



## ORIENTATION TO CANADA

As a newcomer, you may have many questions about your transition to life in Canada. Settlement Service Organizations are funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada and can help you with exploring career options and finding employment, learning about getting your foreign credentials recognized, introducing you to community services and resources, helping you to register your children for school, finding government information, finding free language classes and much more.

### **To find a settlement organization near you:**

Permanent residents, including refugees: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

Temporary residents, including refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, and post-secondary international students: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/temporaryresidents>

## **EMERGENCIES:**

### **9-1-1 for Emergencies:**

In most places in B.C., the emergency phone number for fire, police, and ambulance is 9-1-1. The 9-1-1 call is free. When you call 9-1-1, an operator will answer the phone. The operator will ask if you need police, fire, or ambulance. 9-1-1 is for police, fire, or medical emergencies when immediate action is required: someone's health, safety, or property is in jeopardy, or a crime is in progress.

### **Non-emergency numbers & online crime reporting – Surrey:**

For police matters that do not require an immediate response, file a report online or call the non-emergency line. Non-Emergency Police: 604-599-0502 or Non-Emergency Fire: 604-543-6700

## **EMPLOYMENT AND ACCREDITATION**

### **Accreditation:**

The International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) is the provincially mandated credential evaluation service in British Columbia. They are also a member of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC). [www.bcit.ca/ices](http://www.bcit.ca/ices)

**Getting Your Credentials Assessed:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/prepare-life-canada/prepare-work/credential-assessment.html>

### **Education:**

Education Planner BC is a public service that improves access to post-secondary education in British Columbia. It has education-related resources and information for those exploring educational programs in BC. For more information: **BC Education Planner** [www.Educationplannerbc.ca](http://www.Educationplannerbc.ca)

## Employment:

There are many useful starting points for information and support when you begin your search for a job in Canada.

- Job Bank is the Government of Canada's source for jobs and labour market information.  
[www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)
- WorkBC Programs: <https://www.workbc.ca/discover-employment-services/online-employment-services>
- WorkBC Postings: <https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- Researching the Labour Market: <https://www.workbc.ca/research-labour-market>
- Planning to Work in Canada – An essential workbook for newcomers  
[www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/workbook-national.pdf](http://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/workbook-national.pdf)

## FAMILY RESOURCES:

**BC211** can help you find government and community services you may need. These include counselling, employment, child care, financial assistance, food, senior services, housing, legal services, immigrant services, education, arts and culture, recreation, health services, and support groups. The service is free and confidential (private). It is offered in many languages. Toll-free: 2-1-1 or [www.bc211.ca](http://www.bc211.ca)

**VictimLinkBC** is a toll-free, confidential telephone service offered in many languages. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime. It also provides immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence, including victims of human trafficking exploited for labour or sexual services. VictimLinkBC is funded by the B.C. government. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Toll-free: 1 800 563-0808 Email: [victimlinkbc@bc211.ca](mailto:victimlinkbc@bc211.ca) or form more information: [www.victiminfo.ca](http://www.victiminfo.ca)

**Crisis Centres and Crisis Lines** are staffed by people you can talk to. They can also help you find resources. All calls are free, and services are available in many languages. The following crisis lines can help you in time of need:

- **Crisis Line** (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Toll-free: 1 800 784-2433 (1 800 SUICIDE)  
[www.crisiscentre.bc.ca](http://www.crisiscentre.bc.ca)
- **Mental Health Support Line** is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Toll-free: 310-6789 (this phone number only has 7 numbers).
- **YouthInBC** is an online chat for young people from ages 12-24. It is open from 12 p.m. (noon) to 12 a.m. (midnight). [www.YouthInBC.com](http://www.YouthInBC.com)
- **CrisisCentreChat** is an online chat for people aged 25 and older. It is open from 12 p.m. (noon) until 1 a.m. [www.CrisisCentreChat.ca](http://www.CrisisCentreChat.ca)
- **The Kids Help Phone** is for children and youth. They give information and support to young people with any kind of problem. You can call, text, or access their mobile app or website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You do not have to tell them your name. The information you give them is confidential (they will not tell anyone that you called). Toll-free: 1 800 668-6868  
[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- **Helpline for Children** Phone: 310-1234 (no area code required)

## FRAUDS AND SCAMS:

Fraud and scams are when people lie to you to try and steal your money or your personal information. Fraud can also happen when someone lies, embellishes, exaggerates, or intentionally leaves out information. Fraudsters often target newcomers to Canada. **Recognizing and Reporting Immigration**

**Frauds and scams:** [www.welcomebc.ca](http://www.welcomebc.ca) **Online scams:** <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cyccp-cpci/is-si/index-eng.htm>

## GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Service Canada provides you access to the programs, services, and benefits from the Government of Canada and its many partners – online, by phone, and in person. Services that you can access include Social Insurance Number (SIN), passports, employment insurance, and more. [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca)

## HEALTH CARE

### Registering for Medical Services Plan (MSP)

All residents of B.C. must be registered with the Medical Services Plan (MSP). You need to apply to register for MSP. On your application, make sure you write your name exactly as it appears on other official documents. You should register for MSP as soon as you arrive in B.C. You may have to wait for up to 3 months for your application to be processed. If you do not have MSP, you should buy private medical insurance. If you need medical care in B.C. and you do not have MSP or private medical insurance, you will have to pay all medical costs yourself. These costs can be very high. For more information and to register for MSP, contact Health Insurance BC. Vancouver Area: 604 683-7151 Toll-free: 1 800 663-7100. To Apply for Healthcare: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/MSP/applyforhealthcare>

### Getting Your BC Services Card

You will need a BC Services Card to access health care and other government services. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/government-id/bc-services-card>



### HealthLink BC

HealthLink BC provides free non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. Information and advice is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by telephone, website, a mobile app, and printable information. All of HealthLink BC's services are free. HealthLink BC does not provide emergency services. If you have an urgent medical situation, call 9-1-1. [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)

### Finding a family doctor

If you live in British Columbia and need a family doctor or nurse practitioner, register for the Health Connect Registry. When you register, you are added to a centralized registry of primary care providers across your community. Registration takes less than 10 minutes. You need to provide: Personal Health Number (PHN), found on your BC Services Card, your home address, and your email address and phone number. For more information: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry>

## IMMIGRATION INQUIRIES

For information on immigration-related matters, contact Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada:

**Checking your application status:** <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=029&top=3>

**IRCC Call Centre:** 1-888-242-2100

**IRCC Application or Forms:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides.html>

## LANGUAGE TRAINING

There are many language classes offered to help adults learn to speak, read, and write English. The Canadian government offers Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). Adult refugees and permanent residents can take these classes for free. For more information:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/improve-english-french/classes.html>

For more information on LINC:

Surrey Language Assessment Centre LINC Assessment and Referral Centre

#408 – 7337 137th Street Surrey, BC V3W 1A4

Tel (604) 507-4150 Fax (604) 507-4155

### **Public Post Secondary Institutions Offer English Language Learning for Adults Courses:**

Permanent residents, refugees, and Canadian citizens do not pay tuition for these courses. Other costs may apply. For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/adult-education/adult-upgrading-learn-english?keyword=esl>

### **Private English schools and tutors**

Many private English schools and tutors (teachers) provide English language training. Most of these schools and classes are not regulated by government. Visit the Private Training Institutions

website: <https://www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca/about/contact-us>

## TRANSPORTATION

BC Transit provides bus service to communities outside the Vancouver area. You can download a local bus map and schedule on the BC Transit website. You can also get print copies of the Rider's Guide at your local government office or transit centre. For more information. [www.bctransit.com](http://www.bctransit.com)

## USEFUL RESOURCES FOR NEWCOMERS:

- **BC Newcomers Guide (Available in many languages):** <https://www.welcomebc.ca/Start-Your-Life-in-B-C/documents/BC-Newcomers-Guide-English.aspx>
- **Welcome to Canada Kit:** <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
- **Living in Canada Tool:** <https://www.cic.gc.ca/lctvac/english/index>
- **Working in Canada:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/prepare-life-canada/prepare-work.html>

### **Childcare:**

Childcare BC has information about finding child care in your community. [www.gov.bc.ca/childcare](http://www.gov.bc.ca/childcare)

**City of Surrey:** <https://www.surrey.ca/>

**Driver's Licences and Driving in BC:** <https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/visit-dl-office/Pages/Default.aspx>

### **Food Banks**

Food banks can provide free groceries to those who qualify.

- [Fraser Valley Regional Food Bank](#), 5337 180 Street Surrey, BC, Tel: 778-617-3000
- [Guru Nanak Food Bank](#) Unit 101 15299 68 Ave, Surrey BC, Tel: 604-580-1313
- [Muslim Food Bank](#) 104 – 12941 115 Ave Surrey, BC V3R 0E2 Tel: 1-866-248-3868
- [Salvation Army Community & Family Services](#) 13474 96 Avenue, Surrey, BC V3V 1Y9 Tel: 604-496-5172
- [Salvation Army—White Rock Community Church](#), 15417 Roper Ave, White Rock, BC Tel: 604-531-7314
- [Sources – White Rock/South Surrey Food Bank](#), 2343 156th St. Surrey BC V4A 4V5 Tel: 604-531-8168
- [Surrey Food Bank](#), 13478 78 Ave, Surrey Tel: 604-581-5443

### **Housing:**

Finding a Place to Live – WelcomeBC: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/Start-Your-Life-in-B-C/Find-a-Place-to-Live>

BC Housing – Tenants Programs and Resources: <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/tenant-programs-resources>

Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre: <https://tenants.bc.ca/>

### **LGBTQ2S+ Resources:**

B.C.'s Queer Resource Centre (Qmunity). [www.qmunity.ca](http://www.qmunity.ca)

Pride Education Network. [www.pridenet.ca](http://www.pridenet.ca)

PFlag – Surrey: <https://pflagsurrey.ca/>

**Libraries:** <https://www.surreylibraries.ca/>

### **People with Disabilities**

People with disabilities may have special needs for housing or jobs. If you have a disability, you can find support programs in your community.

Disability Alliance BC. Vancouver area: 604 872-1278 Toll-free: 1 800 663-1278 or contact:

[www.disabilityalliancebc.org](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org)

### **Recycling:**

Recycling Council of BC: [Recycling Council of British Columbia \(rcbc.ca\)](http://Recycling Council of British Columbia (rcbc.ca))

*This information is provided to newcomer and ELL families seeking settlement support services from the Surrey Schools Welcome Centre. Information contained in this resource was collected from many sources and was current at the time of publication. This resource should not be considered a comprehensive listing of all resources and services available to newcomers. For additional resources and updated information, please see relevant websites and/or refer to information on Canada's settlement program and services here: [www.Canada.ca/newcomerservices](http://www.Canada.ca/newcomerservices) SSWC (August 2023)*