

SOUTH OTTAWA COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICES  
SERVICES JURIDIQUES  
COMMUNAUTAIRES DU SUD D'OTTAWA

1355 rue Bank Street,  
Suite/Pièce 406, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 8K7  
Tel: (613) 733-0140 Fax: (613) 733-0401  
<http://www.socls.org>



# **CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE**

## **ACTIVITY REPORT #8**

Submitted to the  
Law Foundation of Ontario  
Access to Justice Fund

On behalf of the

**CONNECTING OTTAWA NETWORK**

July 2016



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## Introduction

This is the eighth 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 activities and performance milestones for the twelve-month period July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. In addition, this report places an emphasis on achievements since the January 2016 LFO Interim Report. Our focus during this period has been the continued implementation of the planned activities, recruitment, training, assignment and supervision of volunteer facilitators, reaching out to our partners in the settlement services and community sectors, adding new functionality to our website, and keeping to our original role as case consultants to our partner organizations.

During this period we have operated well within the approved budget. Please see the attached financial statement; this period has ended with a positive fund balance of \$8,471.47; actual expenditures were \$8,471.47 under budget. (Please see our [financial statement](#) with notes of significant variations.)

This year has provided Connecting Ottawa with valuable stability and reliability. Connecting Ottawa's new Project Coordinator Nico Koenig has 10 months of experience guiding the project and is prepared to manage the year to come. Similarly, Connecting Ottawa's social worker Erin Fitzpatrick has offered her expertise for two years, while our lawyer Alex Derisier has now contributed significantly for one and half years. Our network of partner agencies, website and social media presence has been maintained and strengthened. Successfully completing our fourth year in operation, Connecting Ottawa maintains a reputation as the "go-to" access to justice resource for those with communication barriers across the Ottawa region.

Stability and reliability have also been a strong contributing factor to Connecting Ottawa's increasing capacity and reach. With a stable foundation of partners, knowledge of Connecting Ottawa's expertise has reached new and diverse trusted intermediaries. A good example of Connecting Ottawa's growth is the fact that we received requests for case consultations from 59 different agencies across the Ottawa region, a 65% increase in the number of referring agencies as compared to the previous year. Similarly, Connecting Ottawa has reached an all-time high of case consultations, benefitting 557 clients and their families, a 27% increase as compared to the previous year. Another indicator was the success of this year's Connecting Ottawa conference, which was our most well attended conference thus far.

Connecting Ottawa is in good position to create new resources and programmes. We have successfully delivered eight monthly Lunch and Learn Public Legal Education (PLE) events for our network covering topics such as Family Law and Housing Law. Of note, we have also printed and disseminated the first of its kind local legal referral rack cards available in six different languages including Arabic, Somali, Spanish, Farsi, English and French.

## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

In December 2015, we received notice that our proposal to LFO to extend our funding was accepted. We are very appreciative of the Foundation's continued support for the Connecting Region initiative and the work being done here in Ottawa.

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

- Continue with consultation support to our network partners
- Address the growing interest and demand for PLE
- Implement tools to enable trusted intermediaries to identify legal issues with confidence, and
- Train selected facilitators to initiate outreach activities to focus population communities.

Here is the final report of our progress so far. We thank the Law Foundation again for its continued encouragement, interest and support.



## Highlights

### CONNECT COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- **557** clients and their families have benefited from case consultations by Connecting Ottawa's staff, a 27% increase as compared to the previous year
- **59** agencies referring to Connecting Ottawa for case consultations, as compared to 36 from the previous year
- **8** "Lunch and Learn" sessions, hosting 60 partner staff, which covered Immigration and Refugee Law, Family Law and Housing Law
- **30** meetings with community service partners with the aim to improve access to justice for those with communication barriers.
- **86** case consultations with partner agencies required Connecting Ottawa's support in accessing interpretation and translation services

### PROMOTE THE USE OF A WEBSITE RESOURCE BY TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Users of the ConnectingOttawa.com website increased from 14,110 to **36,260**, an increase of 157%
- **42,902** visits to ConnectingOttawa.com website this year, representing an increase of 162% as compared to the previous year.
- The Syrian Refugee Resource page was accessed **20,202** times
- Substantial increase in users accessing ConnectingOttawa.com through Twitter and Facebook.

### DEVELOP AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS AS TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES

- Facilitators received **12** assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies
- Volunteer Facilitators promoted Connecting Ottawa services at **4** community events
- Coordinated Volunteer Facilitator training focused on current assignments, scenarios and changes to refugee law
- **2** Facilitator Newsletters have been created and distributed which feature common assignment scenarios, upcoming events and workshops, news from Connecting Ottawa as well as case studies from the Volunteer Facilitators

### DEVELOP AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS TO OUTREACH TO THEIR NETWORKS

- **1000** Rack Cards have been printed and distributed through Connecting Ottawa's network of legal and social service agencies
- The Immigration Law Rack Card has been designed and translated into 6 languages spoken in Ottawa

### PLE OUTREACH TO ISOLATED LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

- **2** PLE sessions delivered to Ottawa's faith leaders through partnership with the Law Foundation-funded "Spirit of the Law Project"

## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

- Free Mobile Law Clinic in suburban mall through partnership with University of Ottawa
- **12** presentations and collaborations with social and legal services groups including presentations with Refugee Network Ottawa and Catholic Centre for Immigrants

### SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

- **95** participants attended Connecting Ottawa's 5<sup>th</sup> conference *"Sounds Traumatic: Rethinking What Trauma Means for Legal and Social Work"*
- Highlighted as a best practice by Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario (ACLCO) 2015 Annual Report.
- **15** presentations detailing Connecting Ottawa's approach and best practices

## 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. Our intent 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.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 557 clients and their families have benefited from case consultations by Connecting Ottawa's staff, 27% increase as compared to the previous year
- 59 agencies referring to Connecting Ottawa for case consultations, as compared to 36 from the previous year
- Eight "Lunch and Learn" sessions, hosting 60 partner staff, which covered Immigration and Refugee Law, Family Law and Housing Law
- Coordinated training session for 211 Staff regarding social and legal services for those who do not speak English or French
- 30 meetings with community service partners with the aim to improve access to justice for those with communication barriers.

- 86 case consultations received guidance and support in accessing interpretation and translation services

## PROGRESS

### **Providing consultation services and maintaining our current staffing mix: a lawyer and a social worker**

The network of partners currently includes 48 organizations: 18 community service agencies, 10 agencies serving immigrants, 10 organizations providing legal services, 6 agencies serving people with disabilities, 3 organizations that offer placements to students interested in access to justice issues and 1 providing interpretation and translation services. The project also reaches out to additional organizations that could contribute to successful outcomes and liaises with other networks and coalitions (including Local Agencies Serving Immigrants [LASI], the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership [OLIP], Ottawa Public Library, Refugee Network of Ottawa [ReNoo Group], Crime Prevention Ottawa and the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres).

We have recognized that organizations engage differently with the project; partners participate according to their capacity and resources. To better manage our relationship with the network we have categorized the partners according to the quality and extent of their engagement (Levels 1-3). Organizations in Category 1 are integral to the success of the project; they are fully engaged in decision-making processes and contribute time and resources. Organizations in Category 2 communicate regularly with the project, frequently consult concerning clients, and share their perspectives about our focus and direction. Organizations in Category 3 have expressed an interest in our activities and wish to be kept informed about access to justice issues and opportunities for cross-sectorial collaboration. All organizations receive our communications (information, newsletters, events calendar, etc.), have access to the web site, and are invited to our annual conference and other learning opportunities.

During this reporting period we met with 30 community service partners to assess how our legal issue awareness and system navigation tools can be improved, determine the training priorities for trusted intermediaries within these organizations, and consulted about access to justice for our focus populations.

Further to our Partnership Agreement, office accommodations and human resources services continue to be provided by Centre des services communautaires Vanier, a Community Resource Centre that is already home to la Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa. CSC Vanier is the “employer of record” for project staff, manages payroll and benefits administration, provides the security of mature personnel policies and other human resources infrastructure, and provides office accommodations.

Connecting Ottawa currently has the following staff under contract: Alexandra-Marjorie Derisier LLL, LLB and Erin Fitzpatrick MSW, LLB, RSW. They are both bilingual in English and French; Alex also speaks Spanish and Creole fluently. Nico Koenig is an independent consultant under contract to provide project management services.

During this period we

- Reached out to our partners to raise awareness and promote use of project services.
- Discussed ways in which the project can build local capacity for case management for clients from our focus populations
- Shared best practices when responding to issues raised by these populations
- Understood partners' history and experience when referring to legal services
- Explored ways that the project can improve this experience
- Explored PLE and shared training opportunities
- Determined the most effective ways to maintain productive liaison with partners and other stakeholders.
- Provided case consultation and advice to network partners.

Staffs primarily respond to requests for service but our lawyer and our social worker are regularly colocated with partner organizations 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). New to this reporting period is a trial period of co-location period between Connecting Ottawa's lawyer and Economic & Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC).

Partner organizations consult with us about hard-to-serve clients who face barriers to communication. We provide information and advice, we assess the legal issues and communication challenges, connect the client with needed services, and identify an ongoing case manager before terminating our involvement. The daily workload remains dominated by these casework activities. Although we understand that consultation and advice alone is insufficient support for overburdened front-line service providers who are often poorly prepared to respond to the additional demands of clients who have difficulties communicating their issues, by reverting to our original consultation role our staff will have more time available to allocate to training and organizational capacity building. Our goal at this point is to ensure that each case consultation is an opportunity to build the referring organization's capacity to better respond to the needs of our focus populations and to ensure that case managers on the front lines refer to legal services appropriately.

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 or our consultations are relatively brief, in many other instances our staff is extensively involved with researching a legal issue, determining appropriate connections to services and other time-intensive support activities. There were 557 case consultations offered to partner agencies, other Ottawa regional agencies and services, as well as individual self-referrals. This

## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

represents a total of 557 clients and their families who have benefited (directly or indirectly) from interventions by Connecting Ottawa, a 27% increase as compared to the previous year.

During the reporting period, Connecting Ottawa has also facilitated access interpretation services 86 times and has requested the services of Volunteer Facilitators for 12 assignments.

	# Cases July 2014- June 2015	# Cases July 2015- June 2016
Social Worker	141	236
Lawyer	202	308
Shared	40	13
TOTAL	437	557

	July - June 2015	July - June 2016
# Organizations Referring	35	59
# Interpretation Arranged	70	86
# Facilitators Requested and Assigned	14	12

The cases presented a full range of legal and social issues. Based on 557 case consultations, 59 different organizations requested case consultations from our lawyer and social which is a significant increase from the previous reporting period. Many of these new referring agencies are smaller community-based non-profits. This number of agencies who are referring to us is an important measurement that we hope to sustain and grow over time, as more agencies are aware of the type of specialized support we can offer.

Our [first case study](#) featured in our appendix describes our role in consulting with and supporting immigration and legal services for those with communication barriers. Our [second case study](#), although unique, highlights Connecting Ottawa's expertise when legal supports are not immediately available for clients. The case offers an insight into a complex case requiring significant contributions from multiple stakeholders, and at times, direct service from our social worker as well.

This year, we also hosted three students from University of Ottawa Pro Bono Students Canada: Stephanie Kogane, Corrine Joseph, and Catarina Ferreira. Pro Bono Students Canada placements provide opportunities for us to have a more sustained relationship with a student, albeit for fewer hours each week than other students we have hosted in the past. Our lawyer has done exceptional work in offering these students an experience that also shares significant value to our partners. During October and November, each student volunteered three hours a week, assisting in drafting declarations and support letters, researching immigration and consumer protection issues, and supporting one of our partner agencies Catholic Centre for Immigrants during our case consultations.

### Implementing the Legal Health Check Up as a PLE resource for trusted intermediaries.

The Legal Health Check Up (LHCU) was developed to enable trusted intermediaries and clients to readily recognise when a person with a lived experience may have a legal issue. Organised according to the same taxonomy of legal topics and subtopics developed by Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) and Your Legal Rights and adopted by our web site, the LHCU uses summary statements to describe life scenarios that can “diagnose” legal issues and identify a need for legal information or another legal service.

**Connecting Ottawa**  
Effective communication  
Accessible justice

**Connexion Ottawa**  
Une communication efficace  
Une justice accessible

**The Law Foundation of Ontario**

## LUNCH & LEARN DÎNER - CAUSERIE

This Month's Topic / Sujet du mois:  
*Criminal Law and Vulnerable Populations / Droit criminel*

**FRIDAY / VENDREDI**  
**April 8, 12:00–13:00PM**  
VANIER COMMUNITY SERVICE  
CENTRE, 290 DUPUIS ST.  
Salle Vanier  
contact: [nico@connectingottawa.com](mailto:nico@connectingottawa.com)  
bring your own lunch/ apportez votre dîner

Bilingual informal meetings held over lunch on Fridays. Each month, learn about a legal topic with our social worker and lawyer.

Rencontre informelle bilingue pendant l'heure du dîner. Un vendredi par mois, venez-vous renseigner sur un sujet de droit avec notre travailleuse sociale et notre avocate.

The Connecting Ottawa project aims to improve access to justice for people who are not proficient in English or French or who face communication challenges as the result of a disability, condition or sensory impairment.

Le projet Connexion Ottawa a comme objectif d'améliorer l'accès à la justice pour les individus qui ne sont pas en mesure de s'exprimer en anglais ou en français ou qui connaissent des défis de communication dû à un handicap, un état de santé ou une déficience sensorielle.

[CONNECTINGOTTAWA.COM](http://CONNECTINGOTTAWA.COM) [CONNEXIONOTTAWA.COM](http://CONNEXIONOTTAWA.COM)

Event poster printed and distributed

frontline staff who would not regularly meet each other outside of the working conditions but who face similar cases. Following the sessions, the PowerPoint presentations were shared

LHCU has been at the core of our current “Lunch & Learn / Dîner – Causerie” sessions, and other training opportunities developed to raise awareness of legal issues among network partners. During this year, we organized eight monthly Lunch & Learn sessions for frontline social and legal service workers from across Ottawa.

Each session focused on a different LHCU topic (Immigration Law, Family Law, Housing Law, Power of Attorney, Criminal Law) and provided details related to legal terms, referral information, case studies, additional resources and discussion on best practices. Sessions were most often offered in English, with one session offered specifically in French.

Importantly, the Lunch & Learn sessions were valuable as networking opportunities for

electronically with participants and additional material was available through our website. In total 60 participants have attended our Lunch and Learn sessions (on average of 8 participants attended each meeting).

**Promoting CICO/211 as the default information, assessment and referral resource for trusted intermediaries and clients from our focus populations.**

The Community Information Centre of Ottawa (CICO) 211 continues to be an important resource and valued partner during project implementation. Connecting Ottawa has

- Continued to promote 211 Eastern Ontario as the default information, assessment and referral (IAR) resource in all project communications, materials and activities, as well as through our use of social media.
- Coordinated a training program for CICO staff to strengthen capabilities regarding legal services information, assessment and referral. We provided one training session of CICO staff during this reporting period.
- Maintained a feed of the CICO database to the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa web sites.
- Extended the reach of the CICO Community Bulletin by posting events on the Connecting Ottawa/Connexion Ottawa web sites.

As 211 is a provincial initiative, and CICO is the certified Ottawa service agency, there are an increasing amount of cases where an Ottawa caller will be redirected to another 211 service agency in a different area of Ontario. Those that receive calls from Ottawa rely on the online database of 211 and not on professional local knowledge or consultative projects such as Connecting Ottawa. As such, it will be a challenge to offer training supports to 211 service agencies outside of Ottawa. However, we have received news from CICO staff that 211 agencies across Ontario have used Connecting Ottawa website as an additional consultation service when their database does not provide adequate information. This is an important finding and sheds light on the reach of the Connecting Ottawa website and its use by information and resource professionals from outside of the Ottawa region.

As noted in the Connecting Ottawa Activity Report #7, calls to 211 are now tracked using new provincial-wide categories that no longer correspond to the previous system of local data collection. Additionally, through consultation with 211 managers, it has become clear that documenting the number of calls made to 211 is an inadequate measure to evaluate the effectiveness of Connecting Ottawa. As such, our reports will no longer detail 211 data as an indicator of the work of Connecting Ottawa.



## PROMOTE THE USE OF A WEBSITE RESOURCE 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, Your Legal Rights. However, the fact remains that navigation of the legal system remains challenging for many front-line service providers in Ottawa.

### OUR INTENT

To supplement the on-line information available from Your Legal Rights and the Community Information Centre of Ottawa (CICO) by developing a local web site resource that includes comprehensive and current information about local legal services, and by sharing information about the Connecting Ottawa project and the ways in which it can support project partners to ensure access to justice by our focus populations.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Users of the ConnectingOttawa.com website increased from 14,110 to **36,260**, an increase of **157%**
- **42,902** visits to ConnectingOttawa.com website this year, representing an increase of **162%** as compared to the previous year.
- The Syrian Refugee Resource page was accessed **20,202** times
- Substantial increase in users accessing ConnectingOttawa.com through Twitter and Facebook.

### PROGRESS

Connecting Ottawa's web sites have been maintained in both English (connectingottawa.com) and French (connexionottawa.com). The domain registrations have been extended until November 2016.

During this period we have taken steps to develop the sites further by

- Adding security updates
- Creating "News/ Actualités" feature to promote time-sensitive information or resources. The News tab is available on both French and English sites.

- Expanding the “Resources” menu to provide information about Syrian Refugee Support and Multilingual Immigration Rack Card Files.
- Maintaining a current "Events" calendar and posting **66** events detailing workshops, public legal education sessions, conferences and other learning opportunities of interest to our partners.
- Adding attachment usability to allow “Resources” and “Events” page to host electronic documents, presentations and posters.
- Updating the French site to ensure it is consistent with the English site.
- Adding “Newsletter Signup” link through Mailchimp service.



1

### Website Traffic

Google Analytics informs us that traffic to the sites continues to grow steadily. Our traffic for this year (blue) compares with data from the previous year (orange) and is displayed below.

<sup>1</sup> News/ Actualités” functionality added in 2016. Screenshot taken from <http://connectingottawa.com/news>

<sup>2</sup> Screenshot from <http://connectingottawa.com/how-help-syrian-refugees-ottawa>

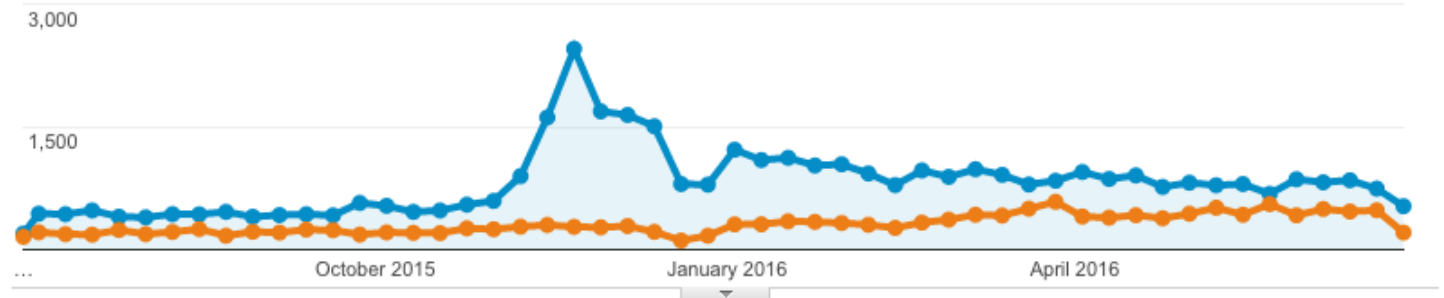
<sup>3</sup> <http://twitter.com/connectottawa>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ConnectingOttawa>

**ConnectingOttawa.com**

Jul 1, 2015 - Jun 30, 2016: ● Sessions

Jun 30, 2014 - Jun 30, 2015: ● Sessions



Sessions

**162.30%**  
42,902 vs 16,356



Users

**156.98%**  
36,260 vs 14,110



Pageviews

**137.07%**  
77,296 vs 32,605



Pages / Session

**-9.62%**  
1.80 vs 1.99



Avg. Session Duration

**13.99%**  
00:01:43 vs 00:01:30



Bounce Rate

**-7.11%**  
55.81% vs 60.08%



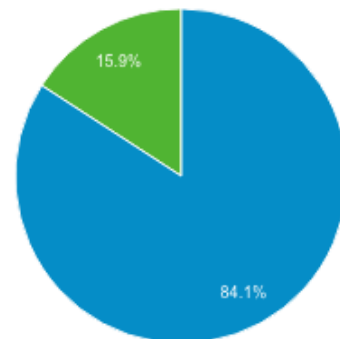
% New Sessions

**-2.01%**  
84.09% vs 85.82%

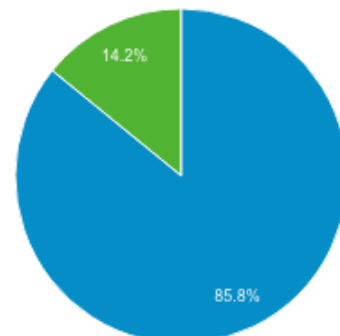


■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

Jul 1, 2015 - Jun 30, 2016



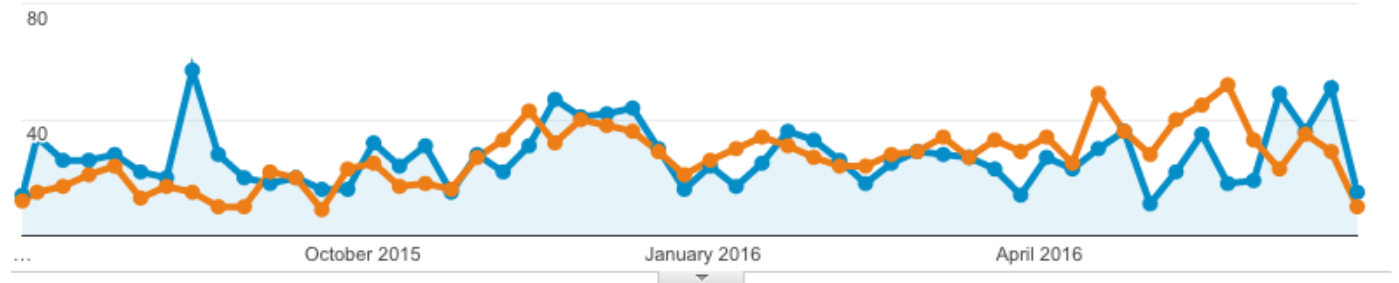
Jun 30, 2014 - Jun 30, 2015



## ConnexionOttawa.com (FR)

Jul 1, 2015 - Jun 30, 2016: ● Sessions

Jun 30, 2014 - Jun 30, 2015: ● Sessions



Sessions

**1.90%**

1,445 vs 1,418



Users

**10.00%**

1,276 vs 1,160



Pageviews

**41.14%**

2,940 vs 2,083



Pages / Session

**38.51%**

2.03 vs 1.47



Avg. Session Duration

**71.36%**

00:01:18 vs 00:00:46



Bounce Rate

**-19.97%**

64.57% vs 80.68%



% New Sessions

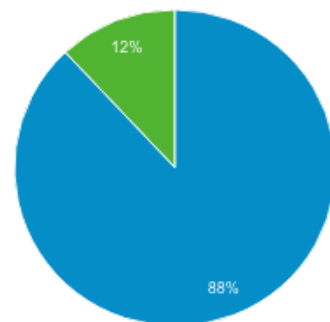
**7.89%**

88.03% vs 81.59%

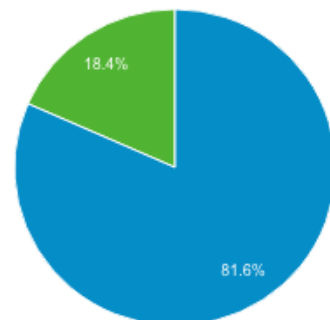


■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor

Jul 1, 2015 - Jun 30, 2016



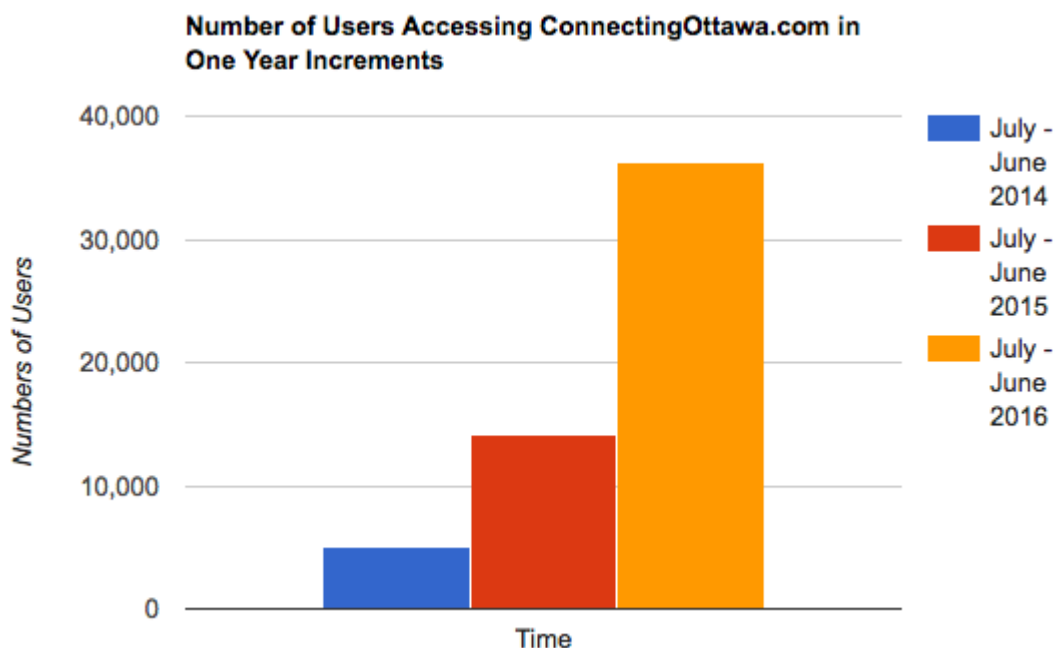
Jun 30, 2014 - Jun 30, 2015



### Number of Users and Page Views

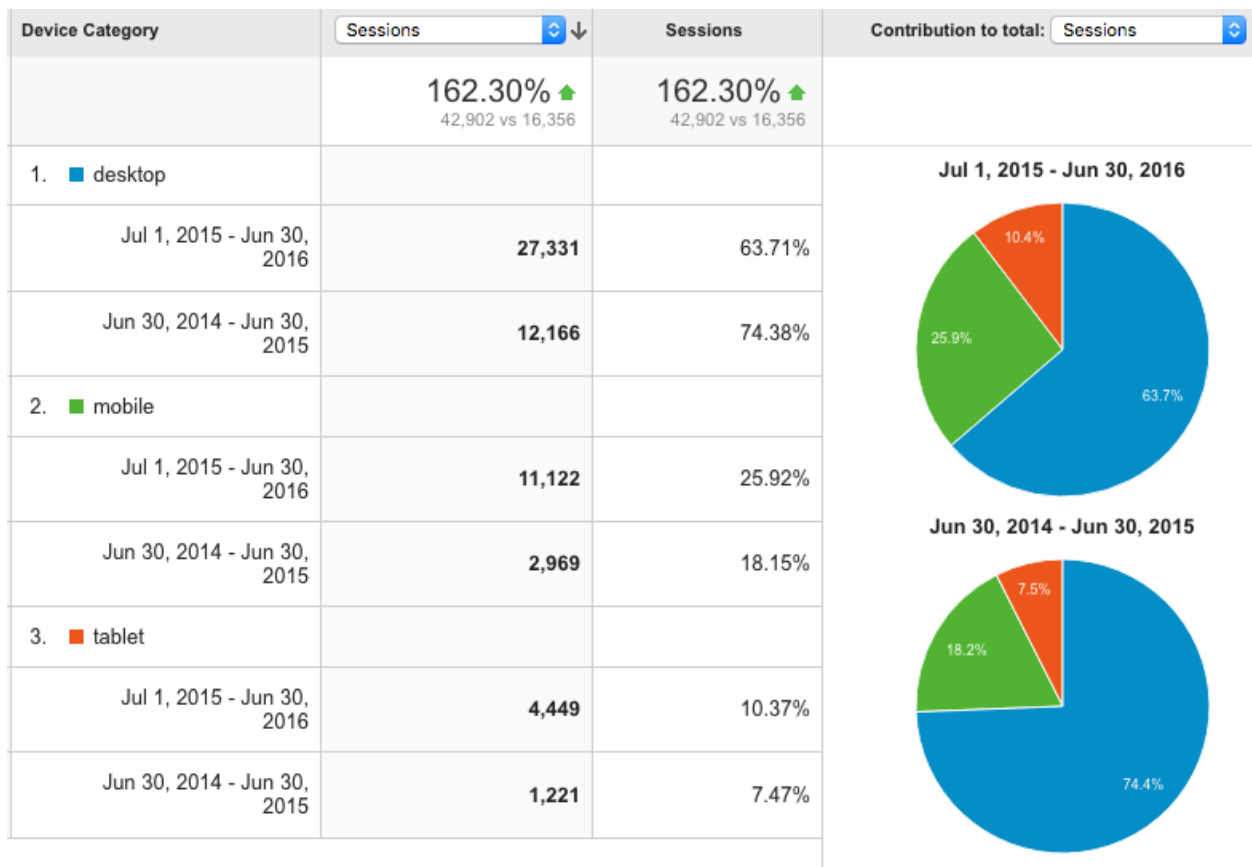
When compared to the previous time (July 1 2014 to June 30 2015), the number of users of the English web site has increased by 157% (36,260 from 14,110); the number of users on the French web site has remained stable with a slight increase of 10%.

The volume of page views has also increased significantly - by 137% (English) and 41% (French) respectively. 85.8% of traffic to the English site and 84.1% of traffic to the French site is comprised of new users, which has kept to the same ratio as the previous year.



### Mobile and Table Vs. Desktop Use of ConnectingOttawa.com

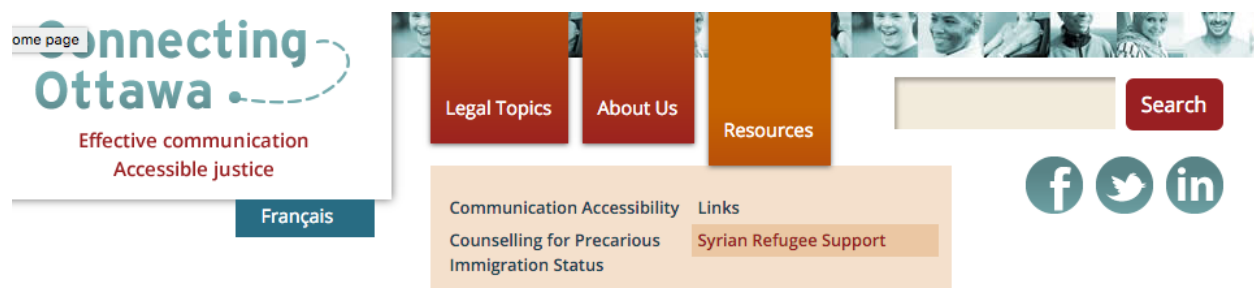
Mobile and tablet use has significantly increased in one-year period. ConnectingOttawa.com was accessed by a mobile smart phones and tables for a combined total of 15,571 times as compared to only 4,190 times during the previous reporting period representing an increase of 271%.



**Most Viewed Websites and Topics**

<b>Website / Topic</b>	<b>Number of Page Views (July 2015-June 2016)</b>
How to Help Syrian Refugees in Ottawa	20,202 (26.14%)
Family Law Information Centre	3,119 (4.04%)
About   Connecting Ottawa	2,550 (3.30%)
Legal Services - Partner Abuse	1,847 (2.39%)
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee [OPGT] - Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General	1,782 (2.31%)
Contact us   Connecting Ottawa	1,653 (2.14%)
Resources  Connecting Ottawa	1,334 (1.73%)
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	1,095 (1.42%)
Counselling Resources  Connecting Ottawa	1,078(1.39%)
Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (CAS)	939 (1.21%)

It is worth noting the significant number of page views (20,202) of our newly created Syrian Refugee Resource page. This resource is the main cause of the significant increase of website traffic during the months of November and December of 2015.



## LEGAL TOPICS

Aboriginal Issues	+
Abuse and Family Violence	+
Consumer Law	+
Criminal Law	+
Education Law	+

2

## How to Help Syrian Refugees in Ottawa

If you are interested in supporting local agencies that support refugees here in our community, listed below are suggestions. This is not an exhaustive list. Please call 211 for further information and options and be aware that general social services agencies in Ottawa have been serving refugee needs in Ottawa for many years. Please see the [Connecting Ottawa resources](#) guide for a list of agencies who serve those “with precarious immigration status”.

## Social Media

Connecting Ottawa’s English and French web sites contain links to the project’s presence on Twitter<sup>3</sup> and Facebook<sup>4</sup>. Social media is another vehicle for the project to share news and information related to our focus populations, their access to services, and emerging legal issues, especially concerning immigration, poverty, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. At the beginning of July 2015, Connecting Ottawa had 390 “followers” on twitter, which has since grown by 30% to 506 followers.

Based on our top shared tweets, it seems many people engage with our twitter posts when we share upcoming events that relate to legal or equity related events. The below screenshot documents our top five posts gaining the most Impressions<sup>5</sup>, Engagements<sup>6</sup> and Engagement Rate<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Screenshot from <http://connectingottawa.com/how-help-syrian-refugees-ottawa>

<sup>3</sup> <http://twitter.com/connectottawa>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ConnectingOttawa>






<sup>5</sup> Impressions: Number of times the Tweet was seen by users on Twitter

<sup>6</sup> Engagements: The total number of times a user interacted with a Tweet

<sup>7</sup> Engagement Rate: Engagements divided by Impressions



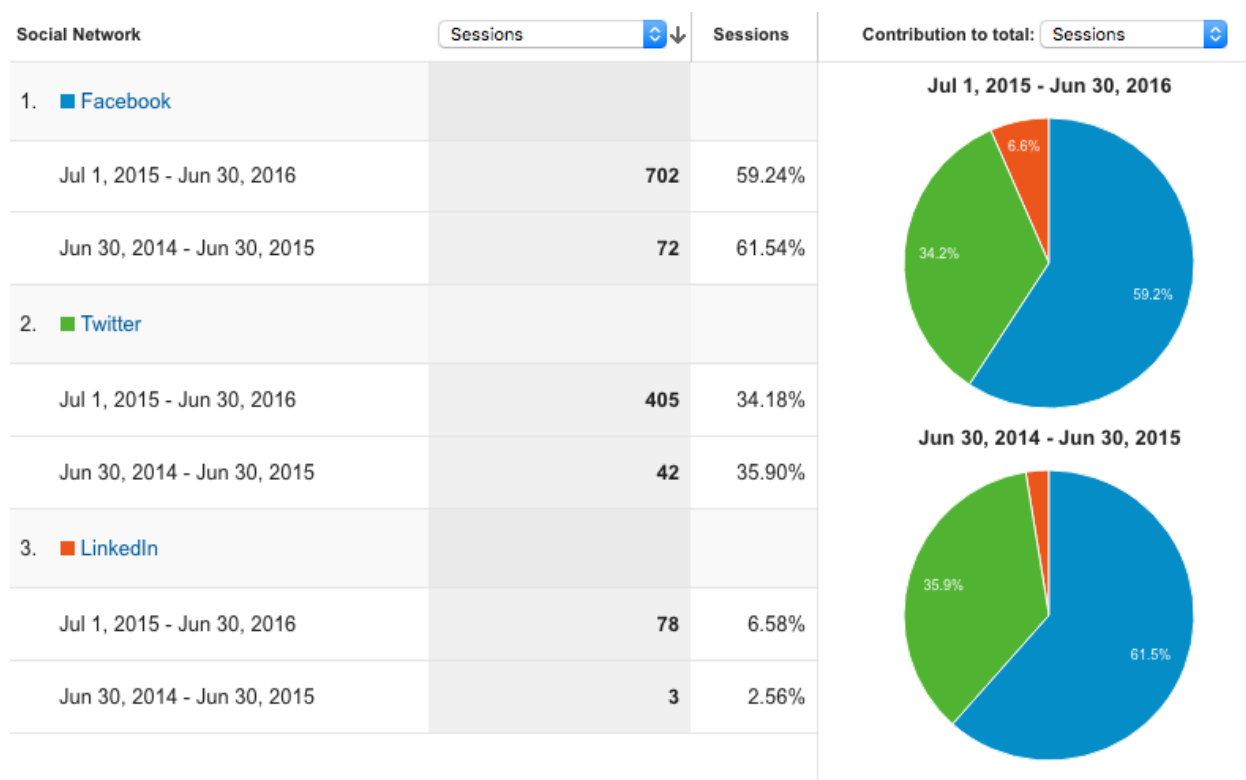
## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

Tweets	Top Tweets	Tweets and replies	Promoted	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement rate
	<b>Connecting Ottawa</b> @connectottawa · Nov 25 #RefugeesWelcome Event TODAY 7-9 The Refugee Story @rawsugarcafe #Ottawa @RefugeesOtt buff.ly/1Li3ZvB pic.twitter.com/SK7vHWx3 View Tweet activity			2,424	25	1.0%
	<b>Connecting Ottawa</b> @connectottawa · Jan 14 Parrainage de Réfugiés 101 Jan 19 @refugee613 @MathieuFleury @tobi_n eventbrite.ca/e/refugee-613-... pic.twitter.com/VwMQtLOdwc View Tweet activity			1,550	7	0.5%
	<b>Connecting Ottawa</b> @connectottawa · Sep 13 Wrongful Conviction Day Reception OCT 2 #Toronto buff.ly/1F7bYPT @LawFoundationOn @LegalAidOntario @AIDWYC @LawsocietyLSUC #IWCD2015 View Tweet activity			1,293	22	1.7%
	<b>Connecting Ottawa</b> @connectottawa · Mar 29 Top-Up funds available to sponsorship groups needing to raise money DEADLINE APRIL 1ST buff.ly/1o9dbP0 @RefugeeHub View Tweet activity			1,068	9	0.8%
	<b>Connecting Ottawa</b> @connectottawa · Dec 4 Day 10/ #16Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence Calendar buff.ly/1Nk227E @OCTEVAW @SascOttawa pic.twitter.com/vlckx8BhjK View Tweet activity			902	20	2.2%

(<https://analytics.twitter.com/>)

Social media platforms like Twitter can be important tools for Connecting Ottawa to promote the project and deliver PLE messages and resources. However, based on our recent Google Analytics research, we have been able to conclude that social media activity only contributes slightly to our overall web traffic. As can be seen below, there has been a substantial increase in the number of users accessing our websites this year through social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. However, this traffic represents a small fraction of those who access through their own knowledge of the site or through Google search function.

## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE



## 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.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Facilitators received 12 assignments to meet and assist clients and partner agencies
- Volunteer Facilitators promoted Connecting Ottawa services at the 4 events
- Coordinated Volunteer Facilitator training focused on current assignments, scenarios and changes to refugee law
- 2 Facilitator Newsletters have been created and distributed which feature common assignment scenarios, upcoming events and workshops, news from Connecting Ottawa as well as case studies from the Volunteer Facilitators

### PROGRESS

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

Our Facilitators are a highly diverse group, ethnically, culturally, linguistically and in terms of their “Canadian experience” in the work force. Many have chosen to volunteer as another step in the process of finding meaningful paid employment where they can use their professional skills. We are always pleased to support the employment aspirations of our Facilitators and we celebrate with them when those aspirations are realized, even though their success will deplete our volunteer pool. Some Facilitators have yet to receive their first assignment because their cultural and linguistic profiles do not match the needs of the client or because of their limited availability or because there has been a temporary decline in the number of referrals for Facilitator support. Other Facilitators have experienced many assignments and are now in a position to mentor newer recruits.

Currently there are 21 Facilitators available for assignments, with the capacity among them to speak 19 languages. We have continued to respond to referrals for facilitators to accompany clients to legal and non-legal service appointments and have also used two Association of Translators and Interpreters of Canada (ATIO) -certified Facilitators (English, French, Spanish, Arabic) as paid interpreters whenever appropriate.

This year, Connecting Ottawa has made an effort in provide opportunities for Volunteer Facilitators to promote Connecting Ottawa through four community events. These events attract a wide variety of communities and professionals most interested in improving to services for those with communication barriers, for example World Refugee Day and a Multi-Cultural Festival.



**Volunteer Facilitators Promote Connecting Ottawa during World Refugee Day**

Facilitators also attended the Connecting Ottawa fall training session in October led by our social worker Erin Fitzpatrick. The training focused on discussing assignments, challenges they have encountered, updates to refugee law, as well discussing different assignment scenarios they may face in the future. The training day was also an excellent opportunity to discuss ways the Facilitators could outreach to diverse language groups in Ottawa. Staff made a commitment to continuously communicate with Facilitators between training sessions, via newsletters and opportunities to meet to share their experiences as volunteers.

## DEVELOP & SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS TO OUTREACH TO THEIR NETWORKS

### OUR CHALLENGE

Many persons who are isolated from the mainstream Canadian experience because of cultural and language barriers; in consequence they are not only relatively unaware of common legal issues but also not connected to the many services that are part of our network. Additionally, Connecting Ottawa's volunteer facilitators are an underutilized resource. The primary role that has been ascribed to them has been enormously valuable but has not fully harnessed the experience, skills, and resourcefulness of these volunteers, many of whom were highly educated professionals in their home countries but are currently underemployed – and underappreciated – in this, their adopted country.

### OUR INTENT

To recruit volunteers from our existing pool of facilitators, and train and equip them to most effectively communicate with their personal networks about legal issues and what can be done to address them. We will produce print materials (handouts, in up to 5 languages) to support this outreach by adapting and co-branding CLEO's multilingual resources to include local references.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1000 Rack Cards have been printed and distributed through Connecting Ottawa's network of legal and social service agencies
- The Immigration Law Rack Card has been designed and translated into 6 languages spoken in Ottawa

### PROGRESS

During this reporting period, we have created a rack card that incorporates our Legal Health Check Up (LHCU) statements developed in the previous year, and paired the statements with Ottawa-based referral services and contact information. Each rack card will focus on our top LHCU legal topics: Immigrant and Refugee Law, Housing Law, Family Law, Criminal Law and Employment and Source of Income.

The first rack card focuses on Immigration Law and has been translated into the top four minority languages spoken in Ottawa (Spanish, Farsi, Somali, Arabic) and is also available in English and French. These rack cards have been printed and distributed to our network

partners. The rack cards will also be used by our staff and Volunteer Facilitators to distribute to clients, trusted intermediaries and during outreach events. In the near future, additional rack cards will be created that will focus on family law, housing law, employment law & criminal law.

The full list of Rack Cards can be accessed at [ConnectingOttawa.com](http://ConnectingOttawa.com). An [Arabic language example can be viewed in the Appendix](#).

ENGLISH

IMMIGRATION

**Have an immigration issue?**

**Is communication difficult?**

**Connecting Ottawa can help connect you with services.**

**Do any of the following apply to your situation?**

- I have no legal status in Canada.
- I fled my country because I was in danger
- I have an application pending with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and do not know what is happening with my application.
- I don't have permanent resident status, but I have lived and worked in Canada for years and my family is well established in the community.
- I am not a permanent resident, but I have a Canadian born child.
- I need medical treatment that isn't available in my home country. If I have to leave Canada, my life may be at risk.
- Because I visited my home country, Canada wants to take away my refugee and permanent resident status.
- I want my partner and children to come live with me in Canada permanently.
- My partner sponsored me so I could come to Canada, but now he/she is abusing me.

**CONTACT**

**211 Ontario**  
211ontario.ca  
Dial 2-1-1

**Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI)**  
ccioottawa.ca  
613-232-8634

**Ottawa Community Immigrants Services Organization (OCISO)**  
ociso.org  
613-725-0202

**Conseil Économique Social Ottawa (CESOC)**  
cesoc.ca  
613-248-1343

**Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre**  
clsoc.ca  
613-248-7008

**Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO)**  
immigrantwomenservices.com  
613-729-3145

**Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa**  
cscvanier.com/fr/juridique  
613-744-2892

**West End Legal Services**  
westendlegal.ca  
613-596-1641

**South Ottawa Community Legal Services**  
sodls.org  
613-733-0140

**Integrated Legal Services Office (Legal Aid Ontario)**  
legalaid.on.ca  
613-569-7448

Connecting Ottawa aims to improve access to justice for people who are not proficient in English or French or who face communication challenges as the result of a disability, condition or sensory impairment.

**Connecting Ottawa**  
Effective communication  
Accessible justice

The Law Foundation of Ontario

211

Immigration Law Rack Card – English

## PLE OUTREACH TO ISOLATED LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

### 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 partners in the legal services sector to direct these existing PLE resources 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.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 2 PLE sessions delivered to Ottawa's faith leaders through partnership with the Law Foundation-funded "Spirit of the Law Project"
- Free Mobile Law Clinic in suburban mall through partnership with University of Ottawa
- 12 presentations and collaborations with social and legal services groups including presentations with Refugee Network Ottawa and Catholic Centre for Immigrants

### PROGRESS

Connecting Ottawa is aware that our network contains a wealth of PLE resources. Our legal services partners have the mandate, experience and resources to present public legal education and information at events throughout Ottawa. During this reporting period, we have explored ways to direct PLE resources to effectively reach our focus populations and the trusted intermediaries with whom they connect.

An important step into working with new trusted intermediaries was our recent partnership with Law Foundation of Ontario funded Spirit of the Law project. Working in different areas of Ontario, Spirit of the Law aims to train members of Ontario's faith sector with basic legal information related to three key areas of poverty law that have a mental health lens: housing, social assistance, and employment. Faith leaders are ideal community-based trusted intermediaries to connect with regarding legal referrals. Many of the faith leaders involved in this project support numerous newcomer and minority language groups and are often asked where to access social and legal services.



## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

In December, twelve interfaith leaders, including ministers, imams and other faith practitioners, came from across Ottawa for Session 1: Introduction to Poverty Law & Mental Health. Connecting Ottawa provided an overview of the legal supports for people dealing with social assistance, employment, and housing-related problems while experiencing mental health issues.

Following a positive review, one of the Spirit of the Law participants invited Connecting Ottawa to do a secondary workshop for the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa. In May 2016, Connecting Ottawa offered 20 Anglican Faith Leaders from across Ottawa and surrounding regions a PLE focused on Mental Health Law. As faith leaders are regularly called upon as trusted intermediaries and they often support newcomer populations and linguistic minorities, they are ideal candidates to attend PLE workshops.

This year, Connecting Ottawa had an opportunity to collaborate with University of Ottawa to be part of their free mobile law clinic in a suburban mall. Connecting Ottawa looks forward to continue this relationship with University of Ottawa in supporting similar outreach events. A full review of this event can be Avant Law Participates in Free Mobile Legal Clinic at Lincoln Fields Mall



**“Law in the Mall” event held in April 2016**

In addition, we have made 12 additional presentations and collaborated with other groups on complementary initiatives:

- 4 Presentations on Sponsorships with Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- "How to Deal with Difficult Clients" workshop at Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- Promoted a survey aimed at developing a resource guide to access legal and social services for those with precarious immigration status. Resource guide will be completed in partnership with Ottawa Sanctuary City Network.
- Collaborated and supported the ReNoO Group (Refugee Network of Ottawa)
- Legal Information and Services in Ottawa Presentation to Staff At 211
- Presentation/ Workshop at University of Ottawa: Ticket Defence Program Legal Clinic Law Students
- Maison D'Amitié: Difference between Refugee Claims and Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds for Permanent Residence applications
- REACH (Disability Law Services) Tabling Event at City Hall
- UNHCR / ReNoO Group / Welcoming Ottawa Week - Refugee Day Program



## PROJECT COORDINATION

### 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.

### PROGRESS

The project coordinator provides progress reports at every meeting of the Advisory Group, consults with project staff weekly, approves all project expenditures, works with the bookkeeper (at SOCLS) to ensure the project’s financial health, and is always available for consultation about the many and varied issues that emerge.

- During this reporting period, the Advisory Group met on four occasions, on 17 September 2015, 10 December 2015, 17 March 2016, and 23 June 2016. The contents of this Activity Report will be received when we meet again in September 2016. The current membership of the Advisory Group is as follows:

NAME	SERVICES SECTOR	PARTNERING ORGANIZATION
Lois McIntyre	Community	Canadian Hearing Society
Mohamoud Hagi-Aden	Community	South East Ottawa CHC
Daniel Gagnon	Legal	Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre
Siffan Rahman	Community	Somerset West CHC
Françoise Magunira	Immigrant	The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC)
Christine Sharp	Community	CIC / 211
Gary Stein	Legal	South Ottawa Community Legal Services
Maria Theresa Garcia	Immigrant	Catholic Immigration Centre

- In September, our project staff met to discuss the future direction and priorities for the project which became the basis for a proposal to the Law Foundation of Ontario to extend project funding for another year (that is, from 1 July 2016 until 30 June 2017). In December 2015, the Advisory Group received notice that the proposal was accepted. We are grateful to the Board of the Law Foundation for their continued support of the Connecting Ottawa project.
- The previous project coordinator David Hole was replaced Nico Koenig, effective 1 August 2015. David Hole developed the original proposal to the Law Foundation to fund a Connecting Region project in Ottawa and coordinated operations during the previous three years.
- All partners have received the Partnership Agreement, which was revised and approved by the Advisory Group on 17 September 2015.
- Work has continued to develop and improve administrative systems required (role descriptions, program descriptions, eligibility requirements, work flow, invoicing and payments, records management and administration), and to provide the logistical and administrative support services necessary to build the overall capacity of Connecting Ottawa.

## 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

We will not only host an annual conference for network partners and interested stakeholders but also to seek out conferences, symposia and other opportunities to make presentations, participate on panels, offer workshops, and poster lessons learned to audiences of our peers and colleagues in community services, especially legal services. In addition, to further develop and inform our network of partners, the project will produce and electronically distribute a newsletter (the Communiqué) periodically.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **95** participants attended Connecting Ottawa's 5<sup>th</sup> conference *"Sounds Traumatic: Rethinking What Trauma Means for Legal and Social Work"*
- Highlighted as best practice by Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario (ACLCO) 2015 Annual Report.
- **15** presentations detailing Connecting Ottawa's approach and best practices

### PROGRESS

#### Annual Conference

Connecting Ottawa's 5<sup>th</sup> conference *"Sounds Traumatic: Rethinking What Trauma Means for Legal and Social Work"* took place on May 18, 2016 at Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre and was attended by total of 95 participants.

During the past year, the topics of migration, refugee status and trauma have become increasingly important issues for legal and social workers to consider. With these issues in mind, this year's conference introduced the concept of trauma-informed care and how it may apply to legal, immigration and social service sectors. Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. Focused on local responses, our conference explored practical tools, best practices and referral processes to consider when supporting persons with lived experience of trauma due to migration and disability in Ottawa.

## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE



Connecting Ottawa's 5<sup>th</sup> Conference on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016



*Dr. Doug Gruner and Dr. Azaad Kassam open the Connecting Ottawa Conference*

A joint keynote address was offered by Dr. Azaad Kassam, a psychiatrist from Queensway Carleton, University of Ottawa and Dr. Doug Gruner, lead physician for Refugee 613's health task force and at Bruyère Family Medicine Centre. The keynote presentations were followed by our lively panel discussion. Our panellists included Laïla Demirdache, Lawyer with Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre; Yedida Zalik, Lawyer with ARCH Disability Law Centre and Farah Nojumi, Clinical Counsellor with Ottawa Community Immigrant Services

Organization. The conference ended with a focus on case studies, which explore the legal and social aspects to consider when supporting clients with communication barriers through a trauma-informed lens.

The Connecting Ottawa Conference Survey Results noted that the conference achieved its set goals and conference participants rating their satisfaction with the conference as 5/5 “Very Satisfied” (60% of responses) or 4/5 (36.7% of responses). The keynote presentations were rated as “Excellent” and were also noted as conference participant’s favourite part of the conference. Dr. Kassam’s presentation was noted as particularly well received.

*“I thought the two keynote presenters were excellent speakers with a wealth of experience. They introduced new perspectives as medical practitioners and further illustrated the interconnectedness of problems facing not only the Syrian refugee population in the city, but other vulnerable clients as well.”*

### **Sharing Best Practices**

Connecting Ottawa seeks out conferences, symposia and other opportunities to make presentations, participate on panels, offer workshops, and promote lessons learned to audiences of our peers and colleagues in community services, especially legal services.

Connecting Ottawa has restarted the distribution newsletter Connecting Ottawa Communiqué - **February 2016**. The newsletter is distributed electronically to 325 email contacts representing our network partners, other service professionals, as well as attendees from our previous conferences and PLE workshops. Future newsletters will feature news, upcoming events and resources most beneficial to those supporting clients with communication barriers.

Connecting Ottawa was also promoted by agencies outside of our partner agencies. Importantly, Connecting was highlighted as an example of [Innovation & Growth in the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario \(ACLCO\) 2015 Annual Report](#). Another article [“Holistic Support: Local Imams Attend Workshop on Mental Illness and the Law”](#) published by [MuslimLink](#) focused on Connecting Ottawa and our work with Spirit of the Law.

During this reporting period, we were asked to present our best practices during 15 presentations and collaborations:

- Presentation to Connecting Communities Fall Forum in Toronto.
- Presentation about Connecting Ottawa and Community Development Practice to Community Development Social Work Undergraduate course at Carleton University
- Continued contributions to the work of CHI-COP (Collaborative-Holistic-Integrated Community of Practice) – CLEO
- Participation in Ontario Project for Interclinic Community Organizing (OPICCO) Conference including brief presentation re: LHCU and Sanctuary City

## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

- Access to Justice Pro Bono Students Canada University of Ottawa
- Presentation about Connecting Ottawa and our Services to the Law Society of Upper Canada LPP Program
- Brief Presentation about Connecting Ottawa Services at the Southwest Community Health Centre Interagency Round Table
- Presentation: "Clients with Intersectionalities- Access to Legal and Social Services" Research Day at Carleton University School of Social Work
- Tabling/ Brief Presentation of Connecting Ottawa Services at International Women's Day- Rideau Rockcliffe Community Health Centre
- Social Justice Training Part 1 + 2. Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
- Mental Health Law- Guest Lecture: School of Social Work- University of Ottawa
- Southwest Community Health Centre (SW CHC) and Canadian Association of Community Health Workers Dinner
- SW CHC - Interagency Lunch: Brief Presentation of Connecting Ottawa's mandate and services
- Presentation to "Scaling up Basic Justice Services," sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (IRDC) and Open Society Foundation (OSF)

We were also able to share best practices and network at the following professional development opportunities:

- Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) Annual Conference 2016
- The Action Group (TAG)/ Law Society of Upper Canada Mental Health Teleconference
- Health Law Conference Organized by Professor Y.Y. Brandon Chen
- Refugee Hub: Webinar sponsoring refugees
- Innovation and Access to Justice Conference
- Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) Spring Training 2016
- Annual Spiritual and Cultural Care Conference: Culturally Responsive Mental Health Care for Refugees

# Financial Report

<b>CONNECTING OTTAWA</b>		
<b>STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS</b>		
<b>FOR THE YEAR ENDRD JUNE 30, 2016</b>		
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actuals</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
<b>2.0 Law Foundation of Ontario</b>		
412 Received During Year	256,560	230,904.00
412 Received During Year (Holdback Receivable)		25,000.00
412 To Deferred Revenue (Current Year's Operating Surplus)		
	<b>256,560</b>	<b>255,904.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>3.2 Website Hosting, Management and Administration</b>		
595 Translation	-	-
625 Website Hosting, Management and Administration	8,000	7,985.47
	<b>8,000</b>	<b>7,985.47</b>
<b>3.3 Facilitators to Connect Clients and Legal Services</b>		
590 Training	400.00	539.76
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria	2,000.00	675.00
550 Meeting Costs		-
595 Translation		-
510 Printing/Supplies		74.28
615 Travel		-
	<b>2,400</b>	<b>1,289.04</b>
<b>3.4 Legal Worker/Social Worker Connection</b>		
515 Allocated Administration	10,000.00	10,000.00
530 Cloud/Mobile Services	2,000.00	1,960.36
540 Equipment Purchases	2,000.00	41.31
545 Materials and Supplies	800.00	961.00
550 Meeting Costs	500.00	382.56
557 Professional Fees		-
56X Salaries and Benefits	161,660.00	157,752.03
562 Resource Development		1,073.70
585 Staffing Costs		-
590 Training/Professional Development	2,000.00	1,659.48
595 Translation/Interpretation		-
615 Travel	4,000.00	2,242.73
699 Sundry		100.00
	<b>182,960</b>	<b>176,173.17</b>
<b>3.6 Secretariat</b>		
510 Administration		-
545 Materials and Supplies		-
550 Meeting Costs		50.77
560 Project Co-ordinator	50,000.00	46,773.00
595 Translation/Interpretation	2,500.00	2,401.07
620 Volunteer (IPL) Honoraria		-
615 Travel	400.00	575.31
	<b>52,900</b>	<b>49,800.15</b>
<b>3.7 Shared Lessons Learned</b>		
520 Annual Conference	2,500	4,932.47
545 Materials and Supplies		-
550 Conferences, etc	-	-
615 Travel	1,000	242.44
	<b>3,500</b>	<b>5,174.91</b>
<b>3.8 Administration</b>		
542 Lead Agency Stipend	5,000	5,000.00
527 Bookkeeping	1,000	1,039.40
525 Bank Charges	-	141.39
522 Auditing	800	800.00
699 Sundry		29.00
799 Contingency	-	-
	<b>6,800</b>	<b>7,009.79</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>256,560</b>	<b>247,432.53</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>		
<b>(EXPENSES OVER REVENUE)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>8,471.47</b>



## LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO – CONNECTING REGION INITIATIVE

### NOTES

- The Lead Agency Stipend is paid to South Ottawa Community Legal Services (SOCLS) to compensate for their time sponsoring and supporting this project.
- As has been the case in previous years, the volunteer honoraria remains underused. We are currently exploring other ways to use the honoraria as a way to support outreach initiatives as well as volunteer assignments.
- As our computers and cell phones remain in good condition, there was no need to use the *Equipment Purchases* budget line to replace or upgrade our equipment this year.
- A new budget line *Resource Development* was included to cover the cost designing, translating and printing our multilingual Rack Cards
- Our *Annual Conference* went over budget due in order to cover American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and speech to text transcription services, which were requested. These are important services to offer; however the expenses accounted for half of our total *Annual Conference* budget.

Our financial position at year-end is shown below.

<b>CONNECTING OTTAWA</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT JUNE 30, 2016</b>	
<b>ASSETS</b>	
110 Cash	110,171.47
115 Accounts Receivable: LFO Holdback	25,000.00
120 Due from General Fund	-
150 Prepaid Expenses	3,000.00
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
120 Due to General Fund	-
210 Accounts Payable	(1,420.00)
230 Deferred Revenue	(128,280.00)
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>8,471.47</b>
Fund Balance, Beginning of Year	57,875.90
Prior Year Surplus Returned to Funder	(57,875.90)
	0.00
Excess of Revenue over Expenses for Current Period	8,471.47
Fund Balance, End of Period	8,471.47



# Appendix

## Case Studies

### **Case Study #1**

#### **Facts:**

Fatima was referred to Connecting Ottawa by one of its partners the Catholic Immigration Centre (CCI).

Fatima is 25 years old and has 4 children. She is originally from Djibouti and speaks Somali. She was married in a religious ceremony as a teenager. During her marriage she experienced domestic abuse at the hands of her husband. Fatima and her husband came to Canada as Government assisted refugees. Fatima is now a permanent resident.

After a particularly violent assault at the hands of her husband Fatima separated with her husband. Her husband was charged with assault and incarcerated following the assault.

In the fall of 2015, Fatima went to CCI after receiving a letter from her husbands' probation officer. This letter was to inform her that her husband would soon be released from prison. She was advised in this letter to move to another location and have no contact with him.

Connecting Ottawa Lawyer met with Fatima and her counsellor at the catholic immigration to explain the probation officers letter and to give advice on obtaining a divorce.

#### **Assessment**

- Client speaks little to no English.
- Client has little understanding of her legal right to initiate divorce.
- Client was not grasping the implications of a religious divorce as opposed to a legal divorce.
- Client is on Ontario Works and cannot afford her own lawyer.
- Client is emotionally fragile and making poor decisions to cope with absence of her husband.

#### **Action Taken**

- Connecting Ottawa Lawyer met with client to explain probation officer's letter and to explain how to obtain a divorce. Client was referred to Immigrant Women Services Ottawa for proper follow-through with regards to trauma and care.
- After 2 appointments Connecting Ottawa client disappeared and did not come to her any subsequent appointments or return phone calls.

- Client reappeared in Spring 2016 after finding out her husband had attempted to murder another woman soon after his release.
- Connecting Ottawa Lawyer revised her divorce forms and instructed the settlement worker on how to assist with the forms.
- Connecting Ottawa Lawyer attempted unsuccessfully to communicate with Fatima's husband's probation officer in order to properly serve the husband with the divorce papers.
- Connecting Ottawa sent counsellor and client to the Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) in order to file divorce papers. They had documents explaining how service of divorce papers as dangerous and difficult,
- Because Fatima's divorce was not a simple divorce Connecting Ottawa lawyer chose not to continue with FLIC for support.
- Connecting Ottawa lawyer met with client and invited a Connecting Ottawa Volunteer Facilitator to a planning meeting with the client to explain next steps.
- Client was connected with family law lawyer at the University of Ottawa legal clinic.
- Volunteer Facilitator accompanied client to the University of Ottawa legal clinic in order to meet with a family Lawyer.
- At present client is in the process of obtaining a divorce and getting full custody of her 4 children.

## **Conclusion**

This case is a good example of the need for various agencies to work together to support a client. Every appointment required an interpreter. Client required legal services to obtain divorce but also need support services from Settlement agencies and required some counselling. Client also benefitted from Connecting Ottawa's Volunteer Facilitator service to accompany her to legal appointments and helping her navigate the city.

Also the case illustrates how long it takes for a client to fully understand and process what it means to take legal action after assault.

## **Case Study #2**

### **Reason for referral**

“Marcel” was referred to Connecting Ottawa from the Clinique Juridique francophone de l’est d’Ottawa for two reasons. First, the client is ineligible for legal representation with Legal Aid Ontario since he is a member of a union. Secondly, he has a communication barrier and complex legal and social service needs. Marcel is in conflict with both his employer and his union. He is a cleaner for a large cleaning company at an Ottawa hospital.

### **Communication Barrier/ Disability Issues:**

Marcel’s major communication barrier results from his inability to read or write in either French or English (though he is bilingual orally), which is attributed to severe dyslexia and developmental delay. He is unable to retain or comprehend complex information (Grade 4 learning level). He has suffered traumatic events and displays symptoms of residual trauma. He is also severely clinically depressed and under the care of his family physician and active psychiatric referral due to suicidal ideation.

Marcel’s physical issues, severe rheumatoid arthritis (RA), are at the root of his conflict with his employer and his union though his communication barriers also make his ability to work very challenging. His physical pain associated with the RA seems to have deteriorated and the employer was less willing to help Marcel work effectively in light of his issues. These issues were making it increasingly difficult for Marcel to perform his required tasks. Marcel felt like his requests were not being sufficiently supported by the employer or union. This led him to take sick leave and vacation days.

### **Legal issues**

When we first met Marcel, he was off work using a combination of sick days and vacation days. He was reluctant to return to work under the same conditions. He also felt not only was his union not supporting him but that they contributed to his problems. Marcel did not comply with requests for required medical documentation in order to extend his sick leave in a timely manner. Marcel received a letter, which indicated he was terminated. Consequently, our main legal intervention has been around trying to reinstate him in his position. The corollary effects of this “termination letter” were numerous and severe. Marcel lost his housing due to loss of income and his mental health deteriorated severely.

### **Biopsychosocial Issues:**

The client’s mental health issues are exacerbated by expected grief due to the relatively recent death of his mother. Marcel is quite socially isolated and she was his main source of social support. Connecting Ottawa provided a warm referral to intake counsellor at the local Community Health Centre for the following services: supportive counselling, housing services,

source of income services and volunteer opportunities/ social integration. The counsellor and I have undertaken ongoing communication and held case consults with the client as needed.

### **Actions taken**

- Provided legal information and counselling to client for eleven months
- Warm referral to Intake counsellor for front line social services counselling- Consistent and ongoing collaborative services with intake worker and case consults with intake worker and client
- Multiple consultations with Clinique juridique lawyer regarding my legal strategy with client and case management plan
- Advocacy to be re-instated at his place of employment via meetings, letters with employer, and union
- Advocated with the company that was subcontracted out by employer for the determination of his actual disability to reach a decision and provide a return to work date and plan;
- Met with Union members – local and national representatives in order to re-establish a relationship between client and union member since the union was failing to represent client and client had lost confidence in them
- Attended first “return to work” plan meeting with client at Hospital in attempt to negotiate a smooth return to work for client
- Legal research throughout and consults with other lawyers in my network

### **Use of Volunteer Facilitator:**

Connected with client with one of Connecting Ottawa Volunteer Facilitator to submit a complaint due to his treatment by the union at client’s insistence. Connecting Ottawa also took the client’s statement and facilitated the completion of the Duty to Fair Representation Bulletin Application<sup>8</sup>. The Application was provided to the client and read by the Volunteer Facilitator. Client was provided with all the information about his legal rights to submit the application and the benefits of the timing of submission of such an Application. It was helpful for the client to know his legal rights and he has now chosen to not submit the Application for now.

### **Challenges:**

Client very challenging to work with due to complexity of communication barrier and declining mental health condition. The family doctor has been less than collaborative. Neither the union nor the hospital proceeding in good faith at all times.

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<sup>8</sup> Describes How the Board handles applications by Employees who complain that they have not been properly represented by their union. The Information Bulletin applies to application regarding a unions duty of fair representation under either the *Labor Relations Act*, 1995, the *Colleges of Collective Bargaining Act*, 2008 etc. The Ontario Labour Relations Board Information Bulletin- Duty to Fair Representation Bulletin No.11

**Outcome:** There is a scheduled and concrete return to work offer for the client and the client is much more hopeful about his options.

## Connecting Ottawa Conference Survey Results

30 Survey Responses (23 responses for 2015 Conference)

### Summary

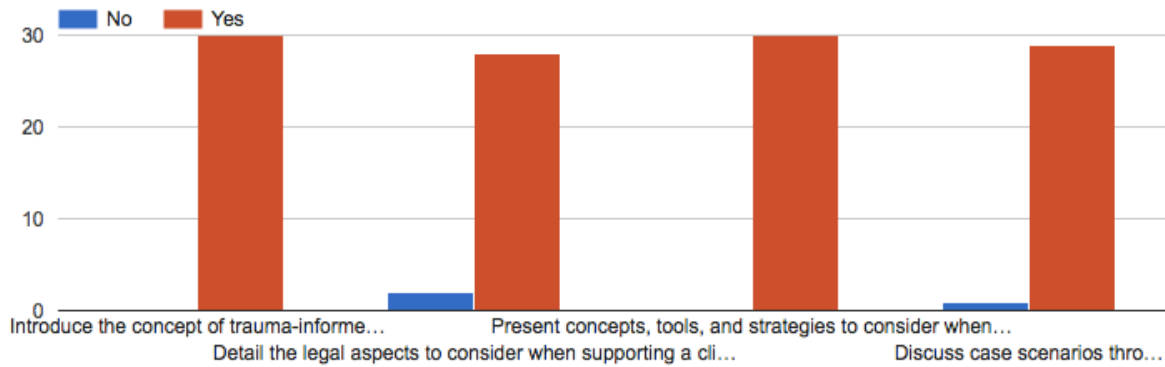
- Our conference achieved its goals with strong support (**93.3 % - 100% approval**).
- Conference participants rated their satisfaction with the conference as 5/5 “Very Satisfied” (60% of responses) or 4/5 (36.7% of responses)
- **The Keynote Presentation was rated as “Excellent”** and was also noted as conference participant’s favourite part of the conference. Dr. Kassam’s presentation was noted as particularly well received.
  - *“I thought the two keynote presenters were excellent speakers with a wealth of experience. They introduced new perspectives as medical practitioners and further illustrated the interconnectedness of problems facing not only the Syrian refugee population in the city, but other vulnerable clients as well.”*
- **Having multiple service sectors share their perspective** was important:
  - *Many different service providers were present all willing to learn better how to help their clients who have suffered trauma*

### Additional Written Feedback:

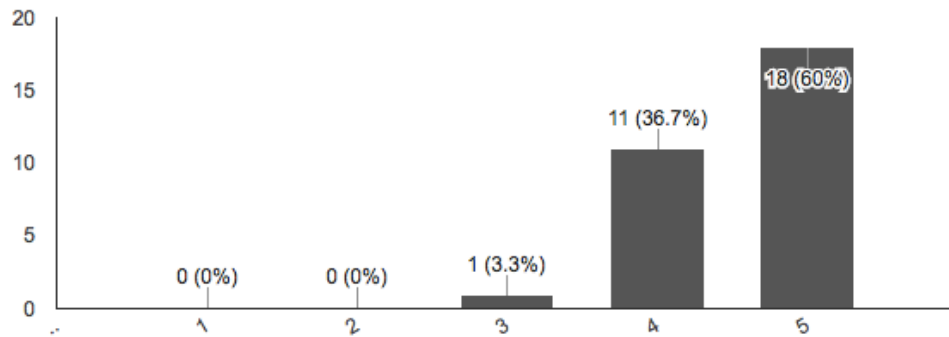
- **More time for Keynote/ Presentations:**
  - *More time allotted for the keynote speakers (they had to skip a lot of content that seemed very interesting)*
  - *It would have been nice to have more time as the presentations and panel discussions seemed rushed at times*
- **Half Day is Good**
  - *I really like the half-day format because it makes attending the conference feasible for many more people. A lot of great information was delivered in the half day and yet it did not feel too packed or there was too much.*
- **Booths**
  - *Might be interesting to have booths set up for breaks*
- **Learn about audience in advance**
  - *It would also have been great to have a better idea of who was at the conference and what agency they were from and more opportunities to network*
- **Order Boxed lunches in advance**
- **More time for Q&A**
- **More tools to help our clients.**

Full results

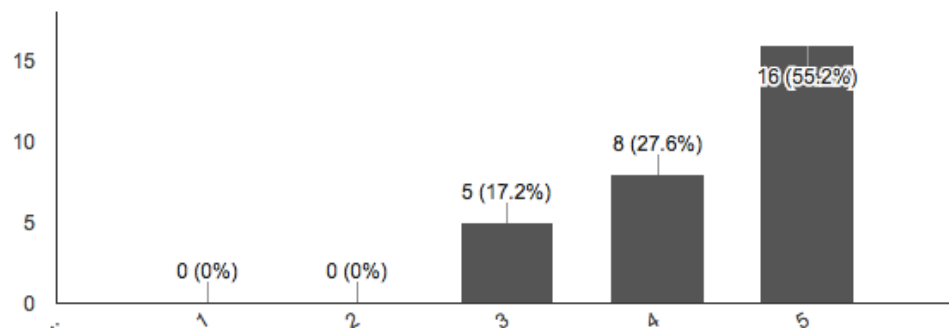
Did we achieve our conference goals?



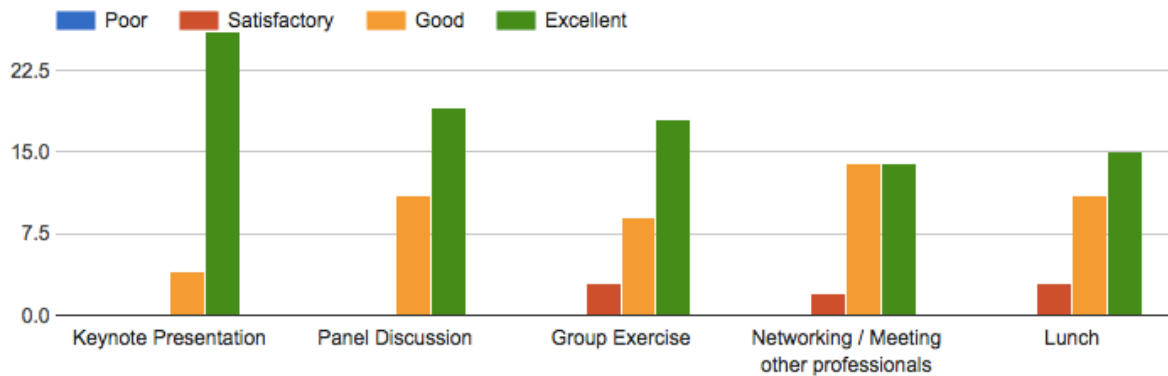
How satisfied were you with the conference overall? (30 responses)



How helpful do you think it was for your work? (29 responses)



## How would you rate each session?



### Additional Conference Comments:

- *Let's not stigmatize one group such as immigrants/refugees. Yes, immigrants/refugees struggle with the stigma associated with mental health so as mainstream Canadians...When we model mental health without stigma, immigrants and refugees will follow us! Let's be a good role models for entire populations.*
- *There seemed to be an emphasis on refugees and/or female victims of crime and lack of the fact that trauma comes in many forms, including to Emergency Response personnel, and also the second-hand variety (such as those who provide lengthy support for initially traumatized clients). The basics of the topics would work however.*

### Connecting Ottawa related questions:

What training topics or resources could help you and your colleagues' better support people with communication barriers?

- **Legal literacy** workshops on a variety of topics (ex: tenant rights, credit card contracts, legal aid, etc.) offered directly to our students by Connecting Ottawa (or one of your partners) at our school would be wonderful!
- More topics related to **school system**.
- **(Understanding of Disability)** That disabilities are not always visual, that they are not cut and dry, that they can interact (and resemble some other effect) and that services for the 'disabled' are extremely strained. Most importantly - disabled status does not mean that they are incapable at all. It just means that they handle the challenges of Life in a slightly different manner.
- The **role of intermediaries** in the court - what is their legal status (beyond that of support person per s.486 in the Criminal Code)
- **Understanding a screening process** and a walk through a journey at Connecting Ottawa, this could help us explain to clients what to expect and help reassure them of the process on accessing services
- **A discussion with CODA or IWSO** would be wonderful as well

- *Knowing **what other services are out there** to refer clients to **which are accessible***
- *Training on **advocating for clients in the mental health systems. Advocating to hospitals** and mental health professionals to access more services.*
- ***Info related to those living in abusive situations.** Don't always have the access*
- *Actual **steps&resources to ENABLE independence** and self-esteem by providing/offering targeted social interactions, problem solving opportunities, and offering conflict resolution bodies & structures to the clients. -- "Education and training" is not enough. **We need to focus on action and results for clients.***
- ***Where to find free translators :-)***

Any other suggestions for how Connecting Ottawa can best build your capacity to support clients with communication barriers?

- ***Meet with our social worker** in order to integrate her into your network and help with the speed and pertinence of referrals to outside entities for further support.*
- *Communication barriers related to **learning difficulties, mild intellectual disabilities, FASD.***
- *it could be neat to have a **client share their personal experience** through the program*
- *Creating **more partnerships** with other community agencies*
- ***More regular "well- advertised" opportunities for public access to law** and available services. Open doors for people to come in and discuss their issues in confidence and mutual trust. **Build up your positive advocacy position.** Become the "go to" organization with "mastery" in your area of focus. Focus on **quality and positive results** before expanding on to other areas!*
- *Have a **list of reliable volunteers** in that field*



## Connecting Ottawa Communiqué - February 2016

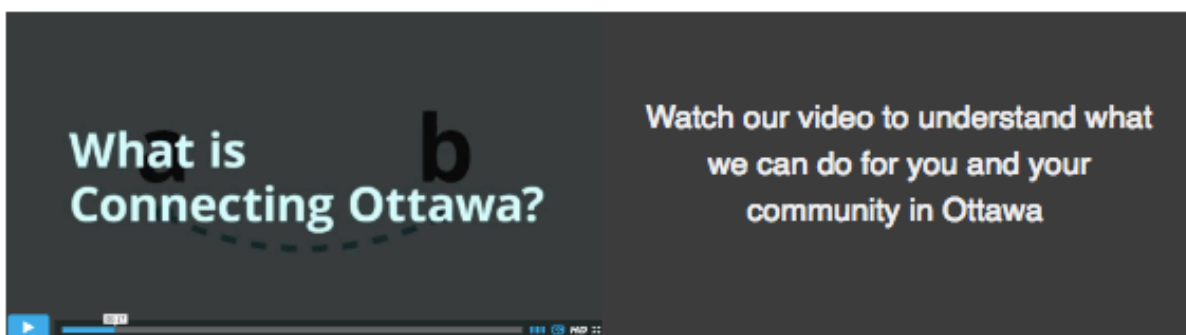


## Connecting Ottawa Communiqué February 2016

Welcome back to the Connecting Ottawa Newsletter! Although it has been two years since our last newsletter, we have continued to be active in improving access to justice for those with communication barriers across Ottawa.

One major update to note is that our long time Project Coordinator David Hole has stepped away from his position and has been successfully replaced by [Nico Koenig](#). Meanwhile, Connecting Ottawa's [Erin Fitzpatrick](#) and [Alex Derisier](#) continue to assist, consult and provide training to our network of over 45 agencies.

Please enjoy and share the news and resource updates below and feel free to [reconnect with us](#) with any questions or concerns you may have.



## **Lunch & Learn / Dîner - Causerie: Immigration Law**

You are invited to attend Connecting Ottawa's monthly Lunch & Learn events: **February 19, March 4 and April 8**. This month's topic of discussion will be Immigration and Refugee Law/ Droit de l'immigration et des réfugiés and will be a basic introduction to referral services focused on refugee and stateless persons. [See full event information and poster here.](#)



## **Save the Date - May 18**

Connecting Ottawa will be hosting our annual conference on **May 18th from 9:00am - 1:00pm** at the Centre communautaire Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre.

Please save the date and look forward to an upcoming invitation with registration details in March.



## **Do you speak another language?**

Connecting Ottawa is trying to document all the different resources, spaces, events, and media that people who do not speak English or French use with one another in Ottawa. [Click here to help us document these resources in Ottawa.](#)

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## Access to Services Survey

If you work within a social, legal or health service agency in Ottawa, please [complete this survey in English](#) or [in French](#).

The goal of this research is to gain insight into how agencies across Ottawa interact with non-status service users and the challenges community organizations face in serving this population. Importantly, the results collected will assist Connecting Ottawa and our partners to develop a Resource Guide.



## Supporting Refugees in Ottawa

We maintain and regularly update two important online resources for those looking to support refugees in Ottawa:

- [Counselling Resources for those with Precarious Immigration Status](#)
- [Agencies supporting refugees in Ottawa.](#)



## Do your clients need assistance with a referral?

Connecting Ottawa coordinates a pool of trained volunteer "facilitators" - trusted intermediaries - to support clients with follow-up and follow through when referrals to legal services have been made. Currently, we have access to 17 facilitators available for assignments, with the capacity among them to speak 19 languages.

[Please contact us for more information.](#)



We would like to thank the following advisory committee members for their valuable contribution and support to project:

- Gary Stein (*South Ottawa Community Legal Services*),
- Lois McIntyre (*Canadian Hearing Society*)
- Mohamoud Hagi-Aden (*South East Ottawa CHC*)
- Daniel Gagnon (*Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre*)
- Siffan Rahman (*Somerset West CHC*)
- Aloys Sirabahenda (*The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa Carleton - CESOC*)
- Christine Sharp (*CICO / 211*)
- Maria Theresa Garcia (*Catholic Immigration Centre*)

## Stay Connected!



Facebook



Twitter



Email us



Upcoming Events

The Connecting Ottawa project aims to improve access to justice for people who are not proficient in English or French or who face communication challenges as the result of a disability, condition or sensory impairment.

Le projet Connexion Ottawa a comme objectif d'améliorer l'accès à la justice pour les individus qui ne sont pas en mesure de s'exprimer en anglais ou en français ou qui connaissent des défis de communication dû à un handicap, un état de santé ou une déficience sensorielle.

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## Additional Conference Photos



Lunch & Learn / Dîner - Causerie (Connecting Ottawa) Friday Jan 8, 2016

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Ottawa** . . . .  
Effective communication  
Accessible justice

**Connexion -  
Ottawa** . . . .  
Une communication efficace  
Une justice accessible



The Law  
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of Ontario

# LUNCH & LEARN DÎNER - CAUSERIE

This Month's Topic / Sujet du mois:  
*Housing Law - Droit du logement*  
*Focus on Maintenance & Repairs*

Bilingual informal meetings held over lunch on Fridays. Each month, learn about a legal topic with our social worker and lawyer.

Rencontre informelle bilingue pendant l'heure du dîner. Un vendredi par mois, venez-vous renseigner sur un sujet de droit avec notre travailleuse sociale et notre avocate.

**FRIDAY / VENDREDI**  
**JAN. 8, 12:00 – 13:00PM**  
**CATHOLIC CENTRE FOR IMMIGRANTS, 219 ARGYLE AVE. ROOM 113**  
*contact: nico@connectingottawa.com*  
*bring your own lunch/ apportez votre dîner*

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## Multilingual Immigration Rack Card (Arabic)

(<http://connectingottawa.com/multi-lingual-immigration-support-rack-cards-english-french-arabic-somali-spanish-farsi>)

**فارسی**  
FARSI / IMMIGRATION

مهاجرت

## آیا در ارتباط با مهاجرت مشکلی دارید؟ آیا برقرار کردن ارتباط برایتان سخت است؟ کونکتینگ اتاوا می تواند شما را با خدمات مرتبط سازد

آیا هیچ یک از موارد زیر به شما ارتباط پیدا می کند؟

- من هیچ موقعیت قانونی در کانادا ندارم.
- من از کشورم گریختم زیرا در معرض خطر بودم.
- در مورد درخواست من از اداره مهاجرت و شهروندی کانادا هنوز تصمیمی گرفته نشده است و نمی دانم در چه موقعیتی قرار دارم.
- من اقامت دائم ندارم، ولی سال هاست که در کانادا زندگی و کار کرده ام و خانواده ام به خوبی در جامعه استقرار یافته اند.
- من اقامت کانادا را ندارم ولی فرزندم متولد کانادا است.
- من نیاز به مداوای پزشکی دارم که در وطنم وجود ندارد. چنانچه مجبور به ترک کانادا شوم زندگیم در معرض خطر قرار خواهد گرفت.
- چون از وطنم دیدن کرده ام، کانادا می خواهد اقامت مرا بعنوان یک پناهنده و مقیم دائم لغو کند.
- من میایم که همسر و فرزندانم برای همیشه به کانادا بیایند و با من زندگی کنند.
- همسرم کفالت مرا بعهده گرفت تا بتوانم به کانادا بیایم، ولی اکنون مرا مورد اذیت و آزار قرار می دهد.

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**تماس بگیرید**

<b>Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa</b> خدمات حقوقی برای فرانسه زبان های شرق اتاوا <a href="http://cscvanier.com/fr/juridique">cscvanier.com/fr/juridique</a> <b>613-744-2892</b>	<b>211 Ontario</b> <b>211ontario.ca</b> با شماره 211 تماس بگیرید
<b>West End Legal Services</b> خدمات حقوقی غرب اتاوا <a href="http://westendlegal.ca">westendlegal.ca</a> <b>613-596-1641</b>	<b>Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI)</b> مرکز کاتولیک برای خدمات به مهاجرین <b>cciottawa.ca</b> <b>613-232-9634</b>
<b>South Ottawa Community Legal Services</b> خدمات حقوقی جنوب اتاوا <a href="http://scls.org">scls.org</a> <b>613-733-0140</b>	<b>Ottawa Community Immigrants Services Organization (OCISO)</b> موسسه خدمات برای مهاجرین در اتاوا <b>ociso.org</b> <b>613-725-0202</b>
<b>Integrated Legal Services Office (Legal Aid Ontario)</b> مجتمع خدمات حقوقی اتاوا <a href="http://legalaid.on.ca">legalaid.on.ca</a> <b>613-569-7448</b>	<b>Conseil Économique Social Ottawa (CESOC)</b> شورای اقتصادی اجتماعی اتاوا <b>cesoc.ca</b> <b>613-248-1343</b>
	<b>Community Legal Services Ottawa Centre</b> مرکز خدمات حقوقی جامعه اتاوا <b>clsoc.ca</b> <b>613-248-7008</b>
	<b>Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO)</b> خدمات برای زنان مهاجر در اتاوا <b>immigrantwomenservices.com</b> <b>613-729-3145</b>

هدف کونکتینگ اتاوا بهبود دادن دسترسی به عدالت برای کسانی است که زبان انگلیسی یا فرانسه را به خوبی نمی دانند و یا کسانی که بخاطر ناتوانی، شرایط و یا اختلال حسی دچار چالش در ایجاد ارتباط هستند.

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**211**



## Avant Law Participates in Free Mobile Legal Clinic at Lincoln Fields Mall

(<http://avantlaw.ca/free-mobile-legal-clinic-april-2016/>)

On Tuesday, April 5, Daniel Tucker-Simmons teamed up with UofO law school professor Dr. David Wiseman and students from his Social Justice Practicum course to set up a free mobile legal clinic in Lincoln Fields mall. The “Free Law” clinic, which was staffed by law students and other local lawyers, was an innovative experiment that aimed to provide free summary legal advice and referrals in a range of practice areas to anyone who stopped by.

The idea behind the experimental clinic was to expand access to justice by bringing legal advice to people where they are. And it was a big success. Students and volunteer lawyers and professors served over 50 people throughout the day, providing free substantive legal advice where appropriate, and referrals where necessary.

Free Law would not have been a success without the support and participation of the other local practitioners and professors who donated their time, including George Brown of George Brown Law, Anne Levesque, Elizabeth Lockhart, and Marina Pavlovic, so kudos to them too. Also highly supportive was the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Clinic – Employment Services division, which donated the use of its conference room for confidential client meetings, as well as Connecting Ottawa’s Erin Fitzpatrick, who provided referral training and also helped staff the clinic. Finally, the clinic could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of Prof. Wiseman and his team of highly motivated and impressively competent students, Jeff, Jamila, Caroline, and Marlee.