

Connecting Ottawa Communiqué September 8, 2022

We are pleased to provide this information for front-line workers to support the information and referral needs of clients. Education sessions that may be of interest to workers are listed first followed by information and updates from our lawyers and partners related to services and programs relevant to clients who have a communication barrier due to language or sensory disability. Please feel free to share this email widely among your networks.

Upcoming Connecting Ottawa education sessions:

The Landlord's Duty to Accommodate (hosted by Connecting Ottawa & Reach Canada)

Date: Thursday, September 22, 2022

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Valérie Lacroix, Ontario Legal Information Centre

Via

zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83907148196?pwd=SEN0MTd5OEdnRzdrTTY4VFA3aE12QT09>

Meeting ID: 839 0714 8196

Passcode: 795422

This session focuses on the landlord's duty to accommodate the tenant: what does it mean? What are the limits of this duty? How to request an accommodation? What to do if your request is refused? We will also discuss the right to accommodation during a hearing at the LTB.

Unsafe workplaces and low pay: The law and health and safety issues faced by low-income workers in Ontario

Presented by: Connecting Ottawa and CLEO-Connect as part of program for Access to Justice Week Ontario

Date: October 25, 2022

Time: 10:30 a.m. - noon

Speaker: Chetan Muram, Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic

Registration

link: <https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=319>

This will be the first of a three part series on employment and vulnerable populations that Connecting Ottawa will be offering as its 2022 Conference Series. Watch you mail for more details on this and the two other sessions to be held in early November.

Legal information and updates:

Refugee claimants can finally renew expired refugee claimant ID documents

Although refugee claimant ID documents (the one with the person's photo on it) technically do not expire, most service providers do not understand this. The expiration date on the document

causes problems when using the document as a form of ID or accessing health care. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has finally instituted a process for claimants to renew their expired document. Please follow the following steps to renew a refugee claimant document by mail:

1. Complete the RPCD request form. Include any dependant who also needs a new refugee claimant document. The form can be found at:
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/kits/forms/imm0168e.pdf>
2. Get 2 passport size photos for each person. The back of 1 photo must include the person's name and date of birth.
3. Mail the complete form and all photos in one envelope to: RPCD / DDA, IRCC
Winnipeg, 269 Main Street, Suite 400, Winnipeg, MB R3C 1B2

After IRCC receives the request, they will send the new refugee claimant document in the mail or inform the individual to pick up the document at an IRCC office.

Fall 2022 increase to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates in effect
ODSP rates and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) increased by 5% as of September 2022. Future ODSP rates will be adjusted to inflation. Ontario Works rates remain the same and there have been no increases to special allowances, such as special diet and personal needs, or to mandatory benefits. For more information visit: [Keeping Costs Down for Ontario Families | Ontario Newsroom](#).

Temporary Employment Insurance (EI) measures expire on September 24, 2022

The federal government relaxed EI eligibility during the pandemic to improve access to emergency support for those in need. The current minimum of 420 insured hours to qualify for both regular and special benefits (parental, sickness, etc.) enabled more workers to qualify for financial support. However, starting September 25, 2022, these temporary changes to the EI program will no longer be in effect:

- As of September 25, 2022, you will need between 420 and 700 hours of insurable employment during the qualifying period to get regular EI benefits
- As of September 25, 2022, you must have accumulated at least 600 hours of insurable employment to qualify for EI sickness benefits
- As of September 25, 2022, you must have accumulated at least 600 hours of insurable employment to qualify for maternity and parental benefits

Petition to extend current EI measures

[Justice4Workers](#) has created a petition to urge the federal government to extend EI recovery rules until a new EI program is launched. Unless the government extends the current rules, EI reverts to old pre-COVID for new claims starting September 25th (see above). To sign or share the petition visit: https://www.justice4workers.org/fix_employment_insurance_petition.

University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic (UOCLC) resumes September 19, 2022

The UOCLC provides legal services free of charge to all those who qualify financially and whose cases fall within their following mandated areas of service: criminal law, family law, and tenant law. Undergraduate students of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University automatically qualify financially. Clinic intakes for 2022-23 will be from:

- September 19 to October 17, 2022
- October 31 to November 30, 2022
- January 4 to January 13, 2023
- January 30 to February 28, 2023
- March 13 to March 30, 2023

To schedule an intake, clients should call UOCLC at 613-562-5600.

Free access to legal representation to combat Anti-Black racism in schools

The Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC), has received funding to hire a new lawyer to help Black families navigate race-related issues in schools across the province, at no cost. Working in partnership with local community organizations, BLAC can provide summary legal advice, document preparation, negotiation and full representation when appealing disciplinary measures and legal assistance with bullying and harassment and other administrative issues that may arise during the school year. To learn more about the services available, visit:

<https://www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca/>

In-person hearings resume as an option at the Social Security Tribunal

The Social Security Tribunal paused in-person hearings during the height of COVID-19, but have now resumed in-person hearings again as an option. Appellants can choose between:

- in-person hearings at a Service Canada Centre
- videoconference on a personal device
- teleconference
- videoconference at a Service Canada Centre

Appellants should indicate their preferred type of hearing in their [Notice of Appeal form](#).

Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) to begin issuing order by email during hearings

Effective August 22, 2022 LTB adjudicators will gradually begin issuing certain orders by email during the hearing where all parties to the application have an email address. The types of orders that may be issued in this manner include interim orders, orders for payment plans, and orders for withdrawn/discontinued/abandoned applications. For those applications in which all parties do not have an email address on file, the order will be issued after the hearing. However, if during the hearing a party who does not have an email address on file wishes to provide one to the adjudicator, they may do so and will receive the order in the manner described above. A party can also, in advance of their hearing, ask to add their email address to the file by emailing ltb@ontario.ca with the subject line: Adding Email Address for File # [1234]. They can also call the call centre and ask that their email address be added.

Landlord Tenant Board public information sessions

The Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) will be hosting four information sessions for the public. Two sessions will be held on **September 15** and two on **September 22**. The sessions will be held from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. and from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. on each of the days. These sessions will demonstrate the basic steps for filing an application, and how to use the portal once an application is filed. These sessions will be useful for applicants who may have already filed an application but want more information about how the portal works, or who want to file an application but need more information or help doing so. The sessions will also be useful for respondents who have received notice that an application was filed against them and who want more information about how to interact with the portal. Register for a session at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/public-information-sessions-for-tribunals-ontario-portal-tickets-404877578737>

\$25 children's dental clinic

Algonquin College will be hosting a children's dental clinic for the fee of \$25 on the following dates:

- September 10th 8:30am - 4:00pm
- September 17th 8:30am - 4:00pm
- September 24th 8:30am - 4:00pm
- October 1st 8:30am - 4:00pm
- October 6th from 5:30pm
- October 7th from 5:30pm

The clinic is for those aged between 6-16. It includes an assessment and teeth cleaning. To book an appointment call or email Algonquin at 613-727-4723 or dentalclinic@algonquincollege.com

Call for participation: Research on newcomer digital spaces

Refugee 613 and the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto are seeking participants for a study of how newcomers use digital spaces. With the research findings they hope to make trusted health information easily available for these communities. To participate, individuals must register for a virtual 1-on-1 interview or a group discussion before Friday, September 9th. Visit: <https://bit.ly/3qo7Mq8> for more information.

Ottawa Pro Bono Employment Law Clinic closed for the season

The Ottawa Pro Bono Employment Law Clinic ran until August 31, 2022. The clinic assisted individuals facing an employment related challenge due to COVID-19 or other reasons. Connecting Ottawa will send an update if and when the clinic reopens.

Family Court Survival Workbook

[Luke's Place](#), an organization committed to improving the safety and experience of women and their children as they proceed through the family law process, has created a workbook for women leaving abusive relations. The workbook provides information and resources on legal issues and family court processes, how to provide evidence of abuse, and how to complete court

documents. The workbook is available at <https://familycourtandbeyond.ca/about-this-site/download-these-resources/>

Resource Sheet: Top 3 reasons to get at COVID 19 booster

[Refugee 613](#) in conjunction with the University of Toronto and the Public Health Agency of Canada has created a new resource sheet: The Top 3 reasons to get a COVID-19 vaccine booster. The resource is available for download in [Arabic](#), [Dari](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Hindi](#), [Pashto](#), [Punjabi \(Gurmukhi\)](#), [Punjabi \(Shamukhi\)](#), [Spanish](#), [Ukrainian](#), and [Urdu](#).

Canadian Centre for Housing Rights renters guide.

Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation has adopted a new name: the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. The new CCHR website can be viewed at <https://housingrightscanada.com/>. The Centre has also released a new guide for renters in Ontario. This guide provides renters in Ontario with key information about the three stages of their tenancy: starting, maintaining and ending their tenancy. It also includes a list of top ten tips that all renters in Ontario should know: To download the guide, visit: <https://housingrightscanada.com/resources/the-ontario-renters-guide/>

The Government of Canada releases a report on the lack of Legal Aid in family law cases

The Government of Canada undertook a study to examine the impact of the lack of legal aid in family law cases in Canada, particularly among populations that experience systemic disadvantage. The study concluded that lack of access to legal aid for family law cases profoundly affects adult litigants and their children. The full report can be read here: [Table of Contents – The Impact of the Lack of Legal Aid in Family Law Cases \(justice.gc.ca\)](#).

Extreme heat and air conditioning

Extreme heat waves have and will continue to disproportionately impact groups protected under Ontario's Human Rights Code (Code). Tenants (including renters, co-op residents and people living in condos) with medical conditions that are affected by extreme heat have a right to accommodation without discrimination in housing based on Code grounds. Under the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA)*, tenants must have access to vital services such as heat, hot and cold water, electricity and fuel (such as natural gas). A landlord or housing provider cannot shut off these services, even if a tenant has not paid their rent. Landlords and housing providers might pay for vital services or tenants might pay for them depending on the lease agreement. Currently, the *RTA* regulations do not include air conditioning as a vital service. Only housing that has central air conditioning may be required by the municipality to maintain a maximum temperature of not more than 26°C between June and September. [The Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) calls on the Government of Ontario to include air conditioning as a vital service under *RTA* regulations and to establish a provincial maximum temperature to make sure that vulnerable Code-protected tenants are protected against threats of eviction for using safely installed air conditioning units. To read the statement, visit: https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/ohrc-statement-human-rights-extreme-heat-waves-and-air-conditioning

Reminder: New Connecting Ottawa InfoSheet: Rights and Responsibilities of Refugees In Canada

Connecting Ottawa lawyer, Heather Neufeld, and Connecting Ottawa's summer student intern, Joel Szota, recently prepared a [new InfoSheet](#) on the rights and responsibilities of Refugees in

Canada to answer some of the common questions that arise. You can review and download the resource at: <https://connectingottawa.com/about-us/connecting-ottawa-resources/>

Reminder: Draft work permit expiration letter for employers available to download

There have been repeated issues of clients about to lose their employment because the employer does not understand that a person who has applied to extend their work permit can keep working even though the previous permit expired. There is also an inaccurate belief that the 120 day day limit listed on the work permit extension confirmation letter is a real deadline and that people have to stop working after it passes. For clients in this situation, Connecting Ottawa Immigration Lawyer, Heather Neufeld, has prepared a letter that can be provided to employers to explain that clients are still able to work as long as they have applied to extend their permit. You can download the letter at: <https://connectingottawa.com/about-us/connecting-ottawa-resources/>

In case you missed it ... (we think the following information bears repeating) Income exemption for recipients of residential school class action settlement payments

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services advises that payments from a class action settlement between the federal government and former day attendees of specified residential schools across Canada are to be treated as fully exempt from income and assets for OW and ODSP purposes, as compensation for pain and suffering. Under the settlement, which was approved by the Federal Court in September 2021, one-time awards of \$10,000 are being made to eligible class members who attended a listed residential school between 1920 and 1997, to compensate for loss of culture and language. **The claims process opened in January 2022 and will close in October 2023.** For further details on the class action, settlement and claims process, see <https://www.classaction.deloitte.ca/en-CA/Indian-Residential-Schools-Day-Scholars-Class-Action-Settlement/>.

Multilingual health resources

As shared by OCASI, the rebranded [Metropolis Social Determinants of Health network](#) (a merge of the Vaccine Uptake Network and the Network to Inform Social Policy on COVID Variants and Vaccination (NISPCV)) has an extensive library of resources on health and COVID 19 and vaccinations available in [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#) (simplified), [English](#), [Farsi](#), [French](#), [Punjabi](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Tigrinya](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Vietnamese](#). To view the library, visit: <https://bit.ly/3QyrsCP>. To sign up for updates, provide your information at: <https://bit.ly/3Q4EAQ9>.

Newcomer Information Hub

[Refugee 613](#) has created [the Newcomer Info Hub](#). Funded by IRCC, the Hub's initial goal was to create multilingual, culturally appropriate COVID-related information for newcomers and make them accessible in the channels newcomers use. Refugee 613 has now expanded the scope of the Info Hub to include more general information useful to support newcomers with their settlement and integration. Visit the Hub at: <https://www.refugee613.ca/pages/newcomer-info-hub>

Ontario recognizes previous driving experience for refugees

Ontario will credit foreign driving experience for protected persons, refugees, and people from Ukraine to help them get their driver's licence sooner. Present a photocopy of the foreign driver's licence (DL) bearing a stamp from Border Services, or complete a self-declaration if the foreign driver's licence is not available. [Learn more about this program.](#)

Infographic: Free legal help for people applying for Refugee Status

Legal Aid Ontario has created a new infographic on the free legal services available to individuals applying for refugee status. It covers what services are available and how to obtain a legal aid certificate. Download the infographic at: https://www.legalaid.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/LAO-PLFI-Refugee-status-infographic_EN.pdf

Updated Connecting Ottawa information sheets

The following resources have been produced by Connecting Ottawa lawyers to provide front line workers and community members with information and referral resources for common legal issues. Please feel free to share with your clients and networks.

- [Paid Infectious Disease Emergency Leave \(July 25, 2022\)](#)
- [Work Permit Letter \(July 25, 2022\)](#)
- [Rights and Responsibilities of Refugees in Canada \(July 22, 2022\)](#)
- [Q & A about Ukraine Immigration status and access to benefits \(June 23\)](#)
- [Financial Assistance for Ukrainian Families \(June 6, 2022\)](#)
- [Transition Child Benefit \(May 31, 2022\)](#)
- [Wills & Powers of Attorney Resource Sheet \(May 17, 2022\)](#)
- [Canada Child Benefit \(May 17, 2022\)](#)
- [Newcomer Owned Small Businesses in Ottawa \(April 5, 2022\)](#)

Student Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) debt reduction available

A significant number of students are being asked to repay the CERB by either the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) or Service Canada. Some of these students might be eligible for a credit towards their CERB debt if they meet the eligibility criteria for debt reduction (see here for information on eligibility): [Student CERB debt reduction - Canada.ca](#). Their credit will be based on the number of 4-week CESB periods they could have received between May 10, 2020 and August 30, 2020. Application forms can be downloaded and submitted to the CRA by fax, mail, or CRA My Account: [Student CERB debt reduction - Canada.ca](#). We encourage you to share this information with your networks because the CRA is not informing students about this credit when they send out repayment notices. If a student has already repaid the CERB benefits they received, they will be reimbursed the difference upon application. For more information on this credit marriage certificate, not just a religious marriage document like a marriage contract.

2023 guideline amount for rent increases capped at 2.5%

The Ontario government confirmed that the 2023 guideline amount for rent increases is 2.5%, the maximum amount permitted under the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*: [Ontario Caps 2023 Rent Increase Guideline Below Inflation at 2.5 Per Cent | Ontario Newsroom](#). Landlords must wait 12 months between increases and give tenants written notice at least 90 days before their rent goes up. For more information on rent increases, please visit Steps to Justice: [How much can my rent go up? - Steps to Justice](#).

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 an Intake Form: <https://connectingottawa.com/request-for-information-consultation/>. This will ensure the most efficient response to your request. As a reminder, we do not provide direct legal services to individuals

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Please be advised that my standard hours of work are Monday to Thursday, 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

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