Newcomer welcome package

[*town name*]



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Guide for writer

As someone dedicated to supporting newcomers in Alberta, we have developed this template tool that will assist you in your role as supporting and welcoming newcomers to your area. This tool was designed specifically for the *Support Networks for Rural Newcomers to Alberta* Project where community members, local libraries, and others are the primary supports for newcomers in their rural/remote areas. This template is free to use for users of all backgrounds, as it is designed to be easily modified to suit the unique needs and assets of your town, allowing you to provide more effective and catered support to newcomers.

This template is structured in a user-friendly format, making it easy for you to add or remove information, include local resource, and personalize the content to reflect the services in your area. The text that is in *orange*, is designed for you to write in information that is relevant to your area; for example, you will see *[town name]* throughout the document where you can insert your town name and other specific information to your area. Additionally, you may notice that not all sections apply to your town, such as “Local Immigration Partnerships” or “Settlement Services” Please feel free to add or remove sections as you see fit. The Newcomer Welcome Package can be used alongside other tools, workshops, orientation sessions to welcome newcomers. If capacity allows, you can work through the package with newcomers rather than just handing them off.

Thank you for your dedication to supporting newcomers settle and thrive in Alberta. We hope this template helps foster a collaborative and united approach in supporting newcomers throughout the province.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*A land acknowledgement is an important step towards diversity, inclusion, as well as Truth and Reconciliation. We believe it is important to include a land acknowledgement and to share knowledge about the traditional land and unceded territory your town is in. This would also be eye-opening for newcomers to gain an understanding of Canada’s colonial history and why we are working towards Truth and Reconciliation. Feel free to add other additional information about the land you reside in. Click here if you’d like to see examples of Land Acknowledgements.*

Other Acknowledgements

This Newcomer Welcome Package was made possible through the Settlement, Integration, and Language funding grant from the Government of Alberta. This package was authored by Crystal Guzman, Engagement & Research Lead, with contributions from Meghan Cunningham, Research & Policy Lead, and Celine Truong, Research Coordinator. The Newcomer Welcome Package was designed as a template for rural municipalities to modify and apply to their own areas. This template would not have been possible without the contribution and time of the participants of the Rural Support Network from across Alberta, whose insights, collaboration, and engagement were imperative to the creation of this tool. Participating settlement agencies included Brooks County Immigration Services (BCIS) and Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle (FRAP). BCIS is a rural project of Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS); part of CCIS’ hub and spoke model which serves the communities of Hanna, Drumheller, Brooks, and Taber. FRAP promotes the cultural diversity and inclusion of Francophones for the settlement and resettlement of Francophones in Alberta. Municipal participants work in the following communities:

Claresholm

Drayton Valley

Drumheller

Fort Macleod

Hanna

Hinton

Lac La Biche

Peace River

Paintearth Country

Slave Lake

Taber

Trochu

Two Hills

Vegreville

Wainwright

Wood Buffalo region

Purpose:

This Welcome Package has been created to support you and your family as you settle into your new life here in Canada. It contains important information to help you navigate living, working, and learning in *[town name***]**. The package provides easy-to-understand resources, tools, and information about the services available in *[town name].* To find what you need, you can refer to the table of contents, which is divided into four main sections: Community Services, Employment, Newcomer Arrival, and Language.

Note to reader:

If you are reading this document online, you can easily navigate to specific sections by clicking on the titles in the Table of Contents. For instance, if you want to know more about "family doctors," simply move your mouse over the title "family doctors" in the table of contents, press the "ctrl" key on your keyboard, and click to go directly to that section in this document. Additionally, you will find links to helpful resources throughout the document. These links are displayed in blue font and are underlined. By clicking on these links, you can access the corresponding resources.

newcomer arrival

This section provides crucial information to be aware of prior to your arrival in Canada, as well as key guidelines for your first fourteen days in the country. You will also find valuable resources that will help you in the process of settling down after your arrival.

Before Arrival

Navigating the challenges of immigrating to a new country can be intimidating. If you have friends or family planning to move to Canada, it would be beneficial to share this information with them. Canada has two official languages: English and French. Developing your communication skills in one of these languages is important for a successful settlement in Canada. You will be better equipped to navigate and familiarize yourself with your new surroundings. The choice of which language to learn depends on the specific region you decide to reside in. For instance, in [*town*], [*English/French*] is predominantly spoken.

Before arriving in Canada, it is important to have a good understanding of various key aspects. By clicking [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/video/before-you-arrive-canada.html), you will be directed to a website featuring a ten-minute video that highlights the most crucial information you need to know before leaving your home country to live in Canada.

Visas and Immigration Streams

A Canadian visa allows you to enter the country of Canada. There are many different types of Canadian visas and streams to immigrate into the country, allowing you to work and/or study here.[[1]](#footnote-2)

* [Study Permit:](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada.html) This is required for international students who wish to study in Canada.
* [The Express Entry program:](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/eligibility/canadian-experience-class.html) This is not a visa itself, but a system to manage applications for permanent residence. Express Entry includes programs such as the Federal Skilled Worker Program, Federal Skilled Trades Program, and Canadian Experience Class.
* [Work permit:](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/permit.html) This permit allows one to work in Canada temporarily. It may be issued by a Canadian employer or through a specific program such as the [International Experience Canada program](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec1.html?adobe_mc_sdid=SDID%3D5D2CC876250B9532-06D78DF1890B7E88%7CMCORGID%3DA90F2A0D55423F537F000101%40AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1684500041&adobe_mc_ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F).
* [Alberta Advantage Immigration Program:](https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-advantage-immigration-program.aspx) This is a program to allow people to become permanent residents in Alberta. This program selects individuals who have the necessary skills to fill job vacancies or those who want to purchase or establish a business in Alberta. Additionally, applicants should be able to support their families. The program is jointly operated by the governments of Alberta and Canada.
* [Family Sponsorship:](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/family-sponsorship.html) This program allows Canadian citizens or permanent residents to sponsor certain relatives to live, study, and work in Canada.

Immigration Status

For the most up-to-date information on immigration streams to live and work in Canada, please refer to the "Immigration and Citizenship" section on the [Government of Canada website](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada.html). This will provide you with the latest and most accurate details regarding various immigration options available in Canada.

The pathways mentioned above explain how you can obtain [permanent residency](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/pr-card/understand-pr-status.html) in Canada. Even if you are currently a [temporary resident](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents.html) (such as a visitor, student, temporary worker, or temporary resident holder), you can still apply for permanent residency[[2]](#footnote-3). A temporary resident is a foreign national who is legally authorized to enter Canada for temporary purposes, such as those highlighted above.

Once you obtain permanent residency, you gain various rights, including access to most social and health benefits enjoyed by Canadian citizens. You can also live, work, or study anywhere in Canada without the need of a work or study permit. Additionally, you become eligible to apply for [Canadian citizenship](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship.html). To apply for citizenship, most applicants must be a permanent resident of Canada, have lived in the country for at least three years, filed their taxes, passed a citizenship test, and demonstrate language skills in either English or French[[3]](#footnote-4). You can check your eligibility for citizenship [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/become-canadian-citizen/eligibility.html).

First 14 Days

This document aims to provide you with essential information when you first come to Canada. The information below, will cover the three most crucial categories of things to know as you arrive and start settling into your new home: Basic Needs, Housing Information, and Newcomer Services (*if applicable*). By exploring these key areas, you will be better equipped to navigate the initial stages of your Canadian journey.

Basic Needs

Taking care of your basic needs is the most important thing when settling somewhere new. It means making sure you have enough food, a safe place to live, and suitable clothes for Canada's weather. This will help you succeed and adjust to life in this country. If you need food when you first arrive, there is a place called [*name of food bank*] at *[address of food bank]* where you can go. It can provide you with food during the first few weeks in Canada. To get affordable clothes, you can visit *[name of thrift store/consignment store/goodwill/church clothing donations, etc.]*. They have clothes for all seasons in Canada and for everyone in your family. Finding a place to live in [town name] can be challenging. To learn more about immediate housing options, you can *[visiting a rental website, calling a known landlord, connecting with \_\_].*

Housing Information

If you are renting a home in *[town name]*, it is crucial to be aware of your rights and responsibilities as a renter. The [Residential Tenancies Act](https://www.alberta.ca/aaip-rural-renewal-stream.aspx) covers the rules and regulations that govern the obligations of both landlords and tenants. It includes topics such as security deposits, resolving conflicts between landlords and tenants, and other important details. Before you sign any lease agreements, it is essential to thoroughly understand the terms and conditions. Be sure to ask questions with a trusted source *[example of individual who they can contact]* for clarification before you put your signature on the document.

When you are renting, you might have to pay for utilities and other bills in addition to your rent. “Utilities" refers to the essential services needed to maintain the property and make it functional. These services typically include electricity, water, and natural gas which is used for heating. The specific arrangement for utility payments can vary depending on the rental agreement or lease. It is important to clarify with your landlord or property manager whether the cost of utilities is included in the rent or if you are responsible for paying them separately. It is also important to determine if some utilities are included, such as heat and water, but not electricity. If your landlord asks you to make arrangements to pay for your own utilities, you can begin to search online for the best prices for your needs through different utility companies such as [Enmax Energy](https://www.enmax.com/home/electricity-and-natural-gas/easymax?gclid=CjwKCAjwvJyjBhApEiwAWz2nLbjTCOGQeacZeBS-i2vkR-X656-hSzQFhYcV-aWQDnis9hw7IffBbBoCFuoQAvD_BwE), [ATCO Energy](https://energy.atco.com/en-ca/home-energy.html?utm_source=Adwords&utm_medium=Search&utm_campaign=Base%20Buy&gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwvJyjBhApEiwAWz2nLRReVG51y37UgpgGP6scMpgGbfwmoe4jNqz8RBj2lbb5PWfcQ08BARoCQF4QAvD_BwE), [Direct Energy](https://www.directenergy.ca/msid/6842?customer_id=777-478-7206&gclid=CjwKCAjwvJyjBhApEiwAWz2nLYAiD2kEZbQhwRlJN7xBDXx_7VR6uPja5ZUbitDC_x6Wua7p5Hv2fhoCCCkQAvD_BwE), [[This website](https://energyrates.ca/alberta/) *has different options according to your postal code, if you’d like to provide local options as well].*

In addition to utilities, there are other expenses to consider. One of these is renter's/tenant’s insurance[[4]](#footnote-5). This type of insurance protects your personal belongings if they get stolen or damaged and also protects you as the tenant. Renter’s insurance provides financial protection if you accidentally cause property damage to others while you are renting the property. Lastly, renter’s insurance covers living expenses in the case that your living space is no longer habitable due to a covered event such as a fire. You can explore a few options that match your lifestyle and budge such as [Westland Insurance,](https://www.westlandinsurance.ca/home/tenant-insurance/ab/) [Square One Insurance,](https://www.squareone.ca/tenant/alberta) or [Alberta Motor’s Association](https://ama.ab.ca/insurance/property/tenant-insurance).

Also, when you rent a place, you may need to set up phone, cable, and internet services. These services are separate from your rent and require you to sign up with different companies. It is important to research and compare different options to find the best services for you.

Thinking about these extra expenses will help you plan your budget better and make sure you have enough money for everything when you rent a place. Make sure to talk to your landlord and ask any questions before you sign a lease.

*It may be useful to insert a chart such as the one below, outlining average cost of living for different sized families based on the town (Example below):*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Household Size* | *Average cost of rent* | *Average cost of groceries* |
| *1* | *$1200/month* | *$500/month* |
| *2* | *$1600/month* | *$800/month* |
| *3* | *$2000/month* | *$1000/month* |

*This chart can be made more comprehensive by including basic needs such as transportation estimates, utilities, phone bills, childcare costs, etc.*

Newcomer Services

*[Town name]* has an organization called *[organization name]* that is located in *[location of organization]* that has services that are dedicated specifically for newcomers to Alberta. These services are free of charge and will help you adjust to life here. *[provide more information as needed].*

Community Services

In this section, you will find valuable information about the resources and services offered in your community to help you feel at home in *[town name]*. Building a sense of community is crucial for successfully integrating into Canada.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)

The Family and Community Support Services program[[5]](#footnote-6) promotes and enhances the wellbeing of all Albertans, communities, and families. This program aims to enhance lifestyle, improve quality of life, and help individuals prevent and manage crisis situations, through community support. Communities design and deliver social programs that take a “people helping people” approach to improve quality of life and build capacity in families. [Here](https://fcssaa.org/about-fcss-programs/find-your-fcss-program/) is a general overview of FCSS offices in Alberta. In [*town name*], [\_\_] is the FCSS office that can be contacted for specific programs such as [\_\_]. *Feel free to include specific programs, contact information, etc., that are specific to your municipality.*

Libraries

Public libraries are important places in *[town name]* that help create a welcoming community.[[6]](#footnote-7) Getting a library card is free, and the library offers countless possibilities for you and your family. The *[name of library]* has resources for everyone in Alberta, including seniors, adults, youth, and children. They have programs like *[programs for children, students, conversation circles, networking events, etc.]*. Once you obtain your library card, and if you are able to, you can choose to download an app called [Libby](https://help.libbyapp.com/en-us/6010.htm) to borrow electronic books and read them on your device. You can also borrow audiobooks, which are great for listening and learning English or French. The app lets you adjust the speed of the audiobook, so you can choose a slower or faster setting that suits you. Remember to reach out to your local library to discover the many programs and services they offer for you and your family!

Places of Worship

*[Town name]* has many places of worship, where you can connect with people of your same faith. *[Some community centres may also provide faith services. If you know the names of the community centres or churches in your town, please list them here!]*

Transportation

*[This section is specific to your municipality. You may not have public transportation, but maybe there is a community organization or a private organization that provides transportation services. Maybe if newcomers are hired as temporary foreign workers, their employer has arranged transportation for them to get to and from work. As much detail as possible here would be great!]*

Local Immigration Partnerships

Municipalities play a key role in delivering services that impaction the successful integration of newcomers. Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) aim to systemize local engagement in settlement with resources, building on existing local initiatives, etc. To learn more about LIPs, click [here](http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/CIC-Local-Immigration-Partnerships-Handbook.pdf). [*If your town has a Local Immigration Partnership, please include that information here. If not, please feel free to remove this section altogether].*

Children/Youth Services

This section includes information that will help you find services and programs that will help your children integrate successfully in *[town name].*

Schools

If you have school-aged children, they can attend *[Provide a list of schools if possible. It may be a good idea to link the school division as well (i.e Golden Hills School Division)].* As their parent, it would be recommended to create relationships with your children’s teachers and other parents, so that you are aware of the activities and programs at the school and can help offer support to your children.

Post Secondary Education

If you are looking for post-secondary education such as college or university, inquire on the reputability of the institution before registering for programs.

*For example, if you are interested in becoming a registered nurse in Canada, you must attend a post-secondary school whose courses are approved by the* [*Nursing Education Program Approval Board*](https://nurses.ab.ca/media/2eidreyq/nursing-education-program-approval-standards-jun-2021.pdf)*, this institution should be preparing you to take the National Licensing Exam as well, and provide opportunity for mandatory work experience associated with the program. To see more information about the registration process for becoming a registered nurse in Alberta, click* [*this link*](https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/2523becf-d148-4ec5-857a-8977aec31064/resource/58190716-81cb-47cf-a1e5-5b9edc667b42/download/registered-nurse-revsept2015.pdf)*.*

Not all careers have such specific requirements, but it is important to be careful when choosing a college or university. Some post-secondary schools may not give you the basic knowledge and skills you need to succeed in your field. There are also schools that **do not** provide the educational requirements for you to successfully be certified in your field. **Certification is an** **essential requirement to work in *some* fields, but not all**. So, make sure to do your research and find out if the school you're interested in offers the right courses, programs, and potentially paths to certification for your goals.

After-School Programming

In *[town name]*, there are community centers that provide programs for youth and children after school. These programs are a great opportunity for your children to meet and connect with other kids their age, fostering a sense of belonging and support. These social interactions can greatly assist your children in adapting to their new life in the community. *[Link any known after-school programs in your town]*.

Benefits of after-school programming

Schools usually finish their day before parents are done with their 9-5 work schedule. After-school programs are supervised places where children and youth can spend time and make friends with kids their age after school until their parents or family members can pick them up. These programs can help young people develop their thinking skills, socialize, and improve their academic abilities. Rather than children spend time alone after school while their parents are working, an after-school program can provide children and youth with services and resources for children and youth to develop a sense of belonging in their community[[7]](#footnote-8). They also provide a supportive environment for their overall growth as they adjust to life in Canada.

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)

The SWIS[[8]](#footnote-9) program consists of in-school settlement and mentorship programs which provide support, build cultural connections, and guide children and youth and they settle into and adjust to their new life in Canada. *[If you have SWIS programs in your municipality, link that information here; if not, feel free to remove this section.]*

Childcare

If you require childcare for your children, *[town name]* has a few childcare facilities that you can use. *[Link/list daycares, pre-schools, learning centres, etc.]*

Health Services

It is crucial to be aware of the locations of health services in *[town name]* to ensure the well-being of you and your family. In Alberta, health services are publicly funded by the Government, which means that all permanent residents and citizens of Alberta can see a doctor without any charge.

Alberta HealthCare Card

If you are new to Alberta, you may be eligible for Alberta Health Care from the date that you established residency in Alberta. You must apply for the [Alberta Health Care Insurance Program](https://www.alberta.ca/ahcip-how-to-apply.aspx) (AHCIP) within **three months** of establishing residency and provide all required documents. The application form for AHCIP coverage can be found [here](https://formsmgmt.gov.ab.ca/Public/AHC0102.xdp). It is essential that you keep your Alberta Healthcare Card with you at all times, as it is an essential piece of identification to access health care services.

Family Doctor

Having a family doctor for regular, yearly check-ups is highly recommended, especially since there is no cost associated with these check-ups if you have your Alberta Healthcare card. Yearly check-ups can significantly enhance your well-being and quality of life in Alberta. [This website](https://albertafindadoctor.ca/) can be used to find a doctor in *[town name]*, along with the ability to choose your doctor’s gender and preferred language.

Alternatively, if you are unable to find a family doctor, you can rely on a nurse hotline by dialing 811. This is a free telephone service known as “[Health Link 811](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/service.aspx?Id=1001957)” that provides 24/7 nurse advice and health information to Albertans. The hotline is primarily used for symptom-based support and health information but can also be used for many other health services. Furthermore, to ensure accessibility to healthcare, some mobile services are available for those living in rural areas of Alberta. For more details on mobile and in-home services, you can visit [this website](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page878.aspx).

*[if you know of doctors who are accepting new patients, it may also be beneficial to link them here.]*

Dentist

Dental care is unfortunately not covered through Alberta Health Care. However, you may be eligible to receive low-cost dental care if your employer does not provide you with private health benefits. To find out if you are eligible to receive reduced-fee dental care, complete and send [this form](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-19284.pdf). If you would like to see a dentist, you can visit *[name/location of dentist]*. Inquire with specific immigration pathway and eligible dental coverage that may come with their healthcare plans.

There is an Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)[[9]](#footnote-10) that provides basic health and urgent dental care to resettled refugees, protected persons in Canada, refugee claimants, detainees, and victims of human trafficking. If you are unsure if you are eligible for the IFHP, click [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada/health-care/interim-federal-health-program/eligibility.html) to view the list of people who are eligible for IFHP.

Hospital

Living in areas further from major cities like Calgary and Edmonton does come with the consideration that larger hospitals are located at a distance. However, it is important to note that Alberta provides regional hospitals in several locations for the convenience of residents. These hospitals can be found in Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat.

Health Services in Your Language

Alberta Health Services offers a number of translated resources in many common languages in Alberta. [This website](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/languages/languages.aspx) provides information about how the health system operates in Alberta in Alberta’s 28 most commonly spoken languages. You can learn about the kinds of translation services that are offered, print off and take a language card to request an interpreter to help you, and view estimated wait times to see a doctor in Alberta’s major emergency care centres.

Community Social Clubs

There are a few community centres in *[town name]* that offer various programs for you and your family. Usually, there are organized events, networking opportunities, sports activities, etc. You can visit *[website/address/ phone number]* for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering is a great way to connect with other people in your community, to improve your language skills, to provide you with professional development skills that you can put on your resume, and for personal fulfillment and wellbeing. Volunteering can offer a sense of purpose and to make a positive impact on their community, while actively participating and engaging with other Canadian residents. Through volunteering, you can make connections, gain a better understanding of Canadian culture, values, and customs; and to develop a sense of belonging in your new home. *[If you know of organizations in your area that are looking for volunteers, it may be helpful to list or link them here.]*

employment

This section will highlight the important steps to take to ensure you have the proper knowledge and tools about working in Alberta.

Documents

To legally work in Alberta as a temporary resident, you will need a work permit, a Social Insurance Number, and, depending on your immigration status, you may need specific authorization to work in Canada such as an open work permit, or a work permit that is tied to a specific employer.

Social insurance number (SIN)

To work in Canada, and to access government programs as a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or temporary resident, you will need a 9-digit number known as a Social Insurance Number (SIN). **This number is private and unique to you and cannot be used by anyone else. It is very important to keep your SIN private and not share this number with anyone as it can lead to identity theft, invasion of privacy, and a loss in government benefits**. For tips on how to protect your SIN, click [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/protection.html).

Parents or legal guardians can apply for children under the age of 12, to also obtain a SIN, but children over the age of 12 may apply on their own. There is no fee to apply for a SIN, but you will need to submit an application to obtain your SIN. Based on your status in Canada, you will need to provide specific documents, such as a Permanent Resident card issued by IRCC, a Record of Landing, a passport, an Albertan provincial ID card or driver’s license, etc. To identify what documents you will require, visit [this website](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html#wb-cont) and scroll to the section that says “Apply for a SIN”.

Work Permit

The type of work permit you require will depend on your Canadian status and the type of work you will be hired for. To learn more about what type of work permit you will need, visit [this website](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/permit/temporary/need-permit-1.html) and answer the questions.

Community Futures

If you are an entrepreneur looking to start your own business, [this website](https://albertacf.com/) provides you with information about business loans, guidance, and support for business owners and entrepreneurs in rural Alberta. Whether you’re looking to buy a business, grow your existing business, or start a business, you can get the support you need.

Workers Rights

As someone working in Alberta, there are laws in place to protect you and ensure fair treatment. These laws cover important aspects such as minimum wage, overtime pay, leaves of absence, working hours, and rules for young workers. Employers have a responsibility to follow these standards[[10]](#footnote-11) and provide the necessary information to their employees.

It is important to know that your pay stub may show deductions, which are amounts taken from your wages. Some deductions are [required by law](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/e-services-businesses/payroll-deductions-online-calculator.html), like taxes (federal and provincial), contributions to the Canada Pension Plan, and Employment Insurance premiums. If your employer provides meals and housing, they may also reduce your wages accordingly by a few dollars a day. However, there are strict rules about how much employers can reduce your wages. For example, it is against the law for an employer to hold back money from your wages because of recruiter fees.

If you have any questions about your employment or want to make sure that your employer is following the law, you can seek assistance through [this website](https://www.alberta.ca/contact-employment-standards.aspx). It is a helpful resource that you can use without giving any personal information. It can provide guidance and information about your rights as an employee in Alberta. For people with a Temporary Foreign Worker visa, special resources are available at this website. The Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory hotline, available at [1-877-944-9955](tel:+18779449955), may also be able to answer questions.

It is also important to know that you are protected by Canada’s [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/) that protects your rights as a person living in Canada. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a special document that protects the rights and freedoms of everyone in Canada. It was made in 1982 and is an important part of Canada’s laws. As stated in the Equality Rights[[11]](#footnote-12) in the Charter, " Equality rights are at the core of the Charter. They are intended to ensure that everyone is treated with the same respect, dignity, and consideration (i.e., without discrimination), regardless of personal characteristics such as race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, residency, marital status, or citizenship.”

Language

Learning a new language can be difficult, especially when you're starting a new life in a different country. Fortunately, there are resources available to assist you in your language-learning journey. The following programs and services can provide valuable support for your language-learning needs.

Community Adult Learning Program (CALP)

This program is provided by the [Government of Alberta](https://www.alberta.ca/community-adult-learning-program-overview.aspx#jumplinks-2) to offer learning opportunities to help improve your literacy, numeracy, English language skills, and basic digital skills. *[If applicable, include information about the CALP in your municipality. If you are unsure if you have a CALP near you, you can use* [*this link*](https://calp.ca/find-a-calp-near-you.html) *to find out.]*

Conversation Circles

Sometimes, libraries and community centres can offer something called a “conversation circle”. A conversation circle is a group of people who come together to talk and practice speaking English or French. It is a safe and welcoming place where you can practice speaking and listening to improve your language skills. A leader or facilitator helps to guide the conversations so that everyone can share their thoughts and learn from each other. It is a great way to gain confidence and make connections with others who are also learning English/French! If you are interested in joining conversation circles in *[town name]*, you can join by visiting *[website/ name of library/community centre/contact information of facilitator etc.]*

Language Classes

If you are a permanent resident, you can take language classes that are funded by the Government of Canada, free of charge. These classes are called Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), and Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC). These language classes are taught by qualified teachers and offer flexibility to take the classes online, and full-time or part-time. To enroll in these classes, you need to complete an online language assessment, which you can even do before coming to Canada. The online self-assessment tool to assess your English or French language skills can be found [here](https://www.clb-osa.ca/home).

Ending note

We are absolutely thrilled to have you join us on this incredible journey. This specially crafted Welcome Package was designed to guide you towards the most essential resources, services, and programs that will make your transition to life in Canada a seamless and exciting experience. Get ready to embark on a new adventure filled with endless opportunities, breathtaking landscapes, and warm-hearted community connections. The vibrant spirit of *[Town name]* is ready to embrace you, support you, and make your new life here truly unforgettable!

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/become-canadian-citizen.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://ama.ab.ca/insurance/property/tenant-insurance> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.alberta.ca/family-and-community-support-services-fcss-program.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://www.alberta.ca/public-library-network.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. <https://www.bgccan.com/index.php?securefile=2018/05/After-School-The-Time-of-a-Childs-Life-2018.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/youth-services.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada/health-care/interim-federal-health-program/coverage-summary.html [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-employment-standards-rules.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/rfcp-cdlp.html#s5> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)