

Connecting Ottawa .

Effective communication
Accessible justice

CATALYST PROGRAM INTERIM REPORT YEAR 1 JANUARY 1 – JUNE 30, 2022

Prepared for :



Submitted: August 18, 2022

Part I: Applicant Information

Name of Organization	Community Legal Services of Ottawa / Services juridiques communautaires d'Ottawa
Name of Program	Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa
Contact Person & title:	Gina Grosenick, Project Manager, Connecting Ottawa
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Grant Number:	CAT-61-21
Reporting period:	January 1 to June 30, 2022

Part II: Interim Report

Introduction:

This is the interim report for Catalyst Grant # CAT-61-21 detailing the activities of the Connecting Ottawa project for the period January 1 to June 30, 2022. We are pleased to report that Connecting Ottawa has **met or exceeded** all programming expectations for this period as identified in our workplan. We have made significant impacts in our community, increasing the ability and capacity of front line community workers to support the legal information and referral needs of clients who are linguistic minorities or who have communication barriers due to sensory impairment.

Demand for our project services significantly increased during the reporting period. This increase is largely due to:

- The reopening of in-person services by our network partner agencies following extended closures due to COVID-19, increasing the number of clients served and range of issues addressed that require Connecting Ottawa support and guidance to front-line workers.
- Further to the above, the disclosure by many agency clients of serious and complicated social and legal issues that have laid dormant during the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring intensive Connecting Ottawa support and consultation to front-line workers.
- The sunsetting or adaptation of government programs designed for COVID-19 pandemic support resulting in increased queries related to social assistance access and legal support.
- The significant backlog of applications and decision wait times at Immigration and Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC), resulting in increased queries related to client immigration and refugee law issues and support.
- The introduction of new federal and provincial measures put in place to support the influx of Ukrainian migrants, resulting in queries about these program by settlement agency workers in our partnership network who are supporting these individuals.
- The reopening of the border and the reduction of regulations on travel, resulting in an increase in immigration and refugee clients being served by settlement agencies in our partnership network.
- The ongoing staffing shortage and turnover in many of the agencies in our partnership network, requiring increased and ongoing capacity building efforts to new and existing front-line social service workers.

We are thankful to the Law Foundation of Ontario for the ongoing support for this project. We specifically want to acknowledge Lili Pach and Lisa Cirillo for the help and support over the past six months of operations as we transitioned to Catalyst Funding.

Background and Mandate:

The mandate of Connecting Ottawa is to improve access to justice for linguistic minorities and those who have communication barriers in Ottawa. We achieve this by working with front-line community workers to develop their capacity to provide appropriate legal information and referrals to clients within these target populations.

The Connecting Ottawa project has been a successful and impactful program operating in Ottawa, Ontario since 2012, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario. From 2012-2021, it was awarded yearly Connecting Regions program funding. In 2021, the project was approved for three year Catalyst funding.

Connecting Ottawa has developed a partnership network of over 50 community, legal, immigration, disability, and social services agencies who work with and address the compounded barriers faced by individuals in the target populations. Connecting Ottawa provides to these organizations and their front-line personnel: case management support services, legal and community informational referrals and coordination, a website directory of legal, social and communication services, a bi-weekly newsletter of legal and social service information updates and activities, and legal education sessions and workshops. We also seek opportunities to coordinate legal and community services to ensure that the access to justice needs of clients are addressed.

Project Goals and Activities

The overarching goals of the Connecting Ottawa project are to:

- Provide information to help front-line social service workers, who act as trusted intermediaries to our target populations, to understand their clients' legal rights, and provide information about the legal services available to help them to exercise those rights;
- Ensure that "every door is the right door" to legal services by training and supporting the information, assessment and referral needs of front-line service providers and other trusted intermediaries to be able to identify when a person from the focus populations requires a legal service and then to connect the person with the right legal information and legal service; and
- Support legal services organizations to provide services to the focus populations within a framework that acknowledges issue complexity and requires a holistic approach to service delivery.

The activities funded under the 2022 Catalyst Grant are to:

- Maintain and expand the Connecting Ottawa partnership network;
- Provide capacity-building on social issues relevant to our target populations to our network of social service and legal partners through direct one-on-one support and consultation opportunities;
- Provide capacity-building opportunities on legal issues relevant to our target populations to our network of partners through education workshops, Connecting Ottawa co-hosted workshops with other organizations, educational presentations delivered upon request at partner agencies' on-site locations, and webinars;
- Host the Connecting Ottawa annual conference;
- Promote the use of resources developed by Connecting Ottawa and other organizations to social services and legal workers supporting clients in the target populations;
- Maintain and expand the updated Connecting Ottawa website;

- Share information pertinent to the legal and social services needs of our target populations with our partnership network via our *Communique*, website and social media channels;
- Work with our legal services partner organizations and community service organizations to help “fill the gaps” of legal services available to our target populations via workshops, seminars and clinics;
- 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;
- Increase attention and support towards disability-serving agencies who work with people with communication barriers; and
- Manage the project effectively and professionally.

Activity reports:

Connecting Ottawa partnership network

The Connecting Ottawa network consists of 57 local social and legal service organizations. This includes 20 community service organizations, 19 immigration and settlement service organizations, 10 legal service organizations, and 8 disability service organizations. During the reporting period we increased our network by 2 organizations. The new members include: Sakeenah Homes, a women’s shelter and transition home serving primarily Muslim clients and families and World Skills Employment Centre, dedicated to supporting newcomers’ economic integration. Organizations engage with Connecting Ottawa on various levels. For many settlement agencies and community resource centres, we engage on a regular basis. Others, like many of the disability agencies and diaspora groups in our network, engage primarily for the educational and information sharing opportunities.

During the reporting period, we held meetings with 15 settlement agency managers to introduce our new immigration lawyer, Heather Neufeld, understand their changing needs as borders and programs reopened after COVID-19, and discussed specific requirements related to Ukrainian migrants and capacity building.

In addition, we held 7 meetings with community legal service organizations to discuss community worker needs, coordinate activities, and identify partnerships opportunities. A longstanding partnership in our network is the Housing Education Group, initiated by Connecting Ottawa and Reach Canada in 2020 with participation from Community Legal Services of Ottawa, Ontario Legal Information Centre, Clinique juridique francophone d’Ottawa, University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic, Housing Help and Action Logement. This group discusses needs and coordinates 7-10 education sessions per year for community workers to develop their capacity to identify and assist clients with housing issues (see the list below for the sessions coordinated during the reporting period). This partnership has been beneficial for all organizations and ensures coordination of programming in this area for community workers.

Connecting Ottawa indicated in its 2022 funding proposal a goal to increase support to disability organizations. Over the course of the reporting period, we have held meetings with two disability agencies as well as held numerous meetings with our network partner Reach Canada to discuss coordination of services. We continue to have a strong relationship with Canadian Hearing Services and regularly seek feedback from them on education needs for community workers in the disability sector.

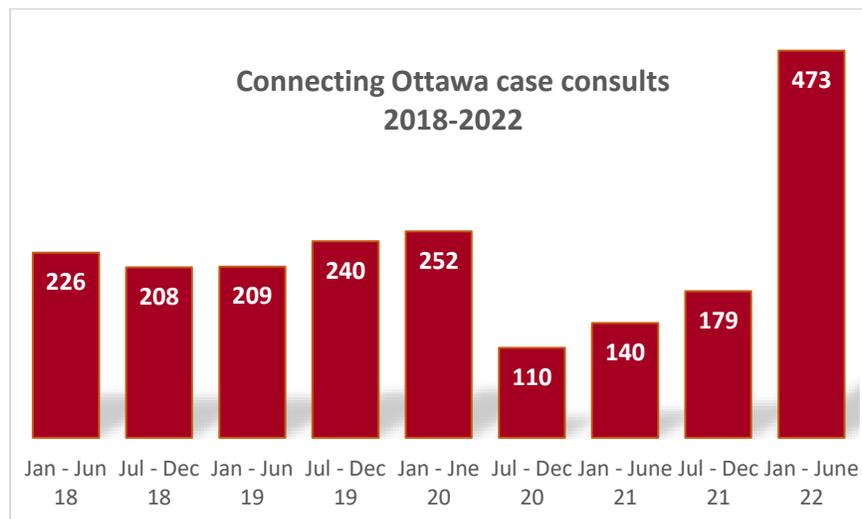
One-on-one support and consultation

Over our ten year history, Connecting Ottawa has found that one of the most effective and impactful way to develop the capacities of the front-line community workers is for Connecting Ottawa lawyers to consult one-on-one with frontline workers to help them address their clients' legal issues. Connecting Ottawa lawyers do not work directly with clients. All client communication, follow up and case management support is conducted by the frontline worker. Connecting Ottawa lawyers determine the level and degree of their involvement in each case and support may include: providing summary legal advice, drafting legal documents, reviewing applications, giving adequate referrals or legal information, etc. The level of involvement is determined on a case-by-case basis by the lawyer in consultation with the frontline worker.

Connecting Ottawa lawyers assist caseworkers and their clients in the following areas of law: immigration and refugee law services, social assistance (ODSP, OW), federal income support benefits (EI, CPP, OAS/GIS, pandemic recovery benefits), housing, employment/work, human rights, consumer/debt, small claims matters, wills/powers of attorney (not drafting but advising), lost identification, guardianship applications (advising/reviewing), and some family law issues.

From January 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022, Connecting Ottawa lawyers conducted 473 individual consultations, serving 752 clients. This is a significant increase in our consultation activities due to the issues discussed in the introduction and is not sustainable in the long term. Of the 473 consultations, 254 required “multiple” interactions with the caseworker, meaning that they were of a complicated nature, requiring follow up by our lawyer prior to fully resolving the query. In the past, Connecting Ottawa held “in-house” sessions at key partner agencies. Due to COVID restrictions, we have not yet resumed in-person services.

It is often in these cases, that this aspect of our project is the most impactful for the outcomes of the client. Please see Appendix A for two case studies that illustrate this aspect of our work.



Legal education, workshops and conferences:

As part of our capacity building approach, Connecting Ottawa plans and delivers legal education sessions to front-line community workers. We develop and present sessions that are open to our entire partnership network as well as respond to invitations from individual organizations on specific issues relevant to their practice.

During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa coordinated and facilitated 10 education sessions that were open to our entire partnership network, reaching a total of 287 front-line workers. Where appropriate, we invite guest speakers to expand the range of topics presented. The sessions hosted from January 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022 were:

- Understanding consumer rights and contracts - June 28
- The Social Security Tribunal of Canada: What community justice workers need to know - June 21
- Landlord and Tenant Board forms for front line workers - An in-depth look at N13 - June 7
- Modernization of social assistance in Ontario 2019-2024 - May 26
- Tips for supporting a client who has an LTB hearing - May 19
- Landlord and Tenant Board forms for front line workers - An in-depth look at N6 - April 26
- Information Session: Sakeenah Homes - April 6
- Landlord and Tenant Board forms for front line workers - An in-depth look at N5 - March 29
- Landlord Tenant Board vs Small Claims Court - March 23
- Information Session: Income tax and benefit returns for low-income residents - March 10

During the period, Connecting Ottawa also coordinated and delivered 12 in-house partner education sessions, reaching a total of 121 frontline workers. Further, Connecting Ottawa lawyers presented 3 workshops for the CLEO Connect network, reaching 787 front line workers provincially. The topics of the sessions were:

- Ukrainians in Canada: Special immigration measures and supports for temporary residents - June 23
- Newcomers and the Transition Child Benefit - March 22
- Newcomers and the Canada Child Benefit - March 8

In addition to the above, Connecting Ottawa actively promoted education sessions coordinated and delivered by other organizations relevant to the social service and legal education needs of our community service workers. During the reporting period, we shared the following organization's education information:

- Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)
- Reach Canada
- L'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario (AJEFO)
- Canadian Women's Federation
- FCJ Refugee Centre
- Women's Initiative for Safer Environments
- Humber Centre for Human Rights Equity and Inclusion
- Refugee 613
- EBO Financial Education Centre
- Tribunal Watch Ontario
- National Accessibility Week
- Welcome to Ottawa Week

Connecting Ottawa hosts a yearly conference on a timely issue relevant to both social service and legal service workers. The 2022 Conference will be held in the fall of 2022. During the reporting period, topics and speakers were explored and planning was initiated.

Legal information resource sheets

An important tool for developing the capacity of front-line workers and for helping them to directly assist their clients is information sheets related to specific legal issues that can be referred to on a case-by-case basis. These Information sheets can also help to reduce the number of one-on-one case consultations requests received by our lawyers. Connecting Ottawa develops and/or updates and distributes information sheets on timely issues as the capacity of our lawyers allow. During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa developed and shared 12 resources:

- Q & A about Ukraine Immigration status and access to benefits (June 23)
- Financial Assistance for Ukrainian Families (June 6, 2022)
- Transition Child Benefit (May 31, 2022)
- Wills & Powers of Attorney Resource Sheet (May 17, 2022)
- Canada Child Benefit (May 17, 2022)
- Newcomer Owned Small Businesses in Ottawa (April 5, 2022)
- Updated information on Special Immigration Measures for Ukrainians and their immediate families (March 23, 2022)
- Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (January 11, 2022)
- Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (January 11, 2022)
- Canadian Worker Lockdown Benefit (January 11, 2022)
- COVID-19 and Infectious Disease Emergency Leave (January 4, 2022)
- Paid Infectious Disease Emergency Leave (January 4, 2022)

Connecting Ottawa information sheets are shared via our bi-weekly *Communique* or in conjunction with our education sessions. Recipients are invited to share more broadly across their network. Our distribution system does not allow for the collection of analytics on the use or further distribution of these resources; however, during the report period, we are aware that five of our information sheets were shared provincially by and uploaded to the CLEO Connect Your Legal Rights resource collection.

In addition to sharing our internally developed resources, Connecting Ottawa also shares resources produced by other local, provincial and federal organizations. 46 resources related to legal and social issues pertinent to our target populations were shared via our *Communique*.

Website

Over the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa's websites have been available in both English (connectingottawa.com) and French (connexionottawa.com). The domain registrations have been extended until April 2023 and we arrange for hosting services through a monthly agreement with a hosting service.

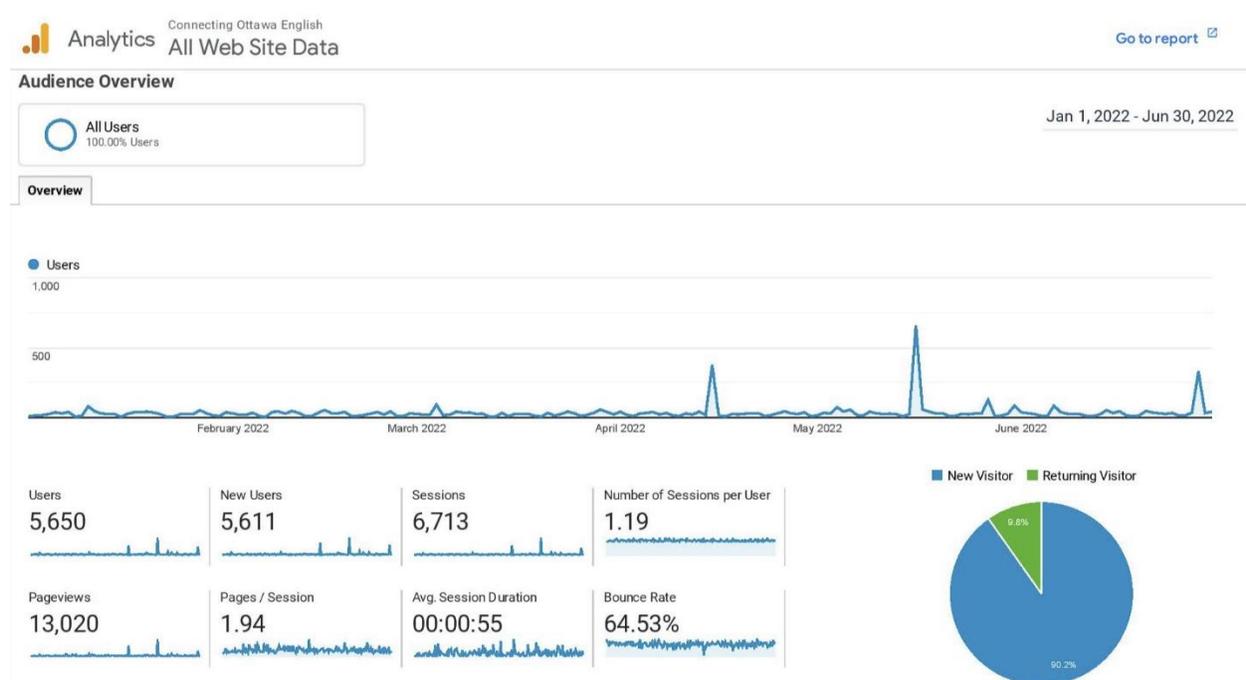
The Connecting Ottawa website is a centralized hub for sharing information about local legal, social services and communication barrier services to partner agencies, other community groups, and the public. A key element of the Connecting Ottawa site is the links to the Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario (CNEO) 211 data base and providing ease of access to legal, social services, and communication barrier resources found there.

Connecting Ottawa promotes and integrates legal information resources via the website. Resources that are posted include: Connecting Ottawa information sheets and resources, links to the Steps to Justice information tool, social service and legal information tools available in multilingual formats, and our *Communique*. Any Connecting Ottawa educational resources that are posted on the website are centralized on a dedicated "Resources page". This page link is

promoted in any electronic or social media posts. Website analytics show that this practice has resulted in multiple hits to our site and to this specific page as individuals seek out these resources.

During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa received 5,650 visitors to the site, resulting in 13,020 pageviews. In the graphic below, note the peaks in audience activity, representing the promotion of new Connecting Ottawa resources via our electronic communication that are driving users to the site. An analysis of the most viewed pages reveals that the most accessed page (after the home page) is the “Resources” page noted above. The website also has a link for community service workers to request a consultation on behalf of their clients, which is used regularly by network front-line workers to connect with our services.

Our original funding application requested additional administrative funds for website content and site management. This request was not approved. Consequently, our workplan schedules for only minimal of posting and updates. Given this capacity, our achievement is substantial.



Communique & other media

Connecting Ottawa produces a bi-weekly electronic newsletter, *Communique*. In this newsletter we share information on upcoming education sessions as well as timely information and updates on local, provincial, and federal legal and social service programs of interest to front-line workers serving clients in our target populations. The *Communique* is very popular among and we continually receive positive feedback on the content. One recipient shared with us: “There is a lot of helpful information in these for both my clients and me”.

During the reporting period, we produced 13 issues of the *Communique*. We encourage recipients to share the document widely and we post the most current issue on a dedicated page on our website. Our distribution system does not allow for the collection of analytics on the use of or further distribution of the *Communique*; however, we are aware that the distribution

extends far beyond our current email list and that Community Network of Eastern Ontario regularly shares content in its newsletter that originated from our *Communique*.

Connecting Ottawa also has a Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn profile. Our 2022 funding application requested, and was denied, additional administrative funds for content and media management. Currently, only the most minimal content is shared via these networks. We currently have 584 followers on our Facebook page, 694 followers to our Twitter account, and 9 followers to our LinkedIn page.

Fill the gaps

Connecting Ottawa works with our legal service and community service partner organizations to help “fill the gaps” of legal services available to our target populations via workshops, seminars and clinics. We are currently seeking to make an impact in three areas: Newcomer identification replacement, Wills and POA support for low income clients, and employment law support.

In 2019-20, Connecting Ottawa initiated a partnership with Pro-Bono Students Canada (PBSC) to host a series of newcomer ID clinics to help individuals replace missing or stolen permanent resident or citizenship documentation. The partnership emerged from several settlement partners indicating that this support was unavailable in Ottawa. PBSC works under the direction of lawyers from Borden, Ladner & Gervais law firm and Connecting Ottawa arranges for the location and promotion of the clinic. Due to COVID-19 and the University of Ottawa moving to online learning, we were unable to offer these clinics during the reporting period; however, we have initiated discussions with PBSC to resume the service starting in the Fall of 2022.

In 2019-20, two agency partners approached Connecting Ottawa for support and resources to assist their clients with wills and powers of attorney. Ottawa’s legal clinics do not offer these services and many individuals within our target populations were identified as falling through the cracks. Connecting Ottawa has worked with the Renfrew County Legal Clinic, Reach Canada and Community Legal Education Ontario to present information sessions to partner organizations. The demand for information and services in this area has only increased due to COVID-19 health concerns among our target populations. During the reporting period, we updated our “Wills and POA information sheet” and initiated discussions with legal service providers in Ottawa on ways to address this gap in a collective manner.

Employment law continues to be an area of concern for individuals in our target populations. Many of these individuals work gig or minimum wage employment jobs and/or are subjected to problematic employment circumstances and discrimination. In 2020 the Employment Law Clinic opened in Ottawa. This is a 4-month service project of the University of Ottawa that is available directly to clients to address their employment law issues. Connecting Ottawa has been working with the Clinic to support funding proposals for full time activity and share information.

Collaboration and sharing

Connecting Ottawa actively promotes and facilitates sharing and connecting of resources among our partnership network. During the reporting period, we:

- Connected Housing Help with the Muslim Community via Sakeenah Homes. Housing Help felt that the Muslim community was under-informed about low income housing issues and through this connection, initiated a series of education sessions.
- Regularly referred partner agencies with UOCLC, CLSO and other legal clinics to present legal information sessions directly to clients.
- Connected OLIC with CESOC to develop francophone workshop series
- Connected Sakeenah Homes with EBO Financial to arrange budgeting workshops.

Connecting Ottawa also actively seeks to promote and share the knowledge learned from the program within the larger sector of newcomer and legal support organizations. During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa staff members regularly participated and contributed to:

- Consumer (Law) Working Group
- Employment Insurance Working Group
- Refugee 613 Executive Committee
- Refugee 613 Ukrainian Housing Group
- Social Security Tribunal Stakeholder Group
- Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, Ottawa Chapter
- Workers Rights Action Group

Project management

The lead agency for the project is Community Legal Services of Ottawa. They are the grantee, provide the accounting services, and contract project management. Office accommodations and human resources services continue to be provided by our partner agency Centre des services communautaires Vanier (CSC Vanier). CSC Vanier is the “employer of record” for project staff, manages payroll and benefits administration, provides personnel policies and other human resources infrastructure, and provides office accommodations

The project is managed by Dr. Gina Grosenick, an independent consultant under contract for 2.5 days per week to provide project management 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.

Connecting Ottawa has two full time lawyers: Heather Neufeld, L.L.M, L.L.B and Liz Majic, J.D. Heather Neufeld is an immigration and refugee lawyer who has more than 10 years of community legal clinic experience. She speaks English, French and Spanish. Liz 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. Both individuals have strong education and PLE abilities. Both have experience as University lecturers and in offering seminars to front-line workers and clients. During the reporting period, Heather Neufeld co-taught the course “Access to Justice for Refugee Claimants” at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Common Law. Both lawyers are licensed with the Law Society of Ontario, are insured by LAWPRO and participate in professional development upgrading throughout the year.

Team meetings are held bi-weekly to manage schedules, plan activities, and ensure that funding goals and objectives are being met.

Connecting Ottawa actively works with law students to introduce them to access to justice issues within our target populations and to supplement our capacity. During the reporting period 3rd year law student Anneka Oh worked with us on a part time basis 10-15 hours per week. We also worked with a ProBono Students Canada placement, Ali Aghaamoo over the winter term. Students conduct legal research and draft memos for case consults, draft other documentation under the direction of the lawyer, conduct research for and support the development of education materials and information sheets, and provide administrative support as required. We have been extremely impressed with our part time student, Anneka Oh, who has asked to work with us for her articling placement. During the reporting period, we forwarded a proposal to use

unspent funds from our previous LFO grants to accommodate this request and to shore up our capacity during this period of increased demand.

Connecting Ottawa has appointed an Advisory Group to assist in the effective management of the project. This Advisory Group 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. The Advisory Group typically meets 4x per year. During the reporting period the group met 3 times.

The current membership of the Advisory Group is:

NAME	SERVICES SECTOR	PARTNERING ORGANIZATION
Lois McIntyre	Community	Canadian Hearing Society
Radiyah Jouad	Community	South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
Leah Landry	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa
Farouq Samim	Community	Somerset West Community Health Centre
Mirela Dranca	Immigrant	The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC)
Christine Sharp	Community	Eastern Ottawa Community Resource Centre
Leigh Pousseau	Community	Pincrest Queensway Community Health Centre
Julie Lavergne	Community	Community Information Centre of Ottawa / 211
Clarisse Titus	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa
Gary Stein	Legal	Retired.
Arber Zaplluzha	Immigrant	Catholic Centre for Immigrants – Ottawa
Sarah Caspi	Immigrant	Jewish Family Services
Basia Mair	Immigrant	Ottawa Community Immigrant Settlement Organization

Workplan

Below is the revised workplan (based on approved grant funding) submitted to Law Foundation of Ontario on January 21, 2022 noting progress in planned activity areas. Activities that have been completed as per workplan are indicated with a green background and an X. Any shaded cells without an X indicate that the activity happened but was not part of the original workplan. Any cells with a number included indicates the multiple times in that month that the activity occurred.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Project Planning and Review												
Staff Planning Session	X											
Data collection and analysis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review of Activities							X					
Team Meetings	2	2	2	2	2	2	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annual Conference planning (moved to Fall)						X	X	X	X			
Advisory Group Meetings	X			X			X			X		
Maintain and Grow Partnership Network												
Meetings with high-use partners to receive feedback		X		X		X		X		X		X
Identify and follow-up potential new partners	X		X		X		X		X		X	
Prepare and distribute bi-weekly Communique	2	2	3	2	2	2	X	X	X	X	X	X
Connect Community Legal and Social Services												
Respond and support front-line worker inquiries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide interpretation services as required			X			X			X			X
Develop working groups as required			X			X			X			X
Share services of partners via <i>Communique</i>	2	2	2	2	2	2	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain and update CO websites – NB: limited		X		X		X		X		X		X
Maintain and post updates on CO social media												
Provide PLE sessions for partner agencies – For this reporting period referred to other legal clinics	X			X			X			X		

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Capacity Building for Front-line workers												
Provide consultations to front-line workers	X 74	X 62	X 96	X 71	X 85	X 85	X	X	X	X	X	X
Offer in-house consultations to high-use partners – not accomplished due to COVID restrictions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Offer in-house education sessions on demand	X		X		X		X		X		X	
Offer network education session by CO lawyers		X	X 2	X		X		X		X		X
Offer network education sessions by CO partners	X		X 3	2	X 2	3	X		X		X	
Develop short education videos and post on website											X	
Develop and distribute Infosheets/resources as required	X 5		X 1	1	X 2	2	X		X		X	
Annual Conference										X		
Fill the Gaps												
Plan and offer ID Clinic		X	X							X	X	
Coordinate other clinics/session as required					X				X			
Share Lessons Learned												
Continue participation in sector roundtables/committees	X		X		X		X		X		X	
Participate as guest speaker on request		X						X				
Set up info table at sector conferences – not accomplished due to COVID-19 restrictions				X				X				X
Share Communique to extended network	2	2	3	2	2	2	X	X	X	X	X	X
Increase support to disability serving agencies												
Coordinate meeting with agencies to discuss needs				X								
Plan and provide disability education session for lawyers						X						
Management and Administration												
Review and renew Project Manager contract	X											
Review and renew staff contracts	X											
Renew accommodation contract									X			
Prepare yearly budget									X			
Financial review and analysis		X		X		X		X		X		X
Report to the Law Foundation of Ontario	X							X				X
LFO Application for 2023								X				

Financial Report

Project income and expenditures to June 30, 2022 are below. There are no discrepancies or variations of note.

CONNECTING OTTAWA		
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
FOR THE SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDED	JUN 30, 2022	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actuals</u>
REVENUE		
Law Foundation of Ontario Received During Year		187,775
Deferred from Prior Year		-
Total LFO	279,750	187,775
Registration Fees	-	-
	279,750	187,775
EXPENSES		
Website Hosting, Management and Administration		
Translation		-
Website Hosting, Management and Administration	5,000	1,878
	5,000	1,878
Education Sessions on New Areas of Law		
Training and Meeting Expenses	750	-
Honoraria	500	70
	1,250	70
Legal Services/Social Services Collaboration		
Accommodation	12,000	5,750
Cloud/Mobile Services	2,000	835
Equipment Purchases	750	208
Materials and Supplies	750	116
Meeting Costs	250	-
Salaries and Benefits	185,500	90,030
Training/Professional Development	1,200	-
Translation/Interpretation	1,250	-
Travel	1,500	-
Sundry	-	82
	205,200	97,020
Shared Lessons Learned		
Annual Conference	3,000	-
Materials and Supplies	500	-
	3,500	-
Administration		
Project Co-ordinator and Administration Costs	56,000	28,004
Lead Agency Stipend	6,000	6,000
Accounting and Audit Expenses	2,800	850
		35
	64,800	34,889
	279,750	133,857
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES		
(EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	0	53,918

Appendix A: Case Studies

Case Study #1

A settlement counsellor at the Ottawa Community Immigrants Services Organization contacted Connecting Ottawa to ask for our help with a particular case. The client, a low-income person from Venezuela who speaks neither English nor French, used Omega Trading Cargo, an international freight forwarding company based in Mississauga, to send a care package containing food, medicine, and clothes to her daughter in Venezuela. The client provided Omega with an estimate of the weight and dimensions of the package, scheduled the package for pick-up, and paid \$286 for delivery. However, after sending the package to Venezuela, Omega sent an email to the client asking for an additional \$369 to release the package from their warehouse in Venezuela to the client's daughter. Omega claimed that the client had misrepresented the weight of the package, and that it was two times heavier than she claimed.

The client refused to pay the additional fee and asked for the package to be returned to her. At this point, it had been well over a month since the package was picked up by Omega and the client was concerned that some of the food in the package had already expired. Omega refused to return the package, telling the client that it would cost her \$665 to return the package. The client refused to pay. Omega then lowered the additional fee, saying that it would assume 60% of the fee due to the difference in the peso, and that they would deliver the package for \$147. The client continued to refuse to pay the fee, and over two months after the package had been picked up by Omega, they sent the client an email with a deadline to pay the additional fee or the package would be declared "abandoned".

Connecting Ottawa's lawyer and law student collaborated with the settlement counsellor to get all the facts from the client and help the client collect all of her documentation and evidence. Connecting Ottawa performed legal research and drafted a demand letter to Omega, requesting that they either deliver the package or issue a full refund to the client because they were in violation of the *Consumer Protection Act*. Omega refused to back down and asked that the client pay the additional fee. In their response, they confirmed that they had sent the package to Venezuela after having weighed it but did not notify the client of the weight discrepancy until after it had been in Venezuela for a week. Connecting Ottawa responded, pointing out that if there was a weight discrepancy, Omega should have notified the client about the additional fee before sending the package to Venezuela.

Within a day of receiving Connecting Ottawa's response, Omega confirmed that the package was shipped to the client's daughter in Venezuela.

The client sent a thank-you note to her settlement counsellor and Connecting Ottawa: "... Thank you if it had not been for your help, I would not have recovered anything. Thank again thank you very much God bless you and Marie-Helene. I am very grateful ."

Case Study #2

Connecting Ottawa's immigration lawyer was contacted by a caseworker at the Catholic Centre for Immigrants concerning a client who was in the process of applying for permanent residence, including his two dependent children abroad on his application. His wife had died abroad and he was desperately hoping to reunite with his two young children and raise them in Canada. However, the children were not able to undergo the required immigration medical exams because their grandparents refused to take them. This meant that both the client's application for permanent residence and those of his children were completely stalled. He was at risk of having his application closed altogether and not gaining status.

The worker reached out to Connecting Ottawa for immigration law advice as he had no idea what could be done. The worker and CO immigration lawyer interviewed the client together and decided that unfortunately the only option was to request that the children be removed from the application. This meant that the client would be unable to bring them to Canada, at least for many years, but there was no other option.

Connecting Ottawa prepared a detailed affidavit from the client explaining exactly why he could not get his children medically examined and all the efforts he had made to do so. She explained how much the client wanted to be reunited with his children but that he accepted their removal from his application because he needed to gain his own legal status in Canada to eventually travel to see his children again.

In the end, Immigration found the client's predicament so compelling that an exception was granted allowing the children to be processed for permanent residence without medical exams. Connecting Ottawa's immigration lawyer had never seen this outcome in 13 years of practicing immigration law. Due to the collaboration of the case worker and CO lawyer, a father will be reunited with his young children rather than being separated from them for years or having his own application cancelled as would have likely occurred without this intervention.