

RENFREW COUNTY LEGAL CLINIC

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012

Inside this issue:

Tenants—Protect Yourself-Don't Pay Cash!!	2
Homelessness & Housing—Let's Take Action!!	2-3
•Social Assistance Review—Countdown to the Final Report	4
•Food Bank Info	
•Telephone Hearings @ the LTB	
Residential School Independent Assessment Process Deadline	5
Resources for your child's education	6
•Casework Outcome Measures at the Legal Clinic	7
•WSIB Q & A	
What is the Renfrew County Legal Clinic?	8

Legal Clinic to Provide Video Link for Clients

The Renfrew County Legal Clinic announced today that it has set up a system of video links for clients across the County called Outreach-Telelaw.

The new access points are provided through partnering agencies – Tyerman and Daughters in Eganville and Barry's Bay, Community Resource Centre in Killaloe, and North Renfrew Family Services in Deep River.

"The new system will allow us to provide services more quickly and more completely than before," said the Legal Clinic's Executive Director, Richard Owen. "Now we can have a face-to-face meeting with a client without having to wait until we can drive out to the site. The client is spared having to drive in to Renfrew or Pembroke, which they often cannot afford."

Each of the partner agencies has a desktop system set up. The client sits at the desk facing the monitor, and the unit is run with a remote control. Agency staff will not remain in the room after the session starts, so confidentiality is maintained. The client will then see the Clinic's lawyers on screen and will be able to have a conversation about his or her case.

This pilot project is funded through an Innovations grant from Legal Aid Ontario. Partner agencies are

contributing the space and service needed to allow the interviews to take place. "It's through this kind of collaboration that we are able to improve our services," said Owen.



Need Help with Family
or Criminal matters?



Call Legal Aid Ontario
1-800-668-8258

Like us
on



Attention
Tenants

Protect Yourself—Don't Pay Cash!!

You pay the landlord in cash and he does not give you a receipt at the time. Perhaps he says he will give you the receipt later, but never does. And you have no proof that you paid, whether for your income tax credit or should the landlord claim you did not pay!

We have seen situations where the landlord claimed the receipt was forged.

If you pay by cheque, you can get the cancelled cheque from the bank, and you have proof of payment.

This is not the only situation where paying by cheque or money order will protect you. It protects you to have a paper trail. Think about it.



Homelessness and housing

Let's take action!!

Homelessness is a hidden problem in Renfrew County. Many of us know people who are "couch-surfing", camping or living in their vehicle because they can't find affordable and safe housing.

The Renfrew County Legal Clinic is hosting community meetings in April to kick start a larger discussion about the issue of homelessness and inadequate housing. They are inviting members of the community to participate.

"Different agencies and groups in the county have been working on this issue, and the legal clinic hopes to identify and support collaboration amongst our community partners to develop some real solutions," says Amy Scholten, staff lawyer with the legal clinic.

"We're looking at both short-term and long-term strategies."

"Everyone is welcome," she adds.



The first meeting was in Pembroke at the Marguerite Centre on April 10 and the next meeting is scheduled for Renfrew at the Ma-Te-Way Activity Centre on April 27.



Homelessness and housing Let's take action!!

Homelessness is a hidden problem in our County.
Let's work on solutions.



Please join our community discussion.



Renfrew

Friday, April 27, 2012

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Ma-Te-Way Activity Centre,
1 Ma-Te-Way Park Dr.

Hosted by the Renfrew County Legal Clinic.

Everyone Wel come!!



Refreshments will be provided.



Please RSVP to Emily @ 613-432-8146 or 1-800-267-5871 ext. 22.

Social Assistance Review – Countdown to the Final Report

As many of you will know, the Ontario Government appointed a Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Commission travelled across Ontario last summer and met with some groups in person, as well as receiving written submissions from many different groups and individuals. You can read those submissions by going to their website, www.socialassistancereview.ca.

The Renfrew County Legal Clinic in partnership with the Child Poverty Action Network hosted a community forum in Pembroke to speak with social assistance recipients about what changes they would like to see. You can read the results in our report to the Commission by looking at their website under the tab "What We Heard" (Earlier Submissions) and look for the Renfrew County Child Poverty Action Network paper. The Commission then published "Discussion Paper 2 – Approaches to Reform" which contained specific questions about possible changes to the system. The time to respond to the second paper was very limited; however, the Legal Clinic submitted a response to some of the points raised in that paper, which is also on the website ("What We Heard" tab, Recent Submissions, Renfrew County Legal Clinic). Our goal was to highlight some of the specific concerns that we have as a large rural community to the reforms that were being suggested. The final report of the Commission is expected in June of 2012. We hope that the changes recommended will lead to tangible improvements for low income people in Renfrew County, but we'll have to wait and see.



613-433-9216

Located at the Renfrew Armouries

Hours of Operation:

The last three Tuesdays of the month:

The first Tuesday - 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

The middle Tuesday - 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The last Tuesday - 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Please mail donations to:

339 Raglan Street, P.O. Box 30022, Renfrew, ON
K7V 1R6

Your donation helps Food Bank volunteers keep the shelves full.

Thank you.



Telephone Hearings
at the

Landlord and Tenant Board

If you receive a Notice of a Telephone Hearing call our office right away. We can help.

You only have 5 days (including weekends and holidays) to object to a telephone hearing otherwise you must request an extension of time! You must give reasons why you are objecting to this type of hearing.

Warning - You cannot receive assistance from duty counsel if your hearing is a telephone hearing.



Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development CanadaAffaires autochtones et
Développement du Nord Canada

Reminder to Former Indian Residential School Students that the Independent Assessment Process Application Deadline is September 19, 2012

Ref. #2-3641

OTTAWA, ONTARIO (March 19, 2012) — Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development is reminding former students of Indian Residential Schools that the [Independent Assessment Process](#) (IAP) deadline to submit applications is September 19, 2012. In accordance with the [Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement](#) (IRSSA), applications will not be accepted after this deadline.

The Independent Assessment Process is an out-of-court process created to resolve claims of abuse at [recognized Indian Residential Schools](#). Former students who have received a [Common Experience Payment](#) can also apply to the Independent Assessment Process. Information on the process can be found in the Independent Assessment Process guide and Independent Assessment Process application form which are available [online](#) (630 Kb) or by calling 1-866-879-4913. Once completed, the application form should be sent to the address listed in the guide. Former students who are eligible to apply to the Independent Assessment Process should begin the application process now, as it is complex. Due to this complexity, and the legal concepts and processes involved, all parties to the IRSSA believe that former students should have a lawyer to represent them – but it is not a requirement.

Recognizing the importance of the September 19, 2012 deadline, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada will continue to share information about the deadline through a national court ordered notice which will appear in print and broadcast across the country this spring and be mailed to all known former students.

The Government of Canada continues to focus on a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, as well as, a renewed relationship between Aboriginal peoples, their families and communities, and all Canadians.

F o r m o r e i n f o r m a t i o n , p l e a s e
c o n t a c t :

Minister's Office
Jan O'Driscoll
Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable John Duncan
819-997-0002

Media Relations
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
819-953-1160

Resources for your child's education.

Many of our clients want their children to go to college or university but feel that this is out of their reach because of the cost. It is well recognized that having a higher education is one of many factors which can end the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next.

There are some resources available to help with the cost of education:

◆ Canada Learning Bond ◆

This is money from the Government of Canada to help you start saving early for your child's education after high school. The bond is worth \$500 when you open an RESP for your child and an extra \$100 each year up to age 15. That could add up to \$2,000 (plus interest) in bonds for your child's education – all from the government. If you are able to add in your own money, the total could be even higher. The bond can be used to pay for full- or part-time studies in an apprenticeship program, a CEGEP, trade school, college or university. Your child must be born after December 31, 2003 and you must receive the National Child Benefit supplement for that child in order to qualify for the Canada Learning Bond.

You can find out further information by calling 1 800 O-Canada (1 800-622-6232) or visiting a [Service Canada Centre](#) near you. Or you can look online at www.canlearn.ca

You should also know that RESPs are not counted against you as income or assets if you are receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability benefits.

◆ 30% off Tuition Grant ◆

The Ontario government is offering a 30% off tuition grant for students attending university or college. In September, students in a university or college degree program will save \$1,600, while students in college diploma and certificate programs will save \$730.

Because the grant is calculated to be 30% off the average Ontario tuition, the amount of the grant will keep pace with any increased future costs -- meaning it will always be 30% off the price of tuition.

More than 300,000 students are eligible to receive the grant this year. Students who already receive OSAP (see below) will have their applications submitted automatically.

Students must be less than four years out of high school and their parents' gross income must be \$160,000 or less to qualify for the grant. Students with disabilities may receive the grant for up to six years of study.

◆ Ontario Student Assistance Program-OSAP

The Ontario Government has created an online application process for OSAP which automatically considers the applicant for 12 different funding programs, including a grant for persons from low income families. They have also created a phone app to allow students to check the status of their OSAP file at any time! There are many other possible grants and subsidies available for those with few financial resources and those with disabilities. Contact the financial aid office of the college or university you are going to for further information.



Casework Outcome Measures at the Legal Clinic

Renfrew County Legal Clinic has been working on Measures of Success for its casework program since fall 2005. The development process was carried forward by a committee of Board and Staff, working with a facilitator Christine Peringer, who volunteered her time.

Casework for us means when we open a file in order to give representation or ongoing advice to a client, as opposed to Advice or Brief Service, which are limited to up to two hours of service.

The group followed the United Way of America workbook, *Measuring Program Outcomes, a Practical Approach*, and took much from a survey of client's perspectives of the impact of legal services in their lives conducted by Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma. A Logic Model was developed for the casework program, Indicators were identified for the Outcomes we were looking for. We then designed a survey, with questions for the legal caseworkers and the clients

Clients are asked for their consent to engage in the survey as part of the retainer. They are free to refuse, and a number of clients did so.

At the point in the file when the client has made a decision as to how or whether to proceed, the caseworker answered some questions on her part of the form. The other part was sent to a volunteer who called the client for a short interview.

At the closing of the file, the lawyer answered several more questions. The information

was then entered into a Tabulator set up in Excel.

We began the survey in February 2007. We did not take into account how long it can be before a file is completed and closed! It was only in the fall of 2011 that we had enough responses to have reliable results.

There are other ways to get data, which involve outside sources and expenditure of funds. We do not have this, so the scope of the project was limited to the questionnaires. Long term outcomes could not be determined.



Results of the Survey

The reports are based on 99 cases. The results were a strong confirmation of the effectiveness of our casework services.

A high proportion of clients responding at the point of decision in their case (88%) felt they had a better understanding of the law relating to their issue as a result of our service. 77% felt that they now knew what they could do or not do in the situation. 90% felt more confident and 81% felt less stressed regarding their issue.

As the caseworkers reported at the end of the case, 94% of clients acted in a way consistent with the legal choices presented. It was reported that 47% of clients got a fair hearing, which was very high, as only 47% of the cases recorded a win or a loss. 75% of clients were better off at the end of the case..

Finally, the results of the cases broke down as 36% win, 10% lose, 34% settled, 13% client withdrew, 6% clinic withdrew. Since settlements generally have favourable results for the client, this would indicate a 71% favourable outcome rate.



My employer does not want me to tell the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) about being hurt. He says he will pay me instead. Is that okay?

The following answer is taken from [Migrant Workers and Workers' Compensation: What You Should Know](#) produced by [Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario](#).

It is best for your case if you and your employer tell the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) about the injury right away. You must tell the WSIB about your injury within 6 months, or you could be unable to get benefits. Your employer is also required to report any injury that requires health care or results in you not being able to earn your full wages.



www.renfrewlegalclinic.org

What is the Renfrew County Legal Clinic?

We are a non-profit community legal clinic dedicated to promoting access to justice for low-income people in our County. We are a staff of five— three lawyers and two support staff. We are funded by Legal Aid Ontario and are governed by an elected board of directors made up of Clinic members from across Renfrew County.

What does the Clinic do?

- ▶ Provides free legal advice by telephone or in-person;
- ▶ Provides representation to low income residents on a case-by-case basis;
- ▶ Provides speakers and educational materials;
- ▶ Acts as a resource to groups that help low income residents;
- ▶ Participates in law reform.

Would you like us to speak to your group?

We provide presentations on a number of topics to groups and organizations in the County.

Here are some examples:

- “What Tenants Need to Know”
- “Your Rights at Work”
- “Ontario Works and Ontario Disability—Navigating the System”
- “When the Collection Agent Calls”

Please call us if you would like to arrange a free presentation.

How can you become involved?

People who live or work in Renfrew County may become members of the Clinic and may attend and vote at all members meetings. If you would like to become a member, please visit our website or call us for a membership application. Membership is free.

How to reach us:

Call us or drop in to our main office:

236 Stewart Street, Suite 101
Renfrew, ON K7V 1X7



Phone: 613-432-8146
1-800-267-5871
Fax: 613-432-7121

We also meet clients in:

Pembroke, Barry's Bay,
Arnprior and Deep River.
Please call for an appointment.

Visit our website:

www.renfrewlegalclinic.org



Follow us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/renfrewcountylegalclinic

