was referred to the Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa (Clinique juridique) to undertake a permanent residence application based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Mr. Stavros spoke fluent French as well as Greek at the time he started his involvement with the Clinique juridique. Shortly after his referral to the Clinique juridique, Mr. Stavros suffered a severe stroke, resulting in him no longer being able to communicate in French. Upon release from the hospital, Mr. Stavros went to live in at palliative care facility and he subsequently received a letter from Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (Immigration) that he and his family would have to be examined for permanent residency in Canada. Many important documents were lost after his stroke when he was moved from his apartment to the care centre. In order to be examined for permanent residency, Mr. Stavros had to reapply for certain identity documents and communicate with his partner and children back in Greece for them to fulfill the requirements outlined by Immigration.

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

During the course of Connecting Ottawa's involvement with Mr. Stavros, he sadly passed away leaving no resolution to his permanent residence application based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Connecting Ottawa, working with the case workers at our partner agencies:

- Met with Mr. Stavros to ascertain what documents were in his possession and what documents were needed.
- Certified copies of original documents.
- Provided legal advice as well as legal information regarding his permanent residency application.
- Prepared two Statutory Declarations for Mr. Stavros. (One to enable him to get an Ontario ID Card and one to send to Greek authorities that would enable his son's mother to get a passport for the child.)
- Negotiated the release of \$2500.00 to be sent to Mr. Stavros' family in order for them to fulfill Immigration's requirements for permanent residency.
- Connected Mr. Stavros with a volunteer facilitator to accompany him to various appointments to get identity documents.
- Connected Mr. Stavros with a social worker to find suitable winter clothing for him.
- Visited him in the care facility for him to sign documents and to update him when he was too ill to come to the office.
- Maintained constant communication with Mr. Stavros' partner in Greece and sent documents for signature.
- Coordinated 4 extensions from Immigration to allow for the collection of all documentation required and for payments to be made.

Following Mr. Stavros' passing,

- Arranged for letters from social workers, attending physicians and the morgue technicians to be sent to the Canadian Embassy in Greece and facilitated 4 VISA applications for Mr. Stavros' partner and their 3 children. (An estranged brother from Quebec was contacted to draft an invitation letter to Canada for Mr. Stavros' partner and children.)
- Had the funds from the care centre reallocated for his family to attend the funeral instead of the Permanent residency requirements
- Made arrangements for the *Disease* Association of Ottawa to house Mr. Stavros' family should they be granted a visa.

Outside of Connecting Ottawa's mandate: Faith based organizations were contacted to arrange a funeral for Mr. Stavros.