

CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

ACTIVITY REPORT #13

Submitted to the
Law Foundation of Ontario
Access to Justice Fund

On behalf of the

CONNECTING OTTAWA NETWORK

DECEMBER 30, 2018

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INTRODUCTION

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

The report describes our interim activities and performance milestones for the six-month period July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

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 posted on our website to trusted intermediaries, including staff and volunteers of partner organizations;
- 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 the existing PLEI resources of our legal services partners to most effectively reach our focus populations and the trusted intermediaries with whom they connect, by providing logistical support for regularly scheduled PLEI events at fixed locations accessible to our focus populations;
- Share the lessons learned from the program's continued development in order to build upon the strengths of the network in Ottawa and to support similar and complementary initiatives in other communities;
- Increase attention and support towards disability-serving agencies who work with people with communication barriers;

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- 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.

For the period of this report, we have made progress in all core activities. Activities receiving increased focus over the six months were: continuing with our capacity building of the social services and legal services sector to increase access to justice for individuals with communication barriers via case consultation and education; receiving and responding to the Law Foundation of Ontario's Connecting Regions Evaluation Report; moving our Volunteer Facilitator program forward; maintaining and regularly communicating with our partnership network; and continuing to effectively manage and administer the project.

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 to December 31, 2018 and a financial report to November 30, 2018.

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 staffing of 2.5 professionals.
- Maintained and supported active partnership network of 51 agencies.
- Trained 197 trusted intermediaries and served 208 clients of partner agencies through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member.
- Provided case support to 30 independent community agencies both in and outside our partnership network.
- Held 3 “Lunch and Learn” sessions on issues of Trauma Informed Care, CAS and Vulnerable Populations, and Consumer Protection.
- Held 2 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 2 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.
- Held 6 training/education sessions with partner agency staff (involving approximately 104 people) related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French or who have a communication barrier as a result of a disability.

PROMOTE THE USE OF ELECTRONIC AND OTHER RESOURCES BY TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Promoted new CLEO and Steps to Justice resources via Connecting Ottawa communique, website, and social media.
- Embedded the 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.
- Facilitated stable and steady growth in the use of our website and on-line resources:
 - Increased users to the connectingottawa.com website to 39,370 from 34,251 in the previous period. Users of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 790 from 713 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of sessions of the connectingottawa.com website to 46,887 from 41,815 in the previous period. Number of sessions of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 893 from 852.
 - Increased number of page views on the connectingottawa.com website to 83,881 from 77,362 in the previous period. Number of page views on the connexionottawa.com website increased to 1,685 from 1,680 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.
- Met with 4 potential new volunteer facilitators to discuss volunteer facilitator program.
- Assigned facilitators to 3 case assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Planned Volunteer Facilitator Training/Orientation session for January, 2019.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Presented 13 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 the Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair.
- Participated in the Refugee 613 Sponsorship Fair.
- Distributed information rack cards at public events and among partnership network.

SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

- Published 6 issues of Connecting Ottawa *Partner Communique*.
- Regularly met with partner agencies to discuss Connecting Ottawa's approach and best practices.
- Participated in the Eastern Region Legal Clinics Housing and Immigration Group Conference.
- Participated in the IRCC Priority Setting Consultation.
- Initiated planning for the 2018 Connecting Ottawa Conference.

PROJECT COORDINATION AND REVIEW

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirements.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate activities.
- Project Manager regularly met with Advisory Group Chair to review operations.
- Held one Advisory Group meeting.
- Reviewed and prepared response to the Law Foundation of Ontario's (LFO) Connecting Regional Evaluation Report.
- Proposed new staffing options to LFO to address capacity issues.
- 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.

ACTIVITIES

- Maintained staffing of 2.5 professionals.
- Maintained and supported active partnership network of 51 agencies.
- Trained 197 trusted intermediaries and served 208 clients of partner agencies through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member.
- Provided case support to 30 independent community agencies both in and outside our partnership network.
- Held 3 “Lunch and Learn” sessions on issues of Trauma Informed Care, CAS and Vulnerable Populations, and Consumer Protection.
- Held 2 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 2 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.
- Held 6 training/education sessions with partner agency staff (involving approximately 104 people) related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French or who have a communication barrier as a result of a disability.

Staffing & Accommodation

During the period, Connecting Ottawa maintained its current staff of two full time front line professional staff and one part time project manager; with notification that one staff member's contract would be ending on December 31, 2018.

The front line professional staff for the period included Alexandra-Marjorie Derisier LLL, LLB, who has an extensive background in labour relations, human rights and refugee law, and Erin Fitzpatrick BSW, MSW, LLB, LLM, who in addition to her social work training had been called to the Bar in 2018. Gina Grosenick, Ph.D., serves as the project manager and has an extensive background managing and communicating about community based programs and networks. Over the period of the report, Connecting Ottawa supported the supervision of one social work student working out of Community Legal Services of Ottawa.

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.

The demand for the project to support social services front line workers with legal information and referrals has far outweighed the demand for social services supports to legal workers over the past number of years. Consequently, over the past number of years, the legal support skills of our social worker position were heavily utilized. As a result, 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 will be presented to the Law Foundation of Ontario Trustees in January, 2019 after which Connecting Ottawa will initiate a hiring process.

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

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

Connecting Ottawa Partnership Network

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

During the reporting period, 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 program manager has met with the Executive Director and AASLI has availed their staff and volunteers to training and information resources available from Connecting Ottawa.

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

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

Connecting Ottawa also formalized its association with the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) during the reporting period. Connecting Ottawa was offered a seat on the OLIP Council. The Council seeks to promote collaboration across sectors, and mobilizes engagement and resources to build local capacity to attract, settle, and integrate immigrants in Ottawa.

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

Capacity building via one-on-one case consultation

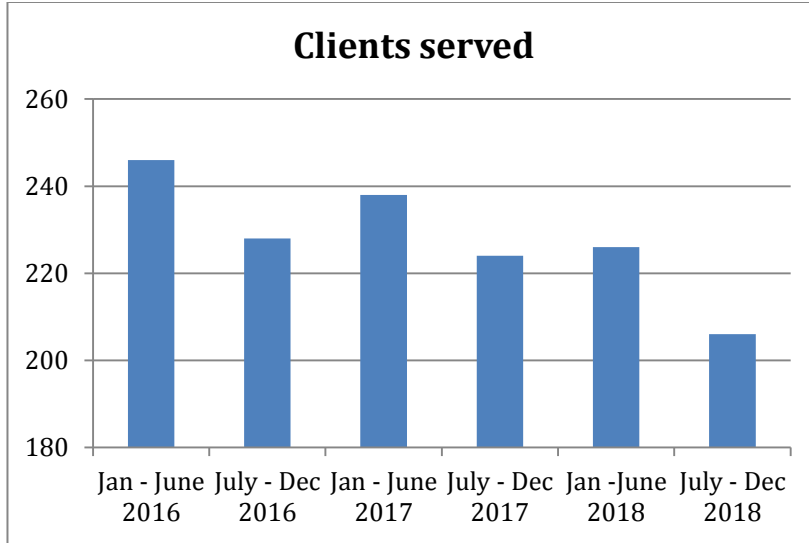
A primary means of developing capacity within the partnership network is working one-on-one with front line staff to address the legal needs of our target populations. Staff members primarily respond to requests for information and consultation but our lawyer and our social worker are also co-located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

Partner organizations consult with us about hard-to-serve clients who face barriers to communication. The eligibility for a client to be received for a consult by either staff is that the client must have a legal problem and a communication barrier. We provide information and advice, help assess the legal issues and communication challenges, help to connect the client with needed information and services, and identify an ongoing case manager before terminating our involvement. The daily workload of our front line staff remains dominated by these casework activities. Our intent is not to increase the legal services available in the community; instead, we view case consultation as an opportunity to build the referring organization's capacity to better respond to the needs of our focus populations, or provide legal services for partners whose clients fall into gaps existing within the current legal support system.

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

During the period there were 208 served and 197 trusted intermediaries trained by Connecting Ottawa staff through direct consultation, joint consultation with a partner agency staff member, or through consulting with a partner agency staff member. The cases presented a full range of legal and social issues. A total of 30 independent partner agencies referred cases or sought assistance from our professional staff to assist them with client needs. The majority of the referrals and case consultations continue to be from settlement and immigration agencies working with Connecting Ottawa; reflecting the increased need as a result of growing sponsorship and government activity in this area. Please see the appendix for an example of a case that Connecting Ottawa assisted with.

The graph below expresses the relative consistency in the number of partner agencies' clients served in each reporting period over the past two years. The slight decrease in clients served for the current reporting period reflect the seasonal reduction due to vacations and the winding down of the one staff member's activities in December, 2018. The demand for services continues to increase; however, as reported previously and in the recent Connecting Regions evaluation and we are forced to waitlist some requests that are received.



Capacity building via education.

In addition to one-on-one case consultations, Connecting Ottawa develops capacity within our network to provide access to justice for our target populations through education. In an effort to address the increased demand on our services, Connecting Ottawa staff has actively sought to increase its educational activities. During the period, Connecting Ottawa staff hosted 3 “Lunch and Learn” sessions and held 6 training/education sessions with partner agency staff related to issues of social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French or have a communication barrier as a result of a disability. 49 trusted intermediaries attended the Lunch and Learn sessions and approximately 104 trusted intermediaries were in attendance for the training/education sessions. These sessions are in addition to the public legal education sessions provided in conjunction with partner agencies (reported under Public Outreach and Education below).

The Lunch and Learn sessions are one hour informational sessions provided by our front line staff on a topical issue of law related to our target populations. The Lunch and Learn sessions are promoted to our partner agencies and front line workers are encouraged to attend to develop knowledge to support their clients. The presentations focus on understanding legal issues, ways to identify issues, and the resources available to support clients with these issues. The topics of the fall Lunch and Learn sessions were: Trauma Informed Care, CAS and Vulnerable Populations, and Consumer Protection. In the past two years, demand for these sessions has been increasing and we regularly have 15-25 participants at each session. Connecting Ottawa also seeks to locate these sessions at partner agencies across the city to ensure that all partners’ front-line workers have access to the sessions. In addition to providing valuable, timely information to partner agency staff, these get-togethers offer opportunities for networking and shared learnings.

The 6 professional development information sessions with partner agencies spanned a range of issues and topics, including:

- Basic Legal Information and Referrals
- Access to Justice Issues
- Trauma Informed Lawyering
- Connecting Ottawa Services
- Guardianships and Wills
- Linguistic Competency

In addition to the training sessions held above, Connecting Ottawa, in partnership with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), hosted two 3-hour seminars for front-line workers entitled “Helping People Find Good Legal Information”. Michelle Cader of CLEO was the workshop leader and the seminars were promoted to Connecting Ottawa partners as well as the broader network of social services providers in Ottawa. Both sessions were fully subscribed with 51 trusted intermediaries receiving training.

Connecting Ottawa also co-ordinated 2 newcomer identification replacement ID clinics to assist individuals who have had their citizenship documentation lost or stolen. These clinics continue the work that was initiated by Connecting Ottawa in 2017-18 to provide a service that front-line workers can refer clients to assist with completing forms to replace citizenship documentation. During the reporting period, 13 individuals were assisted by the clinics staffed by Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) and hosted at the YMCA.

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 by project partners to ensure access to justice by for focus populations.

ACTIVITIES

- Promoted new CLEO and Steps to Justice resources via Connecting Ottawa communique, website, and social media.
- Embedded the 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.
- Facilitated stable and steady growth in the use of our website and on-line resources:
 - Increased users to the connectingottawa.com website to 39,370 from 34,251 in the previous period. Users of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 790 from 713 in the previous period.
 - Increased number of sessions of the connectingottawa.com website to 46,887 from 41,815 in the previous period. Number of sessions of the connexionottawa.com website increased to 893 from 852.
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 - Increased followers to Connecting Ottawa Twitter and Facebook social media feeds.

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 2019 and we have arranged for hosting services through a monthly agreement with a hosting service. Connecting Ottawa also has an agreement with a digital media studio to help maintain

the technical aspects of the site. Connecting Ottawa also hosts a twitter feed (@connectottawa) and a Facebook page (Connecting Ottawa).

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

Connecting Ottawa maintains its agreement with the Community Information Centre of Ottawa (CICO) 211, maintaining the feed of the CICO database on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa websites and promoting 211 Eastern Ontario as the default information, assessment and referral resource in Ottawa. We remain in regular contact with CICO/211 to ensure any issues and changes to the feed and information are addressed. As noted in the recent Connecting Regions Evaluation, the website is used as a “go-to” resource by front-line social service workers to understand what services are available in Ottawa for their clients.

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

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

In 2017, Connecting Ottawa embedded the Steps to Justice resource into our English website. During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa embedded the Justice pas-à-pas resource into our French site.

In September 2017, 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.

Website Traffic

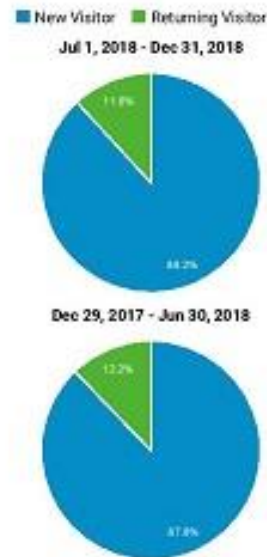
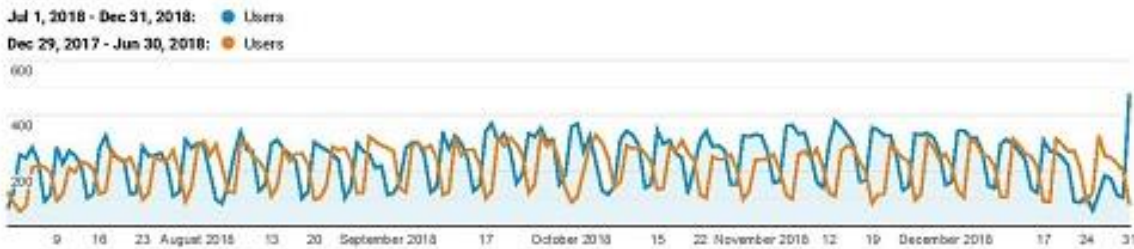
Google Analytics informs us that traffic continues to grow on both our English and French websites. Our traffic for this year (blue) compared with data from the previous year (orange) is displayed below.

When compared to the previous six month period (December 29, 2017 – June 30, 2018), the number of users of the English web site has increased from 39,370 from 34,251; the number of users on the French web site increased from 790 from 713.

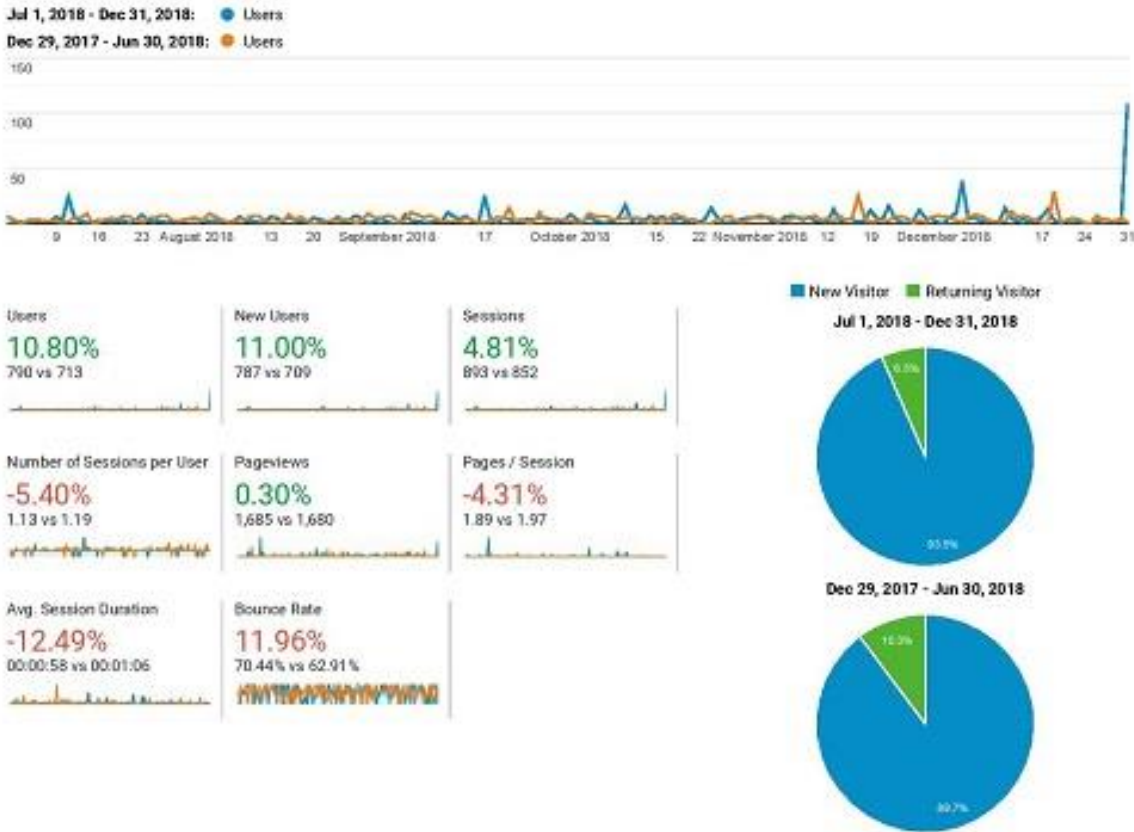
The volume of page views showed a similar trend – an increase to 83,881 from 77,362 for the English site and to 1,685 from 1,680 for the French site.

Traffic patterns reveal that the Connecting Ottawa “resources” and “services” listings continue to be used extensively by users to our websites – underscoring the findings of the Connecting Regions Evaluation. Again during this period, we saw a large amount of traffic directed to issues of family law, tenants’ rights and refugee services – a reflection of the same issues that our front-line professionals are regularly consulted on.

ConnectingOttawa.com



ConnexionOttawa.com (FR)



Social Media

Connecting Ottawa maintains a Twitter and Facebook feed to share news and information related to our project and partnership network, information on our focus populations, access to services, and emerging legal issues. Although work on developing these channels was not a priority during the reporting period, we increased our “followers” on Twitter from 624 to 646 and our followers on Facebook to 124.

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

DEVELOP & SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS AS TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

OUR CHALLENGE

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

OUR INTENT

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

ACTIVITIES

- 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.
- Met with 4 potential new volunteer facilitators to discuss volunteer facilitator program.
- Assigned facilitators to 3 case assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies.
- Planned Volunteer Facilitator Training/Orientation session for January, 2019.

The volunteer facilitator program is an important opportunity to engage the larger community in the Connecting Ottawa program and to support its impact. The concept and goal of trained facilitators to support clients' access to needed services is highly regarded as a good idea by our community partners; however the program has not received sustained uptake and coordination of assignments with partners is often organizationally difficult.

During the period, the Project Manager 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 period. The requests received were difficult to accommodate due to a lack of available volunteers for

the linguistic needs required or the timeliness of the assignment. We continue to work with this partner to coordinate a process that works for both partner agency staff and volunteers.

An additional challenge identified with the program has been recruiting and maintaining a pool of motivated volunteer facilitators. 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 two volunteer listings on the site. As of December 31, we received inquiries and interest from over 15 potential new volunteers via this membership – double what we had in the previous 12 months. Eight of the individuals did not meet our linguistic needs. The remaining 7 were invited to explore our program further. The Program Manager coordinated individual meetings with five potential new volunteers and invited them to attend a training session scheduled for January, 2019.

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.

During the period, the program coordinated 3 client assignments, connecting volunteer facilitators with clients identified by our partners to assist them in accessing needed services such as applying for identification cards or requesting required documentation from a government agency.

A Volunteer Training/Orientation session was planned for January 16, 2019 with all current and potential volunteers invited to attend.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

OUR CHALLENGE

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

OUR INTENT

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

ACTIVITIES

- Presented 13 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 the Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair.
- Participated in the Refugee 613 Sponsorship Fair.
- Distributed information rack cards at public events and among partnership network.

Connecting Ottawa is becoming a sought after provider of legal education and information sessions by our partnership network. During the period, Connecting Ottawa provided 13 individual presentations in collaboration with our partner agencies on the following topics:

- Refugee Preparatory Classes (5 session)
- Trauma Informed Lawyering (4 sessions)
- Family Law
- Wills & POA
- Access to Justice/Social Justice (2 sessions)

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

Connecting Ottawa seeks to actively participate in opportunities to share information about our program with not only target communities but also current and future service providers. During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa set up a table at two events: the Carleton

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University Social Work Agency Fair and the Refugee 613 Sponsorship Fair. The Carleton University Social Work Agency Fair allowed Connecting Ottawa to connect with future front line social workers to share information about the project. The Refugee 613 Sponsorship Fair provided an opportunity to share information about appropriate legal information and referrals to individuals sponsoring refugees in Ottawa.

In June of 2018, Connecting Ottawa re-printed a number (5,000 total) of our public information rack cards, translated into Arabic, Farsi, Somali, Spanish, English and French, on issues of Housing Law, Family Law, Criminal Law, and Immigration Law. During the reporting period we continued to promote the utilization of these cards in our communique and during meetings with partner agencies. Supplies of these resources were requested by and delivered to:

- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- YMCA Employment Centre
- Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
- Ottawa Public Library
- Nepean, Rideau and Osgoode Community Resource Centre

SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

OUR CHALLENGE

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

OUR INTENT

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

ACTIVITIES

- Published 6 issues of *Connecting Ottawa Partner Communiqué*.
- Regularly met with partner agencies to discuss *Connecting Ottawa's* approach and best practices.
- Participated in the Eastern Region Legal Clinics Housing and Immigration Group Conference.
- Participated in the IRCC Priority Setting Consultation.
- Initiated planning for the 2018 *Connecting Ottawa* Conference.

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 the July, August, September, October, November and December issues were developed and distributed.

Partner Meetings

During the period, more than 20 meetings with partner agencies were held to discuss *Connecting Ottawa's* approach and best practices and opportunities to work more closely together to address the needs of the target populations in the city. These meetings provide *Connecting Ottawa* staff an opportunity to check in with network partners to identify current and upcoming education and consultation needs as well as remind them of the services available from *Connecting Ottawa*.

Presentations

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

Connecting Ottawa also participated in the IRCC Priority Setting Consultation hosted by the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP). The objective of this consultation was to align local settlement and integration needs and challenges with the federal government's investment priorities; and alignment which we expect will support our collective progress. Connecting Ottawa's participation allowed for issues of legal information and supports to be voiced and included in the consultation. It also was a great opportunity to connect with network partners and front line staff.

Annual Conference

Connecting Ottawa's 8th annual conference will be held in May 2019. This conference has always been well received and regarded as an opportunity among our partnership network for staff professional development as well as community networking and sharing of lessons learned.

During the period, Connecting Ottawa brainstormed topics and secured the location for the 2019 event.

PROJECT COORDINATION AND REVIEW

OUR CHALLENGE

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

OUR INTENT

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

ACTIVITIES

- Maintained effective and efficient management of operations and administrative requirements.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate activities.
- Project Manager regularly met with Advisory Group Chair to review operations.
- Held one Advisory Group meeting.
- Reviewed and prepared response to the Law Foundation of Ontario’s (LFO) Connecting Regional Evaluation Report.
- Proposed new staffing options to LFO to address capacity issues.
- 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.

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.

Regular staff meetings and semi-regular meetings with the Advisory Group Chair are held to ensure effective communication and coordination of activities. During the reporting period, the project manager met bi-weekly to monthly with each staff member 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.

Advisory Group

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

The current membership of the Advisory Group is:

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

Project Review

In 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 early November, 2018.

A clear outcome of the evaluation was that Connecting Ottawa was working at maximum capacity; yet, there was ongoing, strong, and unmet demand for legal information and consultations from our social services partners. At the same time, 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. Recognizing that the majority of our staff efforts were being dedicated to the demand of social service workers and the need for a different approach for legal workers, 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. Following the initial meeting, it was agreed to continue discussions around this request moving forward.

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.

Financial Report

The financial report to November 30, 2018 is below. The report for the full six month period, to December 31, 2018, will be available in late January. Expenses for the first five months of the 2018/19 grant are in line with expectations. We respectfully request the balance of our funding to be forwarded for the operations of our project for the subsequent six months of the current project grant.

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

CONNECTING OTTAWA		
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
FOR THE FIVE MONTH PERIOD ENDED NOVEMBER 30, 2018		
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actuals</u>
REVENUE		
2.0 Law Foundation of Ontario		
412 Received During Year	256,560.00	128,280
412 Holdback receivable		-
	<u>256,560.00</u>	<u>128,280</u>
EXPENSES		
3.2 Website Hosting, Management and Administration		
595 Translation	-	-
625 Website Hosting, Management and Administration	5,000.00	205
	<u>5,000.00</u>	<u>205</u>
3.3 Facilitators to Connect Clients and Legal Services		
590 Training	200.00	-
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	750.00	127
550 Meeting Costs		50
595 Translation		-
510 Printing/Supplies		-
	<u>950.00</u>	<u>177</u>
3.4 Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection		
515 Accommodation	12,000.00	4,872
530 Cloud/Mobile Services	2,000.00	862
540 Equipment Purchases	500.00	-
545 Materials and Supplies	800.00	339
550 Meeting Costs	500.00	37
557 Professional Fees		-
558 Liability Insurance		-
56X Salaries and Benefits	167,600.00	24,995
562 Resource Development	500.00	-
585 Staffing Costs		-
590 Training/Professional Development	1,800.00	472
595 Translation/Interpretation	1,500.00	259
615 Travel	2,500.00	435
699 Sundry		24
	<u>189,700.00</u>	<u>32,294</u>
3.6 Secretariat		
510 Administration		-
545 Materials and Supplies	400.00	100
550 Meeting Costs		19
560 Project Co-ordinator	50,250.00	16,667
615 Travel	400.00	110
	<u>51,050.00</u>	<u>16,896</u>
3.7 Shared Lessons Learned		
520 Annual Conference	2,500.00	-
545 Materials and Supplies		-
546 Materials and Supplies: Rack Cards		-
550 Conferences, etc	-	-
595 Translation/Interpretation	-	-
615 Travel	-	-
	<u>2,500.00</u>	<u>-</u>
3.8 Administration		
542 Lead Agency Stipend	5,000.00	5,000
527 Bookkeeping	1,500.00	390
525 Bank Charges	-	23
522 Auditing	800.00	-
699 Sundry	-	-
799 Contingency	-	-
	<u>7,300.00</u>	<u>5,413</u>
3.9 October 15, 2018 Event		<u>2,609</u>
	<u>256,500.00</u>	<u>57,594</u>
Total Expenses		
	<u>256,500.00</u>	<u>57,594</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES		
(EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)	<u>60.00</u>	<u>70,686</u>

LFO REPORTING STATISTICS

Organization: Connecting Ottawa	Grant file #: CONRE-09-18
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	13	
# of people with legal needs or members of the public trained	226	Via PLEI training sessions
# of trusted intermediaries and / or frontline workers trained	252 197	Via training/education sessions and events Via consultations with front line staff
# of sessions / page views	34,229/62,867	
# of print resources distributed	1,500	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	208	
# of clients provided legal advice or brief services	208	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	0	
# of paralegals engaged in pro bono work	1	Note: Social Worker with LLB LLM, not paralegal
# of lawyers engaged in pro bono work	1	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by lawyers	0	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by students	0	
# of pro bono hours volunteered by paralegals	0	

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

Growing the non-profit justice sector		
# of books, reports, oral histories or other significant legal research or policy work	0	
# of staff employed in the sector (full-time)	2	
# of staff employed in the sector (part-time)	1	
# of students employed in the sector	0	
# of professional development and learning events	0	
Building a culture of law and understanding of rights		
# of training events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	10	Primarily among partnership network, also tabelling at fairs and information sessions
# of participants in events to build awareness of law, democracy and rights	Approx. 100	
# of student/youth participants	*note B	
# of adult participants	*note B	
Encouraging partnerships and collaboration		
# of organizations you partnered with	60	

- Note A: We are unable to report specific numbers at this time.
- Note B: We have no means to collect this information at this time.

APPENDIX

Case Study

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. A recently presented case study is shared below. All identifying information about the clients has been changed.

Philip is a male from Thailand who speaks limited English and French. He is also visually impaired.

He sponsored his wife after they'd been separated for over 10 years. After his wife came to Canada, marital problems ensued. Children's Aid Society (CAS) had become involved in the home as Phillip's daughter had been preyed upon by a sexual predator online. The father used corporal punishment to discipline his daughter while the mother was away. When she came home from Thailand, the mother informed Phillip of her ongoing relationship with another man in their home country.

Phillip was referred to Connecting Ottawa by the Vanier Community Service Centre and by a lawyer from Clinique Juridique who had worked with Philip on his humanitarian and compassionate ground claim.

Initially, Connecting Ottawa was to give legal advice on separations, sponsorship breakdowns and custody and access. After the initial first meeting with Phillip it became clear that he was in a domestic violence situation: he'd been threatened multiple times and each time his wife told him that "she would play the victim because women were always believed in Canada".

Philip was connected with a settlement worker from Catholic Center for Immigrants and with a social worker at the Vanier Community Service Centre for counselling. Several times he was instructed to leave the home and to go to the police after being assaulted.

Eventually he was able to secure proof of several violent incidents on a cassette player and his wife threatened to have him murdered should he set foot in Thailand to retrieve his property.

Philip was provided the following services by Connecting Ottawa:

- Multiple appointments for legal advice at every step or every new development.
- Philip was connected with a social worker and multiple appointments were held with the social worker present as he was quite distraught.
- Philip also had to go undergo eye surgery and as he had limited vision he was paired with a volunteer facilitator and a law student to assist him with the transcription of the cassette player.
- Connecting Ottawa assisted Philip in obtaining a legal aid certificate.

LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

- Philip was accompanied to the Center for men victim of domestic violence.
- Phillip was referred to a lawyer who accepted his legal aid certificate.
- Advocacy is being done on his behalf for the sponsorship breakdown and negotiations of a payment plan with the province because of his undertakings as a sponsor.