



Northwest Community Legal Clinic

JANUARY 2022

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS
AND OUR COMMUNITY BY
PROVIDING QUALITY LEGAL
SERVICES.

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Introducing New Staff in Kenora

Sam Smith is a member of Métis Nation of Ontario and was born and raised in Kenora, Ontario. She completed her undergraduate degree in 2015 at Ryerson University with a Bachelor of Commerce with specialization in Law and Business. Sam completed the Paralegal Certificate program at Algonquin College in 2021 and will be fully licensed in July of 2022. Sam has a passion for helping people navigate the legal system. She is excited to join the Northwest Community Legal Clinic where she can help with the important work the clinic provides to the community. In her spare time, Sam enjoys being outdoors with her dog and participating in all the various sporting activities available in Kenora.



Meg Illman-White came to Kenora 6+ years ago from Ottawa to fill a Youth and Community Outreach ministry position at Knox United Church. Meg's great love has been parenting her (now adult) children Miriam and Sean and exploring Canada with them on road trips, camping and hiking trips. Her passion in her work life has been with people experiencing poverty, homelessness and addiction. Her hobbies include camping, hiking birdwatching, gardening, photography and walking with her wheaten terrier Mango and with a variety of walking buddies. Meg is excited to bring her experience in community development and community connection to her position as Community Legal Worker.



Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit (CWLB)

Erinne Wreggitt, CLW, Fort Frances

A new Lockdown benefit is now available ONLY when a COVID-19 lockdown order is designated for your region. This benefit gives temporary income support to employed and self-employed people who cannot work due to a lockdown. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you can receive \$270 after taxes are withheld for each 1 week period. You may apply for any weeks between October 24, 2021 and May 7, 2022 that your region was in a government imposed lockdown.

In order to be eligible for the benefit you must reside and be present in Canada, be at least 15 years old, have a valid Social Insurance Number and not have received any of the following benefits in the same period;

- Employment Insurance Benefit (EI)
- Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)
- Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)
- Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP)
- Short Term Disability Benefits

You also must have earned at least \$5,000 in 2020, 2021 or in the 12 months prior to the date you apply. This income needs to be from employment income, net self-employment income, maternity or parental benefits, regular EI, special or fishing benefits or from these covid 19 benefits;

- Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)
- Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)
- Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
- Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)

Other eligibility guidelines include that you have filed a 2020 tax return and that a lockdown in your region resulted in one of the following;

- Job loss (unemployed)
- Self-employed but unable to continue to work
- Or you were employed or self-employed but had a 50% reduction in your average weekly income compared to the previous year.

You also must NOT have: quit your job, voluntarily stopped working, turned down reasonable work, refused to return to work when asked or fail to resume self-employment when you were able.

If you receive this benefit you MUST file your 2021 income tax return by Dec 31, 2022 if you receive the benefit for a period starting in 2021 or by Dec 31, 2022 if the benefit period starts in 2022.

For full details on this benefit please visit **Canada.ca** and choose **Covid-19 Financial Support**.

File Your Taxes On Time Or Risk Losing Benefits

Tammy Noble, CLW, Fort Frances

It is very important to file your income taxes on time especially if you are of low or modest income, as failure to do so may result in the suspension of benefits you and your family rely on. The following are examples of benefits that are “needs based”, meaning eligibility is based on your income from the previous year.

Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)

The GIS is a monthly payment available to low-income pensioners and is calculated based on income for the past calendar year. Seniors must file their taxes on time every year in order to avoid disruptions to their GIS payments.

The Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) Credit

The goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) credit is a tax-free quarterly payment that helps individuals and families with low and modest incomes offset the GST or HST that they pay throughout the year. The amount of credit you will receive is automatically determined when you file your income taxes.

Canada Child Benefit (CCB)

The CCB is a tax free monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children under the age of 18. The CCB may include the child disability benefit and any related provincial programs. The benefit uses your net income to determine the amount you will receive.

Ontario Child Benefit (OCB)

The Ontario Child Benefit is financial support for low to moderate income families to help provide for their children. It provides direct financial support to those families, whether they are working or not. It helps parents with the cost of raising their children.

Ontario Trillium Benefit (OTB)

The Ontario Trillium Benefit combines the Northern Ontario Energy Credit, the Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit and the Ontario Sales Tax Credit to help pay for energy costs as well as sales and property tax. You need to be eligible for at least one of the three credits to receive the benefit and the amount that you receive will depend on your age, income, residence, family size and amount paid in rent or property tax.

Trillium Drug Program (TDP)

The Trillium Drug Program is an income-based program intended for Ontario residents who have high prescription drug costs in relation to their net household income.

To see which benefits you may be eligible for, go to the CRA website www.canada.ca and look under *individuals and families*.

Record Suspensions (formerly “Pardons”)

Application Fee Now \$50.00

Yvonne Treffers, CLW, Atikokan

As of January 1, 2022, the Parole Board of Canada (PCB) fee to apply for a record suspension was reduced to \$50.00 (it was \$657.77 in 2021).

Applications under the previous fee **received but not accepted for processing** before the fee reduction came into effect on January 1, 2022 will be processed under the new \$50.00 application fee. The application fee cannot be reimbursed in cases where an application **has already been accepted** for processing and an acknowledgement letter was sent to the applicant prior to the new fee taking effect.

What is a record suspension? A record suspension allows people who were convicted of a criminal offence, but have completed their sentence and demonstrated that they are law-abiding citizens for a set number of years, to have their criminal record kept ‘separate and apart’ from other criminal records.

A record suspension removes a person's criminal record from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database. This means that a search of CPIC will not show that the individual has a criminal record or a record suspension. Most provincial and municipal criminal justice agencies also restrict access to their records once they are told that a record suspension has been granted, but they are not obligated to do so. A record suspension does not erase a conviction and the person will still have a criminal record, however, it does allow a person to say that they have a criminal record from which they received a record suspension which proves that they are a law abiding citizen.

A record suspension does not guarantee entry or visa privileges to another country including the United States.

How do you apply for a record suspension? The Parole Board of Canada is the only agency that issues, grants, denies or revokes record suspensions. The PBC website has all of the information you need to complete a Record Suspension application. Their information will always be current and correct. It is also where you will find the application form and guide book; both are free of charge.

You do not need a lawyer or other representative to apply for a record suspension. You can fill out the paperwork yourself, or if you need help, you can check with a social service agency (such as the Legal Clinic) to see if you qualify for assistance. If you do choose to use a pay-for-service company, they will charge you a fee to fill out your application. It is up to you to check into the fees you will be charged beyond the \$50.00 application fee. The CPB application fee is paid at the time you submit your records suspension application and will not be returned to you if your application is denied.

When looking online for information, please ensure that the source is Canadian and up to date. Up-to-date information on the record suspension application process is available at [Canada.ca/record-suspensions](https://canada.ca/record-suspensions). For assistance with a record suspension application, contact the Parole Board of Canada at: 1-800-874-2652 (toll-free) or online at suspension@pbc-clcc.gc.ca or your local Legal Clinic.

Kenora Moving Forward

Meg Illman-White, CLW, Kenora

Over the past few months the NCLC has continued to support the work of a community collective called Kenora Moving Forward. The power of this collective has been community partnering and the involvement of partners like NCLC, Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig (WNHAC), and the NeChee Friendship Centre as well as a committed group of individuals who are passionate about creating places of belonging for those most marginalized in our city.

In November, Kenora Moving Forward was able to open a CommUNITY Space due to a lease agreement among the KDSB, WNHAC and Jubilee Church. The space has clear expectations to protect the safety of all who come, while maintaining a “low barrier” approach.

The success of the coalition's work has been increasing community awareness, participation and support. For the first time KMF was able to interview and hire staff (through WNHAC) employing a number of people at various stages of their own healing from multigenerational trauma and addiction. They carry a high degree of respect because their own journeys of healing are a source of inspiration for others. KMF has also been able to offer casual honorarium work and workplace training and supervision for people who attend the space and have skills and gifts to offer. These workers have been invaluable to the success and stability of the space and to setting a tone for others to take an interest in creating a welcoming environment. There are arts and crafts encouraged in the space, some guitar playing, jamming and keyboard from time to time and a curtain can divide the space to allow some privacy for small group interactions and sharing circles. RESPECT for self, others and the space are guiding words.

The importance of this CommUNITY space is being well documented. It has served up to 90 people in one night (people come and go). It provides a place where people feel part of community and valued and can always count on a healthy substantial meal.

The Legal Clinic is a visible part of this work and has been a voice for change in the community conversation around homelessness, mental health and addictions.

211 Role In Emergency Response and Recovery

Rebekka DeCorte, 211 North/Support Staff, Atikokan

Municipalities and communities have the safety and well-being of their residents as a primary consideration every day and during emergencies. 211 can reduce the load on municipalities and help them focus their resources in ways that they are uniquely equipped to do. Being able to get relevant and accurate information to the public and respond to public concerns is a priority.

- For emergency responders and municipal managers, 211 provides a channel for authoritative information to the public about anything relevant to the emergency that does not require police, fire or ambulance, such as the location of emergency shelters, where to get basic supplies and how to donate goods. This helps to alleviate the non emergency calls that go to 911 and other municipal phone lines
- In addition to the public inquiry role, the database skills of 211 staff include the capability to develop disaster databases of emerging information as required
- A further key capability of 211 service is call tracking and reporting on trends in caller needs and gaps in service



**Supporting individuals and our community
by providing quality legal services.**

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www.NorthwestCommunityLegalClinic.ca

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Office Closures

Monday February 21, 2022 - Family Day

Friday April 15, 2022 - Good Friday

Monday April 18, 2022 - Easter Monday

Sub-Offices

We are not travelling to Red Lake and Ear Falls at this time. If you have any questions, please call our toll free number 1-800-403-4757.

April 13, 2022 is International Day of Pink

Tammy Noble, CLW, Fort Frances

What is International Day of Pink? International Day of Pink is a day where communities across the country, and across the world, unite in celebrating diversity and raising awareness to stop homophobia, transphobia, transmisogyny, and all forms of bullying! Who started the International Day of Pink?

The event started when two students at a Nova Scotia high school saw another student, who was wearing a pink shirt, being bullied in their school. They decided to show support for the student by getting everyone at their school to wear pink the following day. So now, every year, on the second Wednesday in April, people around the world are urged to put on a pink shirt to show their support.

This year as in prior years, the Northwest Community Legal Clinic will help promote International Day of Pink and continue to stand in solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as they carry on their fight for equality and acceptance.

If you, your family or business would like to get involved, feel free to reach out to us or go to www.dayofpink.org to find out how you can help.

DISCLAIMER: These articles provide information only and are not to be considered as legal advice. Content reflects the laws that were current at the time of publication and the law may have since changed. Consult your community legal clinic or legal representative for legal advice on your specific situation.



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