

Trainer's Guide: Immigration Status & Social Assistance



This Guide is designed to support legal clinic workers who want to train community workers about the interaction between immigration status and social assistance in Ontario. It is part of a series of Trainer's Guides that cover a range of legal topics.

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This is one in a series of Trainers’ Guides for community workers. Visit the [CLEO Connect website](#) for a list of legal topics.

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Companion to Trainer’s Guide: [PowerPoint slides](#) with notes and instructions for trainers

1. Introduction

About the Trainer's Guide

Who is the Trainer's Guide for?

This Trainer's Guide is for legal clinic staff who are training workers at local community organizations about the interaction between immigration status and social assistance. In the context of these materials, social assistance is understood to include benefits received through the Ontario Works (OW) program and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

Front-line workers at community organizations often help people who come to them with questions about their legal rights. Community workers can give good help and solid referrals if they have the knowledge and skills to do so. Training from legal clinic experts can help.

The Series

This Trainer's Guide is part of a series that provides training materials on several legal topics that community workers often ask for.

We developed our Trainer's Guides with flexibility in mind: each legal clinic can use them to adapt and customize a training workshop for their communities. We designed the training for a session that lasts approximately **2 hours**, but trainers will want to adapt it to suit their own style and to meet the needs of their audience.

We have included a companion piece for the Trainer's Guide: [PowerPoint slides](#) that include activities and resources, as well as notes and instructions for trainers. The PowerPoint slides are intended to be customized by the trainer.

- **The Trainer's Guide**

The Trainer's Guide includes the following sections:

1. **Introduction (p. 4):** This section provides a training snapshot and outline of the training.
2. **Summary of Training and Instructions for Trainers (p. 5):** This section provides a summary of the PowerPoint slides and training activities. It includes some instructions for trainers. The slides and notes are adaptable and intended to be edited by the trainer.
3. **Activity Handouts (p. 12):** This section shows handouts that trainers can use during the training. It includes [a link to the handouts](#) so trainers can download and email them to participants before the session, share their screen during an online training, or print and provide them at a face-to-face training.
4. **Supporting Documents (p. 17):** This section shows sample documents to help trainers plan their training. It includes links to a [flyer](#), [agenda](#), and [evaluation form](#) that can be customized.

- **The PowerPoint Slide Deck**

The [PowerPoint slides](#) are intended to be customized by the trainer.

Getting Ready and Learning Goals

Before you deliver the *Immigration Status & Social Assistance* training, spend some time on the following preparation activities and think about the learning goals. Expect to spend at least 2 hours. For an online training session, ask a colleague to assist you, to monitor the chat, etc.

1. Review the goals of the training

The goals of the training are to help community workers:

- Understand how immigration status affects eligibility for social assistance (Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Understand how receiving social assistance can affect immigration applications
- Learn more about what can be done when someone is refused social assistance
- Learn about useful resources

2. Familiarize yourself with the resources

Get familiar with the resources listed in **slides 71-73** of the slide deck. **Read the Trainer's Guide and PowerPoint presentation.**

Add relevant local resources and information about your legal clinic to the slides — location, hours, and intake procedures. Do what you need to feel comfortable sharing the content, including editing and printing notes. See [tips](#) to print PowerPoint content in black and white to reduce ink, and [how to](#) remove slide notes before you share them with participants.

Think about ways to engage your audience. Anticipate possible questions from participants and think through how you will respond. Consider the timing suggestions and think about how you will keep the training moving to finish on time. Make note of any questions you are not comfortable answering and say that you will get back to the person if possible.

3. Customize the slides and learn about the activities

Consider the participants and the manner in which you will deliver your training (webinar or face-to-face training) and how long each activity may take. Choose the activities you want to use from the options provided. If participants have time for two sessions, you may want to offer the training in two parts — how immigration status affects eligibility for social assistance and how social assistance affects immigration applications. Revise the slides to reflect your choices. Build in time for questions and discussion.

Depending on the level of engagement and discussion during each session, you may not be able to cover all of the activities. They are there for you to choose from.

If you'd like to create a Word Version of your PowerPoint slides, follow the tips in this short [video](#).

If you have any questions about using these training materials, please email info@cleoconnect.ca.

2. Summary of Training & Instructions for Trainers

This section gives an overview of the training. It is meant to be read as you go through the PowerPoint presentation. It will help you get a general sense of the training and understand the approximate time that you want to allocate for each part. It also provides some instructions and suggestions for how to offer the training activities.

The time allocations are estimates, assuming a total training length of 2 hours.

Training Snapshot (for trainer)

	Slides	Suggested Time
1. Welcome, Agenda, and Introductions	1–4	5 mins
2. Activity 1: Myth Busting	5–9	10 mins
3. Learning Goals Systemic Barriers & Lived Reality	10–11	5 mins
4. Part 1: How immigration status affects eligibility for social assistance	12–35	20 mins
5. Activity 2: Case Scenario and Summary of Part 1	36–42	10 mins
6. What can community workers do? Q & A	43–45	5 mins
BREAK	46	10 mins
7. Part 2: How social assistance affects immigration applications	47–64	20 mins
8. Activity 3: Case Scenarios and Summary of Part 2	65–69	15 mins
9. What can community workers do? Q & A	70–71	5 mins
10. Useful resources and campaigns	72–74	10 mins
11. Wrap-up, Feedback, and Evaluation	75–77	5 mins

Training Summary and Instructions

Read this section as you review and adapt the PowerPoint slides. We highlight specific slides to provide training tips for activities to engage participants.

1. Welcome, Agenda, and Introductions	Slides 1–4	
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- Welcome participants and introduce yourself and your clinic
- Share the agenda, review learning goals and participant expectations
- Discuss logistics of the training or workshop
- Discuss role of community workers
- Provide a land acknowledgment

Set Ground Rules and Expectations

Share the outline so participants know what to expect. Emphasize that the goal is to create an anti-oppressive environment. Briefly discuss: the right to pass (participants don't have to answer a question or make a contribution if they don't want to); confidentiality (what is learned, leaves, and what is shared, stays); and respect for each other.

Tell them if you will take questions as you go or at specific times. If the training is held in-person, point out where the bathrooms are, water, and other logistics. State up front that there will be a break. Reflect this in the agenda and confirm with the audience at the outset, adjusting timing if necessary. Tell participants to make themselves comfortable.

2. ACTIVITY 1: Myth Busting	Slides 5–9	
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This interactive activity presents four statements below. Participants can decide if they are true or false, followed by a discussion of the correct answers.

- I can only get Ontario Works (OW) if I was born in Canada. **FALSE**
- Receiving OW will affect the outcome of my refugee claim. **FALSE**
- I can sponsor my spouse if I receive benefits from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). **TRUE**
- If I leave my sponsor, I can apply for OW. **MAYBE**

Show slide 9 so participants can see the correct answers.

Discussion: Discuss misinformation or assumptions that people have about the interaction between immigration status and eligibility for social assistance. Ask participants to share any questions they have that they hope will be addressed in the training. Tell them they will get a chance to ask more questions later.

3. Learning Goals Systemic Barriers & Lived Reality	Slide 10–11	
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Learning Goals

Inform participants that the aim of the training is NOT for them to become experts in social assistance or immigration law, but rather to increase their understanding about eligibility for social assistance and consequences of receiving social assistance for some immigration applications. The training also aims to share helpful tips and make them familiar with resources they can share to help their clients.

Let participants know you will share the slides later — there are many useful resources listed in the slides at the end of the presentation. See page 2 for tips to remove notes from the slides.

Systemic Barriers & Lived Reality

Tell participants that the point of this slide is to keep in mind the many barriers to social assistance that exist for refugees, live-in caregivers, migrant workers and undocumented people in Ontario. Fears about precarious status, language barriers and a lack of information and resources compound disadvantage.

4. Part 1: How immigration status affects eligibility for social assistance	Slide 12–35	
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The slides in Part 1 describe many of the most common types of immigration status and explain what they are. This section includes information about people without status in Canada. Each immigration status description is followed by a slide about how the social assistance system in Ontario treats that status. It also explains the documents that will help prove that a person has the immigration status, for example, a Canadian citizen can prove their status with a passport, birth certificate or a citizenship card.

Slides 26 and 27 describe what a removal order is and explain when removal orders can be enforced, as well as the circumstances where a person can't be removed from Canada.

Slides 32 to 35 discuss the terms 'visitor' and 'tourist' because of the importance the social assistance system places on them. Ontario Works (OW) is not available to people who are visiting Canada, as opposed to people who have established a residence here, whether or not it is authorized by the government.

These concepts are explained and discussed in the slides in Part 1 and in the scenario that follows in Activity 2.

5. Activity 2: Case Scenario and Summary of Part 1	Slides 36–42	
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After reading the scenario, ask participants whether they think Ilana is eligible for OW.

The scenario is based on a decision of the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT File No: 1907-05378) that examines whether or not an applicant was a ‘visitor’. The slide notes include segments from the decision as well as the factors that the Tribunal took into consideration to conclude that the person was not a visitor.

Part 1 is summarized in slides 38 to 40. Slide 39 includes a chart of each immigration status and eligibility for social assistance. The chart on slide 33 shows whether a person will be considered a “visitor” according to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the Social Assistance Ministry and offices, and the Social Benefits Tribunal.

Slide 40 discusses systemic barriers to social assistance and slide 41 includes a flowchart that explains what can be done if an application for social assistance is denied.

6. What can community workers do? Q & A	Slides 43–45	
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Slide 42 discusses what participants can do to assist people in financial need. Share the handouts listed below. Combine the discussion in the slide notes with the handouts.



Handout: [Immigration status and social assistance eligibility chart](#)



Handout: [Am I a “visitor“? chart](#)



Handout: [What to do if an application for social assistance is denied Flowchart](#)

Take time to answer any questions participants have about Part 1. If they have questions about that are covered in Part 2, tell them that you will wait until the end of that section when there will be another opportunity to ask questions. If there are any questions that you are not comfortable answering, say that you will get back to them.

Slide 46 — Break: Tell participants to take a 10-minute break. Tell them when to return.

7. Part 2: How social assistance affects immigration applications	Slides 47–64	
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The slides in Part 2 describe when receiving social assistance might affect the outcome of an immigration application. Slides 48 to 54 discuss family sponsorship applications and the impact of social assistance.

This section includes a case scenario for discussion at slides 55 and 56. After reading the scenario, ask participants whether they think Mohamed can sponsor his spouse while he is receiving ODSP.

Slides 59 to 64 describe sponsors' responsibilities and highlight important details from IRCC's IMM1344 — *Application to Sponsor, Sponsorship Agreement and Undertaking* form.

8. Activity 3: Case Scenarios and Summary of Part 2	Slides 57–68	
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This section includes another case scenario for discussion at slides 57 and 58. Mario is receiving ODSP and has applied to sponsor his spouse, Raoul. Ask participants if they think the fact that Raoul receives benefits as Mario's spouse (but does not have a disability himself) will affect the application to sponsor Mario for permanent residence. Discuss why.

Slides 62 and 63 discuss what happens when a sponsored person receives social assistance during the sponsorship undertaking period. This is called 'default' and there is little flexibility to get out of paying for the social assistance received during the undertaking.

Trainers can highlight this discussion with another scenario at slides 65 to 67 that describe relationship breakdown due to abuse. Ask participants the two questions listed in the slides, whether the sponsor can leave the abusive relationship and what will happen if the person she sponsored applies for OW. Discuss the limited options Celina has in this situation from the notes. Show the chart on slide 68 and use the notes to summarize Part 2 and discuss the grey areas where the answer for eligibility and consequences is "maybe". Share handout.



Handout: [Status, Eligibility, and Immigration Consequences Chart](#)

9. What can community workers do? Q & A	Slides 69–70	
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Slide 69 discusses what community workers can do to support clients, so they understand who is eligible for social assistance, the importance of sponsorship “undertakings” and the impact of receipt of OW in some immigration applications.

Remind participants that they can help clients apply for social assistance and explain when a warm referral to a legal clinic to assess eligibility and consequences is appropriate.

Take time to answer any questions participants have about Part 2. Say that you will share resources and campaigns that address some of the systemic issues and barriers that you have been talking about.

10. Useful Resources	Slides 71–74	
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Walk participants through the CLEO resources on slide 71 and 72. If there is Wi-Fi (in an in-person training), go to the Steps to Justice website (<https://stepstojustice.ca>) to highlight the variety of legal questions there regarding social assistance and immigration status and sponsoring family members.

Explain that Steps to Justice has clear legal information on common questions. Tell participants that the links are embedded in the slide, and you will share the PowerPoint. CLEO also has many print resources that can be ordered for free or viewed online and printed.

CLEO’s Steps to Justice website also has [What information do I need about my immigration status to qualify for OW?](#) (and [other legal topics](#)).

Slide 72 includes a link to enter a postal code to find the local community legal clinic. Explain that there are also many specialty clinics that serve specific populations: Black Legal Action Centre (BLAC), Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples (CSSP), South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO), Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic (CSALC), and HIV & Aids Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO).

Slide 73 highlights some of the campaigns and organizing around social assistance and immigration status and slide 74 includes photo credits.

The law and policies concerning access to social assistance are being challenged by many organizations throughout Ontario calling for equal access and livable incomes.

One example is the Child Tax Benefit Campaign which is pushing for access to Canada Child Benefits for all children living in Canada. This campaign includes a petition participants can sign.

Highlight other organizations relevant to participants and add any other local initiatives here, such as the Toronto-based [Health Network for Uninsured Clients | Wellesley Institute](#).

11. Wrap-up, Feedback, and Evaluation	Slides 75–77	
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As you conclude your training, respond to any outstanding questions, offer to follow up with additional information, if applicable. Give participants the evaluation form, acknowledge the funders and thank participants.

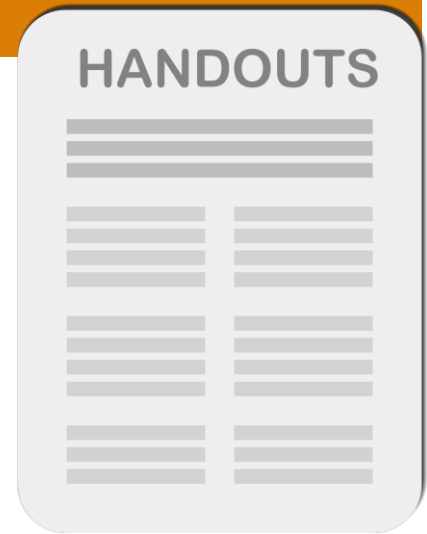


Handout: Share the [Evaluation Form](#)

We also want your feedback as the trainer. Please answer the 5 questions in this short [survey](#).

3. Activity Handouts

This section shows the handouts that trainers can give to participants during the session.



<u>Immigration status and social assistance eligibility chart</u>	13
<u>Am I a “visitor“? chart</u>	14
<u>What to do if an application for social assistance is denied Flowchart</u>	15
<u>Status, Eligibility, and Immigration Consequences Chart</u>	16

Immigration Status and Social Assistance Eligibility Chart

Immigration Status	Eligibility for SA?
Citizen	Yes
PR	Yes
Refugee claimant	Yes
Protected Person	Yes
H & C applicant	Yes
Temporary Resident Permit holder	Maybe
Visitor	See 'Am I a Visitor' Chart
Undocumented person	See 'Am I a Visitor' Chart

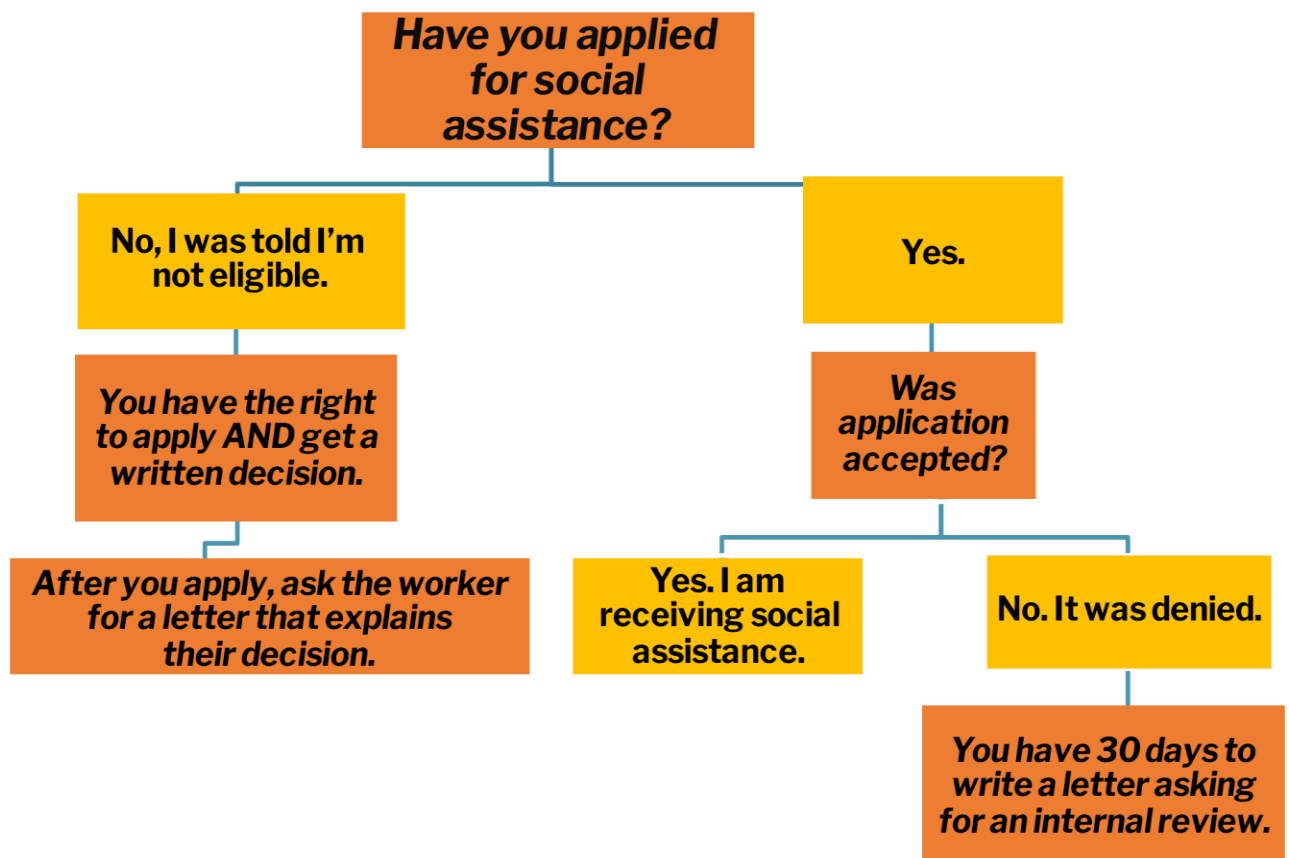
The only people **NOT** eligible for Social Assistance:

1. Those with enforceable removal orders who haven't applied for Permanent Resident (PR) status based on humanitarian and compassionate (H & C) grounds who can leave the country.
2. Visitors who have not made a refugee claim or a PR application.
3. Tourists

Am I a “visitor”? Chart

According to...	Visitor	Worker/ Student	Person without status
Immigration, Refugees Citizenship Canada	YES	NO	NO
Social Assistance Ministry	YES	YES	YES
Social Assistance Offices	YES	YES	YES
Social Benefits Tribunal	YES	MAYBE	MAYBE

What to do if an application for social assistance is denied Flowchart



Status, Eligibility, and Immigration Consequences Chart

Immigration Status	Eligible for SA?	Potential consequences to Immigration application?
PR applicant	YES	YES for OW, YES for ODSP
Sponsor	YES	YES for OW, not for ODSP
Sponsored person	YES	YES for OW and YES for ODSP
H & C applicant	YES	YES, unless exemption granted
Refugee claimant	YES	NO
Protected person	YES	NO
TRP Holder	MAYBE	YES, unless exemption granted

4. Supporting Documents

This section provides sample documents that trainers can adapt and use for the training.



Flyer	18
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Immigration Status & Social Assistance

Legal Information for Community Workers



Do your clients know if they are eligible for OW or ODSP?
How can receiving social assistance affect immigration applications?
How can you support clients?

This free workshop is for you!

You will:

- Understand who is eligible for social assistance (OW and ODSP)
- Learn how to support people who want to apply for assistance
- Understand how receiving social assistance can affect some immigration applications
- Learn about tips and resources you can share with clients

DATE and TIME: *add date and time*

PLACE: *add venue (online or physical)*

REGISTER: *add registration details*

Immigration Status & Social Assistance

Legal Information for Community Workers



AGENDA (sample)

• Welcome, Introductory Activity (Myth Busting)	9:00–9:15
• Learning Goals Systemic Barriers & Lived Reality	9:15–9:20
• Does immigration status affect social assistance?	9:20–9:40
• Case scenario activity and discussion	9:40–9:55
• <i>BREAK (10 minutes)</i>	9:55–10:05
• Does social assistance affect immigration applications?	10:05–10:25
• Case scenario activity and discussion	10:25–10:40
• What can community workers can do? Q & A	10:40–10:45
• Useful Resources	10:45–10:55
• Wrap-up, Feedback, Evaluation	10:55 –11:00

Evaluation Form

Legal Information for Community Workers' Training: **Immigration Status & Social Assistance**

	1 Strongly DISAGREE	2 â	3 â	4 Strongly AGREE
1. The objectives of the presentation were clearly stated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The facilitator communicated the ideas clearly and effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Before the presentation, I felt confident about my knowledge of immigration status and social assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. After the presentation, I feel more confident about my knowledge of immigration status and social assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Before the presentation, I knew where to find legal help for clients about immigration status and social assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What was the most useful part of the presentation and why?

7. Do you have any suggestions for how the presentation could be improved?

8. How will you use this information in your work?

9. Other comments and/or suggestions for future training topics: