



# Ontario's Community Legal Clinics

Together Making the Equal Rights Dream a Reality

**2019 Annual Report**



Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario

[www.aclco.org](http://www.aclco.org)

# A Client's Story

## How Access to Community Legal Clinic Services and Supports Impacted My Life

Timmins, ON

I was evacuated from the Fort McMurray wildfires in May 2016 and moved to Timmins because my son was here and I needed help to get back on my feet. I was on disability in Alberta but had to reapply in Ontario. After 3 months of living in Timmins, I had been in two accidents and got really injured, my fibromyalgia also got much worse. In my situation, living on Ontario Works and getting \$423.00 a month, there is absolutely no way I can afford a lawyer to help me even if I can find one. I've searched the internet for lawyers in Timmins to see if they would help me, but none would. I had to turn to the Legal Clinic and by the grace of God they were able to take on my case for disability support.

There is no way on earth that I would be able to do this without the help of Therese of the Timmins Legal Clinic. My health is extremely poor for a woman who is 56 years old. Therese is my rock, and I desperately depend on her to fight for what I legally deserve. I thank you for taking the time to read my story and pray that hopefully there will still be legal aid workers to help the people in poverty who need them.



# Who we are



## Ontario's Community Legal Clinics

Ontario's community legal clinics serve individuals and families in communities across Ontario. Through modest capped budgets, funded by Legal Aid Ontario, we offer a broad range of legal services to address the basic legal needs of low-income Ontarians.

Community clinics serve the most vulnerable Ontarians on issues that are most critical to them, including housing, income security, education, health care, disability programs, employment rights, victim's assistance, and environmental issues. The vital work that clinics do is aimed at ensuring that people with low

incomes are able to meet their most basic needs, giving them the ability to live healthy lives, in dignity, as active members of society. Most neighbourhood clinics serve geographic communities, while specialty clinics serve specific groups including people with disabilities, injured workers, racialized communities, the elderly, children and youth.

Clinics are rooted in the communities we serve, using limited resources to provide often life-saving services that are most needed by that community, while working closely with other local agencies to ensure that clients are well-served.

# The Benefits of Community Legal Clinics



- ◆ International research shows that investing in community legal clinics reduces costs to the legal system and across multiple government programs by keeping people housed and able to live independently and participate in their communities. Research has made the compelling case that investing in access to justice has measureable economic and social returns.
- ◆ Clinics operate on capped budgets, providing cost certainty to government;
- ◆ Clinics are small offices located in the community they serve, with minimal administration and no bureaucracy, enabling them to be flexible and client-oriented;
- ◆ Clinics work to understand and respond to individual and community needs;
- ◆ Clinics use lawyers, community legal workers, paralegals, public education initiatives and other delivery systems in order to provide services cost-effectively;
- ◆ Clinic work is client-centered, with some clients receiving full representation, while others may receive summary advice or self-help assistance, depending on the most appropriate response in their circumstances;
- ◆ Clinics prioritize client and community needs and attempt to meet them strategically, making efficient use of scarce resources;
- ◆ Clinics develop linkages to non-legal service providers such as health care, housing help and employment supports, sometimes co-locating in service hubs, ensuring that their clients receive “wrap-around” services;
- ◆ Clinics are accountable to their funder, Legal Aid Ontario; they submit annual funding applications, quarterly statistical and financial reports, and undergo periodic quality service reviews/audits;
- ◆ Client surveys indicate tremendously high satisfaction with the work done by clinics;
- ◆ Clinics provide access to justice to hundreds of thousands of low income Ontarians every year, in a cost-effective manner;
- ◆ Clinics are identified by numerous independent reviews as the best way to provide community law services to low-income communities/individuals.

## ACLCO Co-Chairs' Message

It feels like stating the obvious to say that 2019 was an incredibly challenging year for community legal clinics in Ontario, but it must be said. No matter how we look at it, 2019 was filled with challenges to the community legal clinic system. From devastating budget cuts to a co-ordinated, province-wide campaign, in 2019, clinics persevered.

In the same year as the budget cuts, there was talk of modernization of legal aid and clinic services, followed closely by talk of new legal aid legislation: all things that speak to the foundations of the Ontario community legal clinic system. Together, we worked to preserve the fundamentals of community legal clinics in Ontario; and, when Bill 161, An Act to enact the Legal Aid Services Act, 2019 was introduced, community legal clinics with community-based boards of directors were part of that legislation. There is much more work yet to do, both on improving Bill 161 before it is proclaimed, and on ensuring that the essential work of clinics in Ontario continues and is adequately funded. Together, Ontario community legal clinics and the ACLCO, will continue to support the most vulnerable in our communities at a time when that support is more important than ever.



TRUDY McCORMICK



GARY NEWHOUSE



## ACLCO Executive Director's Message

2019 was a challenging year for Ontario's community clinics, possibly the most challenging one in the clinic system's history. The provincial spring budget made significant cuts to legal aid funding, which in turn resulted in a decrease of approximately \$15M to the clinic system's budget. The budget of every clinic was reduced, with approximately a third of the clinics receiving disproportionately large cuts.

Of course cuts of this magnitude had an impact on the services that clinics could provide to their clients and communities. Fortunately those communities right across Ontario stood up in response to the cuts and expressed their opposition to the budget reductions, and their support for the services that clinics provide. It is our hope that government and legal aid officials have heard that community support, and that next year will lead to reinvestment.

In the meantime, clinics struggled to maintain the top quality services that our clients need. As detailed throughout the pages of this Report, clinics continued to provide their communities and clients with creative and innovative services to meet their most basic needs, utilizing a broad array of tools to accomplish the task.

I am proud of the work that clinics have done in difficult circumstances in 2019, and I hope that in 2020 we will be in a better place to focus uniquely on the legal needs of our clients.



LENNY ABRAMOWICZ

# The Most Appropriate Response

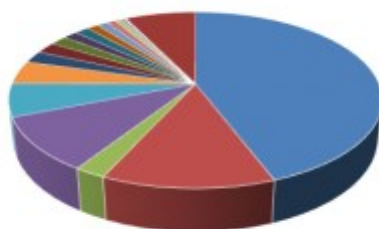
Clinics distinguish themselves among legal aid services providers by offering a broad range of legal services to address the needs of their clients and the inequities confronting low-income Ontarians. Clinics offer legal representation in courts and tribunals, brief services, legal advice, public legal education, and referrals to other sources of assistance. Clinics address a variety of client needs by choosing the right tool in their legal toolkit to address the problem most effectively and efficiently. Clinics often use systemic solutions to address problems that affect the entire community.

The community legal clinics across Ontario provided services to hundreds of thousands of people by:

- Representing clients in courts or tribunals
- Providing quick interventions, detailed legal advice and assistance
- Carrying out public legal education, community development, policy advocacy, law reform projects and initiatives.

## *The Cases*

Areas of Poverty Law



■ Housing	■ Social Assistance - Disability	■ Social Assistance - General
■ General Administrative	■ Immigration/Refugee/Citizenship	■ Employment
■ Health Care/Substitute Decisions	■ Other Income Maintenance	■ Family
■ Workers' Compensation	■ Violence (Victim of Violence/Crime)	■ Taxation
■ Criminal	■ Public Services	■ Human Rights
■ Indigenous Rights	■ Privacy/Access to Information	■ Environmental
■ Correctional	■ Other: Legal	

Community Legal Clinics serve the most disadvantaged who have been pushed to society's margins— people living with disabilities, single mothers, racialized people, victims of abuse and torture, the elderly, newcomers and refugees, among many others.



# Communities Stand



in Support of Their Community Legal Clinics

**“...people  
care about a  
healthy legal  
aid system...”**

This year, the Ontario government reduced funding for legal aid by over \$100M. These cuts resulted in a decrease of almost \$15M in the budget for community legal clinics.

The budget cuts are unprecedented for our clinics after virtually 50 years of steady growth. Such stability over a long period of time made Ontario’s clinic system a globally esteemed provider of access to justice for low-income people. The

reduction in funding has meant a reduction in the services that clinics can provide to their clients, and potential clients.

The communities that clinics serve let it be known that this was a loss that they were not prepared to bear. Elected officials received the messages from their constituents; the media reported that many people care about a healthy legal aid system to maintain our democratic values and equality goals.

# What Ontarians Think About Their Community Legal Clinics

*My employers exploited me. I did not get my wages or vacation pay and could not access Employment Insurance. The legal system is complicated, but with language barriers, it's even harder. Without legal clinics, I wouldn't have gotten my unpaid wages or EI. There should be NO cuts to clinics services. They really are the pathway to justice.*

*No one had told me about my eligibility for CPP until I went to Kensington–Bellwoods. I would not have received ODSP or CPP without their help!*

*Come in*

**WE ARE OPEN**

*The legal clinic has prevented me from committing suicide because I had no one to turn to after receiving unfair treatment and feeling helpless.*

*I am hopeful our politicians will do everything in their power to recognize the need for this service in our society. Please remember, in most cases, this is our ONLY recourse to have our voices heard in a legal courtroom. This is our only method of gaining justice. I do not believe the scales of justice were intended solely for those people affluent enough to afford a lawyer, but for all citizens of Ontario, rich and poor.*

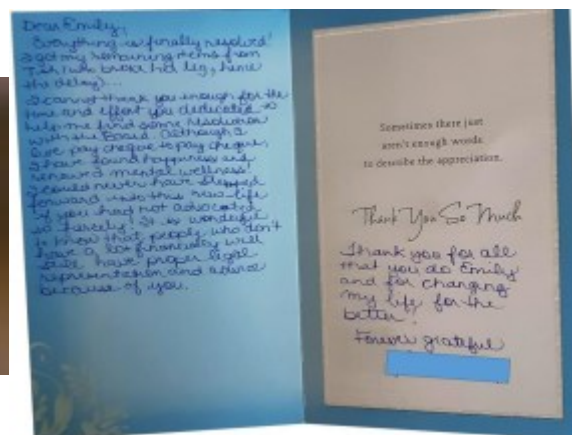
*It gave me a sense of pride in my government for providing resources to people like me who had nowhere else to turn. Had the Legal Aid Clinic not been available to me when I was in dire need of support, I would have had zero guidance and support in how to navigate my personal situation.*



*The West Toronto Legal Clinic helped me fight for my legal rights when there was absolutely no way I could've afforded my own lawyer as a single working mother of two in recovery from addictions and mental health. They showed me the utmost of compassion at a time that I was teetering on the verge of a mental health crisis due to unfair treatment/dismissal at work. The help I got from the clinic significantly improved mine and my children's lives during an incredibly stressful time, helped me to reintegrate back into society and employment and to feel part of the community. I settled my case and have the clinic to thank for that. What an absolutely invaluable service, PLEASE keep it going so other people can benefit as I did. You have no idea how much these services mean to people in the community!*

*You're the best - I'll always remember you; what you did for me and how you treated me!*

*"Thank you for ... changing my life for the better."*



*Without CELA we were 'dead in the water'.*

*Access to this legal service at the legal clinic allows me to obtain an affidavit for co-residency for free, instead of forcing me to return to an unsafe environment to obtain proof of co-residency with my abuser. Having this affidavit will help put me into subsidized housing at a much faster rate, which is essential as I am homeless.*

# Legal Services that ensure equal voices and reduce poverty

Community Legal Clinics across the province work every day to protect and promote the rights of low-income Ontarians.

Whether speaking for a client whose wages have not been paid, or bringing to the Supreme Court of Canada arguments that underscore the impact of the law on the communities we serve, Community Legal Clinics fight for justice for the most disadvantaged among us. Steadfast advocacy for access to justice and respect for the right of all, regardless of ability to pay, ensure a just and equitable society for all Ontarians.

There are 73 Community Legal Clinics in Ontario, each with their own board of directors chosen by the community. We serve tens of thousands of individuals on critical issues for people who live in poverty such as: affordable and secure housing; income security, education, health care, disability programs, and workers' rights to name just a few.

Much of the work done by Community Legal Clinics is aimed at ensuring people with low-incomes have access to basic measures of

income support and housing. These essential supports in turn result in improved health, improved opportunities for children to succeed in school and for adults to participate in the labour market and the economy.

People who are poor bear huge costs: living with deprivation and the stresses it imposes; strains within families; hunger and inadequate nutrition; inferior housing; alienation from mainstream society. This all takes a toll on health, self-esteem, the ability to participate in the labour market, and the ability of children to learn and thrive in school. Health costs related to poverty alone amount to billions of dollars a year in Ontario.

The work that Community Legal Clinics do to help low-income people secure access to our justice system is therefore not only an issue of justice. Clinic services that result in a reduction of poverty have a significant positive impact on the health, vitality and economic return of local communities.

"The most advanced justice system in the world is a failure if it does not provide justice to the people it is meant to serve. Access to justice is therefore critical. Unfortunately, many Canadian men and women find themselves unable, mainly for financial reasons, to access the Canadian justice system."

- FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA, BEVERLEY MCLACHLIN

# The Difference Clinics Make in their Communities

Community Legal Clinics provide a wide range of services in response to the most pressing needs in their communities, as identified by their boards of directors. Strengthened by dedicated staff and Board members, and funded by Legal Aid Ontario, clinics make a significant difference in their communities. Adopting innovative approaches to stretch their resources and address creatively the growing needs of clients, clinics produce results that enhance and improve the legal welfare of those they serve. Clinics help to build healthy and vibrant communities. The following are only a few examples of the outcomes achieved for Clinic clients in 2019.



## Together We Rise! S'élever ensemble! TWR

**Together We Rise! S'élever ensemble!** (TWR) is the bilingual initiative of the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic to improve access to justice for members of the Black community in Hamilton and combat anti-Black racism.

**S'élever ensemble • Together we rise**

Une soirée dédiée à la jeunesse noire et l'accès à la justice

**"Les sentiers de la réussite pour la jeunesse noire"**

Un panel inspirant de jeunes

- Des présentations artistiques, musicales et des rafraîchissements
- Entrée gratuite

Mercredi 5 février 2020  
De 16h45 à 19h45  
Bibliothèque publique d'Hamilton – Bibliothèque centrale  
55 Boulevard York

RSVP: [EVENTBRITE TICKETS](#)

Questions? [twr-see.hclco@gmail.com](mailto:twr-see.hclco@gmail.com)  
or call Mouna at 905-527-4572 x 48

Hamilton Community Legal Clinic  
Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton

Early efforts are focused on relationship building through outreach and community development, including ethno cultural communities, such as the Nigerian and Somali associations. An important priority for TWR is youth; the Hamilton clinic is collaborating with community partner Empowerment Squared and a Law Foundation of Ontario grant to provide the "Hamilton Education Law Project", targeting racialized and newcomer youth and their families, as well as collaborating in several education series for Black and marginalized youth. During Black History Month, the clinic hosted another event called "Black Youth Pathways to Success".

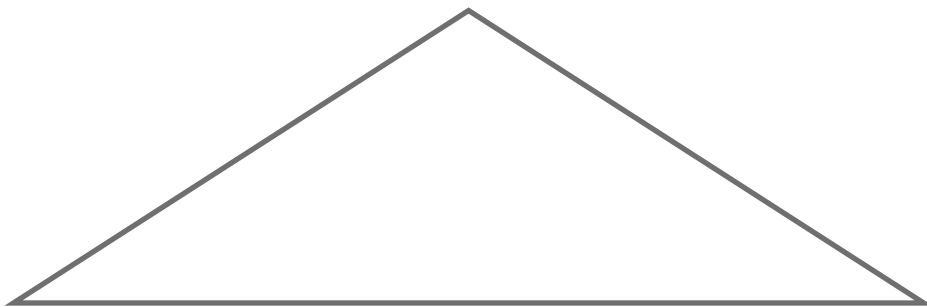
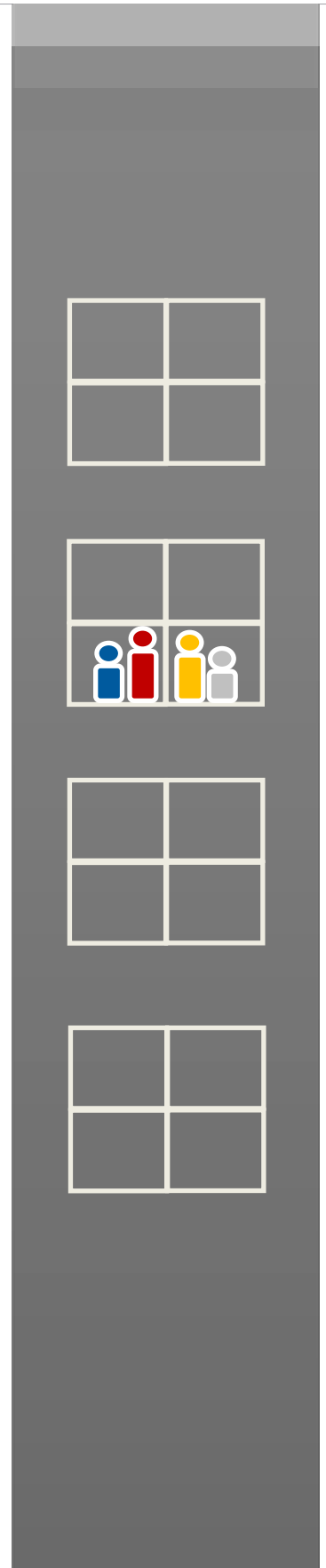
# The Affordable Housing Crisis

**We Can't Wait**  
*any longer*

The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario marked 2019's National Housing Day by releasing a new report and campaign called: We Can't Wait. The goal is to push for stronger tenant protections and preservation of affordable rental housing. Ontario has lost more than a quarter of its affordable rental housing (rents below \$1000) since 2006 and no-fault evictions are on the rise. Preserving affordable rental homes will take bold actions leading to an end to the displacement of low to moderate income communities.

To address the crisis, many community legal clinics have focused on keeping as many people housed as possible. Clinics provide the full range of services from providing useful information for tenants, early intervention to preserve tenancies by resolving rent arrears or disrepair, before they spiral down to create many legal problems.

Eviction prevention means money saved on moving expenses and temporary shelter costs; it keeps children in their neighbourhood school and prevents disruption to family life. Eviction can also lead to job loss, problems for children at school, ill-health and hospitalization, and more, all at a tremendous cost to all of us.





# Regulating Short-Term Rentals

In partnership with Fairbnb, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario have been working tirelessly to curb the unfettered business of short-term rentals, which has exacerbated the Toronto's rental housing crisis and driven up the cost of rents. This is another example of how law reform and tenant organizing works to create systemic change that will benefit all tenants in the long-term. For over 3 years, the clinic has kept the spotlight on this issue as a serious threat to Toronto's rental housing stock, and pushed City Council to pass these by-laws.

A recent decision of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal upheld Toronto's by-law regulating the operation of short-term rentals (i.e. Airbnb) in the

city. This is a major victory for Toronto renters and creates a strong precedent for the rest of Ontario.

In his decision, the adjudicator wrote "One fact is indisputable: each dedicated short-term rental unit displaces one permanent household. That household must find another place to live." He also noted that as many as 5,000 units could return to the long-term rental market thanks to the city's new rules.

Now that Toronto has cleared this legal hurdle, local clinics and their partners are able to push their municipalities to adopt by-laws that will ensure local rental housing stocks are protected from unscrupulous investors. Housing is a human right and should be available to those who need a home.



## Protecting Housing for Vulnerable People

The Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Clinic's Seniors Initiatives have highlighted the extreme vulnerability of pensioners in this volatile housing market. The lack of affordable housing leaves our clients prey to unscrupulous landlords using Owners Own Use and Demolition or Extensive Renovation type applications to displace long standing tenants in what are becoming known as "Renovictions". Though the *Residential Tenancies Act* provides Tenants with a right of return post renovation, many landlords are actively thwarting this right by renting to new tenants at a higher rate – leaving the displaced original tenant with weak financial remedies only. These in no way make up for the loss of an affordable home. KBCLS has been active in fighting these applications as well as in supporting tenants and working with community partners to organizing around such issues in their buildings, notably in the Kensington Market.

# Protecting Queer Refugees

Community Legal Services of Ottawa and partner agency, Capital Rainbow Refuge, piloted the Queer Refugee Hearings Program. The program provides refugee hearing preparation assistance to individuals claiming refugee protection based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (“SOGIE”). It is open to refugee claimants who are represented by private lawyers but who wish to get expert advice in this specialized area of refugee law. Claimants practice testifying about their lived experiences of SOGIE-based persecution and receive guidance about the legal and evidentiary requirements for refugee protection. The goal is to help these particularly vulnerable claimants gain confidence to meaningfully participate in proceedings before the Immigration and Appeal Board’s Refugee Protection Division.



“Whenever I think about access to justice, a quote from Honoré de Balzac comes to mind. He said that, “Laws are spider webs through which the big flies pass and the little ones get caught.” To me, that image perfectly captures not just the inequities in our legal system, but the tangible effects those inequities have on people. While the system is meant to treat everyone equally, some people get stuck, and expend a great deal of time and energy trying to break free. Others breeze through to resolution, and move on with their lives. Giving people access to justice is like giving them the tools to free themselves from the spider’s web.”

- THE RIGHT HONOURABLE RICHARD WAGNER, P.C. CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

## Citizenship regardless of ability to pay

Together, Neighbourhood Legal Services and Justice for Children and Youth achieved a valuable litigation settlement that will enable applicants for Canadian citizenship to request an “exemption from any applicable processing fees” on account of “special and unusual hardship”, under the *Citizenship Act*.

The client of NLS, born in the United States, was a child raised in the care of an Ontario Children’s Aid Society, having been made a permanent Crown ward at age 11. After aging out of care in 1988 without permanent immigration status in Canada, she sought to regularize her status but the application fees and paperwork posed multiple barriers for her; it was not until 2016, when she was about 47 years old, that she was finally granted permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

The client also applied for Canadian citizenship, but her request for a waiver of the \$630 application fee was refused. The client challenged this refusal as unreasonable and in violation of the s. 7 *Charter* right to security of the person, and on grounds that the blanket application fee for citizenship applications without regard to the multiple deprivations and difficulties faced by former Crown wards exacerbated and perpetuated their disadvantages in violation of the s.15 *Charter* guarantee of equal protection and benefit of the law.

The result was an Order made on consent of all parties. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration affirmed that subsection 5(4) of the *Citizenship Act* is available to applicants facing “special and unusual hardship” to request an exemption from application and processing fees, and that these requests will be considered and adjudicated. The Order can now be used in advocating for other cases in which waivers from the citizenship application fee are needed.

# Building Stronger Communities

The discourse is broadening because of empirical research

Access to Justice is much more than just “access to lawyers or courts”



- ✓ **Information** about the law, legal rights, and “paths to justice”
- ✓ **Services** to help navigate the system, improve legal health & prevent legal harm & solve problems
- ✓ Promote justice through **reform** of unjust laws and adopting new laws
- ✓ **Systemic advocacy** to improve policies & practices & programs
- ✓ Making **enforcement** of laws possible and easy

Community Advocacy and Legal Centre presentation to the International Legal Action Group Conference June 2019

## Supporting our Communities to Advocate for themselves

Speakers’ School was created in 2018 by the Community Legal Clinic – Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk Community Developer. It is a six module program focused on building story telling skills to increase individual’s capacity for self-advocacy. The program is delivered in five different communities in partnerships with libraries, as well as tailored for specific agencies to meet the needs of their client populations. Many graduates of Speakers’ School have presented to elected officials, spoken at recovery groups, and have continued to attend monthly ongoing learning sessions.



## Helping to Make the Law

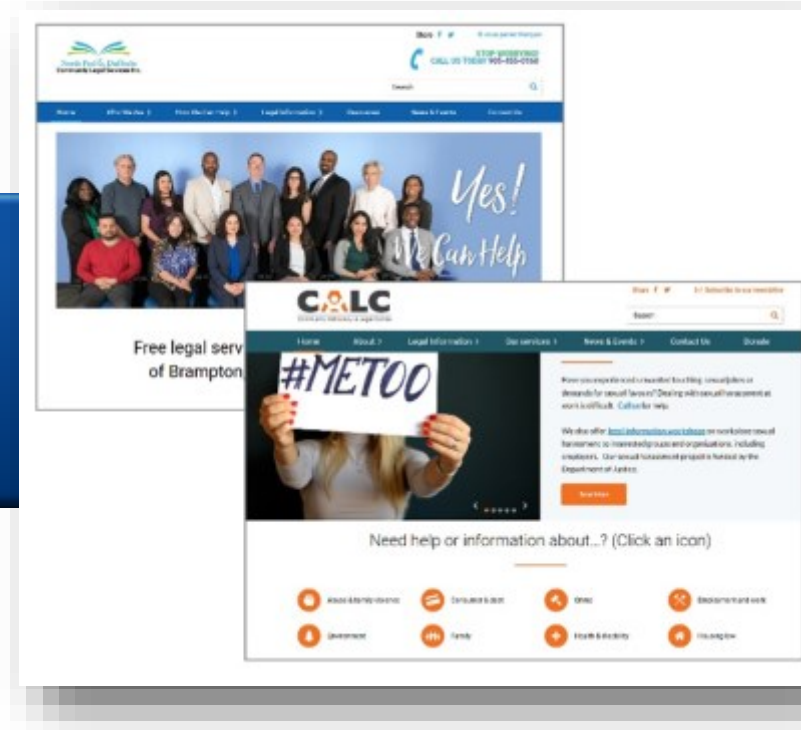
Again the Supreme Court of Canada accepted the arguments of an Ontario Community Legal Clinic. Recognizing the unique position of young people and quoting from the factum of Justice for Children and Youth, the decision recognizes the importance of people's experience of intersecting discrimination and disadvantage in Charter analysis. The *R v. Le* decision represents an incredibly important moment in criminal justice jurisprudence. It is also an affirmation of the significant contribution that a community legal clinic, and test case involvement, can make to the legal fabric in Canada.

## Smudge, Don't Judge

No More Silence and Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project collaborated to create a resource for service providers to assist them in providing better care to Indigenous community members who have survived violence. The web page and video resource addresses the transphobia and homophobia that Two Spirit, Trans and Gender Non-Binary Indigenous people often experience when they seek services. Aboriginal Legal Services is a proud community partner and conducted lunch-and-learns to introduce the project to community members (both service providers and service recipients) and garner feedback on the barriers and challenges they face.



# Improving Access to Justice Tools for our Communities



Over the last year, Community Legal Education Ontario, CLEO, assisted almost 20 community legal clinics in developing state-of-the-art, user-friendly websites. Their communities and clients can now find information about the services they offer, their hours of operation, special events and information sessions, and local referral data. The project also offers an opportunity for clinics to provide up-to-date online legal information on a wide range of topics to help community members through embedded Steps to Justice and Justice pas-à-pas website content.

The template-driven website is easy to use and update; follows industry standards in terms of technology, hosting, and accessibility; is cost efficient for clinics; and is sustainable over the long term.

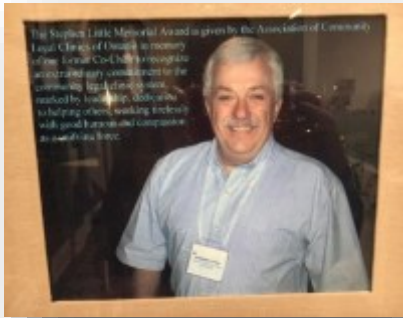
# Contributing to the Recognition of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Injured worker groups assisted by the Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic are raising human rights concerns that involve Canada's obligations to people with disabilities under international law.

The UN's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities visited Canada and heard from Ontario injured workers. The Special Rapporteur recently included in her report recommendations that the Government of Canada: *ensure access to appropriate levels of social protection, income support and benefits for persons with disabilities; and, expand legal aid services for persons with disabilities.*



**The Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups approve the submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities**



## Stephen Little Memorial Award

The ACLCO takes great pleasure in awarding the Stephen Little Memorial Award to the

### Friends of the Clinics Committee

The Honourable R. Roy McMurtry,

Chair Emeritus

George Thomson, Chair

Raj Anand

Ron Ellis

Douglas Ewart

Elizabeth Goldberg

Thea Herman

Patricia Hughes

Mary Jane Mossman

Through their advocacy on behalf of Ontario's community legal clinics, these esteemed members of the Ontario justice system have ensured the survival of the Ontario clinics and the community legal clinic model. Thanks to their efforts, particularly over the past year, our clinic system remains a paragon of a poverty law system that ensures equality before the law for the most disadvantaged.

Stephen Little was co-chair of the ACLCO and chair of the Board at Waterloo Regional Community Legal Services. Stephen dedicated his life to helping others and many in the clinic system knew him. His volunteer spirit was unrivalled. Stephen was a tremendous leader and unifying force. He worked tirelessly and with good humor on clinic issues and committees and did volunteer work for other organizations as well. Stephen passed away in May 2003.

The Stephen Little Memorial Award is given by the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario in memory of our former co-chair to recognize an extraordinary commitment to the community legal clinic system, marked by leadership, dedication to helping others, working tirelessly with good humour and compassion as a unifying force. Previous recipients of the award are The Honourable Sidney B. Linden in 2005, and The Honourable R. Roy McMurtry in 2007.



# Awards and Recognitions



**Legal Assistance of Windsor** received the *Windsor and District Labour Council Gary L. Parent Community Partner Activist Award* in April of 2019. The Award recognizes the efforts of activists who work to make our community a better one. Activists are recognized in several areas such as human rights, environment, social justice, health and safety, public services, political action, and human rights.

**John Bartolomeo**, Director of the Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic, was awarded the *2019 Ron Ellis Award for Excellence in Workers' Compensation Law* by the Ontario Bar Association. The award recognizes a member of the Workers' Compensation Law Section, chosen by their peers, as a leading practitioner and contributor to workers' compensation law in Ontario.



In honor of a 22-year career developing innovative ways for young people to find access to justice, **Mary Birdsell** received the 2019 Sidney B. Linden Award. Mary Birdsell is the executive director of Justice for Children and Youth (JFCY). She has been one of the main forces behind providing legal services for homeless youth where they're most likely to spend their time—at shelters, drop-in centres, and health clinics. The Sidney B. Linden Award, is given by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) to exceptional individuals who help low-income Ontarians in the pursuit of access to justice.

# Injured Workers' Consultants - the Elder

In 1969 Allen Baldwin and a group of student volunteers set up a storefront community advocacy office, Injured Workmen's Consultants, in the Cabbagetown community of Toronto. Al was an injured worker, an activist, a former crane operator and a reformed bank robber. The Conservatives governed Ontario, Trudeau was the Prime Minister, the Doors were singing "The future's uncertain and the end is always near." Not much has changed, but in 1978 IWC applied to the Law Society and joined the community legal clinic system.



"Legal Aid, and, in particular community law, is perhaps the single most important mechanism we have to make the equal rights dream a reality."

FORMER ONTARIO CHIEF JUSTICE  
ROY MCMURTRY

# WHO WE ARE

The ACLCO is the representative body of Ontario's Community Legal Clinics. Seventy community legal clinics throughout Ontario are members of the ACLCO. We are governed by a 13-person executive comprised of staff and board members from clinics from all regions of the province. We have developed expertise in poverty law services delivered through the community legal clinic model. We act in a leadership role to advocate for sustainable legal aid services and, we are recognized throughout Canada and internationally as a champion of community based legal services.



## WHAT WE DO

The ACLCO communicates and collaborates regularly with government, funders, community and justice organizations regarding legal aid and community legal clinics. The ACLCO helps coordinate the clinic system's interactions with a variety of external justice partners.

A primary focus of the ACLCO has been to work with other legal aid service provider groups, primarily through the Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid, to pursue increased government funding for legal aid. In the past year, these efforts were concentrated on working with the provincial government to educate it about the importance of access to justice and legal aid investment. Significant work was also done with the federal government surrounding its role in funding legal aid services in Ontario.

Collaboration with the primary funder of Clinics, Legal Aid Ontario (LAO), remains an important focus for the ACLCO. We work with LAO to ensure robust and thriving poverty law services in Ontario. In addition, the ACLCO works with LAO on a wide range of issues affecting the clinic system through the ACLCO Executive and a number of standing and ad hoc advisory committees.

The ACLCO has expanded its supports for community clinics. We operate the KnowledgeNow program, promoting knowledge creation and sharing throughout the clinic system. The ACLCO Policy Counsel plays an important role in clinic support and leadership. LAO has transferred the responsibility and funding for the clinic learning and training program to the ACLCO. The ACLCO managed this program until September 2019 when the program was defunded due to the cuts to legal aid services.

The ACLCO will continue to work on behalf of Ontario's community clinics by ensuring the ongoing flow of new funding into legal aid and the clinic system, by strengthening the clinic – LAO relationship, by fostering strong relations between the clinic system and our justice sector partners, and by expanding the supports we provide to clinics throughout the province.

Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario  
 Advocacy Centre for the Elderly  
 Algoma Community Legal Clinic  
 ARCH Disability Law Centre  
 Black Legal Action Centre  
 Canadian Environmental Law Association  
 Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples  
 Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic  
 Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic  
 Community Legal Education Ontario/Éducation juridique  
 communautaire Ontario (CLEO)  
 Clinique juridique francophone de l'Est d'Ottawa  
 Clinique juridique Grand-Nord/Grand-Nord Legal Clinic  
 Clinique juridique populaire de Prescott et Russell Inc.  
 Clinique juridique Roy McMurtry (SDG) Legal Clinic  
 Community Advocacy & Legal Centre  
 Community Legal Assistance Sarnia  
 Community Legal Clinic — Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk  
 Community Legal Clinic — Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes  
 Community Legal Clinic of York Region  
 Community Legal Services of Ottawa/Services Juridiques  
 Communautaires d'Ottawa  
 Don Valley Community Legal Services  
 Downsview Community Legal Services  
 Durham Community Legal Clinic  
 Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic  
 Elliot Lake & North Shore Community Legal Clinic  
 Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic  
 Hamilton Community Legal Clinic/Clinique juridique  
 communautaire de Hamilton  
 HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO)  
 Huron Perth Community Legal Clinic  
 Income Security Advocacy Centre  
 Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario (IAVGO)  
 Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic  
 Jane Finch Community Legal Services  
 Justice for Children and Youth  
 Keewaytinok Native Legal Services  
 Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services  
 Kingston Community Legal Clinic  
 Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic  
 Lake Country Community Legal Clinic  
 Landlord's Self-Help Centre  
 Legal Assistance of Windsor  
 Manitoulin Legal Clinic  
 Mississauga Community Legal Services  
 Neighbourhood Legal Services  
 Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex)

Niagara Community Legal Clinic/ Clinique juridique  
 communautaire de Niagara  
 Nipissing Community Legal Clinic  
 North Peel & Dufferin Community Legal Services  
 Northumberland Community Legal Centre  
 Northwest Community Legal Clinic  
 Parkdale Community Legal Services  
 Peterborough Community Legal Centre  
 Queen's Prison Law Clinic  
 Renfrew County Legal Clinic  
 Rexdale Community Legal Clinic  
 Scarborough Community Legal Services  
 Services d'aide juridique du Centre francophone de Toronto  
 South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario  
 South Etobicoke Community Legal Services  
 Sudbury Community Legal Clinic  
 The Legal Clinic  
 Timmins-Temiskaming Community Legal Clinic/Clinique  
 juridique communautaire Timmins-Témiskamingue  
 Unison Health and Community Services  
 Waterloo Region Community Legal Services  
 West Scarborough Community Legal Services  
 West Toronto Community Legal Services  
 Willowdale Community Legal Services  
 Windsor-Essex Bilingual Legal Clinic/  
 Clinique juridique bilingue Windsor-Essex  
 Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic

## ACLCO Member Clinics



# ACLCO - ACJCO

**Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario**

55 University Ave, Suite 1500

Toronto, Ontario M5J 2H7

Phone: [416-847-1416](tel:416-847-1416)

Toll Free: [1-866-965-1416](tel:1-866-965-1416)

Fax: [416-597-5894](tel:416-597-5894)

[www.aclco.org](http://www.aclco.org)