

CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

ACTIVITY REPORT #12

Submitted to the
Law Foundation of Ontario
Access to Justice Fund

On behalf of the

CONNECTING OTTAWA NETWORK

June 30, 2018
(submitted: August 3, 2018)

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Introduction

This is the twelfth 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 Connecting Ottawa project aims to improve access to justice for linguistic minorities; people who are not proficient in English or French or who face communication challenges as the result of a disability or sensory impairment.

The report describes activities and performance milestones for the twelve-month period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. Our extension of 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 PLEI resources to most effectively reach our focus populations and the trusted intermediaries with whom they connect, by providing logistical support for regularly scheduled PLEI events at fixed locations accessible to our network partners and focus populations.
- 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.

In addition to the above, during the reporting period Connecting Ottawa participated in and supported an extensive review of its activities and impact by consultants contracted by the Law Foundation of Ontario. The final report was received in May of 2018.

An interim report on activities was submitted in December 2017. Activities for the period January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2018 have focused on assisting with the finalization of the collection of data for the program evaluation, the continued implementation of the planned activities, reaching out to new partners in the settlement services and community sectors, integrating CLEO's *Steps to Justice* platform into our website, hosting our annual conference, re-printing and distributing educational resources, and keeping to our original role as case consultants and capacity builders to our partner organizations.

Over the past 12 months, we have operated within the approved budget. The financial statement for the 12 month period ending June 30, 2018 is included in this document. Over

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the course of the year, 99% of the allocated funds were utilized, resulting in a small positive fund balance of \$ 2,867.33.

Our support and development of capacity among Ottawa's community service and legal communities surrounding access to justice for individuals within our target populations remains strong and highly regarded. The evaluation report supported these findings and showed evidence that Connecting Ottawa holds a reputation as a "go-to" source in the Ottawa region for legal information and referrals among trusted intermediaries and that demand for our resources, conferences, presentations, and consultations continues to grow.

In 2017-18, we continued to work closely with our partners and community receiving case consultations from 41 different agencies. These case consultations benefitted more than 450 clients and families in the Ottawa region. Much of this work was related to newcomer and refugee issues as a result of the growing sponsorship and government activity in this area.

In addition, in 2017-18 we welcomed three new partners to our partnership network: two involved in immigrant and refugee settlement and one supporting disability rights and information.

To support and develop capacity among our network of community, settlement, housing, legal and disability-serving organizations, Connecting Ottawa facilitated 39 separate educational presentations and workshops, hosted an annual conference on the topic of justice, housing and professional codes of conduct, held open lunch and learn workshop sessions for network partner staff members, and shared information and coordinated partnerships to assist with client supports. We also maintained our Connecting Ottawa website as a resource portal for legal information and resources for community workers.

A new project facilitated by Connecting Ottawa in 2017-18 was the Newcomer Identification Replacement Clinic and partnership. Responding to multiple calls for legal information to assist trusted intermediaries to support clients who have had their citizenship or permanent residence documentation lost or stolen, Connecting Ottawa co-ordinated a task force to explore the issue and facilitated a partnership with Pro Bono Students Canada and the YMCA Newcomer Information Centre to offer a clinic to provide services in this area.

Our goals to strengthen our volunteer facilitator program remain a challenge. In 2017-18, Connecting Ottawa welcomed four new volunteer facilitators and explored opportunities to promote this service more widely among our partnership network. Despite these efforts, the volunteer facilitator program continues to be underutilized by our network partners.

In the coming year Connecting Ottawa's direction will be to:

- Maintain and grow our network of partners;
- Continue to develop capacity among our network partners through one-on-one case consultations and educational efforts;

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- Implement resources and tools to enable trusted intermediaries to identify legal issues with confidence;
- Develop a plan to expand our volunteer facilitator base and better utilize these important resources among trusted intermediaries;
- Continue to update and enhance our website and social network activities;
- Explore and implement electronic and multi-media opportunities to share our capacity building efforts more widely;
- Review and implement the recommendations of the project review, where appropriate, to better focus and serve the mandate of Connecting Ottawa.

In the balance of this report, we share the activities of the Connecting Ottawa project over the past 12 months. We thank the Law Foundation again for its continued encouragement, interest, and support.

Highlights

Connect Community Legal Services and Community Health and Social Services

- Maintained staffing of 2.5 professional staff to support project goals and mandate.
- Recruited and welcomed 3 new agencies to the network.
- Undertook more than 65 meetings with current and potential Connecting Ottawa partner agencies.
- Received requests for case support from more than 41 community agencies.
- Conducted 450 case consultations either via direct consultation with Connecting Ottawa staff, joint consultation with partner agency staff members and Connecting Ottawa staff, or through partner agency staff members consulting with Connecting Ottawa staff.
- Offered 6 “Lunch and Learn” sessions to Connecting Ottawa partnership network staff on issues related to Housing Law, Refugee Claimant Processes, Family Law, Criminal Law, Wills and Power of Attorney, and Immigration.
- Conducted 39 training/education sessions for partner agency staff and clients related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French.
- Coordinated partnership and a pilot newcomer identification replacement ID clinic to assist individuals who have had their citizenship documentation lost or stolen.

Promote the Use of Electronic Resources by Trusted Intermediaries

- Maintained and increased list of social and legal resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites.
- Integrated the *Steps to Justice* resource into the Connecting Ottawa website.
- Increased users of the Connectingottawa.com website from 45,401 to **61,349**.
- Increased sessions of the Connectingottawa.com website from 54,476 to **75,113**.
- Increased followers and engagement with Connecting Ottawa through Twitter and Facebook.

Promote the use of PLEI Resources by Trusted Intermediaries

- Distributed Connecting Ottawa information and rack cards
- Re-printed Connecting Ottawa information card.
- Reprinted “Immigration Law” rack card (prepared in 2015) in 2 languages.
- Re-printed “Criminal Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 1 language.
- Re-printed “Housing Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 2 languages.
- Re-printed “Family Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 1 language.
- Translated Connecting Ottawa bed-bug resource and distributed in hard and electronic copy.
- Participated in the development and launch of the “Welcome to Canada: Discover what Ottawa Services are Available to You” information brochure/toolkit.

Develop and Support Volunteer Facilitators as Trusted Intermediaries

- Assigned 5 facilitators to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Assigned 2 facilitators to promote Connecting Ottawa services at 2 public events.
- Trained 4 new facilitators at annual training session.
- Received requests from two potential individuals expressing interest in becoming involved with the program.
- Explored options to assign volunteer coordinator role to maintain regular communication with current volunteer facilitators.

Develop and Support Outreach Efforts in the Community for Legal Information and Referrals

- Staffed Connecting Ottawa booth/table at 7 community events.
- Participated as member/regular contributor of 7 community organizations/projects addressing issues related to target populations.
- Hosted three LAO “Racialized Community” consultations in conjunction with 3 network partners.
- Hosted the Law Foundation of Ontario’s reporting of “Trusted Help” research project to the Connecting Ottawa network.

Share Lessons Learned

- Hosted 2018 Connecting Ottawa annual conference “*Housing, Justice and Professional Codes of Practice*” (99 participants registered/73 participants attended).
- Published 12 issues of Connecting Ottawa *Communique*.
- Invited speaker at University of Ottawa Access to Justice Program.

Project Coordination and Review

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirement.
- Ongoing consultation with project Advisory Committee.
- Coordination and support of Law Foundation of Ontario’s Program Evaluation.

Activity Reports

Connect Community Legal Services and 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

Develop, connect and provide educational resources to a network of trusted intermediaries who are front-line providers of legal information, assessment and referral services for our target populations and have a social services worker and a legal services worker available to advise and consult. 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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained staffing of 2.5 professional staff to support project goals and mandate.
- Recruited and welcomed 3 new agencies to the network.
- Undertook more than 65 meetings with current and potential Connecting Ottawa partner agencies.
- Received requests for case support from more than 41 community agencies.
- Conducted 450 case consultations either via direct consultation with Connecting Ottawa staff, joint consultation with partner agency staff members and Connecting Ottawa staff, or through partner agency staff members consulting with Connecting Ottawa staff.
- Offered 6 “Lunch and Learn” sessions to Connecting Ottawa partnership network staff on issues related to Housing Law, Refugee Claimant Processes, Family Law, Criminal Law, Wills and Power of Attorney, and Immigration.
- Conducted 39 training/education sessions for partner agency staff and clients related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French.
- Coordinated partnership and a pilot newcomer identification replacement ID clinic to assist individuals who have had their citizenship documentation lost or stolen.

ACTIVITIES:

Staffing

During the period, Connecting Ottawa maintained its staffing of 2.5 professional staff to support its mandate and project goals. Contracts were continued with two fulltime front-line staff: Alexandra-Marjorie Derisier LLL, LLB and Erin Fitzpatrick BSW, MSW, LLB LLM. Ms. Derisier has an extensive background in labor relations, human rights, and refugee law and has been actively involved, personally and professionally, with the settlement and immigration sector in Ottawa. Ms. Fitzpatrick, in addition to her social work training, has had extensive legal training – a unique mix that allows client issues to be understood and examined from a holistic approach. Both full time staff are bilingual in English and French; Ms. Derisier also speaks Spanish and Creole fluently. Office accommodations and human resources services continue to be provided by our partner agency Centre de services communitaires de Vanier, a community resource centre. CSC Vanier is the “employer of record” for project staff, manages payroll and benefits administration, provides the security of mature personnel policies and other human resources infrastructure, and provides office accommodations.

Gina Grosenick, Ph.D. is an independent consultant under contract for 2.5 days per week to provide project management services and coordination. Dr. Grosenick holds a Ph.D. in (non-profit) communication 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.

Connecting Ottawa partnership network

The Connecting Ottawa network of partners currently includes 49 organizations: 18 community service agencies, 13 agencies serving immigrants, 10 organizations providing legal services, 7 agencies serving people with disabilities, and 1 organization that provides translation and interpretation services.

In the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa recruited and welcomed three new partners to the network:

- **Refugee 613:** a coalition of citizens, settlement agencies, sponsorship groups and community partners working to provide refugees with the building blocks of successful integration. More information is available at: www.refugee613.ca.
- **Disability Advocacy Network of Eastern Ontario (DANEO):** an organization advocating for the rights of citizens labelled with intellectual/developmental disabilities to have access to the same opportunities and choices as other Ontarians. More information is available at: <https://inclusionneo.org/>.

- **Matthew House Ottawa:** a faith-based organization providing refugee services and a furniture bank to newcomers to the community. More information is available at: <https://www.matthewhouseottawa.org/>.

We have recognized that organizations engage differently with the project; partners participate according to their capacity and resources. To better manage our relationship with the network we have categorized the partners according to the quality and extent of their engagement (Levels 1-3). Organizations in Category 1 are integral to the success of the project; they are fully engaged in decision-making processes and contribute time and resources. 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. In the 2017-18 reporting period, more than 65 meetings with current and potential partner organizations were held to maintain existing network partnerships and to share the work of Connecting Ottawa with potential new partners. In these meetings we discuss the Connecting Ottawa network, assess how our legal issue awareness and system navigation tools can be improved, determine the training priorities for trusted intermediaries, and consult surrounding access to justice for our focus populations. Our goal is to connect in a face-to-face meeting at least once each year with Level 1 & 2 partners.

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. Staffs 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 client 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.

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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. There were 450 case consultations offered to partner agencies, other Ottawa regional agencies and services, as well as individual self-referrals.

	# Cases July 2016– June 2017	# Cases July 2017- June 2018
Social Worker	242	269
Lawyer	224	181
TOTAL	466	450

The cases presented a full range of legal and social issues. In 2017-18, 41 different partner agencies referred cases or sought assistance from our professional staff to assist them with client needs. Please see appendix for two examples of cases that Connecting Ottawa assisted with.

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 2017-18, our two front-line Connecting Ottawa staff hosted 6 Lunch and Learn sessions and presented 39 coordinated training sessions for partner agency staff.

The topics of the Lunch and Learn sessions in 2018/19 were Housing Law, Refugee Claimant Processes, Family Law, Criminal Law, Wills and Power of Attorney, and Immigration. Cumulatively, 83 individuals attended these sessions. Connecting Ottawa coordinated these one hour sessions at different partner agencies in different locations across the city to maintain engagement with different partners and to ensure that front line staff from different locations would be able to attend. In addition to providing valuable, timely information to partner agency staff, these get-togethers offered opportunities for networking and shared learnings.

In the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa staff conducted 39 professional development information sessions with partner agencies on various issues and topics. These sessions allow Connecting Ottawa to tailor topics and information to the specific agency's staff and/or

clients. In 2017-18 there was ongoing and great demand for presentations on immigration and refugee issues as well as family law issues and how to obtain legal supports. Together, more than 170 partner agency staff and 450 clients attended these various workshops.

The ongoing demand for information on the legal supports available in Ottawa and how to refer clients prompted Connecting Ottawa to partner with Clinique Juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa to prepare and translate a presentation on this issue that can be utilized by both organizations.

Connecting partners and resources to fill gaps

In 2017-18, in response to an identified gap by one of Connecting Ottawa's partners around serving and supporting individuals whose citizenship documentation has been lost or stolen, Connecting Ottawa coordinated a task force to explore the issue and potential partnership solutions. Connecting Ottawa co-chaired a task force with the Ottawa Community Immigration Service Organization (OCISO) to bring together the settlement agencies in the city to discuss the difficulty, demand and potential solutions to helping clients replace lost or stolen permanent residency or citizenship documentation. Following affirmation of this being a shared issue among the partnership network, Connecting Ottawa reached out to organizations providing identification replacement support in Ottawa to explore options to expand their services. Connecting Ottawa and the task force enabled a partnership between Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC), working under the direction of lawyers from Borden, Ladner & Gervais and the YMCA-YWCA Newcomer Information Centre to hold a pilot clinic in March of 2018 to offer these services. Following positive demand, PBSC and YMCA-YWCA have agreed to host 4 more clinics in 2018/19.

GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Maintain professional staffing.
- Maintain and grow the Connecting Ottawa partnership network.
- Continue to support the citizenship identification replacement task force and clinics project and partnership.
- Continue to develop the capacity within the partnership network through providing one-on-one case consultations.
- Continue to develop the capacity in the partnership network through educational sessions including:
 - Connecting Ottawa Lunch and Learn sessions.
 - Partner agency professional development sessions for staff and clients.
 - Collaboration with other organizations to provide training and education sessions on issues relevant to our target populations.

Develop and Promote Trusted Intermediaries’ engagement with social and legal resources via web and other electronic networks.

OUR CHALLENGE

Navigation of the legal system remains challenging for many front-line service providers in Ottawa. 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 initiatives Your Legal Rights and Steps to Justice.

OUR INTENT

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

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained and increased list of social and legal resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites.
- Integrated the *Steps to Justice* resource into the Connecting Ottawa website.
- Increased users of the Connectingottawa.com website from 45,401 to **61,349**.
- Increased sessions of the Connectingottawa.com website from 54,476 to **75,113**.
- Increased followers and engagement with Connecting Ottawa through Twitter and Facebook.

ACTIVITIES:

Connecting Ottawa’s websites have been maintained in both English (connectingottawa.com) and French (connexionottawa.com). The domain registrations have been extended until April 2019 and we have arranged for hosting services through a monthly agreement with a hosting service. 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 groups, and the public.

Connecting Ottawa continues 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 (IAR) resource in Ottawa. In the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa met with CICO/211 to review the CICO feed on the database and facilitated adjustments to ensure that the systems work more cohesively. During the period, Connecting Ottawa also coordinated adaptations to its website to integrate the *Steps to Justice* resource within the Connecting

Ottawa website. Now individuals looking for legal information sources will be offered *Steps to Justice* information on the connectingottawa.com legal resources page, if it exists.

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

- Connecting Ottawa Legal Health Check Up
- CLEO Resources
- PLE Learning Exchange
- 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 in both official languages
- Trauma Informed Care Case Based Learning Scenarios
- Upcoming Connecting Ottawa events
- Upcoming partner events

Website traffic

Google Analytics informs us that traffic continues to grow steadily on our websites. The number of sessions on the connectingottawa.com website for 2017-18 was 75,113 compared to 54,476 for the previous year. Our French website also slightly increased with the number of sessions on the connexionottawa.com website increasing from 1,217 in the previous year to 1,502 in the 2017-18 year.

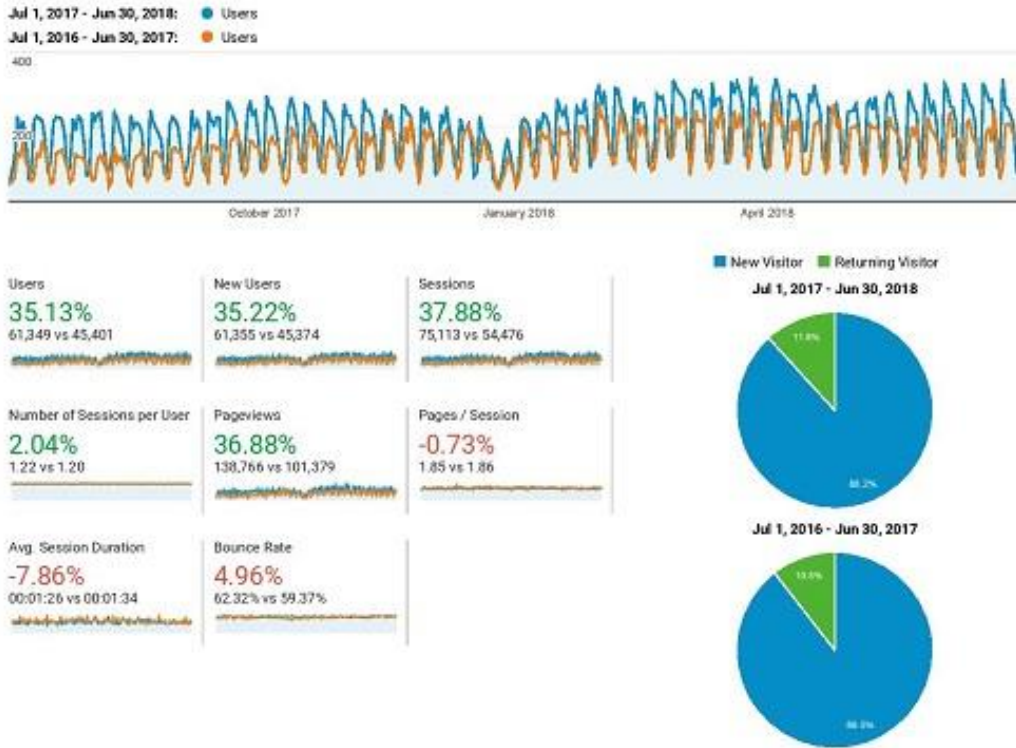
Number of Users and Pageviews

When compared to the previous period, the number of users of the English web site has increased from 45,401 to 61,349; the number of users on the French web site also slightly increased over the same period. Pageviews increased 36.88% (connectingottawa.com) and 25.9% (connexionottawa.com), respectively.

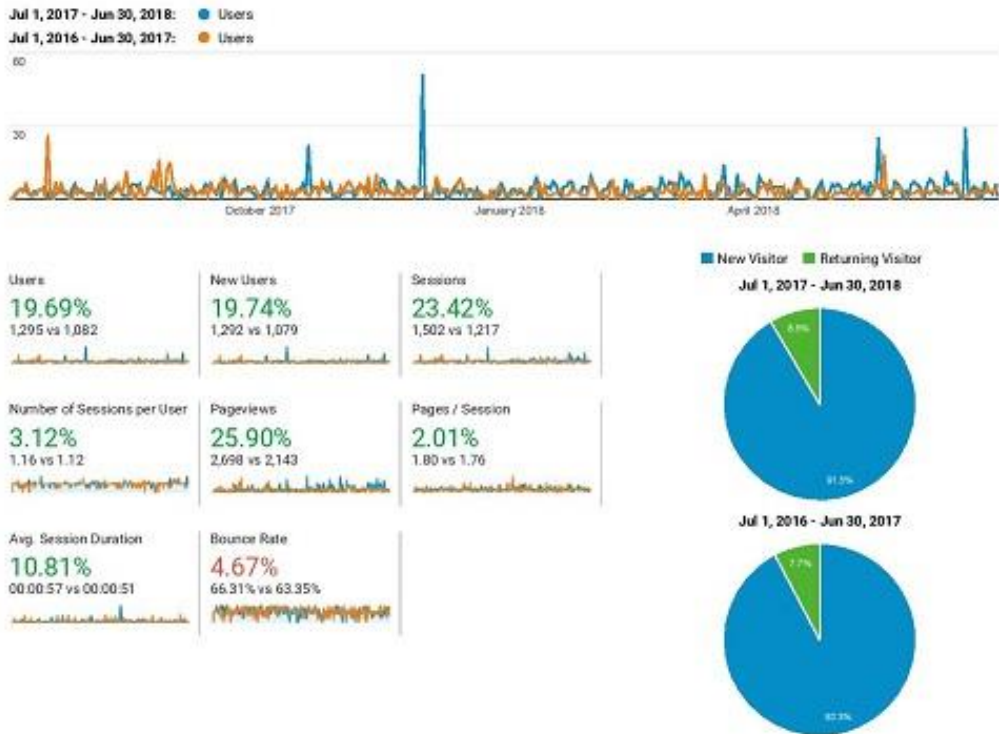
The evaluation of the Connecting Ottawa project by the Law Foundation of Ontario revealed that the trusted intermediaries in Ottawa regularly turn to the Connecting Ottawa website for legal information and to identify legal resources. While we were aware that the website was being used, this report helped us understand better who was using the website and for what purposes.

The following analytics illustrates the trends identified over the reporting period:

Connectingottawa.com



Connexionottawa.com (FR)

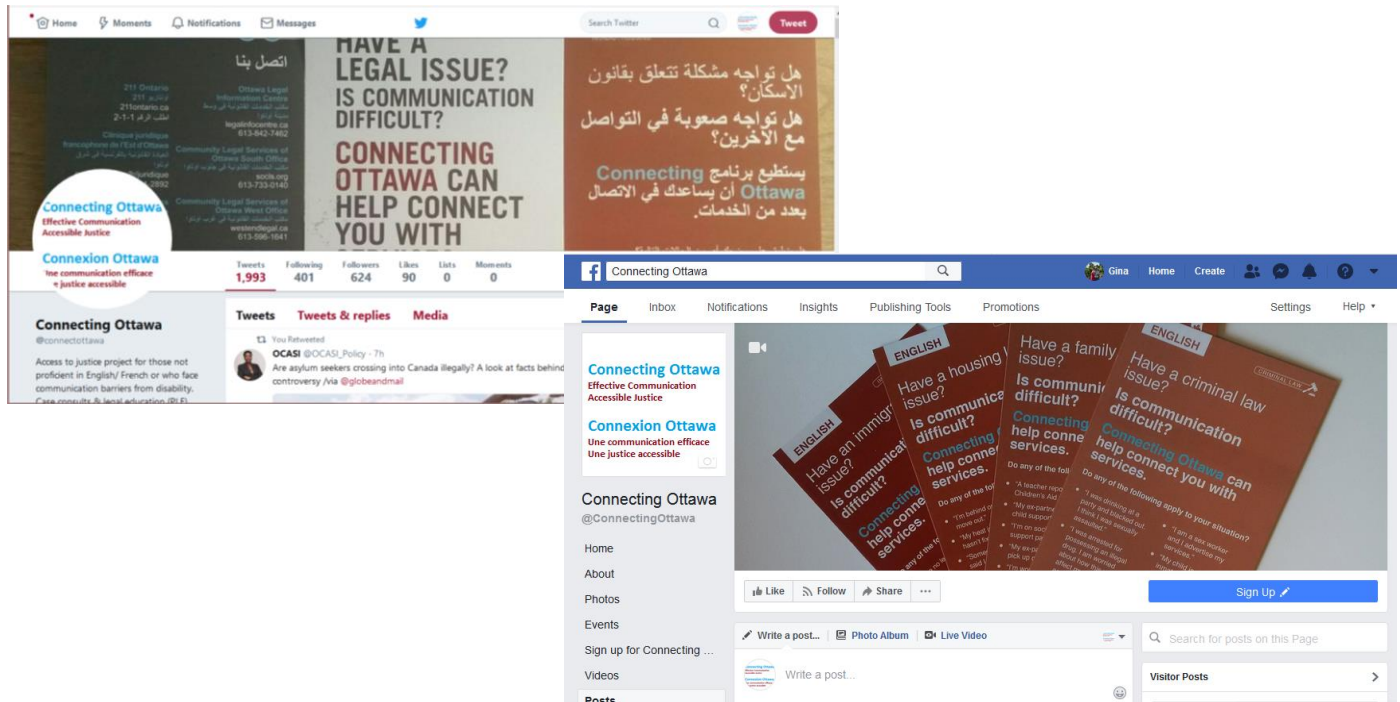


Most Viewed Websites and Topics

Traffic patterns reveal that the Connecting Ottawa “resources” and “services” listings continue to be used extensively by users to our websites. Of interest was the increase in the number of pageviews around resources and services related to family law and housing. These are two issues that partner agencies have highlighted as also increasing in the community.

Social Media

Connecting Ottawa maintains a Twitter and Facebook feed to share news and information related to our partnership network, our focus populations, access to services, and emerging legal issues. Over the reporting period we increased our activity on social media, tweeting or retweeting 193 times and posting on Facebook 20 times, resulting in increasing our “followers” on twitter by 17.7% from 530 to 624 and our “likes” on Facebook by 14.4% to 119.



GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Maintain existing and add new up-to-date and relevant resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa website.
- Ensure comparability of Connexion Ottawa site to English site.
- Promote website resources through network communication.
- Continue to promote Connecting Ottawa and partner activities and issues through social media.
- Grow social media networks to connect with more individuals in the community that provide legal information to our target populations.

Promote the Use of PLEI Resources by Trusted Intermediaries

OUR CHALLENGE

Despite the many excellent electronic resources available, many front-line service providers in Ottawa seek resources to distribute in hardcopy to their clients to help them address their legal and social needs.

OUR INTENT

Develop, as needed, hardcopy resources for distribution to network partners to help clients understand how to address their social and legal needs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Distributed Connecting Ottawa information and rack cards
- Re-printed Connecting Ottawa information card.
- Reprinted “Immigration Law” rack card (prepared in 2015) in 2 languages.
- Re-printed “Criminal Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 1 language.
- Re-printed “Housing Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 2 languages.
- Re-printed “Family Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 1 language.
- Translated Connecting Ottawa bed-bug resource and distributed in hard and electronic copy.
- Participated in the development and launch of the “Welcome to Canada: Discover what Ottawa Services are Available to You” information brochure/toolkit.

ACTIVITIES:

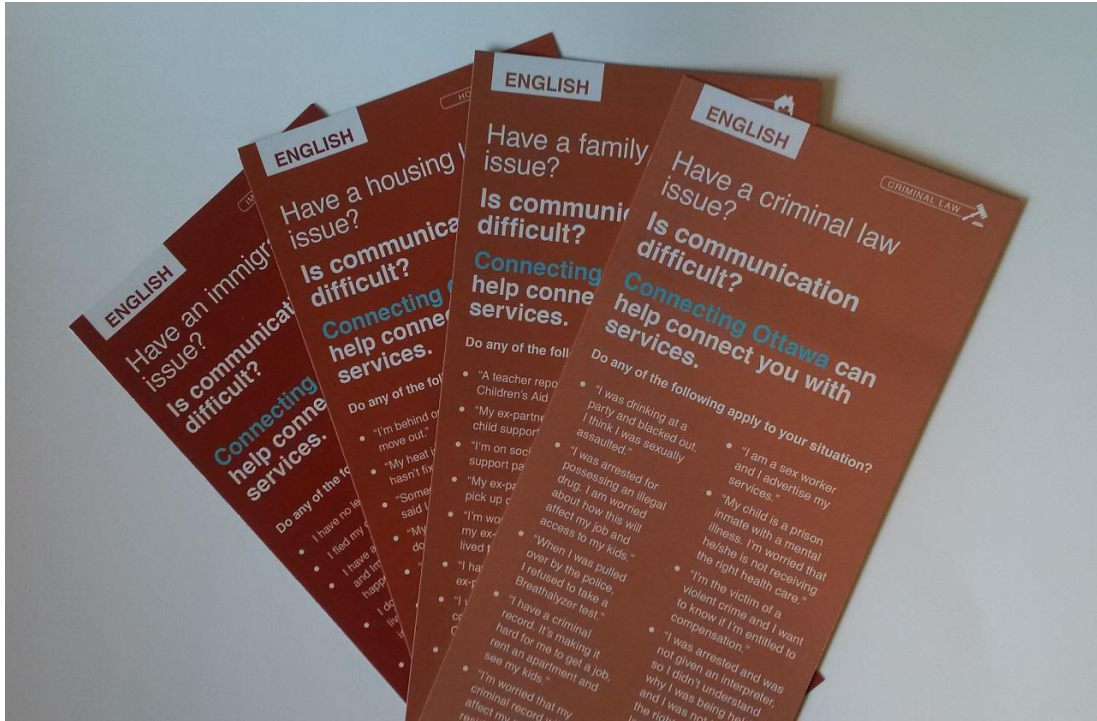
Connecting Ottawa Rack Cards

In 2016-17, Connecting Ottawa developed a set of multi-lingual rack cards on issues of “Housing Law”, “Criminal Law” and “Family Law” to supplement the popular “Immigration” rack card printed the previous year. Rack cards measure 4 inches x 9 inches and are placed by partners in resource centres as well as distributed to partners and clients by Connecting Ottawa staff in consultations and in seminars/PLEs.

The rack cards are branded with the Connecting Ottawa logo and website, include questions from our Legal Health Check Up resource to help individuals identify if they have a legal issue in the area and list local resources that partners and clients can turn to in order to resolve the issue. Rack cards are printed in six languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Farsi and Somali.

In 2017-18, Connecting Ottawa distributed over 5,000 of these resources and reprinted many of the higher demand pieces.

In addition, in 2017-18, Connecting Ottawa distributed and re-printed its general “Have a Legal Issue? Is Communication Difficult” information card that provides information about the services and activities of Connecting Ottawa. These rack cards are distributed to new and potential partners and at outreach events to share Connecting Ottawa’s mandate with the larger community.



Other PLEI Resources

Connecting Ottawa partnered with two agencies in 2017-18 to provide additional information resources to assist front line workers and their clients to access social and legal assistance.

In conjunction with Clinique juridique de l'Est d'Ottawa, the “Bed Bugs/Pest Social Services and Legal Resources” information sheet, developed by Connecting Ottawa in 2016, was translated into French and made available to the partnership network in hard and soft copy.

In the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa collaborated with the Refugee Network of Ottawa and Refugee 613 to develop and launch the “Welcome to Canada: Discover what Ottawa Services are Available to You” information brochure/toolkit. This toolkit provides information on key services essential to refugee newcomers, including legal, upon their arrival in Ottawa. This brochure has been extensively distributed to organizations serving refugees in Ottawa.



GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Continue to distribute Connecting Ottawa rack cards and reprint as required.
- Develop, as needed, PLEI resources to support partnership network.
- Engage with, as required, partner collaborations to develop resources that assist individuals in our target populations to access legal and social services.

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 to assist them with accessing services to which they have been referred.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Assigned 5 facilitators to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Assigned 2 facilitators to promote Connecting Ottawa services at 2 public events.
- Trained 4 new facilitators at annual training session.
- Received requests from two potential individuals expressing interest in becoming involved with the program.
- Explored options to assign volunteer coordinator role to maintain regular communication with current volunteer facilitators.

ACTIVITIES:

Connecting Ottawa has continued to identify the need for multilingual persons to volunteer their time and experience to facilitate access to needed services by our focus populations. A program has been developed that screens and orients volunteer facilitators via interviews, information sessions, a positive Ottawa Police Service Record Check appropriate for volunteers working with vulnerable populations in community non-profit agencies, and completion of training prior to assignment with a client. Training offers not only a shared learning experience re: active listening, problem solving, cultural competencies, privacy and confidentiality, maintaining personal boundaries, roles and responsibilities, etc., but also creates an opportunity for project staff to assess the capacities and capabilities of prospective facilitators in a dynamic setting. Successful volunteers sign a Volunteer Agreement that describes the expected relationship between Facilitators and Connecting Ottawa.

The Volunteer Facilitator program is an important opportunity to engage the larger community in the Connecting Ottawa Program. The concept and goal of trained facilitators to support clients' access to needed services is highly regarded by our community partners; however the

demand for the service and the process to identify and facilitate assignments on a timely basis has been wanting.

For the 2017-18 year, Connecting Ottawa continued to promote the service to our partnership network in our monthly newsletter and at partnership meetings, trained 4 new volunteers, coordinated 5 client assignments, and explored ways to expand the program through developing a volunteer coordinator role.

In November of 2017, Connecting Ottawa held a volunteer facilitator information and training session. Four new volunteer facilitators were trained and signed up to participate in the program. In the February, 2018, a long-standing volunteer facilitator was invited to take on a peer co-ordinator role with the program, to help Connecting Ottawa keep in touch with and maintain momentum with our current group of facilitators. Unfortunately, two months into the assignment, the new coordinator moved out of the city.

The volunteer facilitator program continues to be a priority for Connecting Ottawa. Further development and promotion of the program is planned for the coming year.

GOALS FOR 2018/19

- Identify new peer volunteer co-ordinator.
- Identify workable process for supporting the goals of the program.
- Train current and new volunteers on the program.
- Promote the program and resource among our partnership network.

Develop & Support Outreach Efforts in the Community for Legal Information and Referrals.

OUR CHALLENGE

Many persons who are isolated from the mainstream Canadian experience because of cultural and language barriers are not only relatively unaware of common legal issues but also not connected to the many services that are part of our network. Moreover, most of the information that is available is not understood by many within our target populations.

OUR INTENT

- To promote Connecting Ottawa service and its partnerships to target populations and the trusted intermediaries with whom they connect who are not yet aware of the project.
- Partner with and provide access to our network for organizations seeking to improve access to justice for our target populations.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Staffed Connecting Ottawa booth/table at 7 community events.
- Participated as member/regular contributor of 7 community organizations/projects addressing issues related to target populations.
- Hosted three LAO “Racialized Community” consultations in conjunction with 3 network partners.
- Hosted the Law Foundation of Ontario’s reporting of “Trusted Help” research project to the Connecting Ottawa network.

ACTIVITIES:

Booths at Community Events

During this reporting period, Connecting Ottawa set up and staffed a booth at seven community events including:

- Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair
- South East Ottawa Community Health Centre Fair
- University of Ottawa Human Rights and Conflict Program Information Fair
- Community Adult Justice Network of Ottawa Agency Fair
- Biennial Ottawa Immigration Forum
- Ottawa Social Services Networking Lunch
- Eastern Ontario LAO Clinics Spring Training

At each event, Connecting Ottawa set up a banner and shared information about our project with attendees and other exhibitors. Events provide an excellent opportunity for Connecting

Ottawa to share our mandate with community members, connect with some of our existing partners who may not be regularly engaged with the project and to identify potential new partners in the community.



Community Engagement

In 2017-18, Connecting Ottawa was a member/regular participant of seven different organizations/projects addressing issues related to our target populations. These include:

- Refugee Network of Ottawa (ReNoO)
- Connecting on Disability and Abuse (CODA)
- Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership
- Somerset West Inter-Agency Lunch Group
- Ottawa Poverty Challenge
- Refugee Hub Sponsorship Partnership Program
- University of Ottawa “Free Law in the Mall” pop up clinic

Connecting Ottawa has found participation in these organizations and projects to be of benefit to maintain connection with network members, share information about our project and identify potential new network partners. During the 2017-18 period, Connecting Ottawa staff participated in more than 20 meetings and group events.

Community Outreach

Connecting Ottawa explores opportunities to partner with provincial or national organizations on local efforts to advance access to justice for our target populations.

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In 2017-18, Connecting Ottawa, in conjunction with three of our network partners, hosted the LAO Racialized Communities consultations in Ottawa. Connecting Ottawa also actively promoted via our network and newsletters the Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC) community consultation in Ottawa and efforts by Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) to raise support for waiving fees for “impoverished Ontarians” needing to replace birth certificates or Ontario Photo Cards.

In addition, during the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa partnered with the Law Foundation of Ontario to share information about the “Trusted Help” research report to our community network at our Annual Conference.

GOALS FOR 2018-19:

- Continue to network and share information about the Connecting Ottawa project at community and public events.
- Continue to participate, as appropriate, as a member/contributor to community organizations/projects that serve Connecting Ottawa target populations.
- Identify new opportunities to partner with provincial and national organizations to help achieve goals that will advance access to justice for our target populations.

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, offer workshops, and poster lessons learned to audiences of our peers and colleagues in community services, especially legal services.
- Share information and news with our network of partners.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Hosted 2018 Connecting Ottawa annual conference "*Housing, Justice and Professional Codes of Practice*" (99 participants registered/73 participants attended).
- Published 12 issues of *Connecting Ottawa Communique*.
- Invited speaker at University of Ottawa Access to Justice Program.

ACTIVITIES

Annual Conference

Connecting Ottawa's 7th conference "*Housing, Justice and Professional Codes of Practice*" took place on May 16, 2018 at Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre and was attended by 73 participants.

Housing and inadequate housing is both a legal and social issue for many linguistic minorities and those with communication barriers as a result of a disability or sensory impairment. The 2018 conference explored the connection between housing and other legal and social issues, highlighted successful local programs that supported clients and shared best practices for addressing clients' legal and social needs surrounding housing issues. In addition, the conference reviewed the ethical and professional codes of practice for legal and social services workers supporting these target populations

The conference's keynote address was offered by Karen Andrews of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario followed by a panel discussion of successful community programs serving the social and legal needs of tenants. A discussion was then hosted about ethical and professional codes of conduct. The conference closed with a workshop and discussion about how participants could incorporate the learnings into their practice.

A survey conducted of the participants evaluation of the conference reported that the conference achieved its set goals with more than 80% of conference participants responding that they felt the conference goals were achieved. In addition, 80% of the respondents stated that overall they were “very” or “extremely” satisfied with the conference. The keynote speaker was the highest rated element of the conference, followed closely by the panel discussion and the opportunity to network with peers and other professionals.

Qualitative comments received indicated that Connecting Ottawa should endeavour to incorporate more opportunities for information sharing and reflection and to share more examples of practical solutions related to the topic at hand.



Connecting Ottawa Communique

Connecting Ottawa’s newsletter *Communique* is distributed electronically to the Connecting Ottawa partnership network. Newsletters include announcements related to the Connecting Ottawa project and activities, pertinent news and information relevant to access to justice for linguistic minorities and those with communication barriers, upcoming events, and information about resources most beneficial to those supporting clients with communication barriers.

In 2017-18 twelve issues of the Communique were distributed. Connecting Ottawa encourages our partners to share the information broadly within their organizations and with their front line staff.

Invited Speaker

In 2018-19 Connecting Ottawa staff members were invited to share lessons learned as a guest speaker and workshop facilitator at the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Law Access to Justice Lab and Ticket Defence Program.

GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Host a 2019 Conference for our partnership network.
- Incorporate learnings from 2018 conference into planning for 2019 conference.
- Distribute monthly *Communique* newsletters to our partnership network.
- Share information about the Connecting Ottawa evaluation to our partnership network and other access to justice projects.

Project Management 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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirement.
- Ongoing consultation with project Advisory Committee.
- Coordination and support of Law Foundation of Ontario’s Program Evaluation.

ACTIVITIES

Administration

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

In 2017-18 efforts were made to formalize key policies and processes of the services provided by Connecting Ottawa, specifically as they relate to individuals and cases eligible for Connecting Ottawa services. Following discussions with staff and active partners, a discussion paper related to eligibility was developed and presented to the Advisory Group for review and consideration, resulting in an agreed to practice moving forward.

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group met on four occasions in the past year 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 retirements and position changes, there were some alterations to the Advisory Group in 2017-18.

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 CHC
Daniel Gagnon	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa (Downtown Office)
Siffan Rahman	Community	Somerset West CHC
Françoise Magunira	Immigrant	The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC)
Christine Sharp	Community	Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
Michel Fournier	Community	CICO/211
Gary Stein	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa (South Office)
Arber Zaplluzha	Immigrant	Catholic Immigration Centre
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, providing data and support as needed, and reviewing the first draft of the report.

The final report was received in May of 2018. Connecting Ottawa is pleased with the outcome of this report and, following review and discussion by staff and Advisory Group members, are looking at opportunities to share the information with our larger network and incorporate findings, as appropriate, into our practice.

GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Maintain effective operational standards and practices.
- Hold 4 advisory committee meetings.
- Share information from the Project Review.
- Review and incorporate evaluation recommendations into practice.
- Seek funding for continued operations.
- Identify and formalize policies and processes, as required, for effective operation of the project.

Financial Report

CONNECTING OTTAWA		
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		11a
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2018		
	Budget	Actuals
REVENUE		
2.0 Law Foundation of Ontario		
412 Received During Year	256,560	230,904.00
412 Holdback receivable		22,788.67
	256,560	253,692.67
EXPENSES		
3.2 Website Hosting, Management and Administration		
595 Translation	-	-
625 Website Hosting, Management and Administration	6,500	4,626.75
	6,500	4,626.75
3.3 Facilitators to Connect Clients and Legal Services		
590 Training	400	293.10
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	1,200	175.00
550 Meeting Costs		33.06
595 Translation		
510 Printing/Supplies		
615 Travel		
	1,600	501.16
3.4 Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection		
515 Accommodation	12,000	11,583.33
530 Cloud/Mobile Services	1,800	1,367.09
540 Equipment Purchases	300	3,710.09
545 Materials and Supplies	800	860.55
550 Meeting Costs	500	78.37
557 Professional Fees		2,838.86
558 Liability Insurance		3,636.90
56X Salaries and Benefits	165,200	157,850.00
562 Resource Development	1,000	980.48
585 Staffing Costs		916.75
590 Training/Professional Development	1,800	1,183.55
595 Translation/Interpretation	1,500	516.26
615 Travel	2,500	2,130.88
626 Web Communication/Social Media Support	-	-
699 Sundry		88.00
	187,400	187,741.11
3.6 Secretariat		
510 Administration		-
545 Materials and Supplies	400	207.19
550 Meeting Costs		87.13
560 Project Co-ordinator	50,000	49,999.98
595 Translation/Interpretation	-	220.00
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	-	-
615 Travel	400	5.20
	50,800	50,519.50
3.7 Shared Lessons Learned		
520 Annual Conference	2,500	2,811.35
545 Materials and Supplies		-
546 Materials and Supplies: Rack Cards		-
550 Conferences, etc	-	-
595 Translation/Interpretation	-	-
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria		-
615 Travel	750	585.10
	3,250	3,396.45
3.8 Administration		
542 Lead Agency Stipend	5,000	5,000.00
527 Bookkeeping	1,000	1,039.40
525 Bank Charges	-	68.30
522 Auditing	800	800.00
699 Sundry	-	-
799 Contingency	-	-
	6,800	6,907.70
Total Expenses	256,350	253,692.67
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES		
(EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	210	0.00

NOTES

- Connecting Ottawa continues to maximize funding through partnership agreements that allow us to minimize capital costs and other expenditures. Office and staffing costs are contracted through Vanier Community Services Centre. Community Legal Services of Ottawa continues to be the “lead agency” of record for the funding and provides accounting, book keeping and meeting services.
- Equipment purchases were in excess of budget due to need to replace front-line staff equipment. Approval from LFO was received prior to these purchases being made.
- The project, overall, remains within budget.

LFO Reporting Statistics

Organization: Connecting Ottawa	Grant file #: CONRE-09-16
Period: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018	
Project title: THE CONNECTING REGION -- CONNECTING OTTAWA	

	Total #	Notes or comments
PLEI		
# of print resources produced, updated	7	
# 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	39	
# of people with legal needs or members of the public trained	450+	Number of case consultations
# of trusted intermediaries and / or frontline workers trained	726	Case consultation with front-line workers: 400+ (see note A) Lunch and Learns: 83 Partner Workshops and Meetings: 170 Conference: 73
# of sessions / page views	75,113/138,766	
# of print resources distributed	5,000	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	450+	(See note A)
# of clients provided legal advice or brief services	450+	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	

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# of pro bono hours volunteered by students	0	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by paralegals	0	
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	7	Connecting Ottawa Conference: 1 Lunch and Learns: 6
Building a culture of law and understanding of rights		
# of training events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	46	Partner Workshops and Meetings: 39 Lunch and Learn Sessions: 6 Conference: 1
# of participants in events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	326	Partner Workshops and Meetings: 170 Lunch and Learn Sessions: 83 Conference: 73
# of student/youth participants	*note B	
# of adult participants	*note B	
Encouraging partnerships and collaboration		
# of organizations you partnered with	61	Partner Network: 49 Outreach Organizations: 7 Referral agencies not in network: 5

- Note A: We are unable to report specific numbers at this time. Our case consultations can include multiple clients and trusted intermediaries. We are exploring ways to collect this specific information.
- 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

Paul Preacher (name changed to protect privacy of individual) is a young man from Vietnam. He came to Canada in 2014 for a 3-year contract, employed by a wealthy family on diplomatic mission to Canada. Paul was promised a generous salary in exchange for 40-45 hours of work as a groundskeeper/driver in Canada.

Once in Canada, Paul was severely mistreated by his employers. He was essentially trafficked into Canada under the promise of stable employment. He was not paid the promised salary; instead he was starved, beaten, and shackled in the family's home. He was treated as a slave. He was threatened with severe bodily harm and his wife and child back in Vietnam were also threatened.

After almost 2 years of cruel treatment by his "employers", the Ottawa Police were tipped off as to his predicament and they rescued Paul from his situation. Once liberated by the police Paul was put into contact with various organizations that help victims of human trafficking. At some point after his rescue, Paul was referred to a program for refugee claimants at Peter's Holy Rock Church. A volunteer named Silas Missions was paired with Paul and assisted him in finding housing and a lawyer to assist him with a refugee claim in Canada.

Paul was referred to a private bar lawyer named John Baptist, John had previously worked in the Ottawa legal clinic system and was familiar with Connecting Ottawa's work.

Paul's refugee claim was successful. However, Paul remained severely psychologically and physically traumatized by his ordeal and unable to work. His lawyer, John, referred Paul to Connecting Ottawa after he was refused by one of the two legal clinics who assist clients before the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CCIB). The CCIB assesses financial compensation for victims of violent crimes committed in Ontario.

Connecting Ottawa's lawyer had an initial meeting with Paul, Silas, and an interpreter who had been working on Paul's case since his rescue by the police. After the initial meeting the CO lawyer verified that no other clinics in Ottawa could help Paul. One legal clinic only served female victims of crime and another served only francophone victims of crime.

Connecting Ottawa provided the following support to Paul:

- Explained the role and mandate of the CICB.
- Reviewed all forms and evidence submitted to the CICB.
- Assisted in writing to the CICB.
- Referred Paul to a settlement worker from Catholic Immigration Centre to review immigration forms for his wife and child.
- Contacted Paul's MP in order to have his family reunification application accelerated once we learned that his abusers were set to return to their country of origin shortly, leaving Paul's wife and child exposed to danger.
- Wrote to the Canadian Council for Refugees asking them to intervene on Paul's behalf with the Visa office.

This case is still ongoing.

Case Study #2

Ms. Adamson (name changed to protect privacy of individual) is a single woman aged 49 and Canada citizen who has multiple disabilities and has complex medical issues. She identifies as lesbian. She self-referred to Connecting Ottawa and did not have a front-line worker. Ms. Adamson's sole source of income is ODSP. She has accessed multiple professionals and others in attempt to support and assist her with her two legal issues. Ms. Adamson previously had legal aid clinic assistance but that has been discontinued.

Ms. Adamson has a communication barrier stemming from a learning disability and mental health disabilities. Ms. Adamson completed her high school education after being diagnosed and properly supported with accommodation for her learning disability. She then decided to pursue higher education at a University in Toronto. She started her studies and accessed the office for students with disabilities. She was then diagnosed with diabetes. This exacerbated and complicated her pursuit of her university degree. She was unable to complete her degree after many years of study. During the course of her studies, she took out significant loans via the national and provincial government loan programs. She now owes several thousands of dollars.

This case involves the issue of education law and duty to accommodate and debt issues with the National Student Loan Centre. The triggering event for seeking support was student loan payment due and meetings with representatives of a post-secondary institution that she was attending.

The following issues were identified:

- Lack of understanding of the legal contract that she has undertaken with the student loan centre.
- Structural accessibility issues due to computer-only based nature of loan document system that the client is unable to negotiate effectively due to her disabilities.

- The client maintains that her inability to complete her academic degree was owing to a failure of the academic institution to properly accommodate her complex disabilities/serious illness.
- The client feels a very significant sense of injustice surrounding various experiences at the academic institutions, which has conflated the independent legal issues of the debt contract and the willingness of the institution to accommodate.

Connecting Ottawa provided the following support to Ms. Adamson:

- Explained and discussed at length the separate nature of the two legal issues; legal advice regarding the nature of a legal contract (debt);
- Arranged to have client work with volunteer facilitator to call National Student Loan Centre and correct her loan documents;
- Explained the aspects of her loan document and ensured client able to effectively and independently access her account in future;
- Provided legal advice regarding duty to accommodation and provided PLEI accessible plain language materials regarding “duty to accommodate”;
- Explored and provided options for legal representation in area of litigation;
- Recommended and supported the need for ongoing counselling to address ongoing disappointment resulting from these issues;
- Provided counselling surrounding the need for counselling and suggestions (warm referral) for most appropriate no-cost counselling options available;
- Providing ongoing adjustment counselling to manage client expectations.