



Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization

The background of the cover is a large, vertical photograph of the Parliament Hill clock tower in Ottawa, Canada. The tower is a prominent Gothic Revival structure with a green copper roof and a clock face. A Canadian flag flies from the top. In the foreground, there is a field of vibrant red tulips. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

Welcome to Ottawa
A Guide for Newcomers and Immigrants

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Welcome!!!

When you arrive in Ottawa you may have many questions. You have in your hands a booklet that discusses some of the most important things that you may need to know. We recommend that you call and meet someone who can help you. The best help is available at any of the **Immigrant Settlement Agencies** in Ottawa. The list of contacts is at the back of this booklet.

This guide tells you what you need to know in your first two weeks in Ottawa. This guide cannot answer all of your questions about Ottawa. There are other places that you can look for information.

We hope that we can help make your settlement here in Ottawa as easy as possible.



Welcome to Ottawa!

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Your First Days in Ottawa

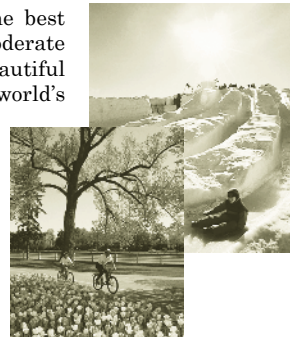
Arriving in Ottawa

Ottawa has an international airport, a bus station, and a train station. Public city transportation reaches all of these ports of entry. Compared to other cities, they are centrally located to all parts of the city. Except for convention refugees at the airport, there is no official immigration service at these ports of entry. For assistance during the daytime, call any of the Immigrant Settlement Agencies listed at the back of this booklet from a public phone. If it is late at night, you will have to call the next day for assistance.

Weather

Ottawa's climate varies considerably from summer to winter. Winters can be bitterly cold and snow is common from November through to March. Temperatures are very cold, some times below -25 degrees Celsius. There is often snow. It is important to dress very warmly in a heavy coat, a hat, boots and gloves. Snow removal procedures are excellent and the city is seldom shutdown by a blizzard. Summer is usually pleasantly warm but can sometimes be rather humid. Spring is one of the best times, not only because of the more moderate temperatures but also because of the beautiful flowering bulbs, culminating in the world's largest Tulip Festival. Likewise, autumn can be quite pleasant, though progressively colder.

WINTER – December 21 to March 19
SPRING – March 20 to June 20
SUMMER – June 21 to September 21
FALL – September 22 to December 20



Finding a Place to Stay

You will need to stay somewhere while you look for a place to live. You can look for an apartment hotel, a travel hostel, or a student residence in a university or college. These are often places where you can stay for days, weeks, or months for a low cost.

Temporary Housing

If you do not have a place to stay when you first come to Ottawa, call any **Immigrant Settlement Agency** (see list at end of booklet).

You can also contact:

Housing Help

202-116 Lisgar Street

Phone: (613) 563-4532

If you arrive at the airport without a place to stay, ask for a list of reasonably priced hotels and hostels in Ottawa and contact an **Immigrant Settlement Agency** as soon as possible.

For government sponsored refugees only:

Reception House

204 Boteler Street,

Phone: (613) 789-4338

Voltage: The voltage in Canada is **110/120V 60Hz**. Some appliances from other countries have a switch for this voltage. You can also buy an adapter to change the voltage to the right level for your appliance. You might need a different adapter to change the shape of the plug to make it fit into the electricity outlet.

Finding Information

Immigrant Settlement Agencies

There are several agencies that can help you start your life in Ottawa. These agencies are called settlement agencies. Settlement agencies can give you information about many things, for example:

- Citizenship documents
- How to find a place to live
- Where to buy food, clothing or furniture at a low cost
- How to find a job and where children can go to school
- Health services
- Where to learn English or French.

These services are almost always free and always confidential. Many are offered in languages other than English and French. Telephone numbers for key settlement agencies in Ottawa are listed at the end of this guide.

Community Health and Resource Centers

Community Health and Resource Centers can give you information about services, organizations or events happening in your neighbourhood. Many of these Centers offer services in languages other than English and French. The main programs of these centers are related to health, social services and community development. All services are free and confidential. To find the nearest Community Health and Resource Center, look at the list given at page 27 of this guide.

Public Libraries

Public libraries in Ottawa offer many free services to residents. To get a free library card, go to any Ottawa Public Library (OPL) branch with photo identification. Your library card gives you access to all branches (33 in 2006) of the Ottawa Public Library and the bookmobile. If you borrow material from the library and do not bring it back on time, (by the “due date”), you will have to pay a fine. Libraries may have multilingual books, magazines, newspapers, records, CDs, DVDs, videos, internet, pedometers and audio books on CD and tape.

To find a public library in your area, look up the word Libraries in the blue pages of the telephone book. The phone book will give you both the telephone number and street address of the library. You can call the library to find out what hours they are open.

The main Library is at:

120 Metcalfe
Ottawa ON K1P 5M2
(613) 236-0301 or (613) 580-2945
<http://www.opl.ottawa.on.ca>



If you are not sure how to use the phone book, read the section in this guide called, “Using the Telephone”.

Immigration Offices

If you have questions about your immigration status, call the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) Call Centre at -
Phone: (613) 954-9019 Fax: (613) 954-2221

You can get information from the recorded message, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you want to speak to a person, call between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., from Monday to Friday.

Public holidays:

Government offices, banks, post offices and many businesses and stores are closed on the following days:

New Year's Day – January 1
 Good Friday – Friday before Easter
 Easter Monday
 Victoria Day – Third Monday in May
 Canada Day – July 1
 Labour Day – First Monday in September
 Thanksgiving Day – Second Monday in October
 Christmas Day – December 25
 Boxing Day – December 26

Exchanging money

It is helpful to have some Canadian money before you arrive in Ottawa. In Canada, you can only change money at official locations. You will need identification. Your passport should be enough in most places. Not all banks or official locations offer the best rates. You can look in the yellow pages telephone directory (“foreign exchange” section) to ask in advance.

For more information about Canadian currency you can go to:

<http://www.vancouver.hm/money.html>

Exchange Rates:

www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/rates/exchange.html

Hotels exchange small amounts of money (especially US dollars), but the rate may not be as good.



Money: Canadian money is based on the decimal system. One hundred cents equals one dollar. Canadian money is made up of coins and paper bills. There are \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 bills.

Safety

Home Safety and Security

http://www.safecanada.ca/parents_e.asp?OP=link&topic=93

House Use and Safety

Most houses in Canada are built with wood. You must always be careful about fire. In Ontario it is the law that everyone has a working smoke alarm mounted on the ceiling outside of every sleeping area. A smoke alarm on every floor of your home will give you extra time to escape in case of a fire. These alarms are available at most hardware stores. It is also against the law to disable a smoke alarm by taking the battery out or disconnecting it. If you are renting the home you live in, the owner must provide you with a smoke alarm and they must make sure it works. If it works on batteries they must even supply the battery! To make sure your smoke alarm works you should press the test button at least once a month. If it does not work, notify your landlord and they must repair or replace it immediately.

To verify if your fire alarm is working:
Ottawa Fire Department (613) 580-2860.

Emergency Fire

Dial 911. Ask for the fire department. Give them your address and answer questions if there are any.

City of Ottawa General Inquiries

For general inquiries the City of Ottawa's "Call Centre" is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dial 311.

Leaving Your Children Alone at Home

It is against the law to leave children alone at home in Ontario if they are under the age of 12. If you have children, you might find it difficult to move around with them everywhere. You must have someone older than 12 in the house if you want to leave children at home. Before you leave even teenagers at home alone for the first time, it is important to make sure they are ready for the experience.

A website for youth and parents: <http://www.choix.org>

Safety for young children:
<http://www.safekidscanada.ca>

Identification

You do not need your passport if you travel inside of Canada. People often carry two pieces of identification with them. The most common identification is a Driver's Licence. It is not required that you carry all your identification with you, but two pieces is often helpful. The most accepted form of identity papers are the following:

- Driver's license
- Permanent Resident Card or Citizenship Card
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Birth Certificate
- Credit Card

Social Insurance Number (SIN)

You must have a social insurance number (SIN). This number and the card it comes on are part of your basic Canadian identity. A SIN is important identification when you apply for the child tax benefit, complete your income taxes, contribute to pension plans or when you seek information from other government services.



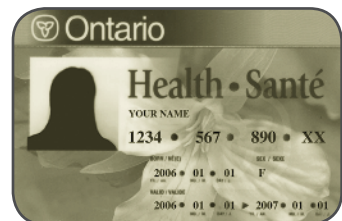
To get your SIN, ask for help at an **Immigrant Settlement Agency** or go to the nearest Employment Centre. You will need to bring:

- Passport
- Immigration papers
- Another form of identification (preferably written in English or French)
- Proof of address

Sometimes people ask for the SIN as a form of identification. If possible, give them another piece of identification. Never give your SIN to anyone who is not authorized.

Health Card

To receive free public health care services, you must first have an Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card. You can obtain free basic health care services by showing the doctor, nurse, or other health care worker a valid OHIP card.



The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)

pays for services that are medically necessary. These services include visits to your family doctor and specialists. You should apply for OHIP as soon as you arrive in Ontario. Generally, there is a three-month waiting period from the date you arrive until you

are covered. During the 3-month waiting period, you are encouraged to buy health insurance from a private company, which provides coverage for some (but not all) medical services. Contact **Canada Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA)** at 1-(800)-268-8099 for names of companies providing such coverage. However, you **MUST** buy this insurance within 5 days of arriving in Ontario, or the insurance companies may not provide coverage for you. Generally, the coverage you will buy would be for “visitors to Canada.”

Applying: You may ask for help from an **Immigrant Settlement Agency**. If you are eligible, you can get an OHIP card by completing the Ontario Ministry of Health application form called: **“Registration For Ontario Health Coverage”**.

Application forms are available from:

Ontario Ministry of Health

Fuller Building
75 Albert Street
Ottawa
Ontario K1P 5Y9
Phone: 1-(800)-268-1154

Ontario Government Website:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ohip/ohip_mn.htm

Once you have completed the application, take it to the **Ministry of Health office**. Make sure to bring your immigration papers, an original document that proves you live in Ottawa (such as your telephone bill or bank statements with your name and address) and other documents as proof of identity (such as your passport, social insurance card, credit card that has your name and signature on it).

Using the Telephone

Having a telephone at home is very important. If you are not careful in selecting the telephone company, you may pay a fortune on long distance telephone bills. Ask that your telephone bills are sent to your home address and keep your phone bills so that you understand how you are paying for calls.

Land Line

For home service (called “land line”), a fixed monthly fee is paid for all local calls. Long distance calls are usually paid by the minute. Some companies offer special prices. Be careful with the company or plan that you select, because you may easily end up in a long term contract with very expensive long distance bills.

Long Distance Phone Cards

Phone cards are available at small shops around Ottawa. With phone cards you can make cheaper long distance calls.

Mobile Telephones

You might find that a mobile phone is your best choice when you first arrive, especially if you do not have a permanent address. Mobile telephones can be very expensive. Therefore discuss your plan thoroughly to avoid hidden charges and long-term binding agreements.

Telephone numbers: Special numbers

Dial these numbers on your telephone to get help.

Dial	to reach:
0	a telephone operator
911	the police, fire, ambulance (for emergencies)
411	directory information – telephone numbers
311	City of Ottawa Services and general information

You can also get special telephone numbers in the front pages of the telephone book. These numbers include phone numbers for help in the following emergency situations:

- Poisoning
- Physical assault
- Sexual assault
- Other emergencies

Sending and Receiving Mail

Mailing a Letter or Parcel

Look for Canada Post sign on stores and other outlets. You can also buy packages of postage stamps at drug stores, grocery stores and convenience stores. Bigger parcels and heavier parcels cost more to mail. The cost also depends on where you want to send it and on how fast you want it to get there. Usually, the farther the parcel has to travel, the more it will cost.



If you are sending a parcel to a different country, you must fill out a customs form. You can get a customs form at the post office. The form describes what is in the parcel. It also describes how much the parcel is worth and how much it weighs.

Getting a Mailing Address

When you have found a place to live, people can send mail directly to your home or post office box number. Until you find a place to live, you can receive mail in three different ways:

Ask if you can use the mailing address of a relative or friend. Tell people to send mail to you “*care of*” (*c/o*) your relative or friend. Ask for general delivery service at the post office. This service is known internationally as “*poste restante*.”

Rent a mailbox at the post office or a store that sells business services.

Opening a Bank Account

There are many kinds of banks in Ottawa. Each bank offers different services. You can visit banks during working hours and ask someone about their services and the kinds of accounts that they offer. You can compare bank service charges among banks

You will need two pieces of identification to open an account at a bank, trust company, or credit union. Usually, one piece must have your picture on it. You do not have to be employed to open an account.

Transportation

Public Transit (OC Transpo)

Ottawa has a very good local transit system. If you are going to take the bus on a regular basis, you can get a monthly pass. When you are buying the bus pass for the first time, you will need a photo identification that you get from the OC Transpo authorities. You will have to go to a special location to obtain your OC Transpo identification card. You can call the number below for further information.

If you will not use the bus regularly, you can buy tickets at different stores or pay the exact price every time you take the bus. Buses do not give change. If you are going to change buses, ask the driver for



a transfer ticket. The transfer ticket will allow you to get on the next bus.

All information is available at: <http://www.octranspo.com>
Phone: (613) 741-4390.

Cars

If you drive a car and live in Ottawa, you will need an Ontario license. If you live on the Quebec side of the river, you will need a Quebec license. International driver licenses should be transferred as soon as possible.

You must have a valid driver's license to drive a car. If you have an international driver's license it is valid for a short period. You need to check with local authorities for details. If you have children, any child under 18 kg. must use a special, regulation seat. Ask any of the **Immigrant Settlement Agencies** about how to get one of these seats.

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/seatbelt.htm>
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/childsafety/menu.htm>

By law, drivers and passengers must wear seat belts. There is a fine for not wearing them. Drivers are responsible for proper use of seat belts for children from birth to 16 years of age. A driver can be charged and face a fine and two demerit points for seat belt infractions. Demerit points remain on a driving record for two years from the date of the offence.

Taxis

They are safe to use. In Ottawa, you can sometimes stop them on the street, though not as easily as in some cities. Stand on the sidewalk and wave at a taxi that has no passengers in it. Taxis are expensive. The cost of taking a taxi depends on how far you go. The price appears on a meter in the front beside the driver. The meter will display a minimum charge when you get in the car. Airport taxis sometimes charge a flat rate instead of using a meter.

You can call taxis by telephone. See "taxis" in the yellow pages telephone book.



Tipping:

It is common to give people who provide services a little extra money. This is called a **tip**. People usually give tips to:

- Waiters in restaurants
- Taxi drivers
- People who make deliveries
- People who carry your baggage in hotels

Usually, the tip is 15% of the cost before taxes. A tip is also called a gratuity.

Driving

You must have automobile insurance if you own and drive a car. You must also properly license the car. If you do not have a car, you can rent one for a day, a week, or as long as you need from a car rental company. Most car rental companies can give you information about driving rules. Most car rental companies charge the amount of time and distance. You will also need to buy accident insurance and gasoline. You can find a car rental company by looking up the words Automobile Renting in the yellow pages of the telephone book.

You can use a foreign driver's license for some time after you arrive in Canada. You will then need to take a driving test and get an Ontario driver's license. Contact the Ontario Ministry of Transportation for information about licenses and driving rules.

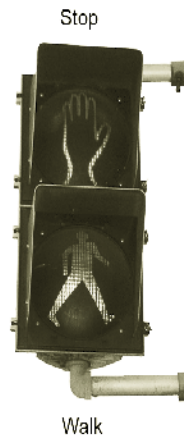
<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca>

Walking

Sometimes where there are no traffic lights you will find a "crosswalk". You may carefully cross the street at this location. Pedestrian signals appear at street corners where there is a stoplight. They tell you when it is safe to cross the street.

Do not cross. If the hand is flashing, do not start to cross the street. If you have already started to cross, continue.

Walk. It is now safe for you to cross the street. Push the button and wait for traffic to stop. Point your arm out in front of you to let drivers know that you want to cross. Once drivers have stopped, you can cross the street.





Legal Ages in Ontario:

You must be at least 16 years old to:

- Drive
- Work full-time
- Leave school or home
- Consent to sex (pending)
- Get married

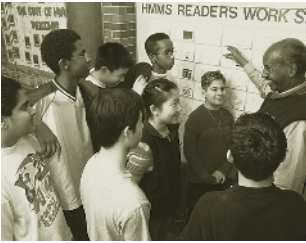
You must be at least 19 years old to buy tobacco and to buy/drink alcohol.

Maps

Detailed maps of the City of Ottawa are found in all “Yellow Pages” telephone book. You can also visit their maps section online.
http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/emaps/index_en.html

Caring for Children

Registering Children for School



Please also read the Education section in this booklet.

Staff at an **Immigrant Settlement Agency** speak many languages. They can help you register your children in school. OCISO (see back of booklet) has a special Multicultural Liaison Program for immigrant children and their families in almost all of Ottawa’s French and English schools. At each school they will let you know how to register your child. They will also help to place your child in the right grade.

All children, boys and girls, from 5 to 16 years old must go to school. Actually, most children begin school when they are 4 years old in “maternity” or “kindergarten” classes. This depends on the parents and each school. “Maternity” or “kindergarten” and grade 1 to grade 8 is called elementary school. Grade 9 to grade 12 is called secondary school.

All children and adult immigrants who will attend elementary or secondary school must be assessed at:

Family Reception Centre

202-300 Rochester St., Ottawa, ON, K1R 7N4
Tel: 239-2416, Fax: 239-5990

Children must be given vaccinations or have Ontario standard vaccination certificates before they can register for school. All students who are new to Canada must have a Certificate of Immunization and Tuberculosis Assessment for School Entry.

School Programs

Many schools have programs that provide care to children before and after school, during lunch hours and school holidays. Ask at your child’s school for more information.

Finding Child Care

Children who are under 12 years old cannot be left home alone. It is

against the law. Ask an adult family member or friend to look after your children when you are not home.

Different types of child care options are available in Ottawa. There are full-time and part-time options in either English or French. If parents are unable to pay the entire childcare fees, they may be able to get financial help to pay (subsidized childcare). Most child care centres have both regular full fee and subsidized spaces. Subsidized childcare is very limited and each child care centre keeps its own waiting list for subsidized and regular spaces.

You should visit a few centres as soon as possible. You can request to put your child's name on their waiting lists. If your child's name is on several lists, this will increase your chances of securing a space when you need it.

Childcare options include:

- Child Care Centres
- Home Child Care
- Licensed Home Child Care
- Nursery Schools
- Municipal Child Care Centres
- Municipal Home Child Care.

Ontario Works Child Care: (613) 580-2424, ext. 24104

Informal Child Care: (613) 580-2424, ext. 24384

For information on child care, visit:

http://www.city.ottawa.on.ca/city_services/childcare/ottawa/options/index_en.shtml

Children's Services Division: (613) 580-2424, ext. 24100

Applying for the Canada Child Tax Benefit

If your children are under 18 years old, you may be eligible to receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB). The CCTB is a monthly payment that helps families with the cost of raising children.

You can obtain an application from an **Immigrant Settlement Agency** or the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA). You should apply for the CCTB as soon as possible. You can receive payments for up to 11 months prior to your date of application.

Child Protection

There is a law in Ontario that protects children from physical and sexual abuse. The local Children's Aid Society can provide information on child protection services, adoption and other services related to the well-being of children.

Taking Care of Your Health

Finding a Family Doctor

Ask for help from an **Immigrant Settlement Agency** or Community Health Centre (see list at the back of this booklet). For all health visits, you must present your Health Card (OHIP). If you do not have a health card, you may be required to pay for medical care. Contact a Community Health Centre for more information on what to do in this situation.

Although there is a shortage of family doctors in the many areas in Ottawa, there are a few ways to find a family doctor:

- Ask a friend if their doctor is accepting new patients
- Use the **“Find a Doctor”** service of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to locate a doctor in your area. Call 1-800-268-7096, ext 626
- Look in the telephone book **“Yellow Pages”** under “Physicians & Surgeons”
- Ask at a hospital if it has a “family practice” unit
- Visit clinics and medical centers in your neighbourhood.

You may have difficulty finding a doctor in your area who takes patients. You may need to go to a walk-in medical clinic, which is staffed by doctors and nurses. Family doctors usually require that you make an appointment.

The Emergency Department of each hospital is mandated to treat people with life-threatening injuries or conditions. They are not to be used for routine medical services, which should be treated by your family doctor or at a walk-in clinic.

Medication

Certain medications can only be obtained with a doctor’s prescription. If your doctor considers that you need such medication, he or she will give you a written prescription. As a patient, you are expected to take your medicine as directed. It is your responsibility to inform your doctor about any allergies or other medicines you are taking. It is expected that you ask questions about the medicine prescribed.

You must take the prescription to a pharmacist, who is health care professional who prepares or dispenses the medication. They work in drug stores or pharmacies in larger stores, hospitals, community health centers, and for the government. A dispensing fee is added to the cost of your prescription to cover these services.

Paying for Prescription Medicine

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) does not pay for prescrip-

tions. You will therefore be required to pay for them yourself. Some employers offer group insurance plans, which may cover some of the cost of prescription medication, or you can buy an individual plan from a private company. Refugee claimants may be eligible to receive essential prescription drugs through the Interim Federal Health (IFH) Program.

Public Health - Requirements for School Children

All children who are new to Canada must have a Certificate of Immunization and Tuberculosis Assessment for School Entry. Ottawa Public Health will verify that all immunization and screening requirements have been satisfied, or have a valid exemption. There is no charge for immunization.

For answers to your questions on injury and disease prevention, preventive health care for babies and children, parenting, pregnancy etc contact:

Ottawa Public Health

Phone: (613) 580-6744

Toll free: 1-(866)-426-8885

TTY: (613) 580-9565

<http://www.ottawa.ca/health>

Housing

Rent Contracts



There are many types of rental accommodation available, such as houses, townhouses, apartments, and rooms. By law, landlords cannot discriminate because of your race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, marital status, ethnic origin.

If you are renting a house or apartment, you will have a rental contract or lease. Contract conditions can be very different. For example, some contract agreements include heat and electricity charges and some do not. You will have both responsibilities and rights when renting any place. Before signing any contract, please ask for Housing Help at any of the **Immigrant Settlement Agencies**. You can also contact:

Housing Help

202-116 Lisgar Street

Phone: (613) 563-4532

There are many magazines advertising rental opportunities. Most if not all of these are free of charge. You can also look for ads in newspapers.

Furniture

If you have a limited budget, you can buy used furniture in good condition at different places in the city. Sometimes you see furniture for sale on the street during the summer. You will also see advertisements for used furniture in different magazines.

There are many charity shops that sell household furniture and kitchen materials at very low cost. Ask people where you can find any of the following: Salvation Army Thrift Store, Saint Vincent de Paul, Value Village.

There are many stores that sell new furniture. Shop and compare prices. Sometimes stores put their furniture on sale.

Food

Almost all food shopping is done in “supermarkets”. Prices of food vary from time to time. If you want to save money and time in shopping, it is a good to look for the flyers of supermarkets that you want to visit and to find what is on sale in order to make a shopping list.

You can also buy food at “convenience stores” they sell basic products like bread and milk; sometimes they close later than “supermarkets”. Convenience stores are much more expensive than supermarkets.

In Ottawa you can find food from around the world. Ask at an **Immigrant Settlement Agency** where to begin finding food of your choice. Check for markets and farms in or around the city. The Ottawa Food Security Council has a very interesting list of farmer markets across the city. They also publish a guide.

<http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc>

“Food banks” are an emergency service for people who need food. They provide free food. Please contact any of the **Immigrant Settlement Agencies** for information.

Clothing

You need different clothes for every season in Ottawa. Most importantly, in the winter you will need very warm clothes. Minus 30 degrees Celsius is very, very cold. Some people wear two or three layers of clothes to help stay warm. You will also need mittens, a warm hat, and thick boots. Children get cold very easily. They need special attention, especially for their hands, head, and feet.

Clothing can be very expensive. Many people choose to buy used clothing. There are many used clothing stores in Ottawa. Free clothing might be available for people who do not have enough money. Contact any of the **Immigrant Settlement Agencies** for help.

Business hours:

The hours that a business is open depends on the type of business and the area it is in. In general, stores are open:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, Friday - 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Sunday - 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Education

Contact any of the **Immigrant Settlement Agencies** for help. OCISO (see back of booklet) has a special Multicultural Liaison Program in most of Ottawa's schools to help new parents and students.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

By law, all children must attend school from the age of 5 years to 16. Most children also attend kindergarten or maternity class at the age of 4.



You should register your child in school as soon as possible. To register your child, go to the nearest school. You will need to bring:

- Child's birth certificate or passport
- Child's immigration status
- Child's immunization documents

Children must be properly immunized before they can attend school. (See "Health" section)

In Ottawa public education is offered in French and English. There is also a separate public system of Roman Catholic schools.

Ottawa Public English: (613) 596-8731

<http://ocdsb.edu.on.ca>

Ottawa Public French: (613) 742-8960

<http://www.cepeo.on.ca>

Ottawa Catholic French: (613) 744-2555

<http://www.ceclf.edu.on.ca/ceclfce/index.html>

Ottawa Catholic English: (613) 224-2222

<http://www.ocdsb.on.ca>

In all public schools, boys and girls attend the same schools and share the same classes. The school day generally begins from about 8:00 in the morning and ends around 3:00 in the afternoon. Children attend school Monday to Friday from the beginning of September to the end of June.

Public schools encourage parents to participate in school activities. As a parent, you have the right to participate in planning your child's education. Parents are occasionally invited to parent-teacher meetings. This is an evening where parents have the opportunity to talk with teachers about the progress of their children. If you have difficulty with English or French, take someone with you to interpret. The school will also try to provide an interpreter, if you ask for one before the meeting.

Some children in Ottawa attend private schools. Children attending these schools have their education paid for entirely by their parents.

Adult Basic Education

Adult basic education is free for Ontario residents, 18 years of age and older who would like to earn their high school diploma. Transportation and child care subsidies are available for eligible students.

Adult High School

(Ottawa-Carleton District School Board)

Phone: (613) 239-2707

<http://adulthts.4poyntzdesign.com/>

St. Nicholas Adult High School

(Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board)

Phone: (613) 228-8888

<http://continuingeducation.occdsb.on.ca/>

Postsecondary Education:

Postsecondary education is provided by universities, colleges of applied arts and technology (often called "community colleges"), or private vocational schools.

In Ottawa, there are several choices for postsecondary education. The most common institutions are:

Carleton University

315 Robertson Hall
1125 Colonel By Drive
Phone: (613) 520-3663
<http://www.carleton.ca>

University of Ottawa

InfoService, Tabaret Hall
75 Laurier Ave. E
Phone: (613) 652-5700
<http://www.uottawa.ca>

Algonquin College

Woodroffe Campus
1385 Woodroffe Avenue
Phone: (613) 727- 4723
<http://www.algonquincollege.com>

St. Paul University

223 Main
Phone: (613) 236-1393
<http://www.ustpaul.ca>

Evaluating your Education and Work Skills

For assistance, contact **World Skills**, listed at the back of this booklet.

If you apply for a job or an educational program, the employer or school may ask you for proof of your level of education or training. The employer or school will also want to know how your documents compare to diplomas or certificates issued in Canada.

You may wish to contact directly:

Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials

<http://www.cicic.ca>

English and French Language Training - LINC

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) is available to immigrants and convention refugees over the age of 17 through funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. An assessment to determine a student's level of skill in English or French is done by the YMCA/YWCA Language Assessment and Resource Centre before placement:

YMCA of Ottawa-Carleton

Language Assessment and Resource Centre

240 Catherine Street, Suite 308

Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2G8

Phone: (613) 238-5462

<http://www.educomts.com/ymca-ywca/Larc2/index.htm>

English and French Language Training - Other

Most universities, community colleges and school boards also offer language classes. Some community organizations and private language schools also do. You can contact these groups directly for more information. Remember to ask about fees since these courses may not be free.

French language courses are available through the French school boards.

Taxes

GST and PST

People in Ontario pay several types of taxes. In Canada, there is a Federal Goods and Services Tax (GST). GST is added when you pay for an item or service. Some things that are exempt from GST are rent, most food products, and medical goods and services.

In Ontario, there is a Provincial Sales Tax (PST). There are some items that are not taxed including most food purchased in supermarkets and prescription medication.

Income Tax

Each year you must declare your earnings to both the Federal and the Provincial governments. The taxation year is from January 1 to December 31. The deadline for submitting income tax forms (called a “return”) is April 30th of the following year. Income tax forms are available at post offices.

Employers must give a T4 statement to every employee. The T4 shows the employee’s earnings and deductions for the past year. Also, banks and financial institutions mail out statements which show any interest earned on savings or investments during the past year. You must attach copies of all income statements to your income tax return. Remember to keep all your receipts.

There are often free income tax clinics which help people fill out the income tax forms. For more information, contact the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-(800)-959-8281. <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca>

There are many free tax clinics in Ottawa. You may ask at any **Immigrant Settlement Agency** or Community Health and Resource Centre.

Property Taxes

These are paid to the city by most property owners. If you are renting an apartment, you don’t pay property taxes. Instead, tax is included in your monthly rent.

For general information, call the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation: 1-(866)-296-6722. <http://www.mpac.ca>

Employment

We encourage you to ask for help from any **Immigrant Settlement Agency** listed at the back of this booklet. Professionals may wish to contact World Skills, listed at the back of this booklet. OCISO has a special employment mentoring program for women.

For employment you will need a Social Insurance Card (SIN). You may also require any of the following documents:

- Résumé
- Educational diplomas, degrees and certificates
- Trade or professional certifications, qualifications
- Letters of recommendation

- Birth certificate or passport
- Driver's licence
- Permanent resident card or confirmation of permanent residence

In Canada, most people work at full-time or part-time jobs to support themselves and their families. At first, you may find it difficult to get work that matches your skills. It may also be difficult to find a job that pays as much as you want until you get Canadian work experience. Your qualifications may not be accepted in Canada until you have Canadian documents or training. Speaking English or French (or both) is essential.



Résumés or Curriculum Vitae (CV)

When you apply for a job, most employers will ask you for your résumé. A résumé is a description of your experience and qualifications and other information about yourself. If you don't know how to prepare a résumé, you can get help from an **Immigrant Settlement Agency**.

Regulated Occupations

In Canada, some professions and trades are regulated in order to protect public health and safety. Examples of regulated occupations are: doctors, nurses, engineers, electricians and teachers. If you practised a profession or trade in your country of origin and want to continue working in this profession in Canada, you will need to get a license from the appropriate regulatory body. You may need to upgrade or adjust your skills to meet Canadian requirements.

Having Your Academic Credentials Assessed

An employer or educational institution may ask you to prove that your credentials are equivalent to Canadian standards. Having your academic credentials assessed shows how qualifications acquired in your country of origin compare to Canadian qualifications. This may help you to better understand the Canadian educational system and assist you with your job search. It may also help you to earn credit towards a degree in Canada by proving that you have already taken similar courses in your country of origin.

Having a credential assessment does not guarantee that you will be issued a licence to practise by a regulatory body, or that credentials earned in another country will be accepted by an employer or educational institution. You will have to pay a fee for your credential assessment. You may wish to visit the following website:

World Education Services – Canada

<http://www.wes.org/ca>

Ottawa Employment Centre - English and French (Bilingual)

Employment Centres have information about available jobs, access to the internet for job searches, computers to complete your resume, photocopiers and fax machines. They can also help you prepare your resume and cover letter. These services are free.

WEST

100 Constellation Crescent
2nd Floor
Phone: (613) 560-0625
Fax: (613) 828-9536

EAST

2339 Ogilvie Road
1st Floor
Phone: (613) 560-0626 ext 34322
Fax: (613) 744-2320

CENTRAL

370 Catherine Street
Suite 100
Phone: (613) 230- 4440
Fax: (613) 236-1891

SOUTH

2020 Walkley Road (at Conroy)
1st Floor East
Phone: (613) 560-0624 ext 15041
Fax: (613) 737-5578

Job Search Tips

- Contact any **Immigrant Settlement Agency** listed at the back of this booklet.
- Prepare your documents
- Network – One of the best ways to find a job is to talk to people.
- Make as many contacts as possible.
- Get Canadian work experience, even if it is not in your trade, skill or profession.
- Work as a volunteer to get workplace experience.
- Look for as many jobs as you can, rather than waiting for a particular job to come up.
- Improve your job skills and Canadian credentials
- Go to college or university to improve your skills or credentials.
- Take French or English language courses.
- Attend interviews and practise job interviewing.
- Some store and restaurants put “Help Wanted” signs in their windows.
- Look in the “Help Wanted” section of local newspapers.
- Look in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory for companies or organizations that might need employees with your skills and experience.

- Sometimes community centres, supermarkets and other public places put advertisements on notice boards.
- Internet
- Keep your hopes alive and look for support as you keep trying!

Your Rights

Federal and Provincial laws protect both workers and employers. These laws set minimum wage levels, hours of work and health and safety standards. They also ensure maternity leave and annual paid vacation as well as protect children who work.

Canada also has human rights laws that protect workers from unfair treatment by employers based on sex, age, race, religion or disability. In Canada, an employer must hire employees on the basis of their qualifications. For example, employers cannot refuse to hire you because they don't like the color of your skin or your religion. This is discrimination. It is also discrimination if you are refused a job because of your age, sex, marital status, disability or sexual orientation.

Organizations That Can Help You

Ottawa Immigrant Settlement Agencies

OCISO (Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization)

959 Wellington Street W
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 2X5
Phone: (613) 725-0202
Fax: (613) 725-9054
E-mail: info@ociso.org
<http://www.ociso.org/>

Catholic Immigration Centre

219 Argyle Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2P-2H4
Phone: (613) 232 9634
Fax: (613) 232 3660
E-mail: cic@cic.ca
<http://www.cic.ca/>

Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO)

219 Argyle Avenue, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2H4
Phone: (613)729-3145
Fax: (613)729-9308
E-mail:
infomail@immigrantwomenservices.com
<http://www.immigrantwomenservices.com/>

Jewish Family Services of Ottawa

2255 Carling Avenue
Suite 301
Ottawa, Ontario K2B 7Z5
Phone: (613) 722-2225
Fax: (613) 722-7570
<http://www.jfsottawa.com/contact.htm>

World Skills (Professional Education and Accreditation)

201-219 Argyle Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1H4
Phone: (613) 233-0453
E-mail: ws@ottawa-worldskills.org
http://www.ottawa-worldskills.org/home_english1.htm

Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre

391 Bank Street, 2nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1Y3
Phone: (613) 235-4875
Fax: (613) 235-5466
<http://www.ottawachineseservices.org/>

Somali Centre for Family Services

1719 Bank Street, Suite 303
Ottawa, ON, K1V 7Z4
Tel. (613) 526-2075
Fax. (613) 526-2803
Email: information@somalifamilyservices.org
<http://somalifamilyservices.org/>

Lebanese and Arab Social Services Association (LASSA)

Suite 302, 151 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3
Phone: (613) 236-0003, (613)236-3111
Fax: (613) 236-6886
E-mail: info@lassa.ca
<http://www.lassa.ca/>

Professional Education and Accreditation

World Skills (Professional Education and Accreditation)

201-219 Argyle Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1H4
Phone: (613) 233-0453
E-mail: ws@ottawa-worldskills.org
http://www.ottawa-worldskills.org/home_english1.htm

Ontario Settlement Agencies

The Ontario by Region section on **Settlement.Org** will help you to find services in a specific area or city in Ontario. Visit <http://www.settlement.org/site/REGIONS/home.asp> to find help in the city where you plan to live. If you plan to land and live in Toronto, dial 211 on a local phone to get help from an information and referral specialist. They can give you information about community services in Toronto.

Community Health Centres

Carlington Community & Health Services

900 Merivale Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 5Z8
Phone: (613) 722-4000
<http://www.carlington.ochc.org>

Centretown Community Health Centre

420 Cooper St.
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2N6
Phone: (613) 233-4443
<http://www.centretownchc.org>

Somerset West Community Health Centre

55 Eccles Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6S3
Phone: (613) 238-8210
<http://www.swchc.on.ca>

Pinecrest-Queensway Health & Community Services

1365 Richmond Road, 2nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K2B 6R7
Phone: (613) 820-4922
<http://www.pqhcs.com>

Sandy Hill Community Health Centre

221 Nelson St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1C7
Phone: (613) 789-1500
<http://www.sandyhillchc.on.ca>

South East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community

1355 Bank Street, Suite 600
Ottawa, Ontario K1H-8K7
Phone: (613) 737-5115
<http://www.seochc.on.ca>

Community Resource Centres

Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre

210 Centrum Blvd., Suite 211
Ottawa (Orléans) Ontario K1E 3V7
Phone: (613) 830-4357
<http://www.crcorleans-cumberland.ca>

Nepean Rideau Osgoode Community Resource Centre

3730 Richmond Road, Suite 106
Nepean, Ontario K2H 5B9
Phone: (613) 596-5626
<http://www.ncrc.ca>

Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre

225 Donald Street, Unit 120
Ottawa, ON K1K 1N1
Phone: (613) 745-0073
<http://www.ofcrc.org>

Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre

2339 Ogilvie Road, 2nd Floor
Ottawa (Gloucester) Ontario K1J 8M6
Phone: (613) 741-7029
<http://www.eorc-gloucester.ca>

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre

2 MacNeil Court
Ottawa (Kanata) Ontario K2L 4H7
Phone: (613) 591-3686
<http://www.communityresourcecentre.ca>

Hunt Club-Riverside Community Services Centre

3310 McCarthy Road
Ottawa, Ontario
Phone: (613) 247-1600
<http://www.huntclubriverside.ca>

Lowertown Community Resource Centre

40 Cobourg St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8Z6
Phone: (613) 789-3930
<http://www.crcbv.ca>

Vanier Community Services Centre

290 Dupuis Street
Ottawa (Vanier) Ontario K1L 1A2
Phone: (613) 744-2892
<http://www.cscvanier.com>

City of Ottawa

110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1
Special Service Number: 3-1-1
Ordinary telephone: (613) 580-2400
http://ottawa.ca/residents/index_en.html

Our Mission: “Through innovative services, community building and public engagement, OCISO enables newcomers and their families to fully participate in an open and welcoming Ottawa.”

Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization (OCISO)
Organisme Communautaire des Services aux Immigrants d’Ottawa

959 rue Wellington Street West, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1Y 2X5
Tel. 1-613-725-0202 | Fax. 1-613-725-9054 | E-mail: info@ociso.org
Website: <http://www.ociso.org>

Charitable registration: # 10780 5632 RR0001



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