



CLEO

Community Legal Education Ontario
Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario

2022/2023 Annual Report

Message from the Chair of CLEO's Board of Directors

This last year has been one of great transition for our organization. At the close of the 2022/2023 year, we said farewell to our long-serving executive director and CLEO champion, Julie Mathews.

Julie began her career at CLEO as a temporary, part-time executive director in 1999. She stayed on to steer CLEO through several shifts and changes as our organization evolved into the robust and innovative public legal education organization it is today.

From the start, Julie has held a deep understanding of what quality legal information is, and the care and craft it takes to develop it.

She knows how to build strong community networks and partnerships. She recognizes how integral these are when promoting access to justice for people who face barriers to participating in the legal system due to low income, language, literacy, disability, isolation, and other disadvantages.

Julie is an innovator, always willing to try new projects and new formats. She guided CLEO's work as we shifted from print publications to online information and greater integration of digital tools as a means of reaching more people and increasing our capacity.

She did this while maintaining balance and mindfulness of the digital inequalities experienced by many Ontarians who lack internet access or digital literacy skills. She stayed focused on ensuring that the results of these new initiatives were responsive to the needs of the diverse communities that CLEO serves.

Julie's emphasis on practical research has had a pivotal influence in the legal community. Recognizing the importance of building a quality bank of research that supports and guides work in the access to justice field, Julie has led foundational research, needs assessments, discussion forums, and innovative projects covering numerous areas of law.

We at CLEO recognize how lucky we are to have had someone guiding our grounded and thoughtful growth, all while maintaining the standard of excellence that CLEO is known for in the public legal education community.

As CLEO approaches its fiftieth anniversary in 2024, it is remarkable that Julie has been the face and the driving force behind CLEO's success for more than half of our organization's existence. We owe Julie a great debt of gratitude for her work with us, and we wish her the best as she takes on new adventures in her "retirement."

Paul Evraire, K.C., Chair

Steps to Justice / Justice pas-à-pas

CLEO's [Steps to Justice](#) and [Justice pas-à-pas](#) websites remain our primary way of providing accessible legal information to people in Ontario. Many of our users face barriers accessing the justice system due to systemic inequities and factors related to income, disability, literacy, and language. We are committed to creating accurate, easy-to-understand legal information that reaches a broad audience.

Visits: 2.4 million

Page views: 4.8 million

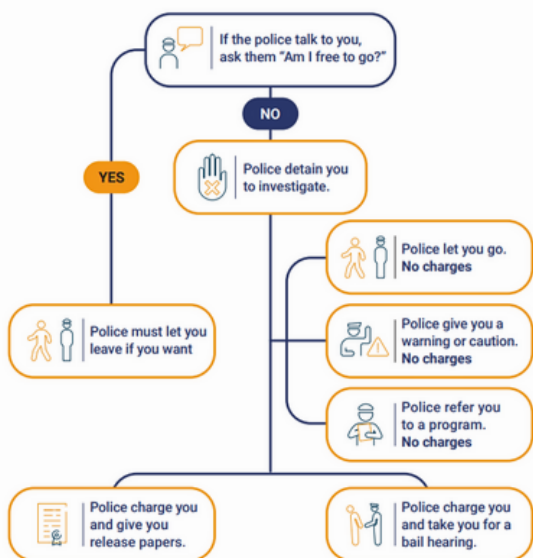
Questions and answers
in English and French: 1,604

New tools, charts, and checklists

Flowcharts, illustrations, checklists, and videos are helpful resources for visual learners and people who have difficulty with written content. This year we introduced:

- Flowcharts that explain:
 - [The child protection process](#)
 - [The criminal court process for youth aged 12-17](#)
 - [What can happen when the police talk to youth aged 12-17](#)
- A [chart](#) that describes the different types of criminal offences
- A [checklist](#) to help tenants exercise their right to return to their rental unit after renovations
- 5 [tipsheets](#) to fill out the Basis of Claim (BOC) form

When police talk to youth aged 12-17



Police can detain you if they believe you're connected to a crime. For example, you match the description of a suspect.

While you're detained or arrested:

- ▶ Police must tell you why.
- ▶ You don't have to answer police questions but you should say your name and age. Giving a fake name is a crime.
- ▶ Police must help you call a free lawyer.
- ▶ Police must help you contact an adult.
- ▶ When you're detained, police can do a pat down search for weapons.
- ▶ When you're arrested, police can do a full search for weapons and evidence.

These tools aim to help alleviate the stress of navigating the legal system. They offer additional ways to help people understand their legal problems and equip those who are comfortable to take action.

This year, we developed additional letter-writing tools to:

- [Complain about a good or service](#)
- [Ask a landlord for the right to move back into a rental unit after repairs or renovations](#)
- [Ask a landlord to sublet a rental unit](#)
- [Ask a landlord to assign a rental unit](#)

Animated videos

We ventured into video production as a visually engaging way to introduce complex legal concepts and processes.

This year, we released 20 short, animated videos in 5 areas of law: [family](#), [criminal](#), [employment](#) and [housing](#).



▶ Watch this video to learn about having guests over to your rental unit
CLEO

▶ Watch this video to learn what your landlord must do to move into your rental unit
CLEO

Live chat

We know that people are often overwhelmed with the amount of information that is available online. And they sometimes need more specific help to move forward.

Our live chat service is an important tool to help people find the legal information they need. And we can refer people to organizations and services that can provide more help and legal advice.

We have dedicated staff that respond directly to users during our live chat hours. And when the service is closed, users can send an email, which we respond to within 2 business days.

People served live: 4,164
Questions answered offline: 6,942

Print publications

Our publications continue to be an important way to provide legal information. This is especially true for people who have lower literacy skills, are not comfortable accessing information online, or do not have reliable internet access.

CLEO pamphlets distributed: 183,680
Organizations and individuals who ordered: 665

Guided Pathways

CLEO's [Guided Pathways](#) are free online interviews that help people fill out legal forms, draft letters, and identify next steps to address their legal problems. The pathways use innovative tools that streamline the process of assembling multiple documents.



Guided Pathways available:
73 in English and 61 in French
Visits: 47,365

This year, we launched the following pathways:

[Appealing a CPP disability decision](#): This pathway was funded by the Department of Justice and developed in collaboration with the Social Security Tribunal (SST). It helps people when they have been denied the Canada Pension Plan disability benefit ask Service Canada for a reconsideration, or make an appeal to the SST. There is a link to the pathway on the SST website.

[Applying for a private prosecution for gender-based violence](#): This pathway, funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, helps victims of crimes involving gender-based violence apply to court to lay charges when the police decide not to prosecute. Gender-based crimes include stalking, unauthorized sharing of intimate images, and assault.

[Exploring family dispute resolution processes](#): This pathway, funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, helps people who are thinking about separation learn about the various dispute resolution processes to manage conflict and reach an agreement when a relationship ends. It allows users to compare dispute resolution methods and decide what fits best with their situation.

[Drafting temporary or final family law court orders](#): This pathway, funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, helps people who have a family law court case complete a draft Form 25: Order (General) to make a temporary or final court order.

[Applying for a fee waiver](#): This pathway, funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, is for people who have a low income and cannot afford to pay court fees. It helps them fill out a request form to ask the court to waive the fees. This applies to court fees in civil, small claims, and family law cases.

"We regularly refer callers to our hotline to Guided Pathways for help with housing issues. I particularly value the Guided Pathways that help tenants prepare and file tenant applications."

Guided Pathways fills a vital gap for tenants seeking access to justice."

Canadian Centre for Housing Rights

Our commitment to improving the usability of our pathways continues. We are doing ongoing research with the Cyberjustice Laboratory at McGill University to design a randomized control trial for evaluating the efficacy of pathways outputs.

As well, researchers at uOttawa Faculty of Law and Western University have prepared an academic paper on the usability of the pathways that is currently undergoing peer review.

And we are working with a researcher from the University of Winnipeg to evaluate the pathways using usage and demographic data.

All of these efforts help identify how people use our guided pathways and the obstacles they encounter, enabling continuous improvement.

Empowering frontline community workers

CLEO Connect provides webinars to community workers on timely legal topics and legal help strategies, equipping them to better support their clients' needs.

Webinars: 17 in English and 7 in French
Number of unique participants: 3,024

Our series of Hot Legal Topics webinars covered income assistance, including the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), workers' rights, including Employment Insurance, immigration, tenants' rights, family law, and domestic violence.

These webinars have been very well received, with 98.4% of survey respondents agreeing that they were useful.

We also offered Skills-Building webinars on making appropriate referrals, navigating the legal help landscape, and assisting clients who are applying for an open work permit.

We incorporated American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation into all our English webinars. We will begin offering Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) interpretation for our French webinars in the new year.

"I'll use the information to understand and support clients [with their] relevant needs. Resources and examples shared in this seminar are going to be very helpful!"

Hot Legal Topics
webinar participant

Training for community workers

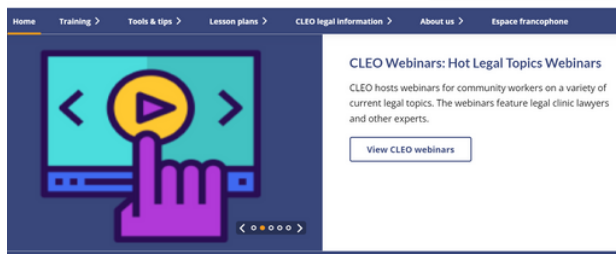
Our commitment to empowering community workers extends beyond webinars to additional training, including workshops and presentations at conferences.

Last year, CLEO Connect delivered 15 workshops to staff at nonprofit organizations. This included workshops on Navigating Steps to Justice as well as Legal Capability training. We reached staff working in the following sectors: settlement, health care, gender-based violence, services for Indigenous communities, and transitional housing.

We continue to promote our Trainers' Guides. These provide valuable resources to community legal clinics who use them to train local community workers on a variety of legal topics.

We presented at the following 3 conferences: the Super Conference of the Ontario Library Association, the annual conference of the Continuing Education School Board Administrators, and the annual conference of the Public Legal Education Association of Canada.

We also launched a research project to assess the need for a service that would help community workers access legal support. And our collaborations with organizations, such as the Canadian Council for Refugees, continue to drive improvements in the quality of services provided to immigrant and refugee communities.



Revenue and Expenses

for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023

Revenue

Legal Aid Ontario	1,678,816
Department of Justice Canada	626,143
The Law Foundation of Ontario	412,763
Ministry of the Attorney General	365,000
Other	42,895
Total revenue	3,125,617

Expenses

Personnel	2,381,059
Projects, production, and distribution (includes online and print content)	351,773
Occupancy and office	262,758
Professional, audit, and other services	77,102
Conferences and membership fees	14,122
Communications, outreach, and travel	5,325
Other operating	620
Total expenses	3,092,759
Excess of revenue over expenses *	32,858

Full financial statements, audited by Chaplin & Co. LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants, are available from CLEO on request.

* CLEO follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions. Excess revenue from 2021-2022 was carried forward and used to cover expenses in 2022/2023. CLEO held net assets at March 31, 2023, of \$527,495. Net assets at March 31, 2022 were \$494,637.

Thank you to CLEO's Board of Directors

Paul Evraire, Chair
Kylie Stanners, Vice-Chair
Prem Lobo, Treasurer/Secretary
Aiman Flahat
Elizabeth Goldberg
John No
Rami Shoucri
Barbara Wiktorowicz
Grant Wedge

CLEO provides clear, up-to-date information about the law to help people across Ontario understand and exercise their legal rights. We focus on reaching those in greatest need of this information: people who live on low incomes and face systemic or other barriers.

We also support other community organizations in their efforts to help people with legal problems by providing training, resources, and research, and helping them make connections.

We are grateful for ongoing funding support from:



Department of Justice
Canada
Ministère de la Justice
Canada

