

Helpful Services for Lawyers and the Community

The Refugee Law Office provides important support to private refugee law lawyers and community legal clinics.

For example, our staff share research, provide expert advice on complex cases and mentor young lawyers. We also work with community agencies to develop stronger relationships to benefit shared clients.

Staff is available to speak to groups about issues affecting refugees and procedures in refugee determination. And we listen – gathering information that will help us better meet community needs. The Refugee Law Office acts as a “window” to the refugee community. We share information - about LAO services and new developments in refugee and immigration law - with community groups.

We also provide training sessions to the private bar and non-governmental organizations on new issues in the practice of refugee law.



A Proud Tradition

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) stands firmly on the side of providing access to justice for immigrants and refugees.

High-quality refugee law services are a proud part of our thirty-year tradition of providing equal access to justice for low-income Ontarians. Today, more than ever, the demand for refugee law services is growing and client needs are becoming more complex.



Contact Details

The Refugee Law Office is located at 375 University Avenue, Suite 206. The office is one block south of Dundas Street in Toronto. The closest subway station is St. Patrick. To make an appointment, please call 416-977-8111.

How To Apply for a Legal Aid Certificate

In the Toronto area, refugees can go to any of the following legal aid offices:

Toronto

375 University Avenue, Suite 204
Closest subway stop: St. Patrick
Telephone: 416-598-0200

Etobicoke

5415 Dundas Street West
Closest subway stop: Kipling
Telephone: 416-237-1216

North York

45 Sheppard Avenue East, Suite 106
Closest subway stop: Sheppard
Telephone: 416-730-1588

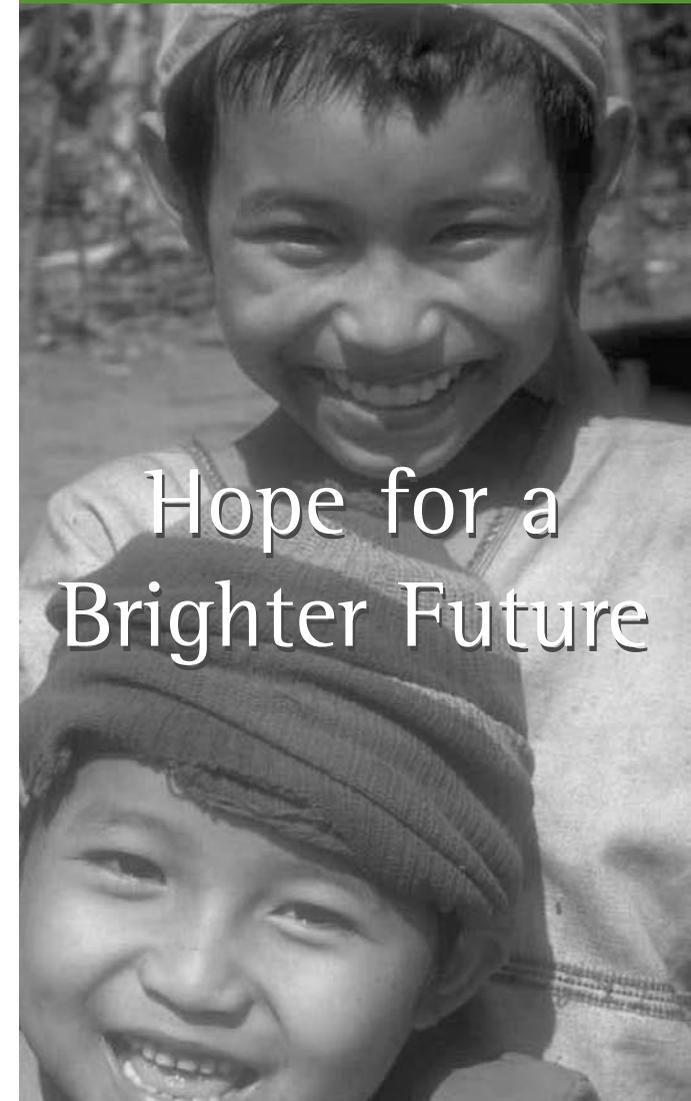
Scarborough

1921 Eglinton Avenue East, Unit 1A
Closest subway stop: Warden
Telephone: 416-750-7172

Toll-free: 1-800-668-8258

Check the white pages of your phone book under “Legal Aid” for the address of the legal aid office nearest you. A list of offices outside of Toronto is also available at www.legalaid.on.ca.

Ce document est disponible en français
Legal Aid Ontario receives financial assistance from
the Government of Ontario.



Hope for a Brighter Future

The Refugee Law Office

An Innovative Approach

The Refugee Law Office provides a range of services for refugees, delivered by skilled lawyers, community legal workers and support staff.

Our people have comprehensive experience in human rights work and refugee advocacy – we fully understand the many hardships that refugees and their families face. We are ready to help refugees from all over the world.

Refugee Law Office staff speak English, French, Spanish, Farsi (Persian), Azari, Turkish, Amharic, Arabic, Albanian, Italian and Tigrigna. We'll arrange for interpreters and translate documents for our clients if required.

The Refugee Law Office staff is committed to ensuring refugee claims are resolved fairly and accurately, with a solid track record of successfully completing complex, groundbreaking cases.

High-Quality Services

Representation for Refugee Claimants

The Refugee Law Office represents refugee claimants who have a legal aid certificate, at refugee determination hearings before the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).



Clients receive the dedicated service of a lawyer and community legal worker to help them through the process – every step of the way.

We help refugees complete all the necessary government paperwork, including the “Personal Information Form”. We also help prepare claimants for hearings and represent them at the IRB. If the hearing is not successful, we can seek review of the IRB’s decision with an application to the Federal Court of Canada.

Checklist for Refugee Claimants

If you need help with your refugee claim, here’s what you can do:

- Go to a legal aid office near you and apply for a legal aid certificate. LAO staff will interview you and decide if you can receive legal aid. People with no income, or who are on social assistance, almost always qualify.
- Once you have a legal aid certificate, you need to choose a lawyer. You may use the certificate to choose a private lawyer (lists of lawyers are available at LAO offices), or a lawyer from the Refugee Law Office.
- If you choose the Refugee Law Office, call 416-977-8111 to make your first appointment.
- Bring your immigration papers and legal aid certificate to your first appointment.
- Be prepared to discuss the reasons you fear persecution in your native country.



Representation at Detention Reviews

The Refugee Law Office provides representation at detention reviews for detainees held on immigration matters at the Immigration Holding Centre (Heritage Inn) in Toronto, Toronto West Detention Centre, the Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ontario and the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario.

We can also offer advice and referrals to assist detainees held at other facilities.

For other immigration matters, (for example appeals to the Immigration Appeals Division, Humanitarian and Compassionate applications) detainees will have to apply for a legal aid certificate and the Refugee Law Office may be able to assist them.

Representation at detention reviews is available to refugees and immigrants.

Clients do not have to have a legal aid certificate, but must still meet certain financial eligibility criteria.



Checklist for Detainees

If you are being held in detention and you need legal help, here’s what you can do:

- Apply for a legal aid certificate, which will enable you to hire a private lawyer, or seek help from the Refugee Law Office without a certificate.
- If you choose the Refugee Law Office, ask someone in the detention facility – an institution social worker, chaplain or community group advocate supporting you – to help set up an appointment. You can place a collect call to the office from detention at 416-977-8111.
- A lawyer or community legal worker from the Refugee Law Office will come to see you in detention. Have your immigration identification number available and be ready to provide a history of your immigration status in Canada.
- If you’re seeking release from detention, think of people who could post a bond for you. If you can’t think of anyone, talk to your lawyer about applying for the Toronto Bail Program.