

Connecting Ottawa . . .

Effective communication
Accessible justice

CATALYST PROGRAM INTERIM REPORT YEAR 2 JANUARY 1 – JUNE 30, 2023

Prepared for :



Submitted: September 7, 2023

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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-61-22
Reporting period:	January 1 to June 30, 2023

Part II: Interim Report

Introduction:

This is the interim report for Catalyst Grant # CAT-61-22 detailing the activities of the Connecting Ottawa project for the period January 1 to June 30, 2023. We are pleased to report that Connecting Ottawa continues to **meet or exceed** all programming expectations for our funding. 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 continue to increase. This increase is largely due to:

- 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 sunseting and/or reassessment of benefit programs introduced during COVID-19, resulting in increased queries related to client eligibility, repayment options, etc.
- The continuation of federal and provincial measures put in place to support the influx of Ukrainian migrants, resulting in queries about these programs, and more recently settlement options, by settlement agency workers who are supporting these individuals.
- The transfer of more than 600 Roxham Road refugee claimants to Ottawa hotels by IRCC and the subsequent co-ordination of client services by settlement agencies in the region to support these individuals. Connecting Ottawa has been regularly called upon to provide information and referral support to the front-line workers and agencies providing support.
- The expansion of the Safe Third Country Agreement and new IRCC family reunification policies announced in early 2023, resulting in increased queries related to client eligibility and support
- 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 Leah Zilnik, Lili Pach, Noah Aiken-Klar, and Lisa Cirillo for their help and support.

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 55 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 2023 Catalyst Grant are to:

- Maintain and expand the Connecting Ottawa partnership network;
- Provide capacity-building on social and legal issues relevant to our target populations to our network of social service and legal partners through direct one-on-one support and consultation;
- 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 update 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;
- 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 maintained engagement with network members through regular emails, our *Communique* and via one-on-one meetings with agency managers, as required. We also welcomed two new partners: Youth Services Bureau and Inuuqatigiit Legal Navigation Services.

We regularly connect with community legal service organizations to discuss community worker needs, coordinate activities, and identify partnership 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 local sector education 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.

During the reporting period, we also initiated a collaboration among legal service organizations to discuss the gap in family law services for low income clients in Ottawa. An initial meeting was held in April of 2023 with a follow up meeting planned for fall, 2023.

To serve disability partner members, we continue to have a strong relationship with Canadian Hearing Services and Reach Canada and regularly seek feedback from them on education needs for community workers in the disability sector.

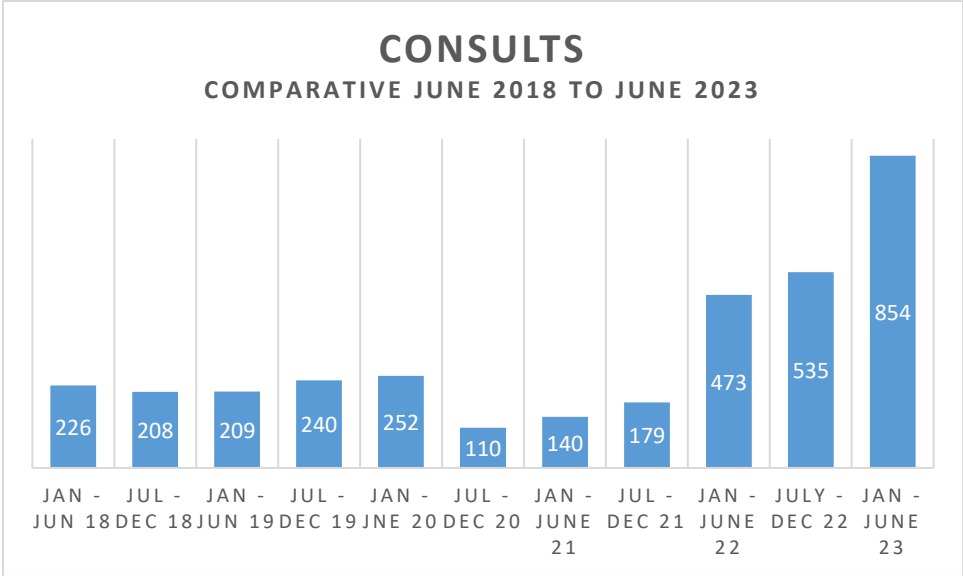
One-on-one support and consultation

One of the most effective and impactful ways that we have found 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 front-line worker. For each inquiry Connecting Ottawa lawyers determine the level and degree of their involvement 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, 2023 to June 30, 2023, Connecting Ottawa lawyers conducted 854 individual consultations, serving 1441 clients. Of the 854 consultations, slightly more than half, or 436, 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. The increase in our consultation activities continues to be a concern and is not sustainable in the long term. During the reporting period, we applied to two calls for proposals to seek additional funding to increase our staffing capacity but were not successful.

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 361 front-line workers. Where appropriate, we invite guest speakers to expand the range of topics presented. The sessions hosted from January 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023 were:

- Tenant Rights and Responsibilities - June 20
- Legal Aid and Legal Clinics: Services available and how to refer – June 6
- RGI Single Offer – May 31

- New worker orientation: Supporting clients and working with Connecting Ottawa - May 25
- New Property Management Bylaw - May 2
- Safe Third Country Agreement - April 5
- International adoption – March 28
- Social Security Tribunal: Services available for clients - March 22
- Income tax: Why it's important and where to refer clients – February 14
- New worker orientation: Supporting clients and working with Connecting Ottawa – February 2

During the period, Connecting Ottawa also coordinated and delivered 5 in-house partner education sessions, reaching a total of 200 frontline workers. Further, Connecting Ottawa lawyer, Heather Neufeld, presented one workshop for the CLEO Connect network on the changes to the Safe Third Country Agreement, reaching 217 front line workers provincially.

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 organizations' education information:

- Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)
- Reach Canada
- L'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario (AJEFO)
- Clinique Juridique Francophone d'Ottawa
- The Alliance for Racialized, Refugee and Im/migrant women
- Ottawa Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO)
- Jewish Family Services
- HIV & Aids Legal Clinic
- Woodgreen's Financial Empowerment Team
- Refugee 613
- 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 2023 Conference will be held in October of 2023. 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 9 new or updated resources:

- Wills and POA Resources Information Sheet (Updated June 16, 2023)
- May 26, 2023 Family Class Immigration Announcement Update (June 7, 2023)
- Expansion of Safe Third Country Agreement - Q & A (April 25, 2023)
- Rights and Responsibilities of Refugees in Canada (July 22, 2022) (Arabic)
- Rights and Responsibilities of Refugees in Canada (July 22, 2022) (Turkish)

- Rights and Responsibilities of Refugees in Canada (July 22, 2022) (Spanish)
- Legal Aid Ontario and Community Legal Clinics (Updated March 20, 2023)
- Overview Canadian Refugee Law (January 31, 2023)
- Canada Dental Benefit (Updated: January 25, 2023)

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 networks. 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 four of our information sheets were shared provincially by and uploaded to the CLEO Connect Your Legal Rights resource collection. Our translated *Rights and responsibilities of Refugees in Canada* infosheets were shared widely by Refugee 613.

In addition to sharing our internally developed resources, Connecting Ottawa also shares resources produced by other local, provincial and federal organizations. 44 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 2024 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 8,018 visitors to the site, resulting in 19,364 pageviews. We continue to drive users to the site via links in our *Communique* and by promoting the site in information sessions. 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.

Capacity to effectively manage and update the website and better promote it to our network continues to be a challenge. During the reporting period, our website design company went out of business. We have been working, via recommendations, on engaging a new organization and identifying any design and administrative work that will need to be undertaken to maintain the site.

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 front-line workers and we continually receive positive feedback on the content.

During the reporting period, we produced 12 regular issues of the *Communique* plus a special issue on the new family class announcement by IRCC. 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. We do not have the capacity to manage these feeds effectively or consistently. Currently, only the most minimal content is shared, mainly to promote our conference. We currently have 687 followers on our Facebook page, 676 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 four areas: Newcomer identification replacement, Wills and POA support for low-income clients, employment law support and family 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 clinics. Our lawyer, Liz Majic, also provides training to PBSC students related to the intricacies of newcomer identification. The clinics were paused during COVID-19. During the reporting period, we have initiated discussions with PBSC to arrange resumption of this service starting in the Fall of 2023.

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; however, these information sessions do not provide needed services. We are pleased to report that Connecting Ottawa and Reach Canada, in partnership, were awarded a small three year grant (2023-2026) by the McLachlin Foundation to undertake research on a sustainable model for clinic that could be offered regularly in Ottawa. During the reporting period, we developed a plan, hired a research student, appointed an Advisory Committee and initiated our research plan. Connecting Ottawa receives a small coordination fee as co-coordinator for the project. Our project manager serves as the co-coordinator and our lawyer, Liz Majic, serves on the Advisory Committee.

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 aligned with 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 to share information. To date, the clinic has yet to secure ongoing funding for this essential service.

In 2023, Connecting Ottawa identified an increased trend in demand for family law support among our target populations. This demand accentuated the gap in services in Ottawa as there are few clinics providing this service and/or private bar lawyers accepting LAO certificates. In April of 2023, Connecting Ottawa convened a meeting of local clinics and LAO to discuss the gap and work together to identify potential solutions. There was support for continued discussions and another meeting of the working group will be held in the fall of 2023.

Collaboration and sharing

Connecting Ottawa actively promotes and facilitates sharing and connecting of resources and knowledge locally. During the reporting period, we:

- Helped to arrange for a private bar lawyer to present to Ukrainian clients at OCISO and Jewish Family Services on the topic of economic pathways for residency.
- Regularly referred partner agencies to UOCLC, CLSO and other legal clinics to present other legal information sessions directly to clients.
- Shared knowledge and information with the director of the newly funded Inuuqatigiit legal navigation service to support their project coordination.
- Connected a working group of private bar lawyers seeking to provide A2J services in local prisons with LFO to discuss potential funding opportunities.
- Connected the City of Ottawa with the Ticket Defence Program at UOCLC to provide in-house supports for their clients.
- Actively supported the efforts to provide settlement support to the Roxham Road transfers to Ottawa by participating in collaborative processes at the social services, legal and advocacy levels to share knowledge and information that could assist with service provision.

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 participated in and contributed to:

- Consumer (Law) Working Group
- Employment Insurance Working Group
- Refugee 613 Executive Committee
- Refugee 613 Ukrainian Housing Group
- Refugee 613 Refugee Task Force
- Social Security Tribunal Stakeholder Group
- Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, Ottawa Chapter
- Workers Rights Action Group
- LAO Clinics Eastern Region Meeting
- Law Foundation of Ontario Catalyst grantees meeting
- Community Legal Education of Ontario document review

Project Management

The lead agency for the project is Community Legal Services of Ottawa (CLSO). They are the grantee, provide the accounting services, and contract project management services for the project. In February of 2023 the project moved human resource services for our lawyers and office accommodation services in-house to CLSO. These services had been contracted to Centre des services communautaires Vanier (CSC Vanier) at the time of Connecting Ottawa's inception. Since that time, the lead organization amalgamated with two other clinics and no longer had capacity limitations to provide these services. With the challenges of COVID behind us, the project felt that 2023 was the appropriate time to centralize all administration services under CLSO.

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.

Until May 6, 2023 we also employed Anneka Oh as an articling student, with funding approved by the Law Foundation of Ontario from unspent CON-RE 20 and 21 grants. Ms. Oh has worked with Connecting Ottawa since 2021 as a student and was seeking an articling placement. Ms. Oh greatly helped in supporting our two lawyers with client consultations and legal research. A full report on activities was provided as addendums to CON-RE 20 and 21 grant reports in July of 2023.

Team meetings are held bi-weekly to manage schedules, plan activities, and ensure that funding goals and objectives are being met. Yearly, we undertake a planning session to set goals and objectives for the year.

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 2 times.

The current membership of the Advisory Group is:

NAME	SERVICES SECTOR	PARTNERING ORGANIZATION
Lois McIntyre	Community	Canadian Hearing Society
Radhah Jouad	Community	South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
Laura McLean	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
Rosetta Foti	Community	Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
Daniel Dussault	Community	Community Information Centre of Ottawa / 211
Clarisse Titus	Legal	Community Legal Services of Ottawa
Gary Stein	Legal	Retired.
Sofiane Maghrebi	Immigrant	Catholic Centre for Immigrants – Ottawa
Sarah Caspi	Immigrant	Jewish Family Services
Yemane Abede	Immigrant	Ottawa Community Immigrant Settlement Organization

Reflections:

We offer the following reflections on the status of our project in response to the specific questions posed in the 2023 interim report instructions.

Is the work unfolding as planned? If not, what changed and why?

Our work continues, overall, as planned. We had hoped that the number of case consultations would have decreased as we moved into 2023. We are finding that this is not the case, with demand for our consults increasing and becoming more complex. This increase in demand is due to the changes in federal and provincial programming as well as the widening of the gaps in services available to our target populations in Ottawa. Further, the turnover in settlement and front-line social services organizations has not stabilized, requiring more capacity building and support required by front-line workers in our partnership network.

Any anticipated difficulties completing the balance of planned work within the scope, budget, and timelines outlined in your application or subsequently agreed to with your Grants Officer

We do not anticipate any difficulties in completing the balance of planned work within the scope, budget and timelines outlined. We are concerned with meeting the ongoing demand for our project within the current budget. During the reporting period, we applied for two grants to increase staffing for our refugee/immigration services: Government of Canada Community Services Recovery Grant and Law Foundation of Ontario Responsive Grant. Neither of the two applications were successful.

Any notable achievements

The following are our notable achievements for the period:

- 80% increase in case consultations (as compared to January – June 2022). As mentioned above, while this is a significant achievement, it is also very concerning.
- Presentation of two “New worker orientation” sessions. These sessions, redesigned for 2023, provide basic information on how to support the legal information and referral needs of clients and how to work with Connecting Ottawa.
- Development of an infosheet and education session on the delineation of services offered between LAO and local legal clinics. This new information sheet helps front-line workers better understand where to refer clients for different legal issues and the eligibility requirements for different organizations.

- Coordination, in partnership with the Housing Education Group, of an indepth webinar on “Tenants rights and responsibilities” that attracted 84 front-line workers.
- Rapid information dissemination to network partners on the issues of the expansion of the Safe Third Country Agreement and new family class immigration announcements.
- Revitalization of newcomer ID services following COVID closures.
- Receipt of three-year funding to help address Wills & POA gaps for low income clients in Ottawa.
- Coordination of the family law discussion group to identify potential solutions for family law gap in Ottawa.
- Increased usage of the Connecting Ottawa website.
- Centralization of administrative services under Community Legal Services of Ottawa.
- Ongoing effective management of the project.

How you have leveraged any partnerships during the reporting period to increase the impact of your work

There are a number of partnerships that have been leveraged during the reporting period to increase the impact of our work:

- Partnership with Refugee613 to have the “Rights and Responsibilities of Refugees in Canada” information sheet translated into 3 languages
- Partnership with Refugee613’s Refugee Task Force and Ukrainian Working Group to share information on local challenges and trends with these target populations and provide capacity building and support, where appropriate.
- Partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) to present timely information on the expansion of the Safe Third Country Agreement.
- Ongoing co-facilitation (with Reach Canada) of the “Housing Education Group”, a collaboration of all local clinics providing housing and tenant legal services and Housing Help and Action Logement to present regular housing education sessions for front-line workers.
- Partnership with all local legal aid clinics and LAO to present an information workshop on the areas of law practiced by each clinic and how to refer clients.
- Ongoing close partnership and relationships with all settlement agencies in our partnership network to identify needs and issues as they arise.

How you engage with other justice sector stakeholders

- As mentioned above, we have close and ongoing relationships with all legal clinics in Ottawa and have ongoing engagement and conversations to address specific client needs as well as provide sector education and information.
- Our project manager has been having regular conversations with the director of the newly funded Inuuqatigiit legal navigation service to share information on project management best practices and lessons learned.
- We are in regular contact with the principals of the Employment Law Clinic to assist in any way we can to maintain and increase this service.
- We regularly refer and/or connect with private bar lawyers to assist with specific cases.
- We receive information from the specialty legal clinics in Ontario and regularly share their information in our *Communique*.

- In April our project manager attended the Eastern Regions LAO Clinics conference to share information on the project.
- In May, our project manager and the Executive Director of Community Legal Services of Ottawa attended the Law Foundation of Ontario Catalyst group meeting where we had very productive discussions with other justice sector stakeholders.
- Our project manager meets regularly with the Associate Dean of the University of Ottawa law school to share information on our initiatives and look for opportunities for collaboration.

Any request for changes or modifications to the grant

We have no requests for changes or modifications at this time.

Workplan

Below is the workplan submitted to Law Foundation of Ontario on August 18, 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.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Project Planning and Management												
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	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annual Conference planning						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
Meetings with disability partners to receive feedback			X							X		
Identify and follow-up potential new partners	X		X		X		X		X		X	
Coordinate programming/workgroups among partners			X			X			X			X
Website, Communique and Other media												
Maintain/update Connecting Ottawa Websites (minimal)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Produce bi-weekly <i>Communique</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Share information via social media							X	X	X			
Capacity Building for Front-line workers												
Provide consultations to front-line workers	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		X		X		X		X
Offer network education sessions by CO partners	X		X		X		X		X		X	
Develop short education videos and post on website											X	
Develop and distribute Infosheets/resources as required	X		X		X		X		X		X	
Annual Conference									X			

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Fill the Gaps												
Plan and offer ID Clinic		X	X							X	X	
Coordinate other clinics/sessions 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				X				X				X
Share Communique to extended network	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
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 2024								X				

Financial Report

Project income and expenditures to June 30, 2023 are below. There are no discrepancies or variations of note.

CONNECTING OTTAWA		
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
FOR THE SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDED JUN 30, 2023		
	Budget	Actuals
REVENUE		
Law Foundation of Ontario Received During Year		196,804.00
Holdback Receivable (10%)		-
Total LFO	293,738	196,804.00
Registration Fees	-	-
	293,738	196,804.00
EXPENSES		
Website Hosting, Management and Administration		
Translation		-
Website Hosting, Management and Administration	5,000	715.27
	5,000	715.27
Education Sessions on New Areas of Law		
Training and Meeting Expenses	1,250	219.84
Honoraria	750	-
Equipment Purchases		-
	2,000	219.84
Legal Services/Social Services Collaboration		
Accommodation	12,000	9,597.99
Cloud/Mobile Services	2,000	609.19
Equipment Purchases	1,250	-
Materials and Supplies	750	-
Meeting Costs	250	218.41
Salaries and Benefits	195,500	95,945.73
Training/Professional Development	1,500	329.48
Translation/Interpretation	1,250	-
Travel	1,200	169.52
Sundry	-	-
	215,700	106,870.32
Shared Lessons Learned		
Annual Conference	3,000	-
Materials and Supplies	488	-
Travel	750	-
	4,238	-
Administration		
Project Co-ordinator and Administration Costs	57,000	27,833.09
Lead Agency Stipend	6,500	6,500.00
Accounting and Audit Expenses	3,300	1,100.00
Other	-	46.50
	66,800	35,479.59
	293,738	143,285.02
	293,738	143,285.02
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES		
(EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	0	53,518.98

Appendix A: Case Studies

Case Study #1

In March 2023, a caseworker from the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) contacted Connecting Ottawa for help because their client had just been served an *N12 Notice to End your Tenancy* by their landlord. The landlord claimed that their mother and her partner intended to move into the rental unit as of May 1.

The client is a newcomer with four children and a limited income. The client's spouse was pregnant at the time with their fifth child. The client was distraught because they had lived there since 2019 and were established in the community.

The caseworker compiled all of the relevant documentation from the client to send to Connecting Ottawa's lawyer for review.

The caseworker, client, and Connecting Ottawa's lawyer also met by Zoom to discuss the client's situation. The caseworker provided interpretation and support in Arabic because the client's level of English is low.

Based on the evidence, it was abundantly clear that the landlord wanted to evict the client and his family so that they could increase the rent to match current market rates in Ottawa.

Connecting Ottawa's lawyer advised the client on his situation. In particular, Connecting Ottawa's lawyer told the client that he and his family were not obligated to move out in response to the landlord's notice, especially since she gave it to them in bad faith.

Connecting Ottawa's lawyer and caseworker decided this was an excellent opportunity to build the caseworker's capacity to advocate for their client. Connecting Ottawa's lawyer coached the caseworker on what to tell the landlord. The caseworker was apprehensive at first about but called the landlord to notify them that the client sought legal advice and would not move out in response to the N12. The caseworker reiterated the client's legal rights to the landlord in this situation.

A couple hours after the call, the caseworker received an email from the landlord. The landlord told the caseworker that the client could disregard the N12 because their mother no longer intended to move into the rental unit. It appears that the caseworker's advocacy worked! The client and his family continue to reside in the rental unit and have not had any further trouble with their landlord ever since.

Case Study #2

Connecting Ottawa was contacted by the Centre for Refugee Children in Toronto concerning an unaccompanied minor refugee claimant who had recently been relocated to Ottawa from Quebec. Despite receiving services from a Quebec non-profit, the teenager was put on a bus to Ottawa by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and lodged at a hotel with hundreds of other asylum-seekers. The organization in Quebec was concerned that no special arrangements were made for the unaccompanied minor and reached out to the Centre for Refugee Children. Not knowing the legal and settlement service landscape in Ottawa, the Centre for Refugee Children contacted us with their concern that the youth had no settlement support, no refugee lawyer, and no one ensuring that he was safe and cared for.

We immediately identified a senior Arabic-speaking settlement worker at the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) to conduct an intake with the teen and ensure his safety and that his basic needs were met. We simultaneously reached out to a well-respected refugee lawyer with experience representing youth, who agreed to take the case on a Legal Aid certificate. Finally, we identified a lawyer at our local community legal clinic willing to act as the child's Designated Representative in order to protect his interests and instruct counsel, given his status as a minor.

In short, it was only through the work of numerous organizations working together and our ability to draw on our connections in the Ottawa legal and settlement community that we were able to put a plan in place to meet the needs of this vulnerable refugee claimant teen.