



# Northwest Community Legal Clinic

SEPTEMBER 2022

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS  
AND OUR COMMUNITY BY  
PROVIDING QUALITY  
LEGAL SERVICES.

## Online Criminal Record Checks

Meg Illman-White, CLW, Kenora

Criminal Record Checks have been an increasing administrative task for OPP detachments in Ontario, with more employers and volunteer organizations requiring record checks. In a desire to increase efficiency of services, the Ontario Government has now implemented a new practice for obtaining criminal record checks, which encourages clients to apply online. There is no option to attend at an OPP Detachment, although mailing the application is acceptable, you must request a paper application by phone from 1-833-909-0057.

To apply online, clients need access to a computer, some degree of tech savvy, English or French literacy and the ability to navigate through the application options. The application requires the client to have a credit card to pay for the record check, and by extension, comfort with online payment. Many legal clinic clients may not have access to apply as a result. Part of the process is **Electronic Identity Verification (EIV)** which requires the person to provide their credit history information. If the EIV fails, the client can use government-issued ID to verify their identity at an additional fee of \$3.95. While many ID's are accepted (including birth certificate, passport, status card and drivers licence or even an outdoors card or blood donors' card), health cards - the ID that the majority of our clients do have - are not listed as valid photo ID.

Online record checks may benefit those unable to find a ride when OPP stations are far from town, but the new process may prove detrimental for people without credit cards, computer skills, or who need to ask someone else to enter their personal information on their behalf.

Hopefully additional options will be provided in future.

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# Portable Housing Benefit

Erinne Wreggitt, CLW, Fort Frances

In April 2020, the Government of Canada and province of Ontario introduced the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) to increase affordability of rental housing for qualifying individuals and households. This benefit is for low income individuals and is paid directly to eligible households to offset rental expenses.

This provincially administered benefit is available to eligible priority groups who are on, or are eligible to be on, the Centralized Waiting List for Rent Geared-to-Income subsidized housing.

Priority is given to those persons experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, Indigenous persons and persons with disabilities requiring modified units.

The benefit amount will depend on the recipient's household size and income. The amount is calculated using a formula that includes household income, the number of people in the household and the local housing market rents in the area.

To receive the COHB, applicants must agree to be removed from the Centralized Waiting List as required by Provincial program guidelines and cannot be receiving COHB and Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing or any other form of housing benefit at the same time.

COHB is a portable benefit, which means that it will continue to support recipients wherever they move in Ontario. The benefit amount may change to reflect the average local market rent and once receiving the benefit you will be mailed a renewal each year that the program is available.

## Annual General Meeting Notice

**NOTICE to the GENERAL  
MEMBERSHIP of the Northwest  
Community Legal Clinic Association  
and the PUBLIC .**

**Our Annual General Meeting will be  
held Saturday Oct. 15, 2022 @ 9:00am  
at La Place Rendez-Vous in  
Fort Frances.**

**Agenda**  
*Reports of Clinic Activities  
President's Report  
Treasurer's Report  
Executive Director's Report  
Motion to accept 2021-2022 Auditor's Report  
Election of 2022-2023 Board of Directors  
Other Business*

*~EVERYONE WELCOME~*



# Are You Turning 65?

Erinne Wreggitt, CLW, Fort Frances

As people age there are often challenges to covering health costs. There are some government benefits that can help.

If you are on Ontario Disability Support Program Benefits (ODSP) when you turn 65 there is a risk that you will no longer qualify financially for those benefits including ODSP health benefits that cover prescription drugs, eye exams and some dental care. When you turn 65 you automatically receive Old Age Security (OAS) pension, and also may qualify for Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS). These benefits are often more than ODSP which is why you may no longer qualify financially. ODSP does have an “**Extended Health Benefit**” (EHB) for those who no longer qualify financially and have high health costs.

If you are receiving Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Disability benefits when you turn 65, benefits automatically get turned into a CPP Retirement pension which is often less than the disability benefit. You would also qualify for OAS and possibly GIS and GAINS. Ontario residents who are 65 and older, automatically qualify for the **Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program**. The ODB covers a certain amount of prescription costs depending on the person's income. And they must pay a deductible each year, which is the first \$100 of their yearly prescription costs. Those who are single, over 65 and have an income of less than \$22,200 or couples with at least one spouse over 65 and a combined income of \$37,100 or less can apply for the “**Seniors Co-Payment Program**”. There is no deductible for this program and people only pay up to \$2 for each prescription.

For more information on **EHB, ODB or Seniors Co-Payment Program** visit [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca).

Seniors that are over 70 and earn less than \$65,000 per year can claim the **Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit** for eligible medical expenses up to \$6,000. This benefit became available this year and the maximum credit is \$1,500. To get the credit, the person must claim their eligible medical expenses on their income tax return. People can claim this new credit as well as the existing **Ontario Medical Expense Tax Credit**.

# Did You Know? You MUST Renew Your Licence Plate!

Yvonne Treffers, CLW, Atikokan

- \* It is FREE
- \* You can renew online or in person at a Service Ontario office

Although Ontario residents no longer need to pay for a licence plate sticker, they must renew their licence plate every one or two years. Your vehicle must have a valid licence plate and be insured to drive legally in Ontario. The licence plate renewal period varies depending on type of vehicle and if you choose to renew for 1 or 2 years. You can renew your licence plate up to 180 days before it expires; the expiry date is usually your birthday.

When you renew:

- you will no longer receive a sticker
- you do not have to pay licence plate renewal fees
- law enforcement will be instantly aware your licence plate was renewed

To renew your licence plate either online or in person, you need:

- your licence plate number
- your vehicle permit number
- your insurance company name and policy number
- your odometer reading
- to pay any defaulted fines, tolls or fees

If you have computer access, you can sign up for digital reminders from Service Ontario. You will get free email, text message, or phone call reminders 60 and 30 days before it's time to renew your licence plate again. If you have moved, you need to change the address on your driver's licence, and vehicle permit. To exchange your existing vehicle permit for one showing your new address, you will need to visit a [\*\*Service Ontario Centre\*\*](#).



Supporting individuals and our community  
by providing quality legal services.

**Fort Frances**

206 Scott Street  
Fort Frances, ON  
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(807) 274-5327 Phone  
1-800-799-2485 Toll Free  
(807) 274-3141 Fax

**Kenora**

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(807) 468-4928 Fax

**Atikokan**

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[www.NorthwestCommunityLegalClinic.ca](http://www.NorthwestCommunityLegalClinic.ca)

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out on  
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## Office Closures

Monday October 10th - Thanksgiving Day  
Friday November 11th - Remembrance Day  
December 26th - reopening January 3rd  
Christmas Holidays

## 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.

## Wear Orange

Both the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day take place on September 30th.

Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day that honours the children who survived Indian Residential Schools and remembers those who did not.

This day relates to the experience of Phyllis Webstad, a Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation, on her first day of school, where she arrived dressed in a new orange shirt, which was taken from her. It is now a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

On September 30, we encourage all Canadians to wear orange to raise awareness of the very tragic legacy of residential schools, and to honour the thousands of Survivors.

**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.



Consider the environment...  
Please recycle this newsletter!