

Connecting Ottawa Communique April 7, 2021

We are pleased to provide this information for front-line workers to support the information and referral needs of clients. Please feel free to share this email widely among your networks.

Upcoming Information Sessions

Mark your calendars for these important sessions:

**** TOMORROW ** Free Tax Clinics in Ottawa -- Information for front-line workers to support clients**

Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

With: Jonathan Rothschild & Bill Singleton, Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89023638088?pwd=WEtuanNSZkNKaFE5ZnRUQjR5NndqZz09>

Meeting ID: 890 2363 8088

Passcode: 469286

Changes to the Divorce Act -- What front-line workers need to know to support their clients

Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

With: David Morneau, Child Witness Centre

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84917425505?pwd=VmdVdnNpWklwQzQ3Y01HeUpSU3Uydz09>

Meeting ID: 849 1742 5505

Passcode: 584746

Housing Update and Q & A Forum for Front-line workers: N12 & N13 Notices - in partnership with CLSO, REACH, Action Logement, Housing Help and other community legal clinics

Date: Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83242448445?pwd=K1AyRTRnWkx2bDMyRC9XZGpUSEZ1QT09>

Meeting ID: 832 4244 8445

Passcode: 764647

Mental Health Supports and COVID-19: Common issues and resources to support clients presented in partnership with Reach Canada

Date: Thursday, April 29, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

with Chantal Jodoin and George Phiri, Counselling Connect

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86527853330?pwd=UHdFVmdRVGtRVlcrdGNCTGMxZmJCdz09>

Meeting ID: 865 2785 3330

Passcode: 875724

REGISTER NOW -- Connecting Ottawa Conference: COVID-19 Vaccines, April 22, 2021

Don't forget to register for our April 22, 2019 Connecting Ottawa (Virtual) Conference: **COVID-19 Vaccines: Status and Supporting Vulnerable Populations**. This conference will address the status of COVID-19 vaccines in Ontario, vaccine myths and hesitancy, and legal issues related to immigration and travel and employment. Please share with your networks. Further information available at: <https://connectingottawa.com/category/events/>

Connecting Ottawa welcomes AIDS Committee of Ottawa to our partnership network

We are excited to welcome AIDS Committee of Ottawa to the Connecting Ottawa partnership network. Since 1985, the AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO) has provided support, prevention, education and outreach services that promotes the holistic well-being of those living with, affected by, impacted by and at risk of HIV/AIDS in Ottawa. For more information on this organization, visit: <http://aco-cso.ca/>

Income tax and low-income clients

The Government of Canada has provided an online search tool to identify free local tax clinics. To assist clients to find a clinic, search this resource at: <https://tinyurl.com/yfvxvzsb>. It is very important for low-income individuals to file a tax return because:

- The federal and provincial governments use the income tax and benefit return to assess and maintain benefits and credits, many of which are income-tested, including the GST credit and the Ontario Trillium Benefit.
- Payments under the Climate Action Initiative are not income tested, but they are paid only if a return is filed.
- The Canada Child Benefit will be discontinued if a parent is not current in filing their return. Similarly, the Guaranteed Income Supplement will also be discontinued if an individual receiving Old Age Security does not file a return.
- Tenants living in Ottawa Community Housing need a notice of assessment to obtain the rent-geared-to-income subsidy.

A reminder that Connecting Ottawa has published an info sheet on CERB Benefits and Taxation available at: <https://connectingottawa.com/about-us/connecting-ottawa-resources/>

Also, plan to attend the Connecting Ottawa education session on April 8, 2021 (see above) to learn more about supporting low-income clients' tax needs.

Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit Infosheet (March 24, 2021).

Reminder that Connecting Ottawa has updated the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit Infosheet:

<https://connectingottawa.com/about-us/connecting-ottawa-resources/> Clients may be eligible for this benefit if they are required to care for family members due to COVID-19 circumstances.

Ontario COVID-19 Child Benefit

The new Ontario COVID-19 Child Benefit is available to anyone living in Ontario who is either a parent or guardian to a child or youth up to Grade 12; a secondary school student over the age of 18; or a parent or guardian to a child or youth 21 or younger with special needs:

- \$400 for each child/youth up to Grade 12
- \$500 for each child/youth up to age 21 with special needs

Payments will begin to be issued on April 26, 2021 (if you have more than one child, you may not receive your payments at the same time). People who received payments through the previous Support for Learners program do not need to re-apply for this benefit as it will be issued to them automatically by e-transfer, direct deposit or cheque, based on how they applied for the Support for Learners benefit. The application window for those who did not receive the Support for Learners benefit will be from May 3 to May 17, 2021. Only one application will be accepted for each child.

It does not matter if a child or youth is enrolled in school or child care. Children, youth or students are eligible whether they attend a publicly funded or private school, attend a First Nation operated or federally operated school, attend school in-person or online, are homeschooled, are enrolled in child care, or at home. For more information, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-ontario-covid-19-child-benefit>

COVID-19 Ontario resources

The Ontario government has published a number of resources on their website: [COVID-19 communication resources | Ontario.ca](#) These plain language and easy to use tools help explain issues related to safety, vaccines, and vaccine safety.

Factsheet: Tenants and rent regulation in Ontario

Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) has put together an updated factsheet on tenants and rent regulation in Ontario. This resource is available at: <https://www.acto.ca/documents/tenant-protection-and-rent-regulation-factsheet/>

Extension of temporary measures for treatment of EI and Canada Recovery Benefit income

As of March 31, 2021, the Ministry of Community and Social Services extended temporary measures addressing the treatment of EI and Canada Recovery Benefits until the end of September 2021. Both the Canada Recovery Benefits and EI benefits are generally treated as non-exempt income. However, OW and ODSP recipients can retain their health benefits if payments under the Canada Recovery Benefits Act or Employment Insurance Act would make them financially ineligible. These temporary measures only apply to recipients who were eligible for OW or ODSP prior to October 2020 and to federal payments:

- made after September 30, 2020 and before October 1, 2021; and
- received by a member of a benefit unit before October 1, 2021.

The public "COVID-19 Fact Sheets" on the Ministry website have been updated to reflect this change: see [Ontario Works COVID-19 key information](#) and [Ontario Disability Support Program COVID-19 key information](#).

HALCO public legal education series

The HIV and AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario will be holding a series of virtual public education sessions in April and May on issues of income supports, HIV non-disclosure, human rights and refugee law. These sessions are open to the public. More information available at: <https://www.halco.org/2021/news/free-virtual-public-legal-education-workshop-series-spring-2021>

UOCLC summer hours

The University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic (UOCLC) has published its summer hours. Intakes will be accepted from May 17 to August 12, 2021 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30 am. More information on the clinic is available at: <https://commonlaw.uottawa.ca/community-legal-clinic/>

New minimum wage effective October 1, 2021

Minimum wage rates in Ontario will increase on October 1, 2021. Under the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act* this increase is tied to the Ontario Consumer Price Index for 2020. The increase to the general minimum wage is 10 cents, which brings the new rate to **\$14.35** an hour. The general and specialized minimum wage rates that also take effect on October 1, 2021 are detailed in this chart: [Your guide to the Employment Standards Act: Minimum wage | Ontario.ca](#).

CLEO resources: Legal rights literacy kits

Community Legal Education Ontario's (CLEO) has published a series of legal rights literacy kits aligned to the Ontario

Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). Workers can use the kits to help learners improve literacy skills while learning about legal rights in Canada. To view the available kits, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/rba8hc>

New Connecting Ottawa website

Connecting Ottawa has updated and relaunched its website. We've updated the look but kept the easy navigation approach to identify local Ottawa resources for clients' legal, social service, and communication barrier issues. You can also complete [an intake form](#) to request information/consultation with one of the Connecting Ottawa lawyers. Visit us at www.connectingottawa.com and www.connexionottawa.com to see what is new.

Connect with us ...

Connecting Ottawa is available to support front-line workers in Ottawa to provide appropriate legal information and referrals to clients with communication barriers as a result of language or sensory disability. If you have a question or require a consultation, please send it to info@connectingottawa.com along with the attached "Intake Form" This will ensure the most efficient response to your request. As a reminder, we do not provide direct legal services to individuals