

## COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

This guide has been compiled to assist you in connecting with the services, organizations and resources available in Calgary. Click on the links to be directed to more detailed information.

### FOOD, CLOTHING & GENERAL SERVICES

#### Low-Cost or Second-Hand Items

##### **Riverside Clothing (Drop-In Centre)**

[www.thedi.ca/live/clothing](http://www.thedi.ca/live/clothing) | 403-266-3600 | 423 4<sup>th</sup> Ave SE

- Free adult and children's clothing
- No referral required
- Hours: Mon & Thurs 9-12pm, 1-3pm
- Mobile night service also available to those who cannot go to the Centre

#### **Resources for Food**

##### **2-1-1 and Inform Alberta**

2-1-1 is a toll-free number for Calgarians to call as a way to access information on various health, community and social organizations and resources. Simply dial 2-1-1.

**Inform Alberta** is a large database detailing and describing the multitude of social services available to the public.

##### **City of Calgary Resources and Services for Newcomers**

The City of Calgary website lists resources and services to assist newcomers in their settlement.

## UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

One of the most recognized frameworks used to portray significant aspects of culture is [Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions](#). It can be a useful tool for improving cross-cultural communication, as well as looking at how culture ingrained in a particular society impacts the members of that society. To better understand other cultures, we must first understand our own culture.

### **Individualism vs. Collectivism**

Canada has a prominently individualist culture, where individuals' accomplishments are highly valued and are acceptable to display. Canadian culture in employment and education thus implies the need for a more individual and competitive behavior in order to be successful compared to many collectivist-based cultures. The norms of relationships may also entail fewer social obligations towards family and friends than collectivist cultures.

### **High Context vs. Low Context**

Canada has a very low context culture, in which verbal communication is expected to include as much detail as possible. The expectation is that it is the responsibility of the speaker, writer, or presenter to get the message across. Written papers or reports are expected to include explanations and as much detail as possible, and conversations are much more direct. Thus, newcomers from a high context culture may be perceived by Canadians as 'beating around the bush' in their communication style as they depend more on shared cultural and relational context.

## **Masculinity vs. Femininity**

There are two facets to the Masculinity-Femininity value orientations. First is the degree to which there is an understood difference between 'masculine' and 'feminine' attitudes and roles. Second is the degree to which a culture can be identified as a 'masculine' or a 'feminine' culture. Hofstede defines a 'masculine' culture as driven by competition, achievement and success, while a 'feminine' culture is driven by values such as caring for others and quality of life. According to this definition, Canada is a more 'masculine' culture, and Canadian culture promotes a relatively small distance between 'masculine' and 'feminine' attitudes and roles.

## **Uncertainty Avoidance**

Canada is a more 'uncertainty accepting' culture, meaning that society is less threatened by change. This is usually the case in environments that have established safety nets for risk-taking behaviors. Newcomers from a culture with a higher uncertainty avoidance orientation may require more predictability.

## **Power Distance**

Canadian culture is marked by a low power distance, valuing egalitarianism and interdependence. Newcomers adjusting from a high-power distance culture may find Canadians disrespectful to one another and uncomfortably informal. The lack of social structure in certain situations may cause stress and anxiety. Power distance value orientation should not be confused with the existence of power differences.

## **Time Orientation**

According to Hofstede, Canada has a short-term time orientation, meaning there is a higher emphasis on direct goals with quick results, personal stability and the pursuit of 'truth'. In comparison, long-term time orientation cultures focus more on the value of 'virtue', threats of shame, and a more 'laissez-faire,' 'que sera, sera' attitude towards goals and results.

For more information on culture, check out the following resources:

- [Country Guides and Profiles](#): *Covers etiquette, local customs, culture and how to conduct business in various countries*
- [Global Affairs Canada](#): *Country facts and insights, cultural information*

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT**

Volunteers can support newcomers with their English language skills. Support is not only about practicing vocabulary, but also about providing encouragement and empowerment. Creating a safe environment for newcomers to practice their English is the key to helping them develop their confidence.

Below are some links to information, resources, and tips for helping with English:

- [Subsidized English Classes for Newcomers](#)
- [ESL Resources](#)
- [Practical Ways to Help](#)
- [Activities that Require Little-to-No English](#)
- [The Power of Mutuality](#)
- [Language, Context, and Identity](#)

"What should we do with our newcomer friends?" is a question often asked by many volunteers. Providing newcomers with opportunities to interact with community life allows them to feel as

though they are active participants in their new environment. It also helps to increase quality of life during the stressful process of resettlement.

## FUN THINGS TO DO

There are a variety of low-cost or free activities that can be done in and around Calgary. This section will provide some ideas and suggestions for you to enjoy with the families you connect with, as well as programs you can help connect them to.

1. Have a picnic, fly a kite, or float down the river on a raft in the summer
2. Go [skating](#), build a snowman, or go [tobogganing](#) in the winter
3. Visit an [indoor playground](#)
4. Play board games or cards
5. Have a movie night with popcorn
6. Make crafts together
7. Do an art gallery stroll (listed below)
8. Create a scavenger hunt for the kids in the family
9. Do some gardening together
10. Go to a festival (listed [here](#))
11. Go for a walk, bike ride, rollerblading etc. down a [Calgary Park pathway](#)
12. Visit a farmers market
13. Walk through Chinatown
14. Take a tour of the +15 system
15. Explore a nearby mall
16. Visit the local library (look up free programs for children and attend with them)
17. Go garage sale shopping
18. Go to a community event (keep updated with a community's newsletter, facebook page, meet-up.com groups, e-mail list etc.)
19. Go to one of CCN's annual events: Hike, Halloween Party, Christmas Party
20. Celebrate a birthday together
21. Celebrate a holiday together (i.e. thanksgiving)
22. Have a dinner together: a BBQ in the summer, cook a traditional meal together
23. Decorate the house for seasons and holidays

## Attractions and Sight-Seeing

1. [Calgary Tower](#) CCN has purchased three tower passes, each allowing 4 visitors. Please contact your volunteer supervisor to book them!
2. [Calgary Zoo](#) **New Refugee Welcome Program** The Calgary Zoo is offers a 12-month complimentary membership to all newcomer refugees. The membership will be valid from the date issued, however, applicants must register during their first year in Canada. They must apply in person at the zoo's North Gate Guest Relations counter and bring their Confirmation of Permanent Residence documents (landing papers).
3. [Devonian Gardens](#) Free
4. [Fort Calgary](#) Reduced price with Calgary Fee Assistance Program; occasional free days
5. [Heritage Park](#) Historical Village – Reduced price with Calgary Fee Assistance Program
6. [Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre](#) Free
7. [Glenbow Museum](#) Admission costs; periodic program group trips; Free admission the First Thursday of every month between 5-9pm.
8. [Calgary Police Interpretive Centre](#) Kids and Seniors Free, Adults \$5
9. [The Military Museums](#) Admission costs
10. [The Aero Space Museum](#) Admission costs
11. [Canada's Sports Hall of Fame](#) Admission costs

12. [Lougheed House](#) Admission costs
13. [Calgary Stampede](#) Free admission on Family Day (Don't forget to check out the free pancake breakfasts daily around the city.)

### **Nature and Public Parks (all free)**

1. [Inglewood Bird Sanctuary & Nature Centre](#)
2. [Fish Creek Provincial Park](#)
3. [South Glenmore Park](#) (spray park for the kids in the summer, playgrounds, sailing, biking and walking trails)
4. [North Glenmore Park](#)
5. [Prince's Island Park](#)
6. [Edworthy Park](#)
7. [Bowness Park](#)

### **[Glenbow Museum](#): Free admission first Thursday night of each month (5-9pm)**

130 9th Ave SE

### **[Canada's Sports Hall of Fame](#): Free admission first Wednesday night of each month (5-8pm)**

69 Canada Olympic Rd SW

For more **events in Calgary**, please see the following websites:

- [Discover Calgary](#)
- [Calgary Area](#)
- [Tourism Calgary](#)
- [Calgary Downtown](#)

## **MEDICAL & DENTAL INFORMATION**

The health system can be a very confusing area for newcomers to navigate. Here are the professionals and programs that newcomers may encounter and lists the relevant resources.

- **Health and Wellness Coordinator, CCIS**  
Government-assisted refugees have access to a Health and Wellness Coordinator at the Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre. They receive guidance by this coordinator on a case-by-case basis. They will be referred to a family doctor or a Primary Care Network (PCN) depending on their needs. After the family has been connected to a family doctor or clinic, the coordinator stays involved to provide families and individuals with further guidance and support to find the healthcare resources they need.
- **Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic (Primary Care Network)**  
This clinic, located in the Marlborough Mall Professional Building, provides comprehensive primary care services for refugees for their first two years in Canada. Check out their [website](#) for more details.

## **Health Coverage**

### **Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan**

All Permanent Residents (landed Independent Immigrants and Government Assisted Refugees) in Alberta are eligible for Alberta Health Care. Resettlement Counselors will apply for AHCIP for Government Assisted Refugees and they should receive their cards within their first three months in Calgary. Independent Immigrants must apply for their own AHCIP. Visit Alberta Health's website on [Moving to Alberta](#) for details on how to apply.

### **Interim Federal Health Program**

This program is for refugees only. The [IFH program](#) provides limited coverage of health care benefits for Government Assisted Refugees during their first year in Canada.

### **Alberta Adult/ Child Health Benefit**

The [Alberta Adult Health Benefit and the Alberta Child Health Benefit](#) programs provide health care coverage for low-income households in Alberta.

### **Dental Care**

For those who are not covered with a health care plan, or are on IFH or AAHB/ACHB, coverage for dental assistance may be limited. The first step is to investigate each of these plans (above) and see what their dental coverage is. For a list of lower-cost dental clinics, click [here](#).

### **Optometrists**

For a list of Optometrist clinics that accept the IFH coverage, click [here](#).

### **Other Useful Information**

#### **Health Link 8-1-1**

A quick and easy way to get medical information and advice from Registered Nurses. This service is available 24/7 for any other health related questions that you may have. The Health Link also provides interpretation services over the telephone; simply tell the nurse which language you would prefer to speak.

[Finding a New Family Doctor](#)

[Seasonal Influenza Immunization](#)

### **DRIVING IN CANADA**

Many Canadians agree that it is necessary to have a car in the city. Some newcomers to Canada have never driven and others have been driving for many years. However, not all newcomers can automatically change their national license to the Canadian equivalent.

[The Service Alberta website](#) provides general information about obtaining a new driver's license or exchanging an old one. If the Alberta Service Agency can prove that a newcomer has been driving in his/her home country for more than two years, it is possible to get a class 5 Driver's License without having to wait for a year after their theory exam for the class 7 Learner's License.

[Registries Plus](#) located at Memorial and 52nd St. NE caters to immigrants. Their staff speak a wide variety of languages and immigrants may be able to do their Class 7 testing in their native tongue.

[Child Seats](#): Read about the laws and requirements in Alberta.

#### **Employment**

There are many things that you as a volunteer can do to ease someone's transition into the workforce in Canada, whether you share the same employment background or not. This page provides both tips on what you can do to help, as well as a list of programs and organizations that provide employment support for newcomers.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

### Tips for a Supportive Volunteer

1. Review their resume, and if you are comfortable, offer some advice.
2. Help them practice their interview skills. If their English level is at a low level, it may be helpful to have them memorize answers to common interview questions to reduce stress during the interview.
3. Refer them to the CCIS employment programs.
4. Help them to map out their career goals or options and help them connect with available resources.
5. Talk to them about the importance of building a network of individuals in their field of interest or expertise.
6. It is normal for a job-searcher to get discouraged. Remind them that this is a natural process. Even Canadian born job-searchers go through this situation. It is a full-time job looking for a job, sometimes requiring hundreds of applications.
7. Offer advice and examples of Canadian workplace etiquette and culture.
8. Help them remember their 'dream'. Everyone comes to Canada with a dream, and employment is often only a fraction of it. Help them to enjoy everything our beautiful city has to offer.

### Employment Services at CCIS

Employment services include employment counselors who provide a one-on-one needs assessment, support, and referrals, career bridging workshops, mentorship programs, networking opportunities, computer-training, as well as programs catered to young immigrants.

For more information, visit the [CCIS website](#).

### Foreign Credential Recognition

Many immigrants who come with professional qualifications must have their foreign credentials recognized in Canada before they can work in their own field. This includes engineers, geologists, doctors, nurses, lawyers, and more.

Here are some websites with more details about Foreign Credential Recognitions.

- [Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative](#) This is a Health Care Canada initiative to help internationally educated health professionals transition into the Canadian health care workforce.
- [Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials](#) This centre provides additional information and referrals.
- [Employment and Social Development Canada](#) Run by the Government of Canada, this website provides information about funding and financial aid for the credential recognition process. It also has success stories with examples of how others have gone through the process.
- [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta \(APEGA\)](#) The engineering and geoscientist license and regulatory body for Alberta.

### Other Employment Resources

- Government of Canada's [3-step guide](#) to the job search process.
- The Government of Canada has a [Job Bank](#) database which provides help in putting together a resume, gives job searching tips, and advertises employment opportunities/

- The City of Calgary [Youth Employment Centre](#) provides a list of events, opportunities, hiring fairs, and other services to help youth in their job search.
- [Employment Alberta](#) has listed several training opportunities for newcomers to Alberta in the fields of engineering, healthcare, and childcare. They also assist newcomers with low literacy levels in developing their skills to enter the workforce.
- [Alberta Works](#) offers a variety of employment resources from job fairs to training, resource workshops, and resume or interview help.
- [Calgary.kijiji](#), [Jobs.Canadaspace](#), and [monster.ca](#) are search engines that might be worth taking a look at.
- The [Calgary Public Library](#) often holds free resume building workshops and other employment support opportunities.

## HOUSING

It is sometimes challenging to find affordable housing in Calgary, especially for newcomers. When they first arrive, government-assisted refugees can choose to find their first residence on their own or have their Resettlement Counselor help them.

Once they have settled in, if they decide to move again, they may be expected to find a place on their own. Independent Immigrants are expected to find their own place as soon as they come to Canada.

Here are some resources.

Calgary Housing Company  
1701 Centre Street NW  
Calgary, AB  
Tel: 403.221.9100

Calgary Housing Company  
320, 433 Marlborough Way NE  
Calgary, AB T2A5H5  
Tel: 403.390.1200

The Calgary Housing Company is a City of Calgary program that offers subsidized and affordable housing for low- or modest-income individuals or families. The application process can be lengthy and strict; however, if eligible, families would only pay 30% of their total monthly income for rent. Application forms must be picked up and dropped off in person at their office (volunteers are able to pick up and drop off for others on their behalf).

Wait times can vary. From past experience, a family can place an application form, not hear anything for weeks, and then receive a phone call informing them that they have possession of a new place in 7 days.

Other times, if families are in dire need (e.g. facing eviction), they can be moved up on the wait list. Wait times can also be as long as 1-3 years. Furthermore, families are expected to accept whatever house/apartment is allocated to them (as per their application form specifications). If they refuse the proposed housing, they will be dropped to the bottom of the waitlist.

Please visit their [website](#) for further details.

Here are some sites for those interested in renting.

[Rentfaster](#)  
[24/7 Apartments](#)  
[Rent Spot](#)  
[Kijiji Classifieds](#)

## Landlord/Tenancy Act

Rental agreements and leases can be tricky and confusing. Check out this website to get a better understanding of renters' rights and responsibilities:

[http://www.servicealberta.ca/Landlords\\_Tenants.cfm](http://www.servicealberta.ca/Landlords_Tenants.cfm)

## FILING OF TAXES

1. **Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre**  
Refugee families may be able to receive support from their CCIS Resettlement Counselor in filing their income tax.
2. **Centre for Newcomers**  
Low-income immigrants can come and get their Income Tax return forms filed for free on certain weekends of March and April. Volunteers trained by the representatives from Revenue Canada will assist the newcomers.
3. **Immigrant Services Calgary**  
Immigrant Services has a free tax filing service, but for clients only. If families want to file their taxes, they need to first book an appointment with a counsellor and bring their permanent resident card to the appointment. If the family is not already a client at Immigrant Services Calgary this option might be a bit challenging.

A list of other **volunteer-led tax clinics** can be found on the [Canada Revenue Agency website](#). **TurboTax**, **SimpleTax**, and **UFile**. These are fairly straight-forward online tax software programs that many people use to file taxes.

## LEGAL SERVICES

Often, newcomers have concerns or questions related to sponsoring a family member to come to Canada. The immigration system, with its many classes and policies, can be very confusing and intricate. While government-assisted refugees will often receive support from their CCIS resettlement counselor regarding this, some general resources for legal services include;

- **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)**  
For the latest updates and/or changes to procedures, please click [here](#).
  - **Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA)**  
[CIWA](#) provides a free, one-time consultation with an Immigration Counselor/Lawyer. Note that they primarily only serve women; however, they will also help couples and families. Appointment wait times are lengthy and must be made in advance.
  - **Calgary Legal Guidance**  
Calgary Legal Guidance offers free immigration legal advice to individuals facing cultural, financial, or other kinds of barriers. They offer their services at various locations including the Genesis Centre, Immigrant Services, and Centre for Newcomers. For the most updated schedule, click [here](#).
  - **Dial-A-Law**  
Dial-A-Law provides the general public with basic information about law and the legal system. There are over 170-recorded topics for people to access 24 hours a day. There is no other service of this nature in the province, and no other means by which people outside the legal profession can obtain immediate information about the justice system at no cost. Operator assistance is available Monday to Friday 8:30 to 4:30. Call 403.234.9022.
- Family Law Information Centres**
- [Alberta Family Law Information Centres](#) (FLIC) provide free help to individuals about family law matters. All services provided in the centres are free.



## **Other Links**

[CIC Start Your Life in Canada Information](#)

[Immigration to Canada](#)

*This is a website built for independent immigrants who are planning on moving to Calgary. It lists a variety of resources and steps one could use if they are a newcomer.*

[Newcomers Map of Calgary \(English\)](#)

[Newcomers Map of Calgary \(Arabic\)](#)

[Immigrant-Serving Agencies in Alberta](#)

[Calgary Fee Assistance](#)

[Calgary Transit – Low Income Passes](#)

[National Do Not Call Registry](#)

[Finding Childcare](#)

[FREE Money Management and Financial Coaching](#)

*Momentum offers free 2-hour money management workshops on budgeting, banking, consumerism, credit, and consumerism.*