Community Legal Clinic
of York Region

Clinique juridique communautaire
de la région de York

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Disclaimer

This presentation is not intended to be used as legal advice for a specific legal problem. If you need help with a specific legal problem and you live in York Region, please contact CLCYR.

CLCYR – Online Intake Form

ROADMAP

Disclaimer

Overview - What is a Legal Clinic?

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Ontario Works

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Contact US

OVERVIEW

- **What is a Community Legal Clinic?**
  - Funded by Legal Aid Ontario but independently run by our Board of Directors
    - Made up of community members from York Region
  - We practice "poverty law"
    - "Poor people come into contact with the law not as a matter of choice, but because they are constantly bumping into it – often in it's most coercive and punitive forms"
      - Wexler's "Practicing Law for Poor People
    - 72 legal Clinics in Ontario
      - Geographic by community; and
      - Specialty (ACTO, BLAC, CSALC, SALCO, HALCO, ACE, ARCH, ALS, CSSP, ISAC, LLSHC, IWCLC, IAVGO, CELA, JFCY, WHSLC)
      - Unique eco-system of legal clinics who fight for the rights of Ontarians experiencing poverty and facing systemic barriers to accessing justice in the legal system
- Service Finder Tool – Not sure who to refer to? Call us or Click Here

Who can we assist?

We are governed by the Legal Aid Services Act

- We provide free legal services to those who qualify financially
- Legal Aid sets our financial eligibility guidelines
- If you are in receipt of social assistance, you automatically qualify financially (must be the main income source for the household)
- If your income is not from social assistance, we will screen for financially eligibility and provide referrals to other service providers for those who don't qualify for our services

Financial Eligibility

ONE-ADULT FAMILY

FAMILY SIZE	As of April 1, 2020
1	$22,720
2	$27,516
3	$32,178
4	$34,809
5	$38,418
6	$41,199

TWO-ADULT FAMILY

FAMILY SIZE	As of April 1, 2020
2	$32,131
3	$34,809
4	$38,418
5	$41,199
6	$44,808

CATCHMENT AREA

- There is one community legal clinic for all of York Region
- operating for 30 years
- We are the largest legal clinic in the province
- We have **two** offices:
  - Richmond Hill – 21 Dunlop St. Suite 200
  - **NEW LOCATION -** Newmarket – 25 Millard Avenue West, Suite 1D



Areas of Law

- **Social Assistance**
- **Housing – Eviction Prevention**
- **Employment**
- **Immigration**

What we don't do:

- Criminal or Family matters – Legal Aid Ontario provides those services. 1-800-668-8258

Other Services



Satellite Offices



Public Legal Education Sessions



Agency Consults/Referrals



Community Outreach



ID Clinics



Strategic Law Reform Work

Income Maintenance Programs

- Ontario Works (OW)/Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
  - Special Diet Allowance/Mandatory Special Necessities (MSN)
- Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD)
- Old Age Security (OAS)/Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)/GAINS
- Disability Tax Credit (DTC)
- Canada Disability Benefit (CDB)
- Tax Clinics
- LEAP (low-income energy assistance program)

Ontario Works (OW)

- Able to help with Financial Assistance when someone is in urgent financial need to help pay for shelter and basic needs.
- To be eligible for OW, must:
  - Be at least 16 years of age
  - Meet financial tests
  - Live in Ontario
  - Be willing to take part in job training or job search programs

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

- May qualify if:
  - 18 years of age/older
  - Live in Ontario
  - Financial need
  - Have substantial physical/mental disability:
    - Expected to last a year or more
    - Inability to function in the home, community life and/or work
    - Impairments, restrictions, duration

How to apply for OW and ODSP

Online:

https://www.ontario.ca/page/social-assistance

By phone: 1-888-999-1142

Or in Person:

At local OW or ODSP offices

For ODSP applications, a medical practitioner must complete part of the application

OW/ODSP Benefits

- Financial support for Shelter and Basic Needs, based on size of family unit
- Special Diet Allowance
- Mandatory Special Needs Benefit (MSN)
  - Assistive devices
  - Medical transportation
- Employment supports
- Dental/Drug coverage
- RDSP (Registered Disability Savings Plan)

ISAC
INCOME SECURITY ADVOCACY CENTRE
Centre d'action pour la sécurité du revenu

OW & ODSP Rates and the Ontario Child Benefit

Current as of July 2026

2026 marks the eighth consecutive year that Ontario Works (OW) rates have been frozen, with no adjustment for inflation. Since rates were last set in 2018, prices have risen by 25%, meaning recipients' real purchasing power has steadily eroded. This year's inaction continues that trend.

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients will see a 1.9% increase in core rates starting in July 2026, reflecting an inflation-based adjustment. Note that this adjustment applies only to core rates. Other allowances such as the Special Diet Allowance remain frozen. Families with children will also see a modest increase in their Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) of approximately $3 per month per child.

The table below sets out the previous and updated Basic Needs and Maximum Shelter amounts for different family types receiving OW or ODSP, along with the corresponding OCB amounts. Notes on the following pages provide further detail.

OW	**OW – Previous**				**OW – As of July 2026**			
Family Type	Basic Needs	Max Shelter	Max OCB	**Total**	Basic Needs	Max Shelter	Max OCB	**Total**
Single	$343	$390	$0	$733.00	$343	$390	$0	$733.00
Single Parent - 1 child	$360	$642	$143.91	$1,145.91	$360	$642	$146.66	$1,148.66
Single Parent - 2 children	$360	$697	$287.82	$1,344.82	$360	$697	$293.32	$1,350.32
Couple	$494	$642	$0	$1,136.00	$494	$642	$0	$1,136.00
Couple - 1 child	$494	$697	$143.91	$1,334.91	$494	$697	$146.66	$1,337.66
Couple - 2 children	$494	$756	$287.82	$1,537.82	$494	$756	$293.32	$1,543.32
ODSP	**ODSP – Previous**				**ODSP – As of July 2026**			
Family Type	Basic Needs	Max Shelter	Max OCB	**Total**	Basic Needs	Max Shelter	Max OCB	**Total**
Single	$809	$599	$0	$1,408	$825	$611	$0	$1,436
Single Parent - 1 child	$952	$941	$143.91	$2,036.91	$968	$959	$146.66	$2,073.66
Single Parent - 2 children	$952	$1,018	$287.82	$2,257.82	$968	$1,038	$293.32	$2,299.32
Couple	$1,166	$941	$0	$2,107	$1,189	$959	$0	$2,148
Couple - 1 child	$1,166	$1,018	$143.91	$2,327.91	$1,189	$1,038	$146.66	$2,373.66
Couple - 2 children	$1,166	$1,105	$287.82	$2,558.82	$1,189	$1,126	$293.32	$2,608.32
Couple where both spouses are disabled	$1,613	$941	$0	Capped at $2,370	$1,644	$959	$0	Capped at $2,416

Ontario Works – Common Issues

Denial or Suspension of Benefits and Overpayments:

- Not reporting Income
- Assets over the prescribed limits
- Not Completed Limitations to Participation Forms
- Not submitted documentation requested – bank statements; business income and expenses statements etc.

ODSP – Common Issues

- **Denial of Disability Benefits**
- **Denial of Special Diet or Mandatory Special Needs (MSN) Benefits**
- **Suspensions and Overpayments**
  - Not reporting Income
  - Assets over the prescribed limits
  - Not Completed Limitations to Participation Forms
  - Not submitted documentation requested – bank statements; business income and expenses statements etc.

Disagreeing with a Decision

An individual has the right to ask for an internal review of a decision about social assistance that they do not agree with. For example, if:

- not eligible for social assistance, either from ODSP or Ontario Works
- found not to be a person with a disability for ODSP
- the individual disagrees with the amount of social assistance they receive
- social assistance payments have been stopped
- the amount of your social assistance payments has changed
- not eligible for a benefit
- the individual disagrees with other decisions on their case

Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D)

- The Canada Pension Plan Disability benefit is the largest long-term disability insurance program in Canada. It is designed to provide financial assistance to CPP contributors who are not able to work because of their disability.

Canada Pension Plan Disability

To qualify for a disability benefit under the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a disability must be both "severe" and "prolonged", and it must prevent you from being able to obtain work on a regular basis.

Severe means that you have a mental or physical disability that regularly stops you from doing any type of substantially gainful work.

Prolonged means that your disability is long-term and of indefinite duration or is likely to result in death.

How to apply for CPPD

Online through “My Service Canada Account”

By printing the paper application package (Form ISP -1151) from Service Canada Forms

Or if on OW or ODSP, you may be able to obtain application from your worker

A Medical Practitioner must complete part of the application

Canada Pension Plan Disability Issues

Legal Clinics provide advice and possible representation on denials of Canada Pension Plan and Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) appeals to the Social Security Tribunal.

The legal clinics may also provide assistance with other issues relating to CPP and CPPD matters.

Old Age Security (OAS)

The OAS program provides the basic OAS pension to seniors aged 65 and over who meet the legal status and residence requirements (minimum 10 years residency requirement);

the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) is another benefit offered to low-income OAS pensioners;

Spousal Supplement is available for low-income individuals aged 60 to 64 who are the spouses or common-law partners of GIS recipients, or who are widows or widowers.

GAINS (Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System), through the Ontario government.

Old Age Security (OAS) Matters/Issues

- Eligibility for Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Determining if individuals are getting the correct amount of benefits
- Legal clinics assist clients with OAS denials and overpayments

How to apply for OAS/GIS/ GAINS

For OAS, Service Canada automatically transfers the individual onto benefits, but for GIS there is a application that has to be completed with financial information to qualify

For GIS:

Online through “My Service Canada Account”

For GAINS, enrollment is automatic based on your tax return and federal pension benefits.

Disability Tax Credit

The disability tax credit (DTC) is a non-refundable tax credit that helps people with disabilities, or their supporting family member, reduce the amount of income tax they may have to pay.

Eligibility:

- If you have a severe and prolonged impairment, you may apply for the credit. If you are approved, you may claim the credit at tax time.

By reducing the amount of income tax you may have to pay, the DTC aims to offset some of the extra costs related to the impairment.

How to apply for DTC

Applications can be found using the “CRA My Account Digital Application” online

Or, can be mailed by printing Form T2201 from the CRA website

A Medical Practitioner must complete part of the application

Canada Disability Benefit (CDB)

- The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) is a federal program that provides monthly financial help to low-income, working-age Canadians with disabilities.
- Eligibility Requirements Disability Tax Credit (DTC):
  - You must be approved for the federal Disability Tax Credit to qualify for the CDB.
  - Must be between 18 to 64
  - Tax Filing: You (and your spouse or common-law partner, if applicable) must have filed your federal income tax return.
  - Residency: You must be a resident of Canada with valid status (citizen, permanent resident, temporary resident meeting specific duration rules, or registered under the Indian Act).
- Payment Amount:
  - Eligible individuals can receive up to $204 per month (or up to $2,450 per year), based on adjusted family net income.

How to apply for CDB

Online: Service Canada/Canada-disability-benefit/apply

By phone: Service Canada 1-833-486-3007

In person: by visiting a Service Canada office

Tax Clinics

- Free tax clinics are hosted by community organizations through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP). They are offered throughout Canada and are available to individuals who have a modest income and a simple tax situation.
- To be eligible to use the services of a free tax clinic, you must have both:
  - a modest income
  - a simple tax situation
- Suggested income thresholds (CRA)

Family size	Total family income
1 person	$40,000
2 people	$55,000
3 people	$60,000
4 people	$65,000
5 people	$70,000
More than 5 people	$70,000, plus $5,000 for each additional person

Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

- It provides an ongoing monthly credit directly on qualified consumers' electricity bills.
  - Eligibility:
    - Low income (combined household income)
    - Number of people living in the home

OESP credit amounts

Level of household income ($)	Number of people living in home						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38,000 or less	$45	$45	$51	$57	$63	$75	$75
38,001 – 54,000		$40	$45	$51	$57	$63	$75
54,001 – 65,000			$35	$40	$45	$51	$57
65,001 – 71,000					$35	$40	$45

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEAP)

- Program that assists with electricity or natural gas bill and face having services disconnected.
- Eligibility:
  - Low income (combined household income)
  - Number of people living in the home
  - Assistance is only available if behind on a bill – or in arrears – and may face having the service disconnected.
- Families who meet the eligibility criteria can get up to $650 in emergency assistance for electricity bills and $650 for natural gas bills

OTHER SOURCES

EI sickness benefits

WSIB

Trillium

DSO

Exceptional program (York region)

Health Canada drug program (special drugs not covered by other programs)

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)



Community Legal Clinic
of York Region

Clinique juridique communautaire
de la région de York

Contact Us

We are able to assist you by phone, email or in-person from 8:30-4:30 Mon – Fri (closed for lunch between 12:30-1:30)

Apply for Service: https://clcyr.on.ca/intake-form/

Telephone: (905) 508-5018

Toll Free: 1-888-365-5226

Fax: (905) 508-7539

Locations

South Office - Richmond Hill
21 Dunlop Street, Suite 200

North Office - Newmarket
25 Millard Avenue West, Suite 1D

Website: https://clcyr.on.ca/

Email for clients: client@clcyr.on.ca