Connecting Ottawa Communique  
February 22, 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 front-line workers are listed first followed by information and updates on 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:

Newcomers and the Canada Child Benefit/Transition Child Benefit Series: March 8 & 22
Connecting Ottawa lawyers, Liz Majic and Heather Neufeld will be the keynote speakers at an upcoming Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) Lunch and Learn series on Newcomers and the Canada Child Benefit/Transition Child Benefit. Plan to attend the following sessions:

- March 8, 2022, 12:00 noon - 12:45 p.m.: This lunch and learn will clarify some common misconceptions about the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) as it applies to newcomers. There are grave consequences for clients who apply for this benefit without understanding the eligibility criteria. This series will provide caseworkers, particularly those who are new to the settlement sector, with the information needed to determine whether clients are eligible for the CCB. Register at: [https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=307](https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=307)

- March 22, 2022, 12:00 noon - 12:45 p.m: This lunch and learn will give caseworkers an overview of the Transition Child Benefit (TCB) as it relates to newcomers. What is the Transition Child Benefit? How long can a client expect to get the benefit and how much will they be paid? These questions and more will be answered during the presentation. Register at: [https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=308](https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=308)

Information Session: Income tax and benefit returns for low-income residents - March 10
Connecting Ottawa will be hosting an information session on income tax and benefit returns for low-income residents. Jonathan and Bill will explain the importance of filing an income tax return for low income individuals and its impact on maintaining benefits and credits. They will also discuss where clients can get their returns prepared for free.
Date: Thursday, March 10, 2022
Time: 11:00 a.m
Speakers: Jonathan Rothschild, Bill Singleton
Via
Landlord Tenant Board vs Small Claims Court - March 23
There are some housing issues that clients face that cannot be addressed via the Landlord Tenant Board. Ontario Legal Information Centre will discuss which issues can be addressed by small claims court and the process to follow.
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 (in conjunction with Reach Canada)
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Speaker: Ontario Legal Information Centre
Via zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81356226764?pwd=empJSGtHTUUhDTGdFQ1prbWRnUmR.Edz09
Meeting ID: 813 5622 6764
Passcode: 250787

Landlord and Tenant Board forms for front line workers - An In-depth Look at N5 - March 29
Date: Tuesday, March 29, 2022 (in conjunction with Reach Canada)
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Speaker: Sylvie Chapman & Melissa Bramson, CLSO
Via
Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84517019732?pwd=aUhrYitjV3hDMnhnaXNnSWJJbG9OQT09
Meeting ID: 845 1701 9732
Passcode: 958299
Reviewing the form together in detail, including what to look for in the forms and answering all of your N5 related questions.

Information Session: Sakeenah Homes - April 6
Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Speaker: Sakeenah Homes
Via
Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81513507191?pwd=SUpIK1NlbEhIVktJSFM3bXJ5eXRtdz09
Meeting ID: 815 1350 7191
Passcode: 235741
Come learn about Sakeenah Homes, a transitional home in Ottawa that provides a safe and nurturing environment for Muslim women and children so that they may be given equal opportunities to excel, grow, and thrive with respect and dignity.

Landlord and Tenant Board forms for front line workers - An In-depth Look at N6 - April 26
Date: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 (in conjunction with Reach Canada)
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Speaker: Sylvie Chapman & Melissa Bramson, CLSO
Via
Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82309653888?pwd=STZmejYyQ2J2ZGFPVDBGUlJzWUZ1UT09
Meeting ID: 823 0965 3888
Reviewing the form together in detail, including what to look for in the forms and answering all of your N6 related questions.

Other Upcoming Education Sessions:

Refugee 613 Webinar Series: Improving Health Communication for Newcomers - February 23, March 3 & March 10
Are you trying to connect with newcomers to share vital information, news about programs, or other opportunities? Join Refugee 613 and our expert guests for this series of 1-hour webinars, Improving Health Communications for Newcomers: Lessons and tips from the pandemic.

- **Part 1: Information Is an Equity Issue: Concepts and Strategies for Understanding & Bridging Gaps** - February 23rd, 2022, 1 - 2 pm EST. Register at: [https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/improving-health-communications-for-newcomers-part-1-of-3-tickets-253285633147](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/improving-health-communications-for-newcomers-part-1-of-3-tickets-253285633147)

- **Part 2: Addressing Information Overload or Underload: Finding Critical Information During the Pandemic** - March 3rd, 2022, 1 - 2 pm EST. Register at: [https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/improving-health-communications-for-newcomers-part-2-of-3-tickets-254564438087](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/improving-health-communications-for-newcomers-part-2-of-3-tickets-254564438087)

- **Part 3 - Creating Accessible Content with and for Newcomers** - March 10th at 1 - 2 pm EST. Register at: [https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/improving-health-communications-for-newcomers-part-3-of-3-tickets-254591278367](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/improving-health-communications-for-newcomers-part-3-of-3-tickets-254591278367)

Legal Education Workshop for Women: Employment Law - February 23
The Women's Initiative for Safer Environments (WISE) will be hosting a legal education workshop for women on employment law. An Ottawa based lawyer will share information on topics that influence how safe women feel at their place of work. Attendees are welcome to ask their own questions about legal issues around employment, harassment, wrongful termination, other work related issues and legal rights.
Date: February 23, 2022
Time: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Register by emailing info@wiseottawa.ca

Testaments et procurations: présentation, enjeux et outils juridiques - 24 février
Date: jeudi 24 février
Temps: 18h à 19h30
Conférencier: Me Jean Nicolas Yacoub, avocat au [Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto](https://www.ca-centrefrancophone-ontario.org/)
Presente par: Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)
S'inscrire: [https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/fr/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=303](https://outreach.cleo.on.ca/fr/civicrm/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm%2Fevent%2Finfo&reset=1&id=303)

Forum: How to Be an Effective Ally to Indigenous and Racialized Women - March 8
The Humber Centre for Human Rights Equity and Inclusion is hosting a virtual forum on International Women's Day entitled "How to be an effective ally to Indigenous and racialized women". Details are as follows:
Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit
Ontario continues to be a designated region for the Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit (CWLB). Eligible claimants can apply for the CWLB for these periods:

- Period 9: December 19 to December 25, 2021
- Period 10: December 26, 2021 to January 1, 2022
- Period 11: January 2 to January 8, 2022
- Period 12: January 9 to January 15, 2022
- Period 13: January 16 to January 22, 2022
- Period 14: January 23 to January 29, 2022
- Period 15: January 30 to February 5, 2022
- Period 16: February 6 to February 12, 2022
- Period 17: February 13 to February 19, 2022

Eligible claimants can apply for any one-week period for up to 60 days after that period has ended. For more information on the CWLB and other federal and provincial income supports, please visit: Connecting Ottawa Resources - Connecting Ottawa.

Tax Filing Requirements for the Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit (CWLB)
Clients who received the CWLB must file tax returns for the years in which they receive this benefit. If they fail to file their returns before December 31, 2022 for 2021 benefits or before December 31, 2023 for 2022 benefits, they are deemed to not have been eligible for the CWLB and will be required to repay the benefits they received. Please encourage your clients who received the CWLB to file their taxes in order to avoid an overpayment.

CRA letters regarding CERB eligibility
The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) sent more than 441,000 letters to CERB recipients near the end of 2020 asking them to verify their eligibility for this benefit. Thousands more letters were recently sent at the end of January, this time targeting recipients who may have earned more than $1,000 a month while receiving the CERB: https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/cra-to-send-out-new-round-of-letters-checking-eligibility-from-cerb-recipients-1.5756484. This article notes that "No one at this point is being asked to repay. They'll have 45 days to contact the CRA, after which the agency may decide that the person owes the money back."

Collection of COVID-19 Benefits
On February 11, 2022, the government updated its webpage on "Collection of individual COVID-19 benefits issued by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)" and its webpage on "Collection of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) issued by Service Canada." Both websites deal with debt payment, payment methods, inability to pay, and "consequences of not paying." Both pages advise that if you do not pay your debt or
refuse to cooperate, the CRA may take legal action. However, before starting legal action, the CRA must:

- Make 1 attempt to give verbal legal warning by phone
- Sent 1 written legal warning letter

More information on a legal warning can be found here: [Legal warning about collection of debt - Canada.ca](#).

**Back payments for seniors who lost their GIS due to CERB/CRB:**

On February 14, 2022, Seniors Minister Khera said that back payments for seniors who lost their GIS due to CERB/CRB will go out as early as April 19, 2022, with some attempt to deliver payments before this date. Minister Khera said that Service Canada will work through MP offices to get funds to "those in dire need" in March 2022. However, it is unclear what the Minister means by "dire need." If you have a client who lost their GIS due to CERB/CRB, you may want to direct them to submit an email/letter to their MP, or submit one on their behalf, asking for immediate access to this GIS back payment, citing the Minister’s statement about MPs providing immediate access to these funds for those in “dire need”. To find your client's MP, type their postal code at this link: [https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en](https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en).

*As a reminder, Bill C-12, which is currently being debated, will amend the Old Age Security Act to exempt pandemic benefits from the calculation of GIS. A huge thanks to the Income Security Advocacy Centre, and a number of other partners, for advocating on behalf of seniors*

**Class Action Lawsuit against the Freedom Convoy**

On behalf of downtown residents, businesses and workers, Ottawa lawyer Paul Champ is coordinating a class action lawsuit against the Freedom Convoy organizers, truckers and donors for personal harm and lost revenues and wages. Individuals who lived, worked or did business in the occupied Zone during the protests will be a part of the class action. Individuals don't have to register, but should keep records of their losses. Email convoyclassaction@champlaw.ca with any questions. A website will soon be created to provide further information.

**Evidence and disclosure at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB)**

Reminder that documents, pictures or videos that a party wants to raise at a hearing must be sent to the LTB and the other party at least 7 days in advance of the hearing. In response, a party may provide further documents, pictures or videos to the LTB and the other party at least 5 days before the hearing. All evidence should be emailed to the LTB and the other party, unless e-mail service is not possible. The LTB email address (to be used solely for this purpose) is: [LTB.Evidence@ontario.ca](mailto:LTB.Evidence@ontario.ca). Please encourage clients to check their Notices of Hearing or any Interim Orders to verify the above information. If evidence is submitted after the above-noted deadline, it is possible the LTB will not accept it.

**Important details about the MyBenefits app**

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is encouraging social assistance recipients to download and use the MyBenefits app in order to communicate with caseworkers and receive letters. As of March 9, 2020, recipients registered for MyBenefits automatically receive
paperless communication because this is the default setting on the app. This means, by default, important decision letters are not mailed out. However, clients can opt out of the paperless communications and receive letters by mail if they prefer this method of communication. A how-to guide explaining how to opt out of paperless communication is available at: 

**Deadline Extended to Renew Health Cards**
The Ministry of Health extended the deadline to renew health cards from February 28, 2022 to September 30, 2022. The Ministry of Health said that expired health cards will continue to be accepted, including red and white ones. Currently, only a valid driver's licence can be used to renew a health card online. Service Ontario is working on enabling health card renewal using the Ontario photo ID card in the coming months. More information is available at: https://www.ontario.ca/page/health-card-renewal

**Federal Indian Day School Class Action**
The legal action, McLean v Canada, was brought to recover compensation for class members from Canada for harms suffered by students who attended a Federal Indian Day School or Federal Day School. To be eligible for compensation, individuals must have attended one of the identified Federal Indian Day Schools or Federal Day Schools during specific eligible class periods and experienced harm. For more information on who can submit a claim and claims assistance, including community support sessions, visit: Federal Indian Day School Class Action (indiandayschools.com). Claims are due by July 13, 2022.

**Social Benefits Tribunal Appeals**
The Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT) continues to hear appeals from people who disagree with a decision that affects the amount or eligibility for social assistance under the Ontario Works Act or the Ontario Disability Support Program Act. The SBT is amending procedural timelines to accept:

- appeals outside of the 30-day legislative requirement
- additional documents for hearings outside of the regular timelines
- reconsideration requests outside the 30-day legislative requirement.

Also, the SBT may send Notices of Hearing after the 60 days legislated timeline and decisions may be released after the 60-day legislated timeframe.

**The Law Foundation of Ontario invites applications for its Responsive program**
The Law Foundation of Ontario is inviting applications for the 2022 call of the Responsive program. Responsive grants fund initiatives generated by nonprofit community groups to improve access to justice. Responsive grants aim to encourage new ideas, approaches, and relationships that can help address emerging needs and connect more people to legal information and supports, especially people who are not currently being reached. Further information on the grant and how to apply is available at: https://lawfoundation.on.ca/apply/responsive/. Deadline to apply is April 1, 2022.
Government Announces 2022-2024 Immigration Levels Plan
Shared by our friends at Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP): The Federal Government announced Canada’s plans to welcome 1,329,700 permanent residents over the next three years. For this year alone, Canada plans to welcome 431,645 permanent residents. Overall, the 2022-2024 immigration levels plan sees an increase of almost 11% compared to 2021-2023 levels plan which targeted to welcome 1,200,000 permanent residents. Read more.

Book a StreetSmart workshop
StreetSmart is an organization founded and run by University of Ottawa law students. It teaches street-involved and marginalized youth between the ages of 12 and 29 their legal rights through accessible and creative workshops. StreetSmart trains passionate law students to facilitate these workshops with not-for-profit organizations, community centres, schools, shelters, and other spaces where youth gather in their communities. StreetSmart workshops are entirely activity and discussion-based. It avoids the typical lecture format that is not always the most engaging and prioritizes an interactive approach. Engaging youth in this way cultivates safe spaces for self-expression, rich spaces for (un)learning, and creative spaces that challenge youth to reimagine their relationship with the law. If you are interested in booking a workshop, contact: ottawa@streetsmartadvocacy.com

John Howard Society launches free civil legal education platform for front-line staff
The John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) has launched a new free online learning platform – www.jhslearninghub.ca - dedicated to providing free civil legal training and education to frontline staff who serve justice-involved individuals in Ontario, to help break down barriers to accessing justice. The new JHS Learning Hub offers training modules and resources that walk users through spotting the most common legal issues faced by clients, such as poverty law issues that include evictions, loss of income support, or dismissals, and provides actionable steps they can take to help clients address the issues. The Hub will also act as a centralized resource to guide frontline social service staff through the process of making quality referrals for relevant legal information, advice, and resources.

Ontario Expanded Booster Dose Eligibility to Youth Aged 12 to 17
On February 18, 2022, Ontario expanded booster dose eligibility to youth aged 12 to 17. Appointments can be booked through the provincial booking system and the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre, as well as at select pharmacies administering the Pfizer vaccine. Drop-ins are welcome at all Ottawa Public Health vaccination clinics. Appointments will be booked for approximately six months (168 days) after a second dose. To book an appointment online, individuals must be 12 years old at the time of appointment.

Ottawa Public Health Online Resources on Scams and Misinformation
Ottawa Public Health has an excellent online resource that addresses some of the common scams taking place in Ottawa and what clients can do to protect themselves: Scams and Misinformation - Ottawa Public Health.

City of Toronto Tips on Preventing or Thawing Frozen Pipes
The City of Toronto has provided important information on preventing and thawing frozen pipes during the winter. Access the resource at: Prevent or Thaw Frozen Pipes – City of Toronto

**Ontario Moved to Next Phase of Reopening on February 17, 2022**
Ontario eased a number of public health measures on February 17, 2022: Ontario Moving to Next Phase of Reopening on February 17 | Ontario Newsroom.

**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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Gina Grosenick, Ph.D. (she/her)
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Connecting Ottawa
(613) 862-7601

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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