

# LEGAL LEARNING

the basics we all should know



THE  
RIGHTS  
PROJECT



# Credits

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This toolkit was created in collaboration with the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association ([CMLA](#)), and the majority of legal information cited comes from the incredible resource, [Steps to Justice](#). This toolkit would not have been accomplishable without the hard work and knowledge of Maisah Syed, Nasra Eska, Jennifer Marston, Kumail Karimjee, and Sara Malik who wrote, verified, and edited the legal content featured in this document. You can see the specific sections they wrote and edited as you go through each page. We are endlessly grateful for them and the work that they do!

The beautiful artwork featured in this toolkit was created by the talented Arohi Sawant. She was able to capture the liveliness of Tkaronto so wonderfully. You can view her work [here](#).

# Introduction

As young people ourselves, we feel that it is a great injustice that accessing information about our rights is difficult. We believe that all young people and community members should possess confidence and strong familiarity with their rights, especially considering that those in positions of authority have used this lack of awareness to exploit their power. This toolkit aims to be all-encompassing, providing you with both detailed information and resources to learn further. It is written in plain language and features sections on Housing, Criminal, and Employment Law that would be relevant to you as students! It also provides details and contact information about a diverse array of Mental Health, Academic, Financial, and Legal resources. It is your right to be informed about your legally binding entitlements, just as much as it is your duty to care for fellow members of our world. We hope that this toolkit equips you with knowledge and information that will support you in speaking out and taking action when you witness injustice. We also hope that it will provide you with the tools you require if you are in need of assistance.

# Land Acknowledgments

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## **Sumaya Nur - Executive Director**

In the late 90s, my mother and father migrated to Turtle Island as refugees due to the civil war that was occurring in Somalia. With both of them being in their early twenties with two young children, they came here in search of a better future, however, in this search for their future they asked permission to be here from the wrong people. As with many African nations, Somalia is no stranger to the everlasting effects of colonialism. Being Somali in this land, I cannot ignore the history of Indigenous peoples with colonialism and the vital need for reconciliation in the current settler-colonial states. The country that we are currently in is a product of settler colonialism; the removal and erasure of Indigenous peoples, in order to take the land for use by settlers, leaves everlasting trauma and displacement. We must also recognize that many of the Black people that are currently inhabiting this land are not settlers by choice, rather they were stolen from their native land and brought here as a product of the transatlantic Slave trade. I hope we are able to recognize and strive to halt the actions or practices we partake in that are complicit with colonialism. The land that I am currently situated on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I acknowledge that Tkaronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

## **Kyla Platsis - Director of Outreach**

I would like to acknowledge that I am situated on the unceded land of the Huron-Wendat, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinabek nations. I am of Greek descent on both my paternal and maternal lineages, but I was born on Turtle Island. My family courageously immigrated here in the 50s and 60s in the hopes of providing greater opportunities to their children after living through devastating wars and economic hardship in Greece. I take a lot of pride in my family and my identity. The sole reason my family was able to relocate here, however, came out of cultural destruction, genocide, and land theft inflicted by white colonizers. While my family did face many struggles and challenges as immigrants on Turtle Island, their whiteness afforded them privileges that many did not have access to. My being European and white means that I am able to benefit from the settler-colonial agenda that aimed to assert white supremacy and Eurocentrism. That being said, I hold a particular responsibility as a settler to trouble whiteness and Eurocentrism where it manifests, as well as amplify and center the voices of Indigenous communities until land reclamation is achieved. I am profoundly grateful to the Indigenous nations that exist on Turtle Island for their care over this land that gave my family a home. My own contributions to this toolkit are a part of this commitment I have made to do my part to achieve a more just and equitable world.

## **Muna Nur - Director of Operations**

I want to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. My parents came to Turtle Island in the 1990s escaping the dire situation of an ongoing civil war, in Somalia. This conflict has been ongoing for the past 30 years. In the process of reflecting on my family history, it is essential that I reflect on and understand the history of Indigenous peoples in Turtle Island and how they have been impacted by colonialism and genocide. I stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. I am thankful for the work I have the privilege of doing with The Rights Project and the people this community brings together.

## **Sanjana Singh - Program Director**

I was born on Turtle Island on the traditional territory of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen First Nations. My mother immigrated here from India in 1997; and similar to many of our parents, she left her home in search of a better life. The land I currently reside on is the unceded land of the Huron-Wendat, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinabek nations. I would also like to acknowledge that Tkaronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. The so-called Canadian state continues to displace and enact violence against Indigenous peoples and communities through the ongoing processes of settler colonialism. As a settler accomplice on this land, it is my responsibility to be in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and to advocate for the increased consciousness of the importance of Indigenous rights and sovereignty. As a non-Indigenous person on this land, it is my responsibility to center and uphold Indigenous voices and work in order to collectively work towards decolonization.

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# Employment Law

This section was written by Maisah Syed and edited by Kumail Karimjee

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## Employment Standards Act

### **What is the Employment Standards Act (ESA)?**

The 2000 ESA regulates most employment relationships in the province of Ontario. The Act sets out the minimum standards that employers and employees must follow. With a few exceptions, the ESA applies to most workers in Ontario including full-time workers, part-time workers and temporary agency workers.

Employees and employers cannot contract out of ESA standards.

Key protections under the ESA include:

- Notice of termination/termination pay and severance pay
- Hours of work, eating periods, rest periods
- Payment of wages
- Minimum wages, overtime wages
- Vacation and statutory holidays
- Tips and gratuities
- Leaves of absence
- Equal pay for equal work

You can find more details on additional protections and specific provisions under the ESA [here](#).

### **Who is not covered by the ESA?**

The ESA does not apply to certain individuals and the persons or organizations they work for including:

- Individuals working under certain programs approved by a college of applied arts and technology or university
- A secondary school student who performs work under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled
- Independent contractors
- Young offenders who perform work as part of a sentence or order of a court
- Workplaces that are in sectors that fall under the Federal jurisdiction (ie. airlines, post-offices, radio), however, the federal Canada Labour Code would apply

Employers are prohibited from misclassifying employees as independent contractors, interns, volunteers or any other type of worker not covered by the ESA. If an employer misclassifies an employee, an employment standards officer can order the employer to comply with the ESA, issue a notice of contravention and/or prosecute the employer. An employee improperly classified as an independent contractor may be able to claim ESA entitlements retroactively for wages such as overtime pay or vacation.

## Employment Contracts

### **Do you have a valid and enforceable employment contract?**

For the contract to be valid and enforceable, it must meet some basic conditions. At the most fundamental level:

- There must have been an offer and acceptance of the contract
- The contract and its terms must not be unconscionable or illegal
- There must be “consideration” (some benefit for each of the parties) for entering into the contract

## **Does an employment contract need to be written?**

Although preferable for the protection of both parties, a contract of employment need not be in written form. Terms can be made by express or implied oral agreement and even through the conduct of the parties.

## **Can an employment contract be changed?**

Although usually signed at the start of the relationship, the employment contract is not necessarily frozen in time. Instead, it often evolves after the initial hiring has occurred. New and modified terms of a contract can occur where an employee has been with an employer for a long period of time and where there have been changes such as promotions, organizational restructuring, increases in remuneration and other factors, which have been mutually agreed to, either expressly or by the parties' conduct.

## **What are the key employment contract clauses to look out for?**

### **i) Termination clauses**

The purpose of a termination clause in an employment contract is to rebut the legal presumption that the employee will be provided with common law notice and replace that entitlement with another notice period that has been agreed to by the parties. The termination clause will typically provide the employee with either a fixed notice period or a formula for calculating the notice period based on the employee's years of service. The termination clause will also specify what benefits and variable compensation (in addition to base salary) will be continued during the notice period.

It is now common for employers to insert termination clauses into their employment contracts to reduce their cost of terminating the employment of their employees. A termination clause will not be enforced by a court unless it provides the employee with at least the minimum statutory entitlements upon dismissal as required by the ESA. Termination clauses are often held to be unenforceable resulting in employees often being entitled to more notice or severance than provided for in a written employment contract.

### **ii) Restrictive Covenants**

Some employment contracts contain clauses that restrict an employee's actions both during and after the period of employment. These clauses serve to safeguard the employer's business interests and commonly include non-solicitation, non-competition and confidentiality clauses. These clauses may vary in their scope and length of enforcement. A duty of confidentiality typically exists even if a written contractual term is in place.

However, non-solicitation and non-competition clauses are often viewed unfavorably by the courts. Courts are very reluctant to enforce clauses that may prohibit an employee from finding a new job and earning income. A carefully and narrowly drafted non-solicitation clause may be enforceable if certain conditions are met. For example, the restriction is only as broad as is reasonably necessary to protect the employer's legitimate, proprietary interests. Non-competition clauses that say that an employee cannot go to work for a competing company, other than for employees in fairly senior roles, are usually not enforceable.

## **Employment Contract Termination**

### **What are the different situations in which an employment contract can be terminated?**

**Wrongful dismissal:** An employee is wrongfully dismissed when an employer terminates the employee without sufficient notice of termination, or a fair payment in lieu of notice. What is most often disputed in these cases is the amount of notice or pay in lieu of notice that an employee is entitled to. There are a number of factors to be considered including an employee's salary, age, tenure as well as minimum entitlements under the ESA.

**Constructive Dismissal:** This is when an employee decides to resign from their employment because the fundamental terms of employment have been significantly changed by their employer (ie. significant change in hours or duties) or because their employer created or allowed for the creation of a hostile or toxic work environment. In these circumstances, the law allows employees to leave from their job and make a wrongful



dismissal claim.

**Termination for cause:** This is considered the capital punishment of employment law. It is reserved for the most serious workplace misconduct such as dishonesty, insubordination, assault or theft. If an employee is terminated for cause, they are not entitled to common notice of termination or severance pay. To avoid paying ESA notice, an employer would have to show willful misconduct that has not been condoned which is an even higher standard than common law just cause.

- Under the common law, the employer typically has a duty to provide the employee with a warning and a reasonable opportunity to improve before resorting to dismissal. Generally, the greater the wrong, the less likely it will be that an employer will have a duty to warn. The requirement to warn an employee may not apply at all where the most serious misconduct is involved.
- Additionally, where an employer has knowledge of misconduct amounting to just cause for dismissal but continues to employ the employee for a considerable time, the employer cannot rely on the same conduct to justify dismissal as the employer may be considered to have condoned the misconduct.

**Probationary periods:** A probationary period refers to the period that employers utilize to evaluate whether a new employee has the needed skills and abilities for a job. Probationary periods generally end once an employee has worked three months, but could be longer.

- New employees are only on probation if they agree to it before being hired.
- Employers often include contract language allowing termination of an employee during a probationary period (before the three month mark) without providing any notice or pay in lieu – such a clause must be specifically contracted for and will not be implied.
- If the parties have agreed to a probationary period longer than three months, employers must provide at least the ESA minimum notice or pay in lieu if they terminate the employee without cause at or after three months during this period.

**Frustration:** Frustration of an employment contract occurs when the continued performance of the contract becomes impossible or would be radically different because of a dramatic change in circumstances. This typically arises when a worker is away from work for an extended period of time and is unlikely to return.

- Where an employment contract is frustrated, the employee is not owed common law notice or pay in lieu of notice. However, if frustration is the result of an injury or illness, the employer does owe the employee their minimum termination and severance entitlements under the ESA.
- If there is a way that an employee off work due to disability could return to work with accommodation, their employment cannot be deemed frustrated unless and until the employer can show that it made every reasonable effort to accommodate the employee's disability to the point of undue hardship.

**Resignation:** An employee who intends to resign must provide their employer with reasonable notice of resignation. What is reasonable depends on the circumstances. Other than for senior positions, two to three weeks is typical. If the employee does not provide the employer with sufficient notice of resignation, the employee may be liable to pay the employer damages for failing to give reasonable notice. Such claims are extremely rare.

Employee resignations must be both:

- **Free and voluntary.** For example, if an employee resigns in the heat of the moment, in circumstances when the employee is angry, upset, or under stress, the resignation may not be voluntary.
- **Clear and unequivocal.** Whether the employee's words or actions amounted to an intention to resign is determined contextually. A court will consider the surrounding circumstances.

If an employer forces an employee to resign, the employee will have been terminated from his or her employment and will be entitled to termination and severance pay.

In some cases, an employee who has resigned is entitled to "resile" from the resignation and return to work provided that the employer has not relied upon the resignation to its detriment.

**Mass termination:** This is when 50 or more employees are terminated at an employer's establishment within a four-week period. If you have been dismissed in a mass termination, there are special rules relating to notice of termination whereas your right to severance pay remains the same. Specifically, if you are terminated as part of a mass termination, the notice period depends on the number of employees who have been laid off. For example,

if 50-199 employees are terminated, you are entitled to 8 weeks of notice.

## **The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)**

### **What is the Ontario Human Rights Code?**

The Ontario Human Rights Code is a statute that guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination in specific social areas such as employment.

Section 5(1) of the OHRC states that every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination or harassment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability.

Human rights applications can be filed against employers as well as unions

### **What are the rights protected under the Human Rights Code?**

The right to “equal treatment with respect to employment” covers every aspect of the workplace environment and employment relationship, including job applications, recruitment, training, transfers, promotions, apprenticeship terms, dismissal and layoffs. It also covers rate of pay, overtime, hours of work, holidays, benefits, shift work, discipline and performance evaluations.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination refers to differential treatment, denial of a benefit, exclusion, imposition of obligations or a disadvantage, etc. because of a characteristic or perceived characteristic that is protected under the Code. Discrimination can occur in many different forms. For example:

- Direct discrimination ie. hiring practices based on gender or race
- Constructive discrimination ie. neutral policies that can have a discriminatory effect (for example, employees with facial hair must be clean shaven)

**Harassment:** Harassment refers to comments or actions that are unwelcome to you or should be known to be unwelcome. Harassment requires a “course of conduct,” which means that a pattern of behaviour or more than one incident is usually needed.

There are specific provisions in the OHRC that expressly prohibit **sexual harassment and solicitation:**

- Section 7 (2) Every person who is an employee has a right to freedom from harassment in the workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression by his or her employer or agent of the employer or by another employee
- Section 7 (3) Every person has a right to be free from,
  - a sexual solicitation or advance made by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the person where the person making the solicitation or advance knows or ought reasonably to know that it is unwelcome; or
  - a reprisal or a threat of reprisal for the rejection of a sexual solicitation or advance where the reprisal is made or threatened by a person in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the person

**Duty to Accommodate:** Employers have a legal obligation to adjust rules, policies or practices to enable individuals to participate fully in the workplace. It applies to needs that are related to all of the grounds of discrimination. For example, an employer can accommodate an employee by allowing them to take off time to attend a medical appointment or for religious holidays.

## **Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)**

### **What is the Occupational Health and Safety Act?**

The purpose of the OHSA is to protect workers against hazards on the job. Employees and employers have rights and responsibilities under OHSA.

## **What are the Responsibilities of employers under OHSA?**

An employer must:

- Establish and maintain a Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), or cause workers to select at least one health and safety representative.
  - A joint health and safety committee (JHSC) is composed of worker and employer representatives. Together, they should be mutually committed to improving health and safety conditions in the workplace. Committees identify potential health and safety issues and bring them to the employer's attention and must be kept informed of health and safety developments in the workplace by the employer. As well, a designated worker member of the committee inspects the workplace at least once a month.
- Take every reasonable precaution to ensure the workplace is safe.
- Train employees about any potential hazards and in how to safely use, handle, store and dispose of hazardous substances and how to handle emergencies.
- Make sure workers know how to use and handle the equipment safely and properly.
- Make sure workers use any necessary personal protective equipment.
- Immediately report all critical injuries to the government department responsible for OH&S.
- Appoint a competent supervisor who sets the standards for performance, and who ensures safe working conditions are always observed.

## **What are the Rights and responsibilities of employees under OHSA?**

Employees have the following three basic rights:

- Right to refuse unsafe work.
- Right to participate in the workplace health and safety activities through the JHSC or as a worker health and safety representative.
- Right to know, or the right to be informed about, actual and potential dangers in the workplace.

Employees' responsibilities include the following:

- Work in compliance with OHSA and regulations
- Use personal protective equipment and clothing as directed by the employer.
- Report workplace hazards and dangers to the supervisor or employer.
- Work in a safe manner as required by the employer and use the prescribed safety equipment.
- Tell the supervisor or employer about any missing or defective equipment or protective device that may be dangerous.

## **What are the Responsibilities of managers/supervisors under OHSA?**

Managers and supervisors act on behalf of the employer, and hence have the responsibility to meet the duties of the employer as specified in the Act for the work they direct.

## **Who is protected from reprisals?**

Under section 50 of the OHSA, workers are protected from reprisals such as suspension, threats of firing, penalties or intimidation when they exercise a right or responsibility under OHSA.

## **Who is required to investigate complaints and incidents?**

Under section 32.0.7 (1)(a) of the OHSA, employers are required to conduct an investigation into incidents and complaints of workplace harassment including sexual harassment that is appropriate in the circumstances.

## **Employment Insurance**

### **What is employment insurance?**

Employment Insurance (EI) is an unemployment insurance program in Canada that allows individuals who have recently lost a job to receive temporary financial assistance. Employment insurance can also be extended to individuals who are unable to work because of illness or who are caring for a young child or a seriously ill family

member. In addition to financial assistance, the program assists the unemployed with job search services.

To learn more about whether you are eligible for EI and to apply online, click [here](#).

Employers may also provide you short-term and long-term disability benefits.

## **The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)**

### **What is The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board?**

The **WSIB** is the workplace compensation board for provincially regulated workplaces in Ontario. **Workers** injured in a workplace accident are entitled to receive benefits paid out by the WSIB, including healthcare coverage and loss of earnings benefits. The WSIB can also assist both employers and workers when it's time for an injured employee to return to work.

You can learn more about the WSIB or submit a claim [here](#).

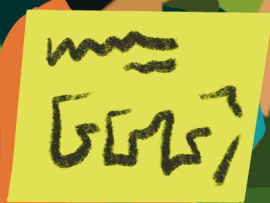
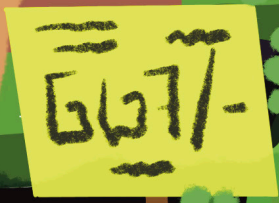
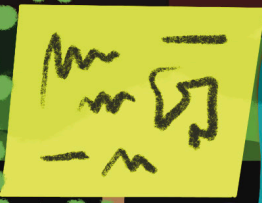
## **Unionized Workers**

### **What is the Ontario Labour Relations Act?**

**The Ontario Labour Relations Act (OLRA)** governs the relationship between unions and employers in some Ontario workplaces. Among other things, it covers the process for bringing a union into a workplace (organizing) and negotiating a collective agreement. A collective agreement is a written contract negotiated through collective bargaining for employees by one or more unions with the management of a company (or with an employers' association) that regulates the terms and conditions of employees at work.

Employees who are governed by a collective agreement should seek assistance for any employment relations matters through their union. Unions owe each of their members a duty of fair representation.

The duty of fair representation requires a union to treat bargaining unit members fairly and honestly, in a manner that is not arbitrary, discriminatory or in bad faith.



# Criminal Law

This section was written by Nasra Eska and edited by Sara Malik

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## **What are my rights – if stopped by the police on the street?**

### **Do I have to stop if the police randomly approach me on the street?**

NO. Unless you are arrested or detained.

The police in Canada do not have the legal right to randomly stop you and demand for you to remain with them, unless they have reasonable grounds to do so. The only way in which they can force you to stop is if you are detained or arrested.

In the context of detention, reasonable grounds means reasonable grounds to suspect, which is synonymous with reasonable suspicion. A reasonable suspicion means something more than a mere suspicion and something less than a belief based upon reasonable and probably ground, the latter is required for an arrest.

A quick way to determine if you are detained or arrested is simply asking: “am I free to leave?” or “am I being arrested or detained?”. If the answer is no, then you are free to leave the situation. You would not be obligated to speak or comply and can continue on your way.

### **Do I have to answer questions the police ask me if I am stopped?**

NO. This also applies if you are arrested or detained.

When questioned by police on the street, you are not obligated to speak or answer any questions they may ask. This applies to whether you are randomly stopped on the street, if you are detained by police, or even when you are arrested. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides all citizens the right to remain silent, this is a right which is protected for you under the Canadian Constitution. Regardless of what the police say, you cannot be punished by exercising this right.

### **Are the police allowed to physically search me or my property when approached on the street?**

NO. Unless you are arrested or detained.

Unless you are detained or arrested, the police cannot arbitrarily search you or your property on the street. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides you with this constitutional right against unreasonable searches. The exceptions to this would be in circumstances where:

- the police reasonably believe there is an imminent danger
- the police reasonably believe you are in possession of drugs
- if the police see you commit a crime
- if you have given voluntary consent

However, if you are detained or arrested, then the police could have the authority to search you and your belongings. If you are unsure if you are detained or arrested, make sure to clearly ask “am I being arrested or detained?” before allowing the police to conduct a search.

### **What about street checks?**

Street checks, also known as carding, is a tactic used by police to stop and question you on the street, sometimes also requiring you to demonstrate your ID. If you are stopped for a street check, the police are not allowed to randomly or arbitrarily require you to stop and show your ID.

As of January 2017, the Ontario government has established guidelines as to when police are able to stop individuals for street checks. These requirements include:

- Have a reasonable reason not related to race, high-crime neighborhoods, refusal to speak, etc.
- Must give you a reason why they are requesting your ID
- Must tell you that you are allowed to refuse to show your ID
- Provide you with a receipt with officer's name and badge number
- Provide you with information on who to contact to access personal information about you the police service has on file, and how to contact the Office of the Independent Police Review Director that handles complaints about the police in Ontario
- Keep detailed records of their interactions with you

### **Am I allowed to photograph or record video of my police interactions on the street?**

YES. There is no law in Canada against taking video or photos of your interactions with police when in a public place.

However, the police may ask you to move out of the way if you are interfering with their investigation. Obstructing an officer, stopping an arrest, destroying evidence, or interference with a police officer's ability to execute their duties can lead to a criminal charge. But if you are simply recording and not interfering with police conduct, you are free to photograph or record video of these interactions.

When recording police interactions try to make sure the video is as recognizable as possible, with getting clear visuals of things such as badge numbers or street addresses. The more detailed your video evidence, the better.

### **What are my rights - when detained OR when arrested?**

#### **When can the police detain me?**

The police are able to detain you if they reasonably believe that you are connected to a crime. This belief must be proven based on unprejudiced and reasonable grounds. This means the police cannot forcefully detain you if they just have a hunch or instinct that you might have committed a crime, their reasoning needs to be objectively reasonable. This could include instances such as if the police reasonably believe you are an imminent danger.

Although, if you are detained (but not arrested), the length of your detainment must also be reasonable and based on the circumstances. Otherwise, this detention would be considered arbitrary.

#### **Do I have to be told why I am being detained**

The police must tell you why you are being detained and the reasonable grounds as to why they believe you need to be obtained. This right is protected for you under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This must be explained to you in a way that makes you fully understand the extent of the circumstances of your detainment. These reasons need to also be explained to you in clear and simple language that any reasonable person could understand. **If you are unsure if you are detained, make sure to ask!**

#### **If I am detained, can the police search me and my property?**

YES. The police do have some powers of search if they have reasonably detained you. This limited search power includes searches such as protective pat downs to ensure you do not have any weapons. However, these pat downs cannot be invasive and can include searches through your pockets, bags, or other private belongings. As long as these pat downs are general frisks outside of your clothes, these are generally considered reasonable.

#### **When can the police arrest me?**

If the police arrest you, the grounds in which they arrest you need to be much stronger than if you are detained. This can include circumstances such as if the police actually see you commit a crime, if they have reasonable and probable grounds to believe you committed an offence, or if they have a signed warrant.

If arrested, the police must formally take you into custody, at times handcuffed. You can find more information on why you may be arrested and what to do if this happens, [here](#).

## **Do I have to be told why I am being detained?**

YES. Similar to when you are detained, the police must, in clear language, explain to you why you are being arrested. This reasoning must also be explained to you promptly at your arrest. If you are unsure if you are arrested, make sure to ask!

## **If I am arrested, can the police search me and my property?**

YES. The police have greater powers of search if you are arrested than if you are detained. These search powers go beyond just pat-downs, and they are able to search in your pockets, bags, or other possessions.

Searches through your cellphone could also be allowed, however this is not universal to all arrest and is based on if the search is justifiable to the reason of the arrest.

## **Can I remain silent if I am detained or arrested?**

YES. You are under no obligation to speak to the police when you are either detained or arrested. This is a right protected for you under the Charter.

However, this right does not necessarily stop the police from asking you questions. It is important for you to keep in mind that you can continue to remain silent despite how many questions or interrogation tactics the police may ask of you. Simply just say “I want to talk to my lawyer” and the police should at that point ensure that you are in contact or assist in getting you in contact with a lawyer.

## **What are my rights – if the police come to my home?**

### **Are the police allowed to enter my home without my permission?**

Generally, the police could knock on your door and ask you questions, however you are not required to answer any questions or allow access to your home without permission. There are limited circumstances where the police are legally allowed to enter your home. These circumstances include:

- If the police have a search warrant
- If the police have a warrant to enter your home for an arrest
- If the police have been given consent from you or someone else in authority in your home
- If the police **reasonably believe there are urgent circumstances** that require the police to enter your home

### **What are the ‘urgent circumstances’ that would allow police to enter my home without my permission?**

Section 529.3(2) of the Criminal Code defines “exigent circumstances” to include circumstances where:

- there are reasonable grounds to suspect that entry is necessary to prevent imminent bodily harm or death to any person; or
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that evidence relating to the commission of an indictable offence is present in the dwelling-house and entry is necessary to prevent the imminent loss or destruction of the evidence.

Examples of situations which would be considered as urgent circumstances are:

- If there is a 911 call made in your home and the police need to enter to prevent death or serious injury.
- If the police believe someone’s health is in jeopardy in your home and requires emergency services.
- If someone in your home has reported a domestic assault and requires their belongings to be collected.
- If police believe there is a drug site and there is suspected harm.

### **What happens if the police have a search warrant?**

If the police come to your home with a warrant, they are required to identify themselves and let you know they have a search warrant for your home. If they do not show you the warrant, make sure to ask as the police are generally required to show you a copy of the warrant. When looking at the search warrant, make sure information such as your name and address are correct. Also, make sure to check if there are any time limits on the warrant.



During their search the police may take some of your items. The police are allowed to confiscate any illegal items that you are not allowed to have in your home, such as drugs or weapons. Any other items that belong to you may also be taken by police, but they are required to return these items back to you at a reasonable time. There are expectations for this, so it is best to speak to a lawyer for further details.

### **What if the police damage my home/property in the process of their search?**

The police are required to act reasonably when they are conducting a search in a home. They cannot unreasonably damage or roughly conduct a search with excessive force for no reason.

### **What are my rights – if stopped by the police in my vehicle?**

#### **What circumstances can the police legitimately require me to pull over?**

The police's powers to stop vehicles are governed by the Highway Traffic Act. These regulations can tend to be wider than other police detentions as driving is considered a privilege. When driving, the police are able to stop you at any time if they suspect potential alcohol/drug use, expired car insurance, or if the car seems mechanically unfit. Of course, if you have been in a vehicle accident or suspected traffic violation the police are legally able to require you to stop as well.

#### **If I am pulled over, do I have to present my identification?**

YES. Whenever you are pulled over, you are required by law to present your:

- Valid driver's license
- Car registration
- Car insurance

Failure to provide these documents when pulled over may result in you being charged with an offence.

#### **Can the police legally require me to take a breathalyzer/sobriety test?**

YES. If the police have any reasonable suspicions that a driver is under the influence of alcohol/drugs, they have the power to require you to take a roadside breathalyzer or sobriety test on the spot. In instances like these you would not have the right to remain silent and you will be required to take these tests or face being charged with an offence. If asked to take such a test, you also will NOT have the right to speak to a lawyer prior to taking the test.

#### **What if I am just a passenger and not a driver?**

The police do not have the same powers with passengers as they do with drivers of the vehicle. Similar to ordinary detention, unless the police have reasonable grounds to suspect that you committed a criminal offence you are not required to speak or present any identification to an officer. You can learn more about your rights if you are stopped when driving here.

### **What are my rights as an indigenous person in youth criminal court?**

If you identify as Indigenous, you have the same rights as other young people who have been charged with a crime, plus other rights and options.

There are many ways people who are members of Inuit, status and non-status First Nations, and Metis communities self-identify. For the purposes of this toolkit the term Indigenous is used to refer to members of these communities.

#### **How does someone identify as Indigenous?**

Self-identification means that based on you and your family's lived experience or history, you describe yourself as Indigenous, Aboriginal, Métis, First Nations, or Inuit. You don't need any government documents, records, or anything "official" to prove you're Indigenous. And you don't have to have a status card or prove that you're connected to an Indigenous community. If you identify as Indigenous, it doesn't matter if you live on or off reserve.

You can identify as Indigenous even if you were adopted into a non-Indigenous family or if you live in a non-Indigenous home, including a foster home or a group home.

### **What are the rights and options you have as an Indigenous person?**

- The right to have your Indigenous identity and circumstances considered at a bail hearing.
- The right to have your Indigenous identity and circumstances considered at a sentencing hearing.
- The option to participate in Indigenous Peoples Court, also called “Gladue court”.
- The option to participate in Indigenous diversion instead of court, where available.
- These rights and options apply to all Indigenous people. It doesn’t matter if you’re a youth or an adult.

### **What is Indigenous court or Gladue court?**

Gladue Court is a special court for people charged with a crime and who self-identify as Indigenous.

Gladue Court is also called Indigenous Peoples Court. These are Canadian courts that apply Canadian law. They often try to incorporate Indigenous cultural practices and understandings of justice. For example, a Gladue Court might start with a smudging ceremony or have Elders or Knowledge Keepers start with a song or prayer. Some courthouses have only one day or a few days that Gladue Court is available each week. But every court must apply the Gladue principles even if it’s not a Gladue Court.

This means at sentencing hearings, all alternatives to jail must be considered before a jail sentence is given. Jail is a last resort. And when a jail sentence is given, the court must apply Gladue principles to the length of the sentence. And in Ontario, at bail hearings, all types of releases must be considered. Detention, or holding an accused without bail, is a last resort.

### **Who should know that you are Indigenous?**

Once the court is aware of your Indigenous identity, you can exercise your rights as an Indigenous person. These people may include:

- the judge
- the Crown
- prosecutor
- your lawyer
- duty counsel
- other court workers

Sometimes people dealing with your case may ask you if you’re Indigenous. But most of the time it’s up to you to let them know about your Indigenous identity. Sharing information about your personal background might make you feel uncomfortable. But sharing this information can help the court understand your circumstances and the challenges you’ve faced. You can tell your lawyer what you’re comfortable sharing.

### **What are the available Indigenous diversions?**

Telling the court about your Indigenous identity may allow you to access special Indigenous diversion programs. Indigenous diversion is only available in some courts. Indigenous diversion is a voluntary way to resolve minor criminal charges without going to trial or pleading guilty. You’re taken out of the criminal justice system and your case is dealt with by an Indigenous organization or community. Indigenous diversion programs are designed to respond to your needs as an Indigenous person in a respectful way. It uses indigenous justice principles to help you take responsibility, and to heal and repair harm.

Talk to your lawyer or duty counsel, or to the Indigenous court worker about Indigenous diversion. It’s possible to enter into diversion from custody and not go for bail.

### **What are your options for bail?**

Telling the court about your Indigenous identity may allow you to get help from an Indigenous court worker if they are available at the court. The Indigenous court worker can help you to make a release plan.

If there is no Indigenous court worker, someone from an Indigenous organization or Bail Program might also be able to meet with you in custody to help you make a release plan.

The purpose of the release plan is to outline the community resources that are available to you while you're on bail waiting for your trial, and to give details about where you will be living. For example, the plan might suggest Indigenous supports for mental health, trauma, addictions, or homelessness. It might also include suggestions for participation in cultural activities.

Your lawyer or duty counsel can use your release plan to negotiate with the Crown. With a good release plan, the Crown might agree to release you without a bail hearing.

If the Crown won't agree to your release, you will have a bail hearing instead. Your lawyer or duty counsel can present your release plan at your bail hearing to try to convince the court to release you.

Ask your lawyer or duty counsel for a referral to the Indigenous court worker.

### **What is a Gladue Report?**

A Gladue Report is a report about your identity and background as an Indigenous person. It usually also includes information about the types of traditional methods for healing in your community and the support and services available to you. If you're found guilty, Gladue Reports are particularly important during sentencing. In many places, Gladue Reports are usually ordered only when the Crown is seeking a jail sentence. The Gladue Report is usually prepared by a Gladue writer who will meet with you to ask you questions about your life and your community.

The Gladue Report will have information about you including things like:

- Where you live and grew up, on reserve or off reserve
- Who raised you, for example, your parents, other family members, or foster parents
- Your current family status
- Whether anyone in your family went to a residential school
- How racism affected your life
- Whether you or any family members experienced abuse or violence
- Whether you or any family members suffer from alcohol or drug abuse
- Whether you experienced mental health issues or medical issues, and if you responded to treatment
- Your educational goals
- Your connections with your Indigenous community
- The Report will have information about sentencing options, and it may recommend one of those options. It may also include suggestions for community supports to help your rehabilitation.

If there is any information in your Gladue Report that is sensitive or private, tell your lawyer. They can ask the judge not to read that information out loud in court.

**Organizations such as Indigenous agencies and Indigenous friendship centers have useful services, supports, and resources. They may have programs, courses, counseling, and other options available for you to help deal with your charges, such as Indigenous diversion or alternative sentencing options.**

**They may also be able to help you with housing, health services, mental health, and education. For help locating an organization near you, contact the Indigenous court worker at your courthouse, if there is one.**

### **What are my rights – when protesting?**

#### **Where am I allowed to protest? Do I always need a permit?**

Protestors are allowed to protest on any form of public property, provided that they do so peacefully. However, there are a few exceptions to essential transport routes. Peaceful protests on public property also do not require a permit. Although there may be public areas which do have noise restrictions, which in those situations may require protestors to [give notice prior to their protest](#).

## **Do I need to speak to police if approached while protesting? Do I need to show identification?**

Similar to when stopped on the street, you have the right to silence if the police randomly stop you while peacefully protesting. Unless they have lawfully detained or arrested you, you are not obligated to speak to an officer. You are also not required to present any identification unless the police have reasonable suspicion to suspect that you have committed a criminal offence.

## **What are my rights - if I want to make a complaint about the police?**

### **What if I want to make a complaint about my experience with the police?**

A person can make a complaint to the police regarding their services, officer's conduct, or instances of abuse of power. In most cases, you also do not have to be the direct victim of the misconduct you are complaining about. Complaints can be submitted in various ways, based on the degree of your complaint.

[To make a complaint](#) about an officer's conduct or police service, they can pursue a Local Resolution. This occurs when an individual can take their complaint directly to the police station and speak to an officer there to mediate their concern. Under this type of resolution, the police station must address the complainant within 30 days of the incident.

However, if your complaint is much more serious, individuals are able to submit a formal complaint to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (ORPRD). This is the office which handles complaints about provincial and municipal police conduct and services. You do not have to be a Canadian citizen to submit a complaint with ORPRD, however anonymous complaints are not accepted. These kinds of complaints are also expected to be submitted within 6 months from the date of the incident. For more information on how to submit a complaint, click [here](#).



ST LAWRENCE MARKET.



# Housing Law

This section was written by Muna Nur, Sumaya Nur, Kyla Platsis, and Sanjana Singh and edited by Jennifer Marston

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Ontario laws include essential laws for almost all rental agreements whether they are included in the rental agreement from your landlord or not.

**Important:** The laws described here only apply to people who rent a whole unit or live in a boarding house with other tenants only. Different rules may apply if:

- you share a kitchen or bathroom with the landlord or a member of the landlord's family
- you don't have an agreement with the landlord directly, but instead pay rent to someone else (like a roommate) who has an agreement with the landlord
- you live in a student residence run by a college or university
- Renting a new place

What can be agreed upon by you and your landlord in your rental agreement:

- Rent price
- Additional services included
- Move-in date
- Lease expiration date (Important: you do not have to move out when the lease expires – your tenancy automatically turns into a “month-to-month” tenancy)

On or after April 30, 2018, most tenancy agreements must be on the government's standard lease form. The form covers everything that the law requires in a lease agreement, as well as space for you and your landlord to agree on anything else.

**Always ensure a written agreement in case you ever need to prove your case. Having the terms in writing is beneficial to both parties.**

What cannot be included in your rental agreement:

- No-pets clauses (unless you rent a condominium with bylaws that prohibit pets)
- Fines for paying your rent late or violating the landlord's rules
- Bans on visitors, overnight guests, or roommates
- Additional fees if you have children, pets, or visitors
- Requirement for post-dated cheques or a damage deposit
- Making you responsible for standard repairs or maintenance

Terms that are always included in rental agreements:

- You have the right to live in your place as long as you want, unless your landlord has a legal reason to evict you.
- You have the right to treat your place as your home, which includes the right to privacy and the right to have guests and roommates stay with you.
- If your building or complex has more than one rental unit, you also have the right to use the common areas. Common areas include things like hallways, elevators, driveways, lobbies, and grounds.
- Your landlord is responsible for maintenance and repairs, unless you cause serious damage beyond regular wear-and-tear, and must follow all the laws about housing standards.
- Your landlord must follow the legal rules about raising your rent.

**What information is your landlord allowed to ask you for when applying for a lease?**

What your landlord can ask for:

- Your income
- Employment related questions including where you work
- How many people will be living with you
- The names of people who will be living with you
- If you have pets

- If you smoke
- Permission to do a credit check
- References from past landlords
- In some cases, if you have a guarantor or co-signer

### **What deposits are you required to pay?**

- Rent deposit
- Key deposit

On a yearly or month-to-month rental, a [rent deposit](#) (or security deposit) cannot exceed one month's rent, or one week's payment on a weekly rental. The deposit must be applied to your final rental period. It can't be utilized for things like damage or other expenses.

A [key deposit](#) must not exceed the cost of replacing the keys. The landlord must reimburse your deposit if you return the keys when you move out. (The landlord can charge you for the cost of making the extra keys, fobs, entry cards, etc.)

Rent increases

### **How much is your rent legally allowed to increase?**

Your landlord can typically only increase your rent by whatever percentage is stated in the "guideline". The "guideline" is a set percentage decided by the government every August that comes into effect the next calendar year. For example, the guideline amount for 2022 is 1.2%. This means that if your rent was \$1000 in 2021, it can be increased to no more than \$1012 in 2022.

### **Does the rent increase "guideline" apply to you?**

The rent increase "guideline" applies to most rental apartments, but there are some exceptions:

- You do not fall under the "guideline" if you live in a subsidized unit, because there are different rules about rent increases for subsidized units. Typically, your rent in these spaces is based on the size of your family and household income.
- New apartments that were built or turned into apartments for the first time after November 15, 2018 may also be exempt from the "guideline".

\*You can find more information about if the "guideline" applies to your rental unit or building [here](#), and learn how to check if your landlord has applied for a larger rent increase [here](#).

### **What does a landlord have to do to increase your rent?**

Your landlord has to let you know in writing that your rent is increasing 90 days before it happens. The notice must tell you what your new rent will be, when you must start paying the new rent, and how much the increase is in both dollars and in percentage. It should also say whether the rent increase falls within the "guideline".

Landlords can only make rent increases when 12 months have passed since the last one. If a landlord did not increase the rent last year or in previous years, they **cannot** "make up" those lost increases by increasing the rent more in the current year.

### **Can your landlord ever increase the rent above the "guideline"?**

In rare cases, where the landlord has done major upgrades or certain costs have gone up more than usual, a landlord can apply for an "Above Guideline Increase" or AGI, which is where they attempt to get approval from the Landlord and Tenant Board to have your rent be higher than the amount stated in the "guideline."

You do have the right to oppose an AGI; you can organize with other tenants in your residence to advocate against it. It is best to have legal representation for a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Please refer to our resources page for access to support.

## **Privacy & Harassment**

### **What notices does your landlord need to give you before entering your place?**

Your landlord can only enter your place without notice under the following circumstances:

- There's an emergency
- To clean your place if your landlord is responsible for doing so

If there is a different reason, they have to notify you in writing 24 hours before and can only come in between 8am-8pm. Even with proper notice, they can only enter your place:

- to fix something or to see if anything is in need of fixing
- if you are moving out, to show your place to a possible buyer, insurer, or mortgage lender; or let a real-estate agent show it to a potential buyer
- for property inspection if they are turning your building into a condo
- for a valid reason that is stated in your rental agreement

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination by your landlord or a landlord you hope to rent from is against the law. It is discrimination if you are treated differently because of your:

- race, colour, or ethnic background
- citizenship or the country you are from (including being new to Canada or being a refugee)
- religion
- age (if you are at least 18, or if you are 16 or 17 and not living with a parent)
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- gender expression
- physical or mental disability, including an addiction
- marital status (for example, married, divorced, single, or living common-law)

or because you:

- are pregnant
- have children
- are on social assistance (welfare)

The above reasons are called “protected grounds”, because people are protected from discrimination on these grounds.

The law prohibits landlords and their employees from discriminating against you when you apply to rent a place, when you are living there, or when they try to evict you. It also ensures that if you are being discriminated against by other tenants, the landlord must take action.

### **Can your landlord reject your application because of your immigration status or nationality?**

No. A landlord cannot deny you a rental unit just because of where you were born or your immigration status. In Ontario, it is against the law for a landlord to refuse to rent to you under any of the protected grounds listed on **page 10**.

Landlords sometimes make general requests that seem neutral but actually discriminate against people based on immigration status or nationality. For example, if a landlord will only rent to people who pass a credit check or have references from local landlords, this unfairly impacts people who are new to Canada. Landlords should not insist on general rules that are unfair, but should try to find a way to ensure that the application process is fair to people who fall under protected grounds. For new Canadians, this might mean looking at your income or getting a letter from your employer instead.

## **Disability Rights**



## **What accommodations are you entitled to?**

Landlords have a duty to accommodate disabilities. This means that your landlord must make the appropriate changes to their policies, operations, and standards to make sure that you receive equal and equitable access to your housing and any related amenities. Unless it causes “undue hardship” to your landlord or unit, you must be accommodated to the fullest extent possible, even if this is expensive for the landlord.

### **What is considered “undue hardship”?**

- When the costs are so significant that they would make the tenancy not viable for the landlord (after taking into consideration external sources of funding, like government subsidies)
- When meeting the accessibility need increases other health and safety risks

### **How can you ensure your rights are respected in situations where your landlord does not want to make accommodations?**

It is important to keep a record of any concerning interactions with your landlord, or agreements that you verbally made (i.e. through taking notes). If you need support in ensuring that your landlord provides you with the accommodations you need, and/or feel that you are being discriminated against, you can contact the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) or the Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC) which are both on our resources page. Please refer to our legal resources on **page 38** for access to support.

## **Housing Law and the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal**

**Discrimination and disability rights are human rights issues, which means that tenants can go to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal to get help for them.**

### **Not sure if what you’re facing is considered a human rights violation?**

[The Human Rights Legal Support Centre](#) has an online tool to help you figure out if you have a claim under the Human Rights Code. Please refer to our resources page to find this tool. For more information and advice, you can also speak to staff at the Support Centre.

If the Human Rights Code does not apply, check other topics and questions on this website. There might be a solution to your problem using your other rights as a tenant.

### **Important things to know:**

It is always helpful to have evidence of human rights violations. Keep any texts, emails, or letters and try to take notes and record your conversations with your landlord if possible.

It’s important that you submit your application to the Tribunal within one year from when the discrimination or request for accommodation occurred. You can still apply if you miss the deadline, but you must justify why you are applying late. A late submission is very unlikely to be accepted by the Tribunal.

### **What are grounds for eviction?**

To evict you, your landlord must follow certain steps set out in the [Residential Tenancies Act](#) (RTA). If you do not want to move out, your landlord will have to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board. The Board is like a court but less formal. It deals with conflicts between landlords and tenants. Before a landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board, they need to ensure the reasons they are attempting to evict you are valid.

### **Can your landlord evict you for having a pet?**

In Ontario, no-pets clauses in rental agreements are void. This means they cannot be enforced. A landlord might be able to evict you or make you get rid of your pet, but only if your pet:

- makes unreasonable amounts of noise
- causes a severe allergic reaction

- is dangerous
- causes damage
- is not allowed because of condominium by-laws or local city by-laws

Also, a potential landlord can ask about pets, and is allowed to choose not to rent to you because you have a pet or plan to get one.

### **Can your landlord evict you for having children?**

A landlord also cannot evict you for having children, unless your apartment is at risk for overcrowding under local bylaws. If you live in subsidized housing or rent-geared-to income housing, you may need to notify the housing provider if you add extra members to your household.

### **Can your landlord evict you for causing damage or for illegal acts?**

Your landlord can try to evict you if they say you caused damage to your place or to the building. Some examples of damage are water damage from a flood that you caused or a broken window damage from a fire that you caused. They can also try to evict you if they say you damaged your place on purpose, or have caused or can be expected to cause “serious” damage by using the place for something that isn’t compatible with a living space. They can also try to evict you if they claim that you did something illegal or allowed someone else to do something illegal in your place, or at your building.

The landlord must first give you a written notice. It should be on a form called Notice to End your Tenancy. You do not have to move out just because you get this notice. If this is the first time in six months that your landlord gave you a notice, you have seven days to cancel or “void” it by stopping whatever they complained about, repairing any damage, or paying the amount the landlord asked you to pay in the notice.

If this is not your first Notice to End your Tenancy in six months or if you don’t cancel the notice, your landlord can file an Application to End a Tenancy and Evict a Tenant with the Landlord and Tenant Board. The Board will schedule a hearing to decide the landlord’s application. The Board has the power to evict you. They can also order you to pay the cost of fixing the damage. The Board or your landlord should send you a Notice of Hearing and a copy of the landlord’s application.

### **Can your landlord evict you for failing to pay rent?**

If you have not paid your rent, your landlord might give you a notice called Notice to End your Tenancy Early for Non-Payment of Rent. This form will ask you to either pay the rent owing or move out by a certain date, at least 14 days after the date of the notice (7 days if you rent by the week). You do not have to move out by this date, even if you cannot pay the rent, though you may choose to if you can no longer afford the place. If you pay the amount in the notice, the notice will be canceled and the landlord cannot take any more steps at that point (but see the next question, if this happens regularly). If you do not pay or move out by the date in the notice, the landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to evict you.

### **Can your landlord evict you for being late with your rent, if you always pay eventually?**

If you are often late with your rent, your landlord might give you a notice, called Notice to End your Tenancy. On the form, your landlord would check the box called, “You have persistently paid your rent late.” There is no exact definition of what “persistently” paying rent late means. It can depend on many things, including how late your payments were, how often it happened, and for how long it has been happening. You cannot cancel this notice by paying the rent that you owe. In fact, your landlord can give you this kind of notice even if you have paid all your rent. After giving you this notice, your landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to evict you.

### **What happens after you have received a Notice of Hearing?**

A Notice of Hearing is the document you receive with the application to End a Tenancy or Application to Evict a Tenant, which is the document that tells you that your landlord has applied to the Landlord and Tenant Board to evict you. The Notice of Hearing tells you when and where the hearing about your eviction will be held. If you miss

the hearing, the Board will probably order that you be evicted.

You can always try talking with your landlord before the hearing. Depending on the type of issue you're having, there may be people you can ask to help you talk with your landlord. If you go to your eviction hearing, it is usually a good idea to try to talk to your landlord in Board mediation before the hearing starts.

At the hearing, a Board member listens to why your landlord wants to evict you and why you think you should not be evicted. The Board member will make a decision at the end of the hearing or later. The decision is called an "order". Copies of the order will be sent to you and your landlord. Sometimes you can make an agreement with your landlord to stop the eviction. This kind of agreement is often called a "settlement". An agreement can be made before or after the Board makes an order.

Try to get advice from your own lawyer before signing any papers. Make sure you get a copy of anything you sign. The Board can make an eviction order at any time of year, even during the winter. Even if the Board makes an eviction order, you still might be able to stop the eviction. Get legal help right away.

### **Where can I receive legal advice?**

It's always best to get legal advice about eviction problems if you can, especially when you have an eviction order against you. If you have a low income, you can call your local community legal clinic and try to make an appointment to discuss your situation. Be sure to tell the clinic that you have an eviction order against you.

If you can't get help from a community legal clinic, you can also try Pro Bono Ontario's Free Legal Advice Hotline, which provides free phone consultations with lawyers on landlord and tenant issues. You can also contact the Law Society Lawyer Referral Service for a free half hour consultation with a lawyer or licensed paralegal. Or you can contact JusticeNet, a non-profit organization that can connect you with a lawyer or licensed paralegal who has agreed to work for reduced fees.

### **What happens if I am formally evicted?**

You must move out by the date given in the Board's order. If you do not, your landlord can tell a public official called the "Sheriff" to make you leave. The Sheriff is the only person who is allowed to actually force you out or lock you out. It is against the law for your landlord, a security guard, or anybody else to do this. Your landlord cannot change the locks until the Sheriff comes and allows it.

### **What are some common reasons tenants apply to the LTB?**

Landlord not performing repairs or maintenance

- It is your landlord's responsibility to maintain and repair your property, which includes anything that is broken or does not work properly and must be repaired or replaced. This includes items that came with your home, such as refrigerators and stoves. As well as common amenities like parking lots, elevators, and corridors. Regardless of whether or not your lease or rental agreement states otherwise or if you were aware of the issue when you agreed to rent the property; according to the law, your landlord is liable.
- Your personal property, including furniture, clothing, and electronics, are not usually covered by your landlord. However, if it is your landlord's fault that your belongings are damaged, they may be held liable. For example, your belongings have been damaged by water as a result of your landlord's failure to address a plumbing issue or a leaking roof.

Landlord not keeping the heat high enough

- Whatever type of heating equipment you have, your landlord is responsible for keeping it in good working order so that it can keep your apartment warm enough. From September to June, this usually means temperatures of at least 20°C. The actual temperature and dates vary depending on where you are in Ontario. For example, the temperature in some areas must be 21°C, and heat must be given all year in some parts of Northern Ontario. You are able to find information regarding what the standards are in your area by contacting your city hall office. If there are no specific standards in your area, your landlord must follow the provincial guidelines for heat which is 20°C all year.

Landlord collected an illegal damage deposit or rent increase and the tenant wants their money back. If you do pay an unlawful deposit, make sure you can prove that the payment was required and not voluntary. You can:

- ask the landlord to give you the demand in writing
- check your rental agreement to see if the deposit is listed as “required”
- send your landlord a letter verifying that you are paying the deposit since the landlord informed you that it is needed to rent the property, and keep a copy of the letter.

Make sure you have a receipt for all deposits that you give to your landlord. Your receipt should have the following information:

- your name
- the address of your rental unit
- the landlord’s name
- the amount you paid
- the date you paid
- what the money was for
- your landlord’s signature

You can inform your landlord that the deposit is illegal once you’ve moved in. You have the right to request a refund of your deposit. If the landlord was unaware that the deposit was illegal, they may voluntarily return it. If your landlord still refuses to return your deposit, you can file a complaint with the Landlord and Tenant Board, which will order your landlord to do so.

If you are experiencing any of these, your next steps include

1. Talking to your landlord about the issue.
2. Discussing with your neighbors to see if they are experiencing similar issues.
3. Call an inspector. Many towns have inspectors who can order your landlord to make repairs or to clean up your building. If there are no housing standards by-laws where you live, your municipality has to enforce the provincial maintenance standards.
4. Apply to the landlord tenant board.

### **What is the Tenant application process to the Landlord and Tenant Board?**

The Board is like a court but it is less formal. When you apply to the Board you are starting a legal process, like a lawsuit. After you apply, there will be chances for you and your landlord to discuss what should happen. If you can’t agree, the Board will hear both sides and make a decision.

In most cases, before you apply to the Board, you will have to take some steps to try to get your landlord to deal with the problem. For example, for repair problems, the Board will expect you to prove that you told your landlord about the problems and gave your landlord a reasonable time to fix them.

If the Board finds that your landlord has not followed the law, they can order your landlord to fix or stop the problems. The Board can also order your landlord to compensate you by paying you money or reducing your rent. But you shouldn’t wait too long, either. The Board usually can’t do anything if you apply more than one year after the problem stopped or was fixed.

### **How do you begin your application to the Landlord and Tenant Board?**

If your landlord will not fix the problem, you can apply to the Board using the Tenant Application. You can download and print it from the Board’s website. You can also fill in and file the form online (“e-file”). Fill out the part of the form that asks for basic information about you and your landlord, and the address of the rental unit. Your landlord might be a person or a company. Make sure you identify your landlord correctly. If you are not sure who your landlord is, you can name whoever you make your rent cheques out to. You can also look at a copy of your tenancy agreement or any other letters or notices from your landlord. If the Board does make an order against your landlord, you might have a problem enforcing it if the name is not exactly right.

When your application form is completed, you have to file it with the Board. There is a filing fee of \$53. If you e-file, the fee is \$48. But if you are on social assistance or other low income, you can ask the Board not to charge you the

fee. To do this, you have to fill out a “Fee Waiver Request” form. You can ask the Board to send you this form, or download it from the Board’s website.

The Board will schedule a hearing and give you a Notice of Hearing package. This has a copy of your application and information about the time and place of the hearing. The Board will mail a copy of this package to your landlord.

You should start preparing for the hearing as soon as possible. It is important to be fully prepared for your hearing. You only get one chance. If you are not prepared or are missing important evidence, the Board probably won’t let you come back another day.



# Academic Resources

## 1. Meal Exchange

“Meal Exchange is a nationally registered charity founded in 1993. For over 20 years, we have inspired and empowered students across the country to create healthy, just, and sustainable food systems . We facilitate collaboration and innovation on campuses, and act as a catalyst to increase access to good food for students.”

Services provided by Meal Exchange:

- GoodFood Campus Program: Starts with post-secondary schools signing the GoodFood campus agreements which asks administrators to commit to addressing food issues on campus, work with student leaders, and come up with plans of action/solutions that are led by the voices of the student community
- Food & Politics: Sessions that connect students to political leaders and cover a wide range of topics including student food insecurity and systematic barriers facing post-secondary students. You can register for upcoming events here: <https://www.mealexchange.com/events>

A full list of their services can be found here: [What We Do — Meal Exchange](#)

Contact Information:

Suman Roy (Executive Director) [suman@mealexchange.com](mailto:suman@mealexchange.com)

Brittany Maguire (Program Manager) [brittany@mealexchange.com](mailto:brittany@mealexchange.com)

Rohini Mohanlal (Program Coordinator) [rohini@mealexchange.com](mailto:rohini@mealexchange.com)

## 2. Aspire

Aspire is for students and “provides access to job postings, resources and information to help you get ahead of the competition. Designed in partnership with employers, post-secondary institutions and government, ASPIRE works to uncover diverse, challenging and innovative opportunities for students in Financial Services.”

Who can apply?

“ASPIRE is open to all full-time students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada who are legally able to work and are returning to school the following semester.”

Services provide by Aspire

- Get information about internship, co-op and employer student-led opportunities that match your skills and interests
- Business training
- Employers that provide high-quality student opportunities and commit to Aspire’s six guiding principles
- Chances to network with other students and employers
- Feedback from employers
- Industry insight that will let you see if Financial Services is the best fit for you

Contact Information

Email: [aspire@tfi.ca](mailto:aspire@tfi.ca)

Phone Number: 416-933-6780

## 3. University of Toronto - Community of Support’s MCAT Student Support Program (MSSP)

The goal is to support diversity in healthcare. They provide an 11-week prep course that runs from early May to late July for Community of Support members who experience financial need. MSSP lectures are archived and available to all Community of Support members.

Who is eligible to apply?

Students who are Indigenous, Black, Filipino, socioeconomically disadvantaged, or who have a disability are eligible.

For more information: <https://applymd.utoronto.ca/community-support>

#### **4. Toronto Metropolitan University Student Life and Learning Support**

Offers a variety of different services, including but not limited to, tutoring, graduate student support, math and computer science support, in addition to language and writing services. You can access these supports through the link here: <https://www.ryerson.ca/student-life-and-learning/learning-support/>

\*Please note all tutoring and one-to-one support is being done online and bookings can be made through the link above.

#### **5. Onyx Initiative**

The Onyx Initiative supports Black Canadians as they embark into their careers following completion of University/ College, helping them through access to placements/internships, mentorships, coaching and professional development. They facilitate the process by which recent graduates are able to obtain an internship placement or full-time employment in their chosen field of study.

How does it work?

You can enter this program in two different ways:

- By taking the online training and coaching modules - These modules allow you to move at your own pace, and include interactive sessions. You also receive certification at the end of the program.
- The Onyx Scholars Program - Made up of students and recent graduates, the Onyx Scholars Program provides individualized training, coaching, and mentoring before, during and after your internship placement. This program offers a variety of different placement services.

What is the criteria for consideration?

- Identify as Black
- Be enrolled in a Canadian College/University OR be within 12 months of graduation

You can access their FAQ and Application form below:

Application: <https://www.onyxinitiative.org/apply/>

FAQ: <https://onyxinitiative.org/#faq>

Contact Information

Website: <https://onyxinitiative.org>

Email: [info@onyxinitiative.org](mailto:info@onyxinitiative.org)

#### **6. OUAC - University Student Transition Resources**

This is a website that contains links to some of the various services and resources offered for academic success at Ontario Universities. It also highlights different supports for incoming students, you can use this link to find your school!

<https://www.ouac.on.ca/university-student-transition-resources/>

#### **7. Indspire**

Indspire invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis young people. They offer various supports such as scholarships and bursaries, the River to Success student mentorship program (for students in High School, incoming or current post-secondary education, and those transitioning into the workforce), as well as the Teach for Tomorrow program that provides support to students who are passionate about becoming teachers.

Quick access to their student supports:

- [Indspire Bursaries & Scholarships](#)
- [Rivers to Success](#)
- [Teach for Tomorrow](#)



Contact Information:

Email: [info@indspire.ca](mailto:info@indspire.ca)

Website: <https://indspire.ca>

Phone Number: 1.855.INDSPIRE (1.855.463.7747)

### **8. Black Future Lawyers (BFL)**

“Funded by UofT’s Provost’s office and UofT Law, BFL offers supports and engagement opportunities to Black undergraduate students who aspire to go to law school and become lawyers. BFL’s goal is to increase the number of Black students who attend law school and join the legal profession.”

What does BFL provide?

- Mentoring and job shadowing with Black lawyers, judges and articling students
- Invitations to attend workshops, lectures, and other events at UofT Law
- Admissions and financial aid info
- Access to free LSAT course prep, depending on eligibility
- A individual application process to UofT Law for Black candidates

Link to information about the application process: [UofT Law Black Student Application Process \(BSAP\) | Black Future Lawyers - The University of Toronto Faculty of Law](#)

### **9. Osgoode Hall Law School (York University) - Access to Law and Learning (ALL)**

A free course for students for students facing financial barriers to support them in preparing for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Students will also gain access to panel discussions that will allow them further insight into the legal profession and law school itself.

As stated in their website, the topics of these panels typically include:

- The law school admissions process
- Financing your legal education
- Life as a law student
- The various career options for law school graduates

For information about eligibility requirements and application dates, go to the link here: [Free LSAT Prep Course - Osgoode Hall Law School](#)

# Mental Health Resources

## 1. What's Up Walk-In® Clinic | <https://www.whatsupwalkin.ca/>

What's Up Walk-In® Clinic offers a free mental health counselling walk-in service for children, youth, young adults, and families. Usually no appointment is necessary. During the coronavirus pandemic virtual counselling sessions are available immediately (phone or video) while in-person appointments must be booked in advance starting mid-October. The clinic helps with issues such as depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidal ideation, sexual identity matters, bullying, behavioural concerns, addictions, and anything else that might be on one's mind. All the information you provide is confidential.

Therapists offer single sessions up to an hour long. They don't judge. They will support you in your concerns, and work collaboratively with you. The focus is on abilities, resources, and skills that you have, or you want to develop. Together they will target a priority concern and develop a plan with you that you feel comfortable with. If you feel you need more help, you can come back to the What's Up Walk-In. All of the therapists are clinically trained. The clinic is barrier free, and accessible. No health card or appointment is necessary and it's completely free!

Offered at six locations across Toronto.

Skylark | <https://www.skylarkyouth.org/>

Yorktown Family Services | <http://www.yorktownfamilyservices.com/>

YouthLink | <http://www.youthlink.ca/>

Griffin Centre Mental Health Services | <http://www.griffincentre.org/>

The Etobicoke Children's Centre | <http://www.etobicokechildren.com/>

Strides Toronto | <https://stridestoronto.ca/>

Number: Call Mental Health T.O at 1866-585-MHTO(6486) to be connected to a counsellor.

## 2. Gerstein Crisis Centre | <https://gersteincentre.org/>

Community-based crisis services for adults age 16+ in Toronto who are dealing with mental health issues and/or substance use issues and are currently in crisis. Also offers online face-to-face support, wellness groups, short term follow-up support, and referrals to other services.

They are here to listen. Crisis Workers are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week at (416) 929-5200. Their goal is to help you work out some effective ways of addressing your immediate difficulties and to connect you to services that can offer ongoing support.

They encourage self-referrals so that they can hear directly from people about what they are going through. Service providers may also make referrals to their services by calling their referral line at (416) 929-0149.

This line may at times be answered by voicemail, your call will be returned by a member of the crisis team within the hour.

## 3. Crisis Text Line | <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Provides text support for young people in crisis by connecting them to trained Crisis Responders. Powered by Kids Help Phone.

Text HOME to 686868 from Canada, anytime, about any type of crisis.

## 4. Native Child and Family Services of Toronto | <https://nativechild.org>

Holistic healing services for Indigenous children, youth and families through video or telephone counselling. Visit their website to learn more about their wide array of services.

In this time of crisis, it is important to be vigilant about the safety of children and families in our communities. If any member of the public, or a professional, has a concern about the safety and/or well-being of a child or youth under 18, they should immediately contact the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto at (416) 969-8510.

**5. Warm Line | <http://www.warmline.ca/>**

Confidential and anonymous service for adults (18+) who are feeling lonely, isolated, anxious, depressed or in need of a friendly ear. **This is not a crisis service.**

Between 12pm - 8pm, Call 416-323-3721

Between 8pm - Midnight, Call 416-960-WARM (9276)

Text 647-557-5882 from noon-midnight 7 days a week

**6. Across Boundaries | <https://www.acrossboundaries.ca/>**

Mental health support and services delivered through Anti-Racism/Anti-Black racism and Anti-Oppression frameworks.

All of their programs are free of charge.

They provide programs that integrate skills building, digital programming, support groups, alternative and complementary therapies, art therapy, creative expressions, community kitchen, individual support, counselling, and community partnerships. They are committed to a community development approach and believe in the active participation of racialized communities. They are committed to service users and to their community, and are committed to providing dignified, inclusive and compassionate mental health and addiction services for all racialized communities. Visit their website to learn more about the wide array of programs they offer.

**7. The Access Point | <http://theaccesspoint.ca/>**

The Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Access Point, referred to as The Access Point, is a centralized point where you can apply for individual mental health and addiction support services and supportive housing. Through one application and intake assessment process, The Access Point provides coordinated access to a number of services with their large network of service providers.

The Access Point processes your application for services. Once you have submitted your application, you will be contacted to discuss your eligibility for services and what your goals and needs are. If you are found to be eligible, you will be placed on the waitlist for the service(s) requested. Once those services are available, The Access Point will contact you to connect you to the service provider agency. Referrers or applicants are asked to communicate changes (i.e. applicant contact information, housing status changes, etc.) to The Access Point staff to ensure your application remains up to date.

Visit their website to fill out an application.

**8. Good2Talk | <https://good2talk.ca/>**

Confidential support services for post-secondary students in Ontario provided by phone or text.

Good2Talk is a free, confidential service for post-secondary students in Ontario, available 24/7/365. By calling 1-866-925-5454, post-secondary students in Ontario can receive professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being.

**9. First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Line | <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>**

Immediate, culturally competent, telephone crisis intervention counselling for First Nations and Inuit Peoples. Counselling is available in English, French, Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

Call the toll-free Help Line at 1-855-242-3310, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Visit their website to use the chat box to connect with a counsellor on-line.

**10. Stella's Place | <https://stellasplace.ca/>**

Stella's Place Drop In Virtual 45 mins Counselling is a free, low-barrier single-session counselling program for young adults between the ages of 16 and 29. No appointment is necessary and everyone is welcome!

They support young adults living with mental and emotional health issues including but not limited to: anxiety, depression, self-esteem, emotion regulation, relationship challenges, self harm, suicidal ideation, life transitions, compulsions, perfectionism, overcontrol behaviors, the impacts of homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism,

and other structural oppressions, support with struggles relating to identity, and mild to moderate substance use.

Participants may phone or email to book a Drop In Counselling session any time between 10 am - 5 pm on Thursdays.

Phone: 416 461 2345 participants press 0 to connect with staff

Email: [connect@stellasplace.ca](mailto:connect@stellasplace.ca)

Once you connect with their Access Coordinators you will be asked a few pre treatment intake questions that they use to collect preliminary information about you. This information will be kept securely within your file. The answers to these questions help them to best match you with a clinician, evaluate their programs, and improve their services so that they can continue to offer free counselling to the community.

# Financial Resources

## 1. For Youth Initiative Scholarship

Youth aged 16-29 who are attending/will attend a Canadian university in the 2022-2023 academic year and live, work, volunteer, and/or go to school within York-South Weston are eligible to apply. Preference will be given to youth actively involved in FYI programs. Take a look [here](#).

## 2. Black Career Conference Scholarship - Black Rotman Commerce

\$1000 scholarship awarded to Black students who attend the Career conference. Apply [here](#).

## 3. Indigenous Student Bursary

Provides aid to Indigenous students with financial need who are attending either a publicly assisted college or university in Ontario or an approved Aboriginal Institute in Ontario \$1000-3500. Apply [here](#).

## 4. Black Business and Professionals Association Annual Scholarships <https://bbpa.org/bbpa-scholarships/>

BBPA Specialty Scholarships are grouped into two sub categories

- The LGBTQ Scholarship, an annually funded scholarship that will be offered for the first time in 2020. The BBPA LGBTQ Scholarship recognizes an outstanding student from the LGBTQ community who wishes to pursue higher education at the college or university level. It will be awarded to a student who has completed high school, exhibits academic performance, social contribution and statements of personal need.
- The BBPA Skilled Trades Scholarship, an annually funded scholarship that will be offered for the first time in 2020. This Scholarship recognizes an outstanding student who wishes to pursue a skilled trade of their preference. We recognize the need to bridge the gap between business and our youth, to promote economic community at the person, industry, and national level. It will be awarded to a student who has completed high school, exhibits academic performance, social contribution and statements of personal need.

## 5. The Nahom Berhane Scholarship

<http://www.nahom.org/about-the-scholarship/scholarship-application/>

The Nahom Berhane Scholarship for Leadership and Inclusion provides assistance to youth with a proven track record of volunteerism, community service and leadership in the community. In addition, the youth are in need of financial support to attend post-secondary institutions including universities, colleges and professional trades training.

## 6. RBC Capital Markets Canada Pathways Diversity Award Program

<https://www.rbccm.com/en/careers/scholarships.page>

RBC Capital Markets is committed to fostering a diverse workplace and promoting inclusion to fuel innovation and economic prosperity. Through the Diversity Scholarship, we wish to recognize and reward exceptional undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing a career in banking or finance.

## 7. Financial Basics, Financial literacy from Government of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/financial-basics.html>

## 8. Bank of Canada Scholarships

<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/careers/scholarship-awards/#scholarship-awards>

These Awards are designed to assist students with disabilities, Indigenous students and those who identify as a member of a racialized group in furthering their education and to encourage them to take an interest in fields related to the work of the Bank.

## 9. Jobstart- Youth Job Connection | <https://www.jobstart.org/yjc>

The Youth Job Connection (YJC) program serves youth aged 15 to 29 who experience multiple and/or complex barriers to employment by providing more intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities.

# Legal Resources

## 1. Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO)

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Housing Law

“The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) is a specialty community legal clinic with a provincial mandate to advance and protect the interests of low-income tenants. We specialize in housing issues related to tenants in Ontario.” (ACTO, 2021)

The ACTO also provides free legal advice for the Landlord and Tenant Board on the day of your scheduled hearing. The ACTO manages the Tenant Duty Counsel Program (TDCP) in Ontario. On their website you can also find resources, information, and tips in regard to housing law and housing rights.

Website: <https://www.acto.ca/>

## 2. Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC)

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Human Rights Law, Housing Law, Employment Law

The Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC) is a not-for-profit organization and legal clinic focused on addressing issues at the intersection of legal issues and anti-Black racism. They deliver their legal aid services to low and no income Black people in Ontario. BLAC is a legal clinic that provides legal aid for many different legal topics including housing law, employment law, and human rights law. Although they do not provide legal aid for criminal law, they have many resources and information on their website regarding those topics and many other topics. BLAC’s website is an incredible resource. They also provide public legal education sessions on various legal topics and anti-Black racism.

Website: <https://www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca/>

Phone Number: 416-597-5831

Toll-free Number: 1-877-736-9406

## 3. Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association (CMLA)

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Employment Law, Housing Law, Criminal Law, Human Rights Law

The Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association (CMLA) is a non-profit organization that works to empower and advocate for self-identifying Muslim members of the legal profession. The CMLA includes members from various fields including lawyers, corporate counsel, academics, and many others who are interested in the law. Members collectively come together to support various initiatives from legal advocacy efforts to networking. The CMLA welcomes non-Muslims to join their organization as well.

Website: <https://www.cmla-acam.ca/>

## 4. Community Advocacy and Legal Centre (CLAC)

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Housing Law, Employment Law, Human Rights Law

The Community Advocacy and Legal Centre (CLAC) is a non-profit legal clinic that provides legal aid for low to no-income individuals living in the area of Hastings, Prince Edward, and Lennox & Addington counties and Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. The CLAC also provides workshops on legal education, works alongside communities on legal issues, and promotes advocacy efforts.

Website: <https://communitylegalcentre.ca/>

Phone Number: 613-966-8686

Toll-free Number: 1-877-966-8686

## **5. Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Housing Law

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) provides accessible legal information and resources to better help you exercise and learn about your rights. On their website they have information and resources on many different legal topics. CLEO develops accurate and useful legal education resources and information in the hopes it will better equip people to understand and exercise their legal rights. CLEO also works to address systemic barriers people face when accessing the justice system. On their website you can also find Guided Pathways, which are interactive interviews that can help you complete legal forms and create legal documents, including those related to housing law.

Website: <https://www.cleo.on.ca/en>

## **6. Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Housing Law, Human Rights Law, Accessibility Issues

The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation provides free services to tenants who are facing evictions and/or breaches of their human rights. They advance housing rights for all renters in Ontario by conducting research, developing policy, advocating for the individuals they represent, and taking legal action. Some of their services include (but are not limited to): ensuring that tenants have a strong awareness of their rights and the eviction process, helping community members prepare for hearings before the Landlord and Tenant Board, and facilitating telephone mediations with landlords. They are open Monday to Friday from 9:30am-5:00pm

Website: <https://www.equalityrights.org>

Phone Number: 416-944-0087 or 1-800-263-113

Email: [cera@equalityrights.org](mailto:cera@equalityrights.org)

## **7. Downtown Legal Services (DLS)**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Criminal Law, Housing Law, Employment Law

Downtown Legal Services (DLS) is a legal clinic and clinical education program. DLS is affiliated with the University of Toronto Faculty of Law and their staff and law students offer free legal aid to low and no income individuals. DLS also offers legal education programs and works alongside communities in advocacy efforts.

Website: <http://downtownlegalservices.ca/>

Phone Number: 416-934-4535

Email: [law.dls@utoronto.ca](mailto:law.dls@utoronto.ca)

## **8. Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC)**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Human Rights Law

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre (HRLSC) provides legal services to those who have experienced discrimination that is in violation of Ontario's Human Rights Code. They offer legal assistance and support in filing applications to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, as well as offer legal representation at mediations and hearings. On their website, you can also find resources and how-to guides which illustrate your rights and common legal terms.

Website: <https://www.hrlsc.on.ca>

## **9. Legal Aid Ontario**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Criminal Law, Mental Health Legal Issues

Legal Aid Ontario provides free legal aid to low and no income individuals living in Ontario. They also offer same day court services, a toll free line that offers free 20-minute legal advice for family law matters, web based information and referrals, and legal representation.

Website: <https://www.legalaid.on.ca/>

## **10. Parkdale Community Legal Services (PCLS)**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Housing Law, Employment Law

Parkdale Community Legal Services is a community legal clinic and teaching clinic that provides free legal services to low and no income individuals. PCLS also stresses the importance of community advocacy work and addressing oppression at its roots. PCLS provides legal representation, advice, and resources.

Website: <https://www.parkdalelegal.org/>

## **11. Pro Bono Ontario**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Employment Law, Housing Law, Criminal Law, Human Rights Law

Pro Bono Ontario provides high quality programs that connect those in Ontario who cannot afford lawyers to volunteer lawyers who are able to assist in legal matters. They aim to protect vulnerable individuals who need assistance with everyday legal issues. They also support start-ups, artists, social service organizers, and social entrepreneurs who face legal issues. Pro Bono Ontario also provides a free legal advice hotline.

Website: <https://www.probonoontario.org>

Hotline Number: 1-855-255-7256

## **12. Steps to Justice**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Employment Law, Housing Law, Criminal Law, Human Rights Law

Steps to Justice is an incredible resource. Their website provides legal information and resources on a wide range of legal topics. Steps to Justice provides reliable, accessible, and practical information on common legal issues. They offer step-by-step information for legal issues, fillable forms, self-help guides, referral information for legal aid and social services in Ontario, and even offer live chat and support via email for legal questions.

Website: <https://stepstojustice.ca/>

## **13. Aboriginal Legal Services**

Areas of focus relevant to this toolkit: Indigenous Youth Criminal Court

Aboriginal Legal Services is a great resource for legal-related programming for Indigenous people living in the Greater Toronto Area. Their mission is to strengthen the capacity of the Aboriginal community and its citizens to deal with justice issues and provide Aboriginal controlled and culturally based justice alternatives. Their website provides legal information and resources on a wide range of Indigenous legal topics.

Website: <https://aboriginallegal.ca/>