

Building a New Life in Ontario

A guide for newcomers

LEARNING ABOUT: YOUR NEW HOME AND COMMUNITY

As a newcomer to Ontario, you may have many questions. This guide will help you learn more about:

- Finding services in your community
- Looking for jobs and training
- Improving your language skills
- Getting many other kinds of help.

Getting started

Adjusting to a new community and a new way of life takes time. Some newcomers adjust to Ontario quickly and easily. You may, for example, have friends or family here who can help. For others, settling in Ontario may take a longer period of time.

Where to get help

Settlement Services

Newcomers often need help, especially during their first few months in Ontario. It is important to know that there are many services that can give you the help you need. These services, called 'settlement services', are located in many Ontario communities. They are free, and they can often give you help in many languages. Here are just a few of the ways settlement services can help you:

- Answering questions about your new community
- Helping you find a job or get more training
- Finding a school or child care
- Accessing health care services
- Finding the government and community services you need
- Translating documents or interpreting services
- Helping you find English/French language classes
- Helping you find a place to live
- Helping you fill out forms.

How to find a settlement service near you

Most communities in Ontario have a settlement service for newcomers. To find a service in your community, visit the 'After You Arrive' section of the Ontario Immigration website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

A Checklist: Settling in Ontario

Here are some of the most common steps newcomers take after arriving in Canada.

Settlement services in your community can help with these and many other steps you may need to take:

- ✓ Find a place to live
- ✓ Apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- ✓ Apply for an Ontario health card (OHIP)
- ✓ Open a bank account
- ✓ Get information about working in Ontario
- ✓ Find the services you need, close to home
- ✓ Locate a doctor, dentist or other health services
- ✓ Contact an employment centre to help you find a job
- ✓ Find a public library and other community services
- ✓ Get information about your rights as an employee or tenant
- ✓ Find a school for your children
- ✓ Apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)
- ✓ Get a map of your community and learn about public transportation
- ✓ Find language classes for you and your family
- ✓ Learn about where to buy the things you need
- ✓ Apply for a Driver's Licence

Language training services

Canada has two official languages, English and French. It is important that you are able to communicate in the language of your community and the language used at work. Many newcomers have studied English before moving to Ontario. There are also many services in Ontario that can help you improve your language skills. To learn more, visit the 'Learn English' section of the Ontario Immigration website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

Other services for newcomers

There are many other kinds of community services you may find helpful. These include:

- Employment services
- Education services
- Public libraries
- Community information centres
- Community health centres
- Community recreation centres.

Employment services

Ontario has many different types of job and career opportunities. Ask your nearest settlement service about:

- **Job search workshops:** which can improve your job search skills
- **Mentoring programs:** which can help you meet someone in your profession
- **Work placement / internship programs:** which can help you get the Canadian experience you need
- **Bridge training programs:** which can help you upgrade your skills and move more quickly into your profession.

Do you work in a profession?

You should learn as much as you can about how to work in your field before you arrive. If you are a professional, such as a doctor or teacher, you can get help from Global Experience Ontario (GEO): an Access and Resource Centre for the Internationally Trained. GEO helps internationally trained individuals find out how to qualify for professional practice in Ontario. To learn more about GEO and working in Ontario, visit the 'Working' section of the Ontario Immigration website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

Education services

You may need to enrol your children in school. Or, you may want to upgrade your own education. Learn more by visiting the 'Studying' section of the Ontario Immigration website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

Public libraries

Public libraries are located in most Ontario communities. They provide many services for free. You can join your local library to borrow books, music, movies and other materials. Some libraries have materials in many languages. Most libraries can also give you free access to the internet. Many libraries have programs that help you get to know the community.

Community Information Centres

Community Information Centres can help you find services where you live. You can find your nearest Community Information Centre by:

- Dialing 211 on your telephone (if you live in Toronto, or in the Niagara Region, or Simcoe County)
- Visiting the 'After You Arrive' section of the Ontario Immigration website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca.

Community Health Centres

Community Health Centres offer health care and health promotion services in your community. They have doctors, nurses, dieticians, counsellors and community workers who provide education and advice about your health. They also have youth support services, seniors' outreach services, parent and child programs and community development programs.

Community recreation centres

Every city in Ontario has community programs and public recreation centres that you can use. Some centres have skating arenas, pools or gyms. Many of the programs and facilities are free or do not cost very much to use.

Where to learn more

Do you want to learn more about living, working and learning in Ontario? Visit the Ontario Immigration website at: www.OntarioImmigration.ca.