

CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

ACTIVITY REPORT #14

Submitted to the
Law Foundation of Ontario
Access to Justice Fund

On behalf of
CONNECTING OTTAWA

June 30, 2019
(Revised: August 27, 2019)

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INTRODUCTION

This is the fourteenth 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, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

As per our 2018-19 funding agreement, our key objectives for the project were to:

- Connect community legal services and community health and social services.
- Promote the use of electronic and other resources among trusted intermediaries.
- Develop and support volunteer facilitators as trusted intermediaries.
- Conduct public outreach and education.
- Share lessons learned.
- Manage project coordination and review.

To achieve the above, our core activities for 2018-19 were to:

- Maintain and grow our partnership network and maintain regular communication with them;
- 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 through consultation with our front line professionals;
- Provide capacity building opportunities on legal issues relevant to our target populations to trusted intermediaries and our network of partners through Lunch and Learn workshops and educational presentations delivered upon request at partner agencies' on-site locations;
- Promote the use of resources developed by Connecting Ottawa and other resources to trusted intermediaries, including staff and volunteers of partner organizations via our website, communicate and social media;
- Further develop the Connecting Ottawa website 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 PLE efforts 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;

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- Increase attention and support towards disability-serving agencies who work with people with communication barriers;
- Receive and share with our partnership network the results and recommendations from the LFO's evaluation of our program and explore opportunities to increase the project's impact

An interim report on activities was submitted in January 2019. Activities for the period January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2018 have focused on hiring and onboarding a new staff member, Liz Majic who replaced Erin Fitzpatrick who left the organization on December 31, 2018; the continued implementation of the planned activities; exploring opportunities to integrate the recommendations of the LFO evaluation report; reaching out to new partners in the settlement services and community sectors; coordinating an RFP and awarding a contract to update and relaunch Connecting Ottawa's website; hosting our annual conference; re-printing and distributing educational resources; and maintaining our efforts as case consultants and capacity builders to our partner organizations.

Over the past 12 months, we have operated according to the approved budget in all areas but staffing costs. The financial statement for the 12 month period ending June 30, 2019 is included in this document. Over the course of the year, 95.5% of the allocated funds were utilized. The staffing costs for the period 2018-19 were underutilized as a result of unspent salaries for the 2.5 month period when we were without one front-line staff member. We have discussed the utilization of this unspent balance with the Law Foundation of Ontario and will be submitting a proposal to spend these funds by August 31, 2019.

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 conducted last year 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.

Below, please find a summary of project highlights and a detailed overview of our activities for each strategic objective as well as Connecting Ottawa's LFO reporting numbers and financial report to June 30, 2019.

We thank the Law Foundation of Ontario 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 and supported active partnership network of 51 agencies.
- Participated in more than 50 meetings with current and potential Connecting Ottawa partner agencies.
- Trained 331 trusted intermediaries and served 383 clients of partner agencies through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member.
- Offered 6 “Lunch and Learn” sessions to Connecting Ottawa partnership network staff on issues related to Refugee Claimant Processes, Income Tax, Trauma Informed Care, CAS and Vulnerable Populations and Consumer Protection.
- Conducted 18 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.
- Held 3 Training Sessions for front-line workers on the issue of “Helping People Find Good Legal Information”.
- Coordinated 4 newcomer identification replacement ID clinics in partnership with YMCA and Pro Bono Students Canada to assist individuals who have had their citizenship documentation lost or stolen.
- Supported and managed one University of Ottawa law student intern placement.

PROMOTE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC AND OTHER RESOURCES BY TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Promoted relevant CLEO, *Steps to Justice* and other resources via Connecting Ottawa communique, website, and social media.
- Embedded the French-language *Justice pas-à-pas* resources into the connexionottawa.com site.
- Maintained and increased a list of social and legal resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites.
- Distributed Connecting Ottawa information and rack cards.
- Re-printed “Housing Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 4 languages.
- Facilitated stable and steady growth in the use of our website and on-line resources:
 - Increased users to the connectingottawa.com website to 83,669 from 61,349 and connexionottawa.com website to 1,665 from 1,295 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of sessions of the connectingottawa.com website to 101,107 from 75,113 and the connexionottawa.com website to 1,887 from 1,502 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of page views on the connectingottawa.com website to 181,640 from 138,766 and the connexionottawa.com website to 3,449 from 2,698 in the previous period.
 - Increased followers to Connecting Ottawa Twitter and Facebook social media feeds.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS AS TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Coordinated partnership to reintegrate volunteer facilitator program with social service agencies.
- Joined Volunteer Ottawa to recruit new volunteer facilitators.
- Participated in the Volunteer Ottawa Volunteer Fair to promote volunteer facilitator program.
- Received 30 volunteer facilitator inquiries.
- Assigned facilitators to 5 case assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Coordinated Volunteer Facilitator Training/Orientation session in January, 2019 and welcomed five new volunteer facilitators to the program.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Presented 10 individual public legal education sessions in collaboration with partner agencies on issues of social and legal services related to our target populations.
- Participated in three community events.
- Supported outreach activities related to target populations.

SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

- Published 12 issues of Connecting Ottawa *Partner Communique*.
- Presented at the Canadian Bar Association Young Lawyers International Training
- Presented and participated in the Eastern Region Legal Clinics Housing and Immigration Group Conference.
- Presented and participated at the Conférence du réseau francophone
- Participated in the IRCC Priority Setting Consultation.
- Hosted 2019 Connecting Ottawa annual conference "*Cannabis 101: Understanding the New Laws and Supporting Clients*".

PROJECT COORDINATION AND REVIEW

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirements.
- Proposed new staffing options to LFO to address capacity issues.
- Conducted search and hired and on-boarded new staff member.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate activities.
- Coordinated staff planning/visioning day to plan 2019-20 targets and objectives.
- Held three Advisory Group meetings.
- Reviewed and prepared response to the Law Foundation of Ontario's (LFO) Connecting Regions Evaluation Report.
- Prepared summary of LFO Connecting Regions Evaluation Report to present to the Connecting Ottawa partnership network.
- Coordinated and held a network celebration event to share findings of the evaluation report and thank partners for their support over the past six years.

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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained and supported active partnership network of 51 agencies.
- Participated in more than 50 meetings with current and potential Connecting Ottawa partner agencies.
- Trained 331 trusted intermediaries and served 383 clients of partner agencies through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member.
- Offered 6 “Lunch and Learn” sessions to Connecting Ottawa partnership network staff on issues related to Refugee Claimant Processes, Income Tax, Trauma Informed Care, CAS and Vulnerable Populations and Consumer Protection.
- Conducted 18 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.
- Held 3 Training Sessions, in partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), for front-line workers on the issue of “Helping People Find Good Legal Information”.
- Coordinated 4 newcomer identification replacement ID clinics in partnership with YMCA and Pro Bono Students Canada to assist individuals who have had their citizenship documentation lost or stolen.
- Supported and managed one University of Ottawa law student intern placement.

ACTIVITIES:

Connecting Ottawa partnership network

The Connecting Ottawa network of partners currently includes 51 organizations. This network includes 18 community service agencies, 15 agencies serving immigrants, 10 organizations providing legal services, 7 agencies serving people with disabilities, 1 organization providing interpretation and translation services.

During the reporting period, and as indicated in our mid-year report, we welcomed one new organization to our partnership network: Association for South Sudanese Languages Institute (AASLI). AASLI is a new organization in Ottawa formed to support the cultural and social needs of South Sudanese citizens and immigrants in Ottawa.

The recent evaluation of the Connecting Ottawa project recommended that Connecting Ottawa expand the network and enhance the involvement of some of the current members.

In regards to “expanding the network”: this is part of Connecting Ottawa’s current practice. Efforts to increase the network are facilitated in two ways. (1) Front-line staff identify potential new network members as they are presented to them in their regular course of consultation or education activity. (2) Connecting Ottawa participates in local information fairs and sectoral roundtables at which new organizations that would benefit the partnership are identified. When a new organization is identified, the Project Manager will contact and follow up with key principals in the organization, share with them the mandate and activities of Connecting Ottawa, and invite them to participate. These efforts have been a priority since February of 2017 and we have welcomed 6 new organizations to the partnership in the last 18 months. The Project Manager sets a goal for this activity each year to ensure attention is paid to it.

In regards to “enhance the involvement of some members that are less connected to the network”: from the inception of the network, Connecting Ottawa has recognized that different partners will want to be involved at different levels. Consequently, we categorize each partner as a “1”, “2”, or “3” partner. Category “1” are partners that are heavily involved in the project, Advisory Group, and contribute time and resources. Category “2” communicate regularly with the project and Category “3” have expressed interest in the project and have indicated a desire to be kept informed and access programs as the need arises. We do not expect all organization to be equally involved in the project and thus do not feel that some of the Category “3” members need to have their involvement enhanced. As part of our current practice, the Project Manager sends a monthly communique to all partners, meets with and engages with Category “1” partners on a regular basis (minimum 5-6 times per year) and tries to meet with and engage with “Category “2” partners 1-2 times per year. These contacts provide opportunities to remind partners of the services available to them as well as discuss the engagement of partners and their comfort level with their current level of engagement. Regularly, staff turnover at partner agencies results in reduced engagement of the partner

agency until new staff are identified and the Project Manager can meet with them and increase their connection to the network.

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.

The project evaluation also recommended that Connecting Ottawa engage with and more deeply with organizations serving the disability community. During the reporting period, this was unaddressed due to the staffing turnover; however will be a priority for 2019-20.

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. Our front-line staff primarily respond to requests for service as they arise. In addition, our lawyers 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. There were 417 case consultations offered to partner agencies, other Ottawa regional agencies and services, as well as individual self-referrals. This represents a slight decrease from 2017/18 figures due to our project being down one staff member for three months of the reporting period.

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	# Cases July 2017– June 2018	# Cases July 2018 - June 2019
Social Worker	269	138
Lawyer	181	208
Lawyer 2 (Mar – June, 2019)		71
TOTAL	450	417

Please see appendix for two examples of cases that Connecting Ottawa assisted with.

A key recommendation in the evaluation was that “Connecting Ottawa should have more resources including more time spent at agencies on case consultations and reach out to more people and more organizations” while at the same time ensure that we are “promoting the model as a capacity building model and not a legal service”.

At our staff planning session in May of 2019, we recognized that our capacity for consultation activities was being dominated by the two organizations that we were co-located for office hours with. In an effort to diversity this work across the network, the decision was made to cut back on the hours provided to OCISO and CCI and provide consultation hours to CESOC, YMCA and two to three of the community resource centres in 2019/20. This decision was not due to a lack of demand for client consultation services by the settlement sector – new staff and new issues being faced by newcomers continue to require the expertise of our front line staff – but the desire to spread these services more equitably across the network. This change, in addition to a plan to increase our partner education sessions to all of our Tier 1 partners, will help us to achieve more impact across the network and move towards the recommendation made in the report.

We also continue to work both at the partner manager level and the front line service provider level to promote the model as a capacity building model and not a legal service. Connecting Ottawa does not promote itself as a legal service, although we agree that sometimes there is some confusion among front-line social services staff regarding what legal supports we provide. Our front-line staff, when called in for a consultation, make the determination as to how to best move forward for that client. If the case requires only limited legal services to support the needs of the client, such as an affidavit, our front line staff have the flexibility to provide this service on a case by case basis. For cases that require more extensive support, our front line staff will help the social services provider refer the client to the appropriate legal service. Only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. where there is a gap in available services, do we provide legal services direct to clients. In these cases, we ensure that there is ongoing involvement of the front line social services staff to maintain their trusted intermediary role with the client.

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 2018-19, Connecting Ottawa presented 6 Lunch and Learn sessions and presented 18 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. During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa also held 3 training sessions, in partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), for front-line workers on the issue of “Helping People Find Good Legal Information”.

The topics of the Lunch and Learn sessions in 2018-19 were: Refugee Claimant Processes, Income Tax, Trauma Informed Care, CAS and Vulnerable Populations, and Consumer Protection (2 sessions). Cumulatively, 72 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. The evaluation report identified potential enhancements for the Lunch and Learn events including increasing the length, more diversity in location, and potentially partnering with other agencies to present topics outside of the scope of practice of our staff. Efforts were made to host events at diverse locations; however, we found that attendance was significantly impacted if the event was held at a great distance from the downtown core, where the majority of our social service partners’ offices are located. For our February event on Income Tax, we invited a guest presenter from the Financial Education Centre to present the session. We are looking to increase the session length in the upcoming year by adding a question and consultation period to the formal presentation.

In the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa staff conducted 18 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 2018-19 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 in the city. Together, more than 220 partner agency staff attended these various workshops. The evaluation report recommended that Connecting Ottawa explore ways to increase partner agency education sessions moving forward. We have formalized this recommendation into our work plan and will be preparing and proposing education plans to key settlement organizations in the coming year as well as posting education session slide decks and webinars on our website.

The recommendation report also proposed that Connecting Ottawa partner with other organizations to conduct PLEs. In 2018-19 we partnered with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) and Community Legal Services of Ottawa (CLSO) to host three half day workshops on “Helping People Find Good Legal Information”, presented by CLEO staff. Almost 100 partner and potential partner agency staff attended these sessions.

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 agreed to host 4 more clinics in 2018/19. The four clinics were held in the reporting period – although two needed to be relocated to the Ottawa mission due to flooding at the YMCA – and were well received and attended. Connecting Ottawa plans to resume the partnership and program again in 2019-20.

Student Intern

In the winter of 2018, Connecting Ottawa coordinated and managed an internship for one University of Ottawa third year law student. The internship was overseen by our senior lawyer and the student shadowed the lawyer to case consultation and helped to support her day to day activities. Connecting Ottawa actively supports these placements as an opportunity to engage with the next generation of lawyers and introduce them to key access to justice issues for the target populations.

GOALS FOR 2019-20

- Maintain and grow the Connecting Ottawa partnership network.
- Continue to coordinate the newcomer identification replacement clinics project and partnership.
- Continue to develop the capacity within the partnership network through providing one-on-one case consultations, expanding in-house hours to 4-5 new organizations.
- 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.

PROMOTE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC AND OTHER 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 and the use of other PLEI resources to project partners to ensure access to justice by for focus populations.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Promoted relevant CLEO, *Steps to Justice* and other resources via Connecting Ottawa communique, website, and social media.
- Embedded the French-language *Justice pas-à-pas* resources into the connexionottawa.com site.
- Maintained and increased a list of social and legal resources on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites.
- Distributed Connecting Ottawa information and rack cards.
- Re-printed “Housing Law” rack card (prepared in 2017) in 4 languages.
- Facilitated stable and steady growth in the use of our website and on-line resources:
 - Increased users to the connectingottawa.com website to 83,669 from 61,349 and connexionottawa.com website to 1,665 from 1,295 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of sessions of the connectingottawa.com website to 101,107 from 75,113 and the connexionottawa.com website to 1,887 from 1,502 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of page views on the connectingottawa.com website to 181,640 from 138,766 and the connexionottawa.com website to 3,449 from 2,698 in the previous period.
 - Increased followers to Connecting Ottawa Twitter and Facebook social media feeds.

ACTIVITIES:

Provide current information about local legal and social services

Connecting Ottawa publishes a monthly Communique, distributed via email to partner agency members (please also see information below under “Share Lessons Learned”). In each issue, new legal information resources that are available online or via hardcopy are shared with our partnership agencies for them to distribute among their staff. We also periodically share information about local legal and social services via our social media sites: Facebook and Twitter.

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 2018-19, Connecting Ottawa distributed over 3,000 of these resources and reprinted the “Housing Law” rack card in four languages to replenish our inventory.

Other PLEI Resources

In the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa introduced a new information resource “Wills & Estates: Information and Resources Ottawa” in both English and French. This resource is a plain language information sheet that front line workers can utilize to assist clients in understanding the legal requirements surrounding wills. The information sheet was posted on our website and introduced to network partners via our monthly communique.

We also, in response to the issue being raised within our partnership network, re-distributed the Connecting Ottawa bed bugs resource in both English and French to provide information to partnership staff to assist clients with these issues.

The evaluation report recommended that Connecting Ottawa continue to promote the resources that Connecting Ottawa offers. We look forward to continuing to do so via our newsletter and social media sites in the coming year.

Connecting Ottawa Website

Connecting Ottawa’s websites have been maintained in both English (connectingottawa.com) and French (connexionottawa.com). The domain registrations have been extended until April 2020 and we have arranged for hosting services through a monthly agreement with a hosting service.

The Connecting Ottawa websites are our primary means for sharing information about local legal and social services to partner agencies, other community groups, and the public. The recent Law Foundation of Ontario evaluation reported how well regarded and utilized our site was by local social service and legal service professionals to help them identify information and services to assist their clients.

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 2017, Connecting Ottawa coordinated adaptations to its website to integrate the *Steps to Justice* resource within the connectingottawa.com website. In the current period, the *Justice pas-à-pas* resource was integrated into the connexionottawa.com website, along with new updates related to immigration and refugee legal issues to both the English and French *Steps to Justice* resources.

During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa was advised that our current website platform would soon become obsolete and decided to use the opportunity to refresh and relaunch this important local resource. Over the final quarter of the current reporting period, Connecting Ottawa prepared a RFP for the site redesign, awarded the contractor and met with CICO/211 numerous times to review the CICO feed on the database and identify system upgrades that could even more effectively draw the CICO database feed into the new website. CICO/211 has agreed to work with Connecting Ottawa and our website designer closely during our website upgrade to ensure effective transition and transfer of information.

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 2019-20 was 101,107 vs. 75,113. The connexionottawa.com website sessions increased to 1,887 from 1,502.

When compared to the previous period, the number of users to the connectingottawa.com site has increased from 61,349 to 83,669 and the connexionottawa.com users have increased from 1,295 to 1,665. Pageviews increased from 138,766 to 181,640 on the connectingottawa.com site and from 2,698 to 3,449 on the connexionottawa.com site.

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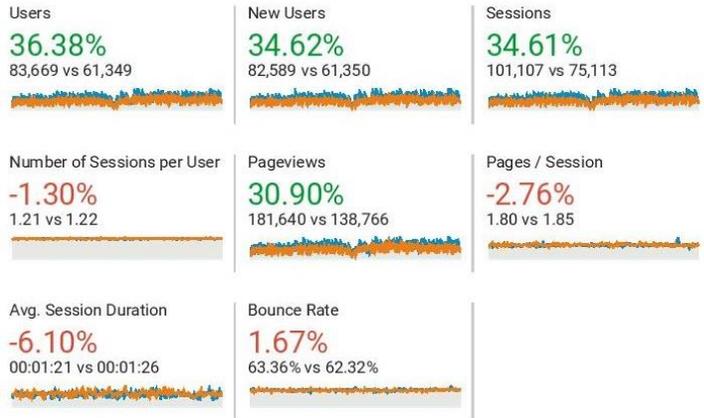
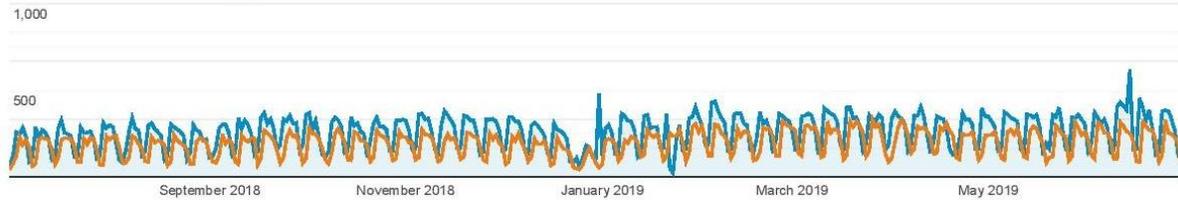
The evaluation of the Connecting Ottawa project by the Law Foundation of Ontario revealed that trusted intermediaries in Ottawa regularly turn to the Connecting Ottawa website for legal information and to identify legal resources. While we were aware that the website was being used, this report helped us understand better who was using the website and for what purposes and has helped to inform the website redesign. We hope to launch the new website in the winter of 2020.

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

Connectingottawa.com

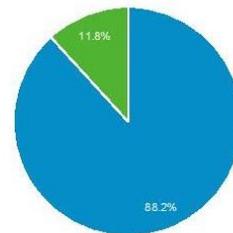
Jul 1, 2018 - Jun 30, 2019: ● Users

Jul 1, 2017 - Jun 30, 2018: ● Users

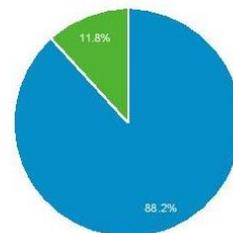


■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

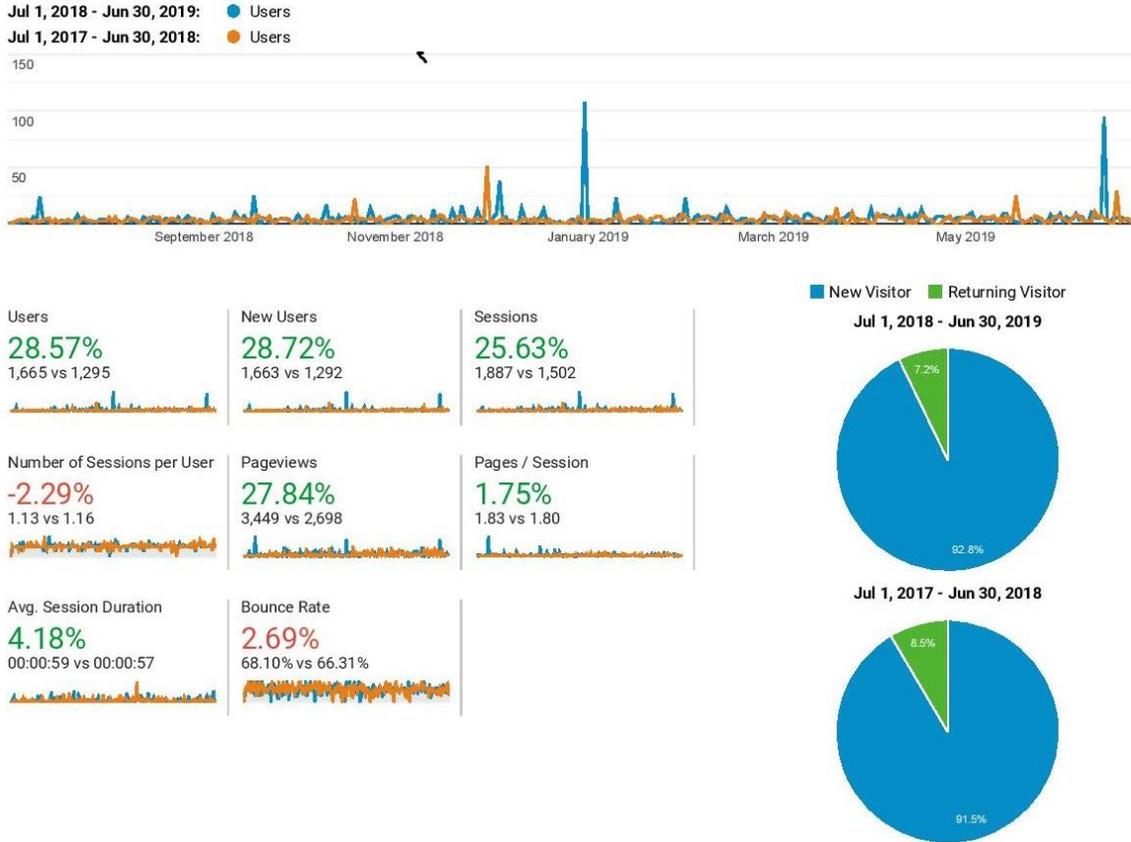
Jul 1, 2018 - Jun 30, 2019



Jul 1, 2017 - Jun 30, 2018



Connexionottawa.com (FR)

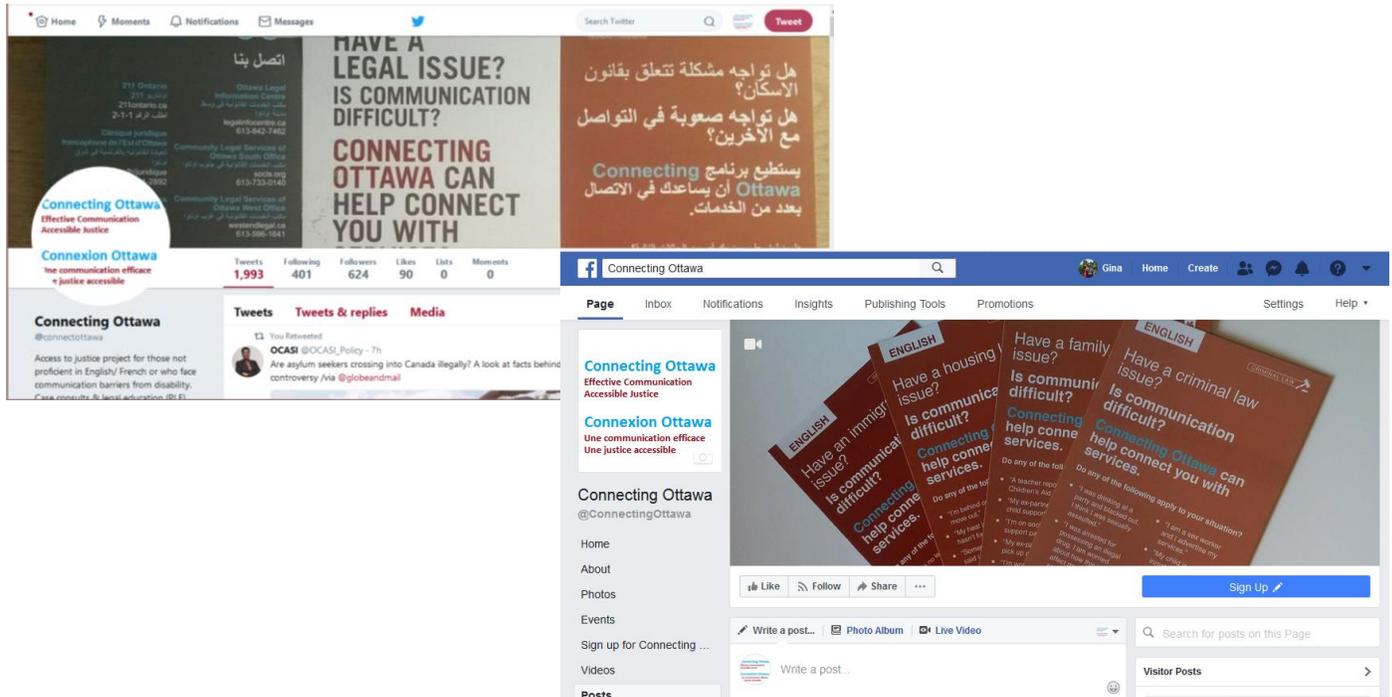


Most Viewed Websites and Topics

Traffic patterns reveal that the Connecting Ottawa “resources” and “services” listings continue to be used extensively by users to our websites. Family law and housing resources continue to be key search topics as well as resources for immigrant women. 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 maintained regular activity resulting increasing our “followers” on twitter by from 624 to 655 and our “likes” on Facebook from 119 to 145.



GOALS FOR 2019-20

- Manage and coordinate website redesign and relaunch.
- 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.
- Regularly promote Connecting Ottawa resources to partnership network.
- 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.

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

- Coordinated partnership to reintegrate volunteer facilitator program with social service agencies.
- Joined Volunteer Ottawa to recruit new volunteer facilitators.
- Participated in the Volunteer Ottawa Volunteer Fair to promote volunteer facilitator program.
- Received 30 volunteer facilitator inquiries.
- Assigned facilitators to 5 case assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Coordinated Volunteer Facilitator Training/Orientation session in January, 2019 and welcomed five new volunteer facilitators to the program.

ACTIVITIES:

The Volunteer Facilitator program was designed as an important opportunity to engage the larger community in the Connecting Ottawa Program. The concept and goal of the program is to offer trained facilitators with a diverse cultural and linguistic background to partner organizations to support clients' access to needed services. While the idea of the program is well received, we have struggled since the implementation of the project with demand from partner agencies and in identifying a process to coordinate and facilitate assignments on a timely basis.

For the 2018-19 year, Connecting Ottawa continued to promote the service to our partnership network in our monthly newsletter and at targeted partnership meetings, advertised for new volunteer facilitators, trained 5 new facilitators, and coordinated 5 client assignments.

During the period, the Project Manager targeted and met with the Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC) Newcomers Health Program to discuss the program in detail and

invite feedback to explore ways to more deeply utilize the program and to better manage requests to allow for the time requirements to assign volunteers. SWCHC discussed the program at a staff meeting and identified a number of opportunities to utilize volunteer facilitators. Subsequently, we received 3 volunteer facilitator requests from SWCHC during the year. The requests received were difficult to accommodate due to a lack of available volunteers for the linguistic needs required or the lack of capacity on behalf of the partner agency to coordinate and link the volunteer facilitator and client. On one occasion, a volunteer facilitator was matched with a client for a series of appointments, but then was never called back for the follow-through. We identified through this process that the Volunteer Facilitator program becomes an additional task to manage for partner agency front line staff and cannot always be accommodated within their capacities.

The Volunteer Facilitator assignments that were successful in the 2018-19 period were those that were coordinated and managed by Connecting Ottawa staff directly. The five client assignments that were successful included support for clients to complete forms or accompaniment to required appointments, under the direction of Connecting Ottawa staff. We have also found that our Volunteer Facilitators are interested and eager to assist with our education activities: Three of our volunteer facilitators supported our administrative needs at our annual conference this year.

An additional challenge identified with the program has been recruiting and maintaining a pool of motivated volunteer facilitators. The sporadic nature of the need for volunteer facilitators in our program has resulted in high levels of attrition to our volunteer base and challenges in keeping volunteers motivated. During the period, we redeveloped our informational materials and have been clearer in our communication with potential volunteers about the demands of the program to try to ensure that expectations of new volunteers align with the realities of the requests for assignments.

To address the recruitment issue, Connecting Ottawa purchased a membership with Volunteer Ottawa in August of 2018. Volunteer Ottawa (VO) promotes and educates about volunteerism in the city and hosts a database of available volunteering opportunities. Connecting Ottawa participated in the VO Volunteering Fair in early November, 2018 and has posted three volunteer listings on the site. During the reporting period, we received inquiries and interest from over 30 potential new volunteers. Volunteer facilitator inquiries are responded to with an initial email, explain the program, a personal meeting with the Program Manager, if the individual is interested and then formal training as a final step to becoming a facilitator. In January, 2019, Connecting Ottawa coordinated a volunteer facilitator training session and welcomed five new volunteer facilitators to our roster.

The evaluation report recommended that Connecting Ottawa “clarify the role of volunteer facilitators” and “continue to work with partners” on this aspect of our project. We feel that we have undertaken extensive work in this area over the past year; yet, the volunteer facilitator program continues to be a challenge for Connecting Ottawa. Further review of the program is planned for the coming year.

GOALS FOR 2019/20

- Review program feasibility with partner agencies.
- Make recommendation to Advisory Group for moving forward.
- Implement recommendations as agreed to by Advisory Group.

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

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Presented 10 individual public legal education sessions in collaboration with partner agencies on issues of social and legal services related to those with a communication barrier.
- Participated in three community events.
- Supported outreach activities related to target populations.

ACTIVITIES:

Public Legal Education Sessions

Connecting Ottawa is becoming a sought after provider of legal education and information sessions by our partnership network. During the period, Connecting Ottawa provided 10 individual presentations in collaboration with our partner agencies, with more than 348 clients attending, on the following topics:

- Refugee Preparatory Classes
- How to Stay In Canada Legally
- What Happens After a Refugee Claim

The evaluation report recommended that Connecting Ottawa explore opportunities to partner with community organizations to provide PLE events in different languages. We agree that this is a good idea but have limited translation budgets to accommodate. We have, over the years, partnered with different agencies to provide PLEs to clients in different languages, leaning on the partner agency to provide the translation and interpretation. We are also incorporating Google Translate on our website to allow for our PLE information to be translated through this service. While studies have shown that this translation is rudimentary, and thus “not perfect”, it does allow for some increased access to our information by those that do not speak English or French.

Booths at Community Events

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

- Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair
- Volunteer Ottawa Volunteer Fair
- Refugee 613 Sponsorship Fair

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 2018-19, 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 (OLIP)
- Somerset West Inter-Agency Lunch Group
- Refugee 613 Stakeholders Table
- Refugee 613 Housing table
- 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 reporting period the provincial government announced a significant reduction to LAO funding and the discontinuation of LAO funding for refugee and immigration matters. Connecting Ottawa helped to coordinate local meetings with settlement agencies to identify ways to support them and their clients under these new funding guidelines. We are exploring ways to be part of a local coordination effort in the coming year.

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.

In 2018-19, Connecting Ottawa participated in a workshop to review communications messaging around making Ottawa a more welcoming city for newcomers. We also

participated in the IRCC Community Consultations hosted by the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership in the Fall of 2018.

In addition, during the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa supported the efforts of Julie Matthews LFO Fellowship to develop a framework for supporting trusted intermediaries work with providing legal information and advice.

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

- Published 12 issues of *Connecting Ottawa Partner Communiqué*.
- Presented at the Canadian Bar Association Young Lawyers International Training Program
- Presented and participated in the Eastern Region Legal Clinics Housing and Immigration Group Conference.
- Presented and participated at the Conférence du réseau francophone
- Participated in the IRCC Priority Setting Consultation.
- Hosted 2019 Connecting Ottawa annual conference "*Cannabis 101: Understanding the New Laws and Supporting Clients*".

ACTIVITIES

Connecting Ottawa Communiqué

Connecting Ottawa's newsletter *Communiqué* is distributed electronically to members of our partnership network, other service professionals, as well as, periodically, attendees from our previous conferences and education workshops. Network partners are encouraged to distribute the newsletter to front-line workers each month.

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 communiqué is sent monthly. During the reporting period 12 issues were developed and distributed.

Presentations

Connecting Ottawa staff were invited to present as part of the Canadian Bar Association's (CBA) Young Lawyers International Program Training sessions during the reporting period. CBA, having heard of Connecting Ottawa's work with newcomers and refugees invited our professional staff to assist with this training. Connecting Ottawa presented 4 separate workshops on Trauma Informed Lawyering.

During the reporting period, our two front line staff attended the Eastern Region Legal Clinics Housing and Immigration Group conference in Gananoque and facilitated workshops on:

- Linguistic Competency
- Wills and POAs

In addition, our senior lawyer attended the Conférence du réseau francophone and facilitated a workshop on “Introduction to Immigration Law”.

External Recognition of Project

Over the reporting period, the Connecting Ottawa project was recognized in two external publications:

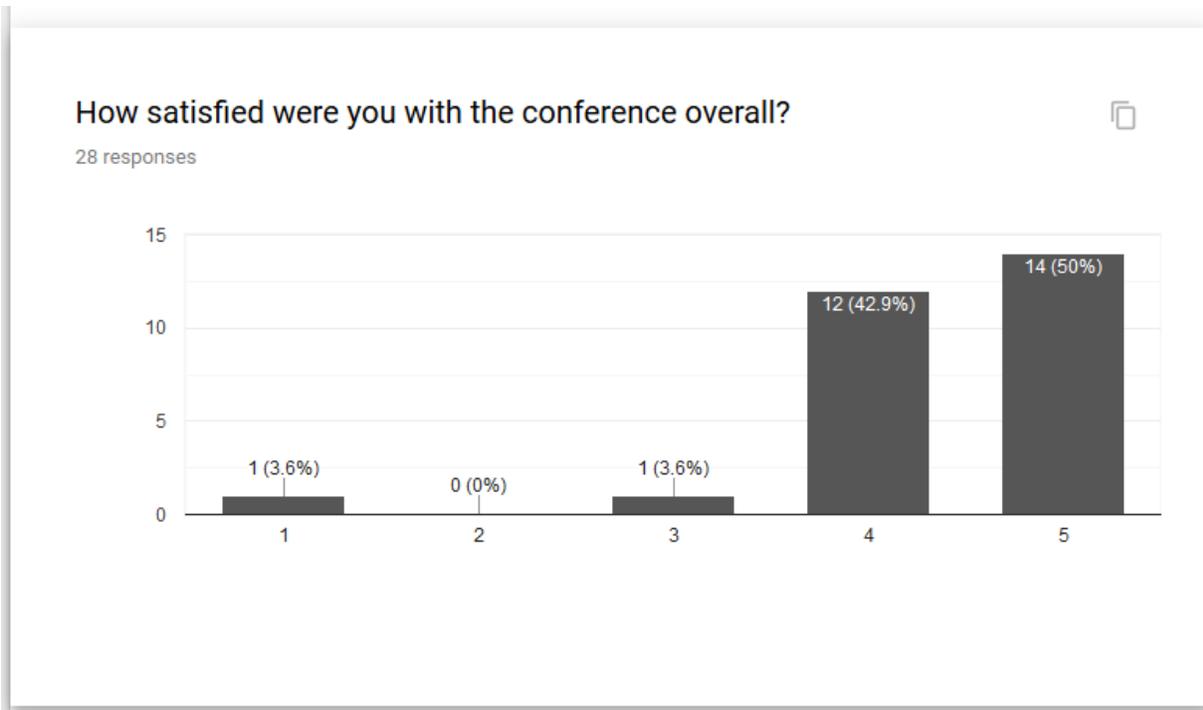
- In September, 2018, the Connecting Ottawa project, and lawyer Alexandra Derisier, was featured by the Law Foundation of Ontario as a grantee story on the Law Foundation of Ontario website.
- In December, 2018, Sue James, director and housing solicitor at Hammersmith & Fulham Law Centre and a founding trustee at Ealing Law Centre spoke to Connecting Ottawa Advisory Chair, Gary Stein and shared information about Connecting Ottawa and lessons learned about supporting individuals legal problems from a holistic approach in a report published in the December/January issue of British Legal Action magazine.

Annual Conference

Connecting Ottawa's 8th conference "*Cannabis 101: Understanding the new Laws and Supporting Clients*" was held on May 15, 2019 at Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre. 143 individuals registered and 120 attended.

The topic of Cannabis was chosen due to the new laws that have recently been enacted. The 2019 conference explored the new laws surrounding cannabis and how the new laws were to be enforced and how they will impact our target populations and other vulnerable clients. Our line-up of speakers informed the social services and legal workers in attendance about the products, how they are used, current and future regulations, police enforcement strategies, implications on housing and employment, and the intersection between social justice and decriminalization.

A survey conducted after the event reported that the participants felt that the conference achieved its set goals with more than 96% of conference participants responding that they felt the conference goals were achieved. In addition, 92% of the respondents stated that overall they were “very” or “extremely” satisfied with the conference. The panel discussion on the implications on housing and employment was the highest rated element of the conference, followed closely by the discussion on enforcement strategies.



Following the conference, our staff held a “debrief” to review conference learning and discuss how to incorporate the successes of this year into future years.

GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Host a 2020 Conference for our partnership network.
- Incorporate learnings from 2019 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 requirements.
- Proposed new staffing options to LFO to address capacity issues.
- Conducted search and hired and on-boarded new staff member.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate activities.
- Coordinated staff planning/visioning day to plan 2019-20 targets and objectives.
- Held three Advisory Group meeting.
- Reviewed and prepared response to the Law Foundation of Ontario's (LFO) Connecting Regional Evaluation Report.
- Prepared summary of LFO Connecting Regions Evaluation Report to present to the Connecting Ottawa partnership network.
- Coordinated and held a network celebration event to share findings of the evaluation report and thank partners for their support over the past six years

ACTIVITIES

Operations and 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.

Office accommodations and human resources services continue to be provided by our partner agency Centre de services communautaires 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.

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.

Regular staff meetings and meetings with the Advisory Group Chair are held to ensure effective communication and coordination of activities. During the reporting period, the project manager met weekly to bi-weekly with staff members to discuss issues of workload, sharing of information, reporting, and activities moving forward. Meetings with the Advisory Group Chair were held on an as needed basis and addressed issues related to funding, finances, staffing, project manager oversight, and Advisory Group planning.

In May, 2019, a full-day staff planning session was conducted to review our current activities and identify priorities and targets for the 2019-20 funding year. At this meeting, we set goals for each of our core areas of activity and a workplan for moving forward.

Staffing

During the reporting period, there was a turnover in one of our front line staff positions. After 4.5 years as Connecting Ottawa's Social Worker, Erin Fitzpatrick left the project, effective December 31, 2018. Notification was provided to our community network in mid-December and an exit process was planned and managed to ensure minimal disruption to our partnership network.

Recognizing that the demand for the project to support social services front line workers with legal information and referrals far outweighed the demand for social services supports to legal workers over the past number of years, Connecting Ottawa presented a recommendation to the Law Foundation of Ontario to replace our open position with a second "Legal Worker" with a strong background in social services. The recommendation was approved in January, 2019 after which a hiring process was initiated.

During the hiring process, Connecting Ottawa front-line activities were limited to the capacities of our one remaining legal worker, Alexandra Derisier. Ms. Derisier provided exceptional service during this time to ensure that our partnership network was not significantly impacted by the reduced staffing.

At the end of March, 2019, we welcomed Elizabeth (Liz) Majic to the project. Ms. Majic brings a depth of knowledge in landlord and tenant law, social assistance, and employment law drawing on an extensive background working with vulnerable populations and complex human rights issues. She previously worked at three community law clinics, Canada Without Poverty, and the Feminist Alliance for International Action. She also has strong education and PLE abilities with experience both as a University lecturer and in offering seminars to front-line workers and clients. The first three months of Ms. Majic's employment were coordinated to ensure warm introductions to the partnership network, other staff members and to the job requirements and responsibilities.

During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa renewed the contract of Alexandra-Marjorie Derisier LLL, LLB who has been with Connecting Ottawa for 4 years and has an extensive background in labour relations, human rights, and refugee law and has been actively involved, personally and professionally, with the settlement and immigration sector in Ottawa. Alexandra is bilingual in English and French and also speaks Spanish and Creole fluently.

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.

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.

Ongoing efforts are being 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. In the reporting period, and following recommendations made in the evaluation report, policies related to client eligibility and parameters surrounding providing education sessions to members were reviewed and developed.

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group met on three 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 2018-19.

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

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
Mirela Dranca	Settlement	The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC)
Leigh Presseau	Community	Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
Julie Demers	Community	CICO/211
Gary Stein	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa (South Office)
Arber Zaplluzha	Settlement	Catholic Immigration Centre
Basia Mair	Settlement	Ottawa Community Immigrant Settlement Organization

Project Review

In June of 2018, the Connecting Regions Evaluation Report was released by the Law Foundation of Ontario. Connecting Ottawa had 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.

Following the release of the report, the Connecting Ottawa Project Manager and Advisory Group Chair met with staff to discuss the report and review the recommendations included in the report. The Connecting Ottawa Project Manager and Advisory Group Chair also held telephone calls with staff from the Law Foundation of Ontario to discuss next steps and the application of some of the recommendations of the report.

Meetings with staff reviewed each of the recommendations to identify opportunities to integrate recommendations into current practice or identify what additional capacities would be required to expand the services as recommended in the report. These discussions were summarized in a formal response that was forwarded to the Law Foundation of Ontario in November, 2018.

The importance of the evaluation and sharing the results with the partnership network was identified. To accomplish this, Connecting Ottawa requested that the small amount of unspent funds from our 2017-18 grant be allocated back to Connecting Ottawa to hold a network celebration event that would report the outcomes of the evaluation and celebrate the

success of the project over the six years of its impact in the Ottawa community. An event was held in Ottawa on October 15, 2018 for our partnership, a powerpoint presentation was prepared and shared and thank you gifts were purchased for distribution among our network. The event was very well received and an event report was sent to the Law Foundation of Ontario in early December, 2018.

The findings of the evaluation and the opportunities to incorporate them as outlined in the formal response sent to the Law Foundation of Ontario in November have been integrated into our project's planning and review processes.

One element of the review that remains unaddressed is the role and function of a social worker in the project. The evaluation identified that there was a desire for increased social services support and information from our legal services partners; however, the current consultative process offered by Connecting Ottawa was not the most effective delivery mechanism for this information for this group of front line workers. In our project renewal application, Connecting Ottawa approached the Law Foundation of Ontario to explore adding an additional part time social worker position to Connecting Ottawa to address this need utilizing a new mode of service delivery. This request was not approved for the 2019-20 funding period. Connecting Ottawa continues to explore ways to incorporate this element of service into our activities for the coming year.

GOALS FOR 2018-19

- Maintain effective staffing and operations management.
- Hold 3-4 advisory committee meetings.
- Continue to 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 FOR THE YEAR ENDED		JUNE 30 2019
	Budget	Actuals
REVENUE		
2.0 Law Foundation of Ontario		
412 Received During Year	256,560	230,904
412 Received During Year for Special Event		2,482
412 Holdback receivable		-
	256,560	233,386
EXPENSES		
3.2 Website Hosting, Management and Administration		
595 Translation	-	500
625 Website Hosting, Management and Administration	5,000	6,150
	5,000	6,650
3.3 Facilitators to Connect Clients and Legal Services		
590 Training	200	175
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	750	439
550 Meeting Costs		50
595 Translation		-
510 Printing/Supplies		16
	950	680
3.4 Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection		
515 Accommodation	12,000	11,580
530 Cloud/Mobile Services	2,000	2,950
531 Out of Contract Telecom Expenses		573
540 Equipment Purchases	500	282
545 Materials and Supplies	800	872
550 Meeting Costs	500	165
557 Professional Fees		4,194
558 Liability Insurance		6,142
56X Salaries and Benefits	167,600	142,822
562 Resource Development	500	491
585 Staffing Costs		677
590 Training/Professional Development	1,800	918
595 Translation/Interpretation	1,500	1,527
615 Travel	2,500	1,978
699 Sundry		24
	189,700	175,195
3.6 Secretariat		
510 Administration		-
545 Materials and Supplies	400	342
550 Meeting Costs		204
560 Project Co-ordinator	50,250	51,000
615 Travel	400	220
	51,050	51,766
3.7 Shared Lessons Learned		
520 Annual Conference	2,500	2,815
545 Materials and Supplies		-
546 Materials and Supplies: Rack Cards		-
550 Conferences, etc	-	-
595 Translation/Interpretation	-	-
615 Travel	-	-
	2,500	2,815
3.8 Administration		
542 Lead Agency Stipend	5,000	5,000
527 Bookkeeping	1,500	1,559
525 Bank Charges	-	84
522 Auditing	800	800
699 Sundry	-	-
799 Contingency	-	-
	7,300	7,443
3.9 October 15, 2018 Event		2,482
		2,482
	256,500	247,031
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES (EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	60	(13,645)

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.
- Website costs were in excess of budget due to costs associated with the website redevelopment RFP and project.
- Staffing costs are under-spent due to unspent salaries for the 2.5 month period when we were without one front-line staff member.
- The project, overall, remains within budget.
- Connecting Ottawa will be submitting a proposal to utilize unspent funds from 2018-19 in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

LFO REPORTING STATISTICS

Organization: Connecting Ottawa	Grant file #: CONRE-09-18
Period: July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	
Project title: THE CONNECTING REGION -- CONNECTING OTTAWA	

	Total #	Notes or comments
PLEI		
# of print resources produced, updated	5	
# 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	28	
# of people with legal needs or members of the public trained	348	Number of public case consultations
# of trusted intermediaries and / or frontline workers trained	412 840+	Case consultation with front-line workers: 330 (see note A) Lunch and Learns: 72 Partner Workshops and Meetings: 220 Conference: 120
# of sessions / page views	102,994/141,464	
# of print resources distributed	3,000	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	383+	(See note A)
# of clients provided legal advice or brief services	383+	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	1	Note: Unpaid, limited internships
# of paralegals engaged in pro bono work	0	
# of lawyers engaged in pro bono work	2	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by lawyers	0	

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# of pro bono hours volunteered by students	24	ID Clinic in partnership with PBSC
# 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	75	Partner Workshops and Meetings: 68 Lunch and Learn Sessions: 6 Conference: 1
# of participants in events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	Put in training 462	Partner Workshops and Meetings: 270 Lunch and Learn Sessions: 72 Conference: 120
# of student/youth participants	*note B	
# of adult participants	*note B	
Encouraging partnerships and collaboration		
# of organizations you partnered with	61	Partner Network: 51 Outreach Organizations: 7 Referral agencies not in network: 3

- 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

Mary (name changed to protect identity) is a young woman from Burundi. She lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania for a number of years. Mary speaks Kirundu and Swalihi. She speaks very limited French only enough to get her to ask for basic things.

Mary moved to Ottawa from Montreal. She was fleeing Montreal as a victim of domestic violence. Her husband was arrested for assaulting her. She has a month old baby. Mary is presently living in a shelter in Ottawa. Mary has no income and is currently requesting Ontario works.

Mary required assistance in a few matters.

Firstly Mary had a court date fast approaching when she first met with connecting Ottawa staff. She did not feel emotionally prepared or ready to present herself in court. The court appointment was in Montreal, she had no income, and she has a month old child. Thus, she couldn't travel to Montreal to attend the court date to give testimony in her husband's assault trial.

Mary came to Connecting Ottawa's office for help in filling out her victim impact assessment statement she also needed an advocate to have the possibility to testify via a video conference in Ottawa.

Mary originally came into contact with Connecting Ottawa through the Catholic Center for Immigrants. She arrived as a drop in to see a counselor at CCI and was not registered for an appointment. She was given a very short appointment with the Connecting Ottawa lawyer and a follow up appointment was scheduled at Connecting Ottawa's office.

Mary required an interpreter and interpretation was arranged by Connecting Ottawa. The Connecting Ottawa student was tasked to reach out to the courthouse in Montreal to the victim support intake person to see what could be done about transferring the trial via video conference.

Furthermore Mary required assistance in getting her identity documents reissued as her husband destroyed or threw out her identity documents, marriage certificate and their child's

birth certificate. She also was not receiving her child tax benefits; instead they were being issued to her husband.

Mary was referred to a settlement worker at CSCV. Mary was also referred for counseling at OCISO. Furthermore, Mary was referred to social workers at the community center to help with obtaining clothing, housing, and other basic needs.

Connecting Ottawa gathered funds to pay for the bus ride to Montreal so that Mary could give her Victim Impact Statement. For this journey, she was paired with a volunteer facilitator in order to support her while in Montreal. At trial it is expected she may appear via video because of Connecting Ottawa's advocacy.

Case Study #2

On May 8, 2019, a caseworker from the Orleans Cumberland Community Resource Centre (OCCRC) contacted Connecting Ottawa about a client named Maryiam (name changed to protect identity). Maryiam's first language is Farsi and she speaks limited English. She cannot read any English or Farsi.

Maryiam uses the food bank at the OCCRC on a regular basis to feed herself and her two daughters. Maryiam is on ODSP and unable to work due to serious back problems and depression. Until this point, she had never requested any help from frontline social workers at the OCCRC.

Maryiam, however, approached one of the caseworkers because she did not understand some documents that she had received in the mail. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) was suing her in Small Claims Court for \$6,000 worth of credit card debt. A settlement conference was scheduled for May 30, 2019. The caseworker wanted to know if an interpreter would be present at the settlement conference.

Since Maryiam is on ODSP, Connecting Ottawa determined that she qualifies for free court interpretation services. Connecting Ottawa sent the caseworker a fee waiver form and offered to swear or affirm it once completed. Connecting Ottawa also offered to review all of Maryiam's documents as soon as possible in order to provide additional advice or information.

Connecting Ottawa then arranged for a Volunteer Facilitator (VF) to accompany Maryiam to the courthouse to submit her fee waiver form and to request interpretation services. While there, Connecting Ottawa advised the VF to attend at Pro Bono Ontario with Maryiam for 30 free minutes of legal advice. Maryiam's caseworker arranged for Maryiam to receive a taxi chit to Connecting Ottawa's office in Vanier.

Connecting Ottawa met with Maryiam and the VF on the morning of May 10, 2019. Maryiam was visibly upset and cried throughout the meeting. She confided that her limited English and inability to read made it challenging for her to move on with her life. She also confided that she

often feels worthless. Connecting Ottawa assured Maryiam that we would work with her caseworker to help her with her legal issue. Maryiam expressed her gratitude for our help and appeared to be in better spirits after the meeting.

Upon reviewing all of her documents, Connecting Ottawa saw that Maryiam had actually filed a defence with the assistance of Pro Bono Ontario. In the defence, Maryiam offered to enter into a repayment plan with the CIBC of \$100.00 per month. Connecting Ottawa also found a letter from Maryiam's ex-husband's lawyer. The letter was dated for September 2018. Maryiam's ex-husband was seeking to vary the terms of a child support order because his income had changed. Connecting Ottawa advised Maryiam and the VF to attend at the Legal Aid Ontario office after going to the courthouse.

Maryiam and the VF submitted her fee waiver form and requested an interpreter for the settlement conference later that morning. The clerk confirmed that an interpreter would be present on the 30th. Maryiam and the VF then met with a lawyer for 30 free minutes of legal advice. The lawyer advised Maryiam to submit proof of her income showing that she is unable to pay anything more than \$100.00 per month. Maryiam and the VF were unable to attend at Legal Aid Ontario later that day to address Maryiam's family law issue because Maryiam was too overwhelmed to attend to this matter.

Connecting Ottawa arranged for a VF to attend the settlement conference with Maryiam on May 30. However, since the VF could only attend in the morning, Maryiam's caseworker at the OCCRC offered to attend with Maryiam in the afternoon. Connecting Ottawa coached the VF and caseworker before the settlement conference, advising them that the goal should be a negotiated repayment plan because the CIBC was likely pursuing Maryiam for this debt because she owns her own home. As a result, Maryiam was at risk of having a lien registered against her property. A motivated creditor could even consider seizure and sale.

Connecting Ottawa met with Maryiam again the following week to draft an affidavit swearing that she could not afford to pay more than \$100.00 per month towards this debt. A copy her ODSP paystub was included as an exhibit. Connecting Ottawa also got Maryiam to sign an authorization form asking the plaintiff's representative to cc all correspondence to Maryiam's caseworker at the OCCRC. These documents were served on the plaintiff and filed at the courthouse by Connecting Ottawa later that day because they had to be submitted 14 days before the settlement conference.

On May 30, 2019, Maryiam and the VF attended the settlement conference. Unfortunately, the Farsi interpreter failed to show up. As a result, the judicial officer adjourned the matter until a later date because he was not comfortable proceeding without an interpreter. During the first part of the settlement conference, the CIBC revealed that they were pursuing Maryiam for this debt because she owns property. A date for the rescheduled settlement conference has not been set yet. In the meantime, Maryiam has been advised to check her mail regularly for any court documents.

Connecting Ottawa provided Maryiam's caseworker with referrals to credit counselling because Maryiam disclosed that she has more credit card debt. With Maryiam's authorization, the caseworker booked an appointment with a credit counsellor. She also helped Maryiam compile all of her financial information for the appointment and arranged for a Farsi interpreter to attend the appointment with them

Maryiam's caseworker continues to work with Maryiam on sorting out her financial situation. The reality is that Maryiam may have to consider selling her house to pay off her debts and avoid bankruptcy. The caseworker has also connected Maryiam with a reading program so that she can learn to read.

Connecting Ottawa is in regular contact with the caseworker from the OCCRC about this matter, and will continue to provide capacity-building until it is resolved.