

Summer News from LIFE*SPIN

July 2022

Many benefits are based on you Filing Income Taxes for 2021

July is the month that begins to impact all tax credits and pensions that are tax based. London Housing also now requires a copy of your income tax assessment to apply for and maintain your subsidized housing.

Other changes have come into being, as with the Disability Tax Credit. Canadian Revenue agency updated the criteria on DTC; Mental functions and Life Sustaining Therapy may make you eligible for Disability Tax Credits (DTC) but read the fine print. For folks under 40 years-old, the approval for a DTC also makes you eligible for a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) that will provide extra financial resources to help you live with disability barriers.

For information on RDSP's and how to apply, see

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f19a1d28746323bdabaaf31/t/60be403e4140f85162fa95c7/1623081037453/RDSP++with+logo-Aug+1.pdf>

If you qualify for the Canada Child Benefit – Young Child Supplement, you can get retroactive payment for the CCBYCS, you and your spouse or common law partner if applicable must have a filed and assessed 2019 and 2020 tax and benefit return before December 31, 2023. No retroactive payments will be issued after this date. https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/ccb-young-child-supplement.html?utm_campaign=not-applicable&utm_medium=vanity-url&utm_source=canada-ca_ccb-young-child-supplement

If you have not filed your 2019, 2020, or 2021 taxes yet, we can help.

LIFE*SPIN Community Volunteer Income Tax Program:

Book your appointment now to complete your 2021 tax return! We can also do your tax return, as far back as 2011! Please fill out an appointment form at <https://form.jotform.com/221305529033244>

Please remember to set your phone to receive calls from unknown caller, as all our staff are working from home.

LIFE*SPIN Free Store

The Free Store has now started Stage 2 of our *Covid-19 Safety Plan*. The Free Store is presently closed but will reopen for Registered Shoppers only on Tuesdays. **All Shoppers must be registered**, using our on-line Intake Form found on our website: <https://form.jotform.com/221305775229254>.

You only need to register once and we ask that you follow the requested rules.

- Each household of registered shoppers can shop at the Free Store *once a month*.
- The Free Store will be open on *Tuesdays, beginning June 7th*, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for Registered Shoppers only
- Registered Shoppers will line-up at the side, on Ontario Street, 3 meters from the door, and you are asked to stay back two meters from the person in line in front of you.
- Before registered shoppers enter the store, we will ask your first and last name, as entered on your registration form. We will provide you a clean mask and hand-sanitizer.
- Two registered shoppers will be permitted at a time, for up to 15 minutes.
- We request only *one registered shopper from each household* enter at a time.
- You may choose one outfit for each family member, as donations allow.
- Housewares may be available (such as linens and small kitchen appliances)
- For safety, our staff will take a Rapid Covid Test each morning, before opening. In the event that someone tests positive, the store will not be able to open that day.
- We are not ready to accept donations at this time, but ask if you have a stash of plastic grocery bags, please bring them along with you.

Thank you for your patience and kindness during this transition

Please take time to watch LIFE*SPIN VIDEO INSTRUCTION:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rV2IPA3W_oI

Community Food Box Project

As food costs continue to rise, we know that many of the families we serve are struggling to feed their families nutritious food, especially fresh produce. There are a number of helpful resources on our website at <https://www.lifespın.org/food> and we encourage you to use the programs that may help support your family.

The Community Food Box Program is for low-income Londoners who are at high-risk of bad health outcomes from exposure to Covid and for those who struggle with shopping, due to age or mobility. With generous support from On the Move Organics (OTMO) and their regular customers, as well as donations from LIFE*SPIN donors, we are able to provide a limited number of free boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables to our community. The order form can be found at <https://form.jotform.com/221305917411245>.

You can also purchase your own boxes of fresh produce to be delivered to you. You can pick out exactly what items you would like and how much, The link to purchase food directly is at <https://onthemoveorganics.ca/>

Grow Food

<https://www.cbc.ca/life/home/planning-your-first-edible-garden-here-are-the-steps-to-follow-and-common-mistakes-to-avoid-1.5532253>

Here are some compelling reasons why you should consider starting your own garden this year:

1. Growing your own fresh fruits and vegetables is a great way to stretch your food budget.
2. Homegrown vegetables provide readily-available nutrition (every day a vegetable is off the vine it loses its health benefits).
3. No harmful chemicals are sprayed on your veggies.
4. It would provide fresh air and outdoor exercise for the whole family.
5. Forges bonding experiences for family and community members.
6. Allows you to control your food supply and be more self-sufficient.
7. Gardening is a great activity to help relieve stress and improve sleep quality.
8. Reduces your carbon footprint.
9. Statistically, gardeners live longer!

Don't let lack of space deter you. No matter how much room you have, you can grow your own vegetables

Office of the Community Advocate

Sometimes you just need help to access supports or resources. LIFE*SPIN's Community Advocate is there to help, and can assist you to complete applications for:

- disability supports (ODSP, CPP-D, Assistive Devices)
- financial supports (home modification grants, Disability Tax Credits, low-cost internet, pensions, seniors support and benefits)
- subsidized and co-op housing, as well as a request for a property standards inspection
- health benefits (prescriptions, dental, vision, special diet, pregnancy allowance)
- and Discretionary benefits available through the City.

If you would like assistance with one of these issues, you can request a telephone intake appointment. Please submit your request at: <https://form.jotform.com/221304055872248>

We have numerous workshops on our website at www.lifespın.org at [www.https://www.lifespın.org/community-advocate](https://www.lifespın.org/community-advocate)

LIFE*SPIN advocates on behalf of individuals, as an intermediary, when help is needed. We also provide educational resources and as a connection to numerous community programs. In addition, we provide assisted access to resources that may assist individuals seeking to empower themselves.

Clients often request assistance from LIFE*SPIN for a specific referral or resource. Others may

require more in-depth and on-going supports to more thoroughly address several over-lapping issues or barriers that affect their lives.

- Canada Pension Plan
- Ontario Works (OW) / Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Housing /Co-op applications The LIFE*SPIN Co-op Housing Kit is available to download at: <https://www.lifespın.org/s/London-Co-operative-Housing-Kit>
- Health Benefits, including Medical/Dental/Optical/Assistive Devices
- Senior's Wellness
- Welcome Baby

If you would like an appointment to speak with our Community Advocate, please complete the Intake Form at <https://form.jotform.com/221304055872248>

We cannot provide any legal advice or assistance. If you need help with a legal matter, including Landlord/Tenant Issues, please contact Neighborhood Legal Services or Community Legal Services. Both clinics offer free legal assistance to families that are low-income.

In the course of our advocacy work, we often identify common issues and will try to offer **information workshops** or **information resources** that will help. Please do visit the "Resources" tab on our website at www.lifespın.org to see if there are resources that may assist you.

August 8th, 2022 at 10:00: a workshop on Applying for Discretionary Benefits. Find out how to apply and what is covered. This is an excellent workshop on learning what is available to you.

To Register for this workshop:

<https://form.jotform.com/221514582325249>

LIFE*SPIN has published the following information resources that address common issues that may be of help to you:

Wills and Powers of Attorney <https://cleoconnect.ca/resource/yourlegalrights/will-and-power-of-attorney-fundamentals-wills-power-of-attorney-for-property-and-powers-of-attorney-for-personal-care/>

Registered Disability Savings

Plans <https://cleoconnect.ca/resource/yourlegalrights/registered-disability-savings-plan-who-can-get-one-how-to-get-one-and-what-are-the-advantages/>

Registered Education Savings Plans - You may qualify for a Canada Learning Bond of \$500, when you open a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for your child:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f19a1d28746323bdabaaf31/t/62d6fd648e705e5c66af1111/1658256741121/RESP+BOOK+with+logo-+July+2022.pdf>

Co-op Housing Kit for London <https://www.lifespın.org/s/London-Co-operative-Housing-Kit>

How to Access Low-Cost Internet Services (<https://www.lifespın.org/community-advocate>)

How to Access Financial Resources Services (<https://www.lifespın.org/community-advocate>)

How to Access Subsidized Housing Services within our Community
(<https://www.lifespın.org/community-advocate>)

Housing Issues

Property Standards: If there are issues with your housing, you need to contact your landlord in writing. If you do not hear back from them in two weeks, please send a copy of the letter to property standards enforcement at enforcement@london.ca along with a request for an inspection.

In February, we asked you to identify properties that the city should inspect for property standards violations. One of our student teams put together a full report to City Council that was submitted on May 17th. If you would like to view the full report, you can find it on our website at <https://www.lifespın.org/s/Student-Report-to-London-City-Council-regarding-By-Law-CP-16-as-they-relate-to-Community-Standards-3.pdf>

Many of you also submitted photos and addresses of vacant properties that violated the bylaw that covers them. All of the identified properties can be found on the map at the end of the report above.

Neighbourhood Legal Services can assist you with filing at the Housing Tribunal 519-438-2890

Welcome Baby Program

Since Covid-19, our Community Food Box project identified moms who were pregnant or nursing. For new moms and for those who were expecting, we are planning a fall educational event fair that will include many item supports for mom as well as educational supports. This will be organized by our student nursing and student doula teams. This will be a very important event to attend, to assist in preparing you for your baby.

The clinic will see anyone in the household provided they do not already have a doctor. Care for everyone will continue until the youngest child reaches the age of five, or until you can be placed with a primary care provider in the community as this is the goal of the clinic.

One of the issues we found that was common, is that families with young children are going to walk-in clinics or emerg with their young children, because they do not have family doctors.

If you would like a referral to the clinic, please complete an Intake Form for our Community Advocate at <https://form.jotform.com/21097530922251>. Leia can also assist you in

making application for discretionary benefits for cribs, pregnancy allowance, and provide you information and support for accessing Canada Child Benefits.

We hope you have a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing you later this year.

The LIFE*SPIN Team