

GUIDE FOR MEDICINE HATTERS WHO SUPPORT NEWCOMERS



This guide was developed by the Medicine Hat Local Immigration Partnership, a collaborative community initiative dedicated to improving the integration and retention of newcomers. We are constantly working to add and edit this material. Please e-mail us at jenn@mhlip.ca if you need additional information or have some modifications to recommend.

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- The Calgary Local Immigration Partnership's Newcomer Guide for Service Providers
- Alis's Welcome to Alberta: Information for Newcomers, Government of Alberta, Community and Social Services
- Immigration Partnership Saskatoon 2018 Newcomer Needs Assessment
- The Medicine Hat College International Student Orientation Booklet 2020-2021

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Who Is This Guide for?

This guide is for anyone in Medicine Hat who supports newcomers. You may have sponsored a friend or family member to Canada, or you may be an employer that brought a newcomer to Canada to work. Perhaps you are a neighbour of new immigrants or refugees. You may serve immigrants in your work all the time, or occasionally. Regardless of how you might interact with newcomers, we want all community members in Medicine Hat to succeed in welcoming them. Some people who may find this guide useful:

- Private sponsors
- Employers
- Neighbours
- Health care workers
- Educators
- Social workers
- Police officers
- Faith communities

Why Did We Make This Guide?

The Medicine Hat Immigration Partnership developed this guide so that people in Medicine Hat who support newcomers would know what resources, services, and programs are available for newcomers. We also developed parts of this guide to help Medicine Hatters explain important information that might seem obvious to us, but might not be obvious to a newcomer who came from a place where there are different rules, expectations, and services.

Whether someone is moving to Medicine Hat from across the country or from around the world, there are many programs and services in place to help newcomers create a new life here. Moving to a new country can be both exciting and stressful. This book starts by providing information about the important things a newcomer must do and know when they first arrive, the journey a newcomer experiences, and a directory of services that describes what organizations are available to help along the way.

The information in this guide is current as of November 2020. Because programs and services for newcomers are reviewed and changed regularly, some of the information in this book might not be up to date when you are reading it. For more recent or detailed information, go to the websites or call the telephone numbers listed throughout the book.

How To Use This Guide?

There are several ways to use the book. You can:

- Read the book from beginning to end
- Use the Table of Contents to find specific information
- Go to the websites in each section to learn more

UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION STATUS

People entering Canada can seek temporary or permanent residency status based on the length of time they intend to stay in the country.

Temporary Resident

A foreign national who is in Canada legally for a short period. **Temporary residents include:**

1. International Students

2. Foreign Workers

- Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs)
- Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAWs)

3. Visitors

Students, foreign workers and visitors, such as tourists.

Permanent Resident

A person who has legally immigrated to Canada but is not yet a Canadian citizen. There are generally three main immigration pathways to becoming a permanent resident of Canada.

1. Economic or business class

This is a category that includes investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed people. A person may become a permanent resident in this category based on their social capital and ability to economically establish themselves in Canada.

2. Family class

This includes family members sponsored to come to Canada by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

3. Refugee class

Those who applied for and received permanent resident status in Canada after their refugee claim was accepted. Refugees are persons forced to flee their homes because their basic human rights have been violated or are in jeopardy. Most often they have fled their countries involuntarily and they have had little to no time to prepare to move to Canada, including bringing relevant documents and credentials.

UNDERSTANDING AN IMMIGRANT'S JOURNEY

Please see the following two pages (p.10-11) to better understand an Immigrant's Journey.

PRE-ARRIVAL SERVICES

Pre-arrival services provide overseas clients with information and resources to plan their settlement processes and prepare for employment in their professional fields.

What Services Are Available?

Planning for Canada

Pre-arrival counselling to clients in 32 countries

Settlement online Pre-arrival

Services (SOPA) offers online group-based job-search and soft-skills workshops to overseas clients destined to Alberta.

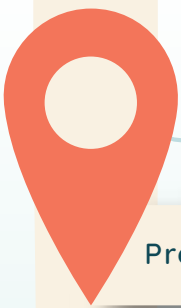
Active Engagement and Integration Project

(AEIP) serves clients in South Korea, China, United States, and Taiwan.

Who Can Use These Services?

1. **Newcomers that have an approved Canadian permanent residence application that is still living outside of Canada.**
2. **Newcomers that have one of the following documents:**
 - A letter from the Canadian government saying they can get pre-arrival services
 - A confirmation of permanent residence letter
 - A passport request letter that indicates Permanent Resident visa issuance
 - A letter from the government of Canada asking for medical exam results
 - A single-entry permanent resident visa
 - A letter from the government of Canada letting them know they can pick up their permanent resident visa

****Temporary residents that are visiting, studying, or working in Canada CANNOT use pre-arrival services**



Pre-arrival Services (pg. 10)

Arrival to Medicine Hat (pg. 12)



Social Insurance Numbers /
identification (pg. 13, 14)



Cultural Food (pg. 29)



Temporary Housing (pg.38)



Transportation (pg. 15, 46)



Telephones &
Important numbers (Pg.17,18)



SETTLING



Education (pg. 30)



17.) First Job/
Survival Job (Pg.32)



Accessing internet, phones
& mail (Pg. 19,20)



14.) Banking (Pg.43)

Language Learning (pg. 34)



INTEGRATING

Housing (pg. 38)



Healthcare (pg. 36)

Self-employment (pg. 33)



Law and Justice (pg. 42)

20.) Socializing and Cultural Organizations (Pg.27)



Fulfillment

Become a thriving and productive member of society. Give back to the community.

Fincances (pg. 43)



Belonging

Fostering acceptance and mutual respect between immigrants and the community.

Recreation (pg. 46)



Integrating

Improving language skills, access to health care, fulfilling employment, socialization and networking, feeling of safety in the country

Canadian Citizenship and Immigration (Pg. 22)



Settling

Basic Survival needs like housing, food and clothing

Maslow's Pyramid of Immigrant Needs

Thrive and give back to society



ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

When someone arrives, this is a list of things (not in a particular order) that a newcomer will need to do during their first weeks in Medicine Hat, Alberta. You can help a newcomer with these items, or a settlement agency (p.23) may be able to help newcomers with items on this list. Each item on the list refers you to a section of the book for more information:

- Find a temporary place to stay.
- Find out where to shop for food.
- Apply for a Social Insurance Number.
- Open a bank account.
- Register for free public health insurance.
- Explore the city.
- Enrol children in school.
- Find out about English language classes.
- Find out how to have my qualifications assessed.
- Look for work.
- Learn how to dress for winter.

IMPORTANT THINGS A NEWCOMER NEEDS TO DO KNOW WHEN THEY HAVE JUST ARRIVED

In this chapter you will find information about important things a newcomer will need to do or know during their first few days and weeks in Medicine Hat.

Apply for a Social Insurance Number

A Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a 9-digit number use to administer Canadian government programs. Everyone must have a Social Insurance Number to work, to open a bank account, and to apply for government benefits. Employers cannot legally pay someone without this number.

Applying for a Social Insurance Number (SIN)

- To apply for a SIN, the newcomer must submit a **primary document** (an official document that proves their identity and status in Canada) such as a Permanent Resident Card or work permit. The original document must be submitted
- If the name on the primary document is different from the name used on other documents, a **secondary document** with that name must be submitted. The original document must be submitted.

For more information about applying for a Social Insurance Number:

- Go to the Medicine Hat Service Canada Centre at Northside Centre, 78 8St. NW. (currently closed due to COVID)
- Call the Service Canada Employment Insurance number at 1-800-206-7218 and press 3 for information about Social insurance Numbers

How to use a Social Insurance Number Safely

- memorize the number and keep the Social Insurance Number card in a safe place
- Not use a Social Insurance Number card as a personal identification
- Not show a Social Insurance Number card or give out the number to people who do not need it. Legally, the only places one needs to give a Social Insurance Number to is:
 1. An employer
 2. A bank or financial institution (when applying for a bank account)
 3. The government (when accessing programs and benefits)

**If a card is lost or stolen, contact Service Canada. A fee may be required to replace your card

Carry Identification

It's important to communicate to newcomers that we need to carry identification (ID) because in some countries this is not important, and in other countries people carry different identification. Canadians are often asked to show their ID to confirm their identity, age or address, such as when using a credit card or a cheque to pay for purchases, when accessing health care services and when renting accommodation. ID from the original country can be used until Canadian ID is received (for example, a Permanent Resident Card).

**It's best to carry two types of ID:

1. Once piece should be photo ID, which can include:

- A driver's license or photo identification card
- A photocopy of a Permanent Resident Card
- A photocopy of a passport from home the Permanent Resident card has not been received

2. The second piece of ID, which does not need a photo can include:

- a health insurance card (see **Personal Health Card**, p. ____)
- A major credit card (see **Using and Building Credit**, p. _____)
- An employee card
- A photocopy of a birth certificate
- A bank debit or account card with the newcomer's name and signature
- A utility bill with the newcomer's name on it

Advise the newcomer to keep the following pieces of identification in a safe place and to not carry them:

- Social insurance number card
- Passport
- Work Permit
- Confirmation of permanent residence forms
- Permanent Resident card

Getting Around Medicine Hat

Maps

The Medicine Hat Visitor Centre (330 Gehring Rd SW, Medicine Hat)(403-527-6422) provides maps of the city including bicycle paths.

Bus maps, routes, and apps can be found at:

www.medicinehat.ca/government/departments/community-development/medicine-hat-transit

Public transit

Public transit in Medicine Hat can be quite different from other countries. Here are some important things you may want to explain to the newcomer you are interacting with:

- buses pick people up and drop people off at bus stops. Buses do not usually stop to let people on or off between bus stops
- Bus stops are clearly marked by signs
- Most bus stops are outdoors. When taking the bus, it's important to dress for the weather, especially in the winter

To find more information about fares and routes:

- See www.medicinehat.ca/transit and www.medicinehat.ca/MHTnow
- Get the Medicine Hat Transit App on your computer or phone

Walking

Rules for walking is different in other countries. In many countries there are no rules. Explaining to a newcomer that Canada has the following pedestrian rules/laws will help newcomers walk safely in Medicine Hat:

- walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic
- Cross the street only at street corners or marked crosswalk. Failing to do so is known as jaywalking, which is illegal and can result in a fine
- Obey the traffic lights.
- Drivers are supposed to stop at crosswalks to let pedestrians (people walking) cross but they do not always do this. Look carefully and be sure vehicles have stopped BEFORE crossing the street.

Bicycling

People in Medicine Hat of all ages ride bikes (bicycles) to work and school or for recreation. When riding a bike, these laws must be followed:

- an approved bicycle helmet must be worn if someone is 17 years or younger. (Adults are encouraged to wear helmets.). An approved helmet meets safety standards and will have a sticker or mark from a safety standard organization like the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or American National Standards Institute (ANSI).
- Keep right or in the right lane. Ride single file
- Obey all traffic signs and lights. Use hand signals when turning
- Get off and to walk a bicycle when using crosswalks
- Equip bicycles with a bell and brakes that will stop the bicycle

- At night, bicycles need front and rear reflectors and a white headlight
- Bicycles designed for one person must carry only one person. A bicycle with a child seat is equipped for two people

Taxis

Taxis are more expensive than public transit. Taxis in Medicine Hat:

- Are metered
- Expect a tip of 10%, but is not required

To call for a taxi, call:

- Care Cabs: 403-429-2211
- Deluxe Central Taxi: 403-526-3333

Driving

*For information on driving, see the chapter on **Driving and Vehicles**.

Shuttle buses

For those that need to get to Calgary, there are two shuttle buses available:

- Prairie sprinter
- J & L Shuttle Service

Using Telephones and Directories

Newcomers may not be familiar with our area codes, toll free calls, and important numbers. Many may want to call back home, but do not know the fees or ways to pay for these long-distance calls. This section provides information on this.

Local calls

To make a local call within Medicine Hat, dial the area code and phone number. In Medicine Hat the area code will be 403 or 587.

403 - 000 - 0000

Long-distance calls

For numbers in North America and the Caribbean, press 1 and enter the area code and telephone number:

1 - 403 - 000 - 0000

For numbers in other countries, press 011 plus the country code and the number. Country codes can be found on the front pages of the telephone book, by pressing 0 for the operator and asking for a country code, or by searching on the internet.

Long Distance Calls:

Long distance plans can be expensive for home and cell phones, though plans do exist. It is less expensive to call long-distance through Skype.

Toll Free Calls

Toll free calls are long-distance calls that you can make for free. Toll free numbers often begin with **1-800, 1-866, 1-877, or 1-888**. Many business and government departments have toll-free numbers.

Alberta government number by dealing **310-0000**, then after the prompt, enter the 10 digit number you are trying to reach.

Telephone books and directories

You can find telephone numbers for people and businesses in the following online directories:

- 411.ca
- yellowpages.ca

Important Phone Numbers

It is important to explain to a newcomer the following important phone numbers. 911 - Call 911 for emergency services such as police, fire, and ambulance. Call 911 only in a real emergency like life and death situations such as:

- In the case of a serious injury or accident
- During a crime in progress
- If you wake up to the sound of someone breaking in in the middle of the night

****You can be fined for a non-emergency call and will have to pay for non-emergency ambulance trips.**

When you call 911, tell the person who answers:

1. What the emergency is and what help you need
2. Where the emergency is
3. Your name, address, and phone number

4. Even if you can only say FIRE, POLICE, or HELP, call 911 and stay on the line until help arrives.

811 - Call 811 for Health Link - Alberta's free 24/7 health information and advice service. The service is staffed by registered nurses and health professionals who provide health advice and navigation services.

511 - Call 511 for information on Alberta road conditions.

411 - Call 411 (for a cost!) for directory assistance

These are some other important phone numbers when a newcomer might ask you for help that might be beyond what you can help them with (ex. money, family violence, mental health, etc.)

- [Income Supports](#) – 1-866-644-5135
- [Medicine Hat Women's Shelter](#) – 24/7 helpline: 403-529-1091. Free support to individuals impacted by family violence and abuse:
- [Addiction Helpline](#) – 1-866-332-2322
- [Community Resources](#) – [211 Alberta](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#) – 1-800-668-6868
- [Mental Health Helpline](#) – 1-877-303-2642

Access Computers and the Internet

Everybody can access a computer for free at the Medicine Hat Public Library, even without a library card. At many cafes anyone can access the internet for free if you bring your own laptop or device.

If a newcomer is looking for a job or needs a computer to write a resume, computers are available for use (free of charge) at Being Human Services or at the Employment Hub in the Provincial Building.

Many rental apartments in Medicine Hat include internet connections. However, if a newcomer needs internet connection, Telus, Shaw, Bell, Lightspeed, or Rogers can be contacted.

The Medicine Hat Public Library

In many other countries, a library is a place that only has books that can be borrowed. It's important to explain that the Medicine Hat Public Library is a public hub where they can meet people, have conversations, bring kids to play, find information, and use many resources for free. At the public library they can:

- use a computer for free
- Get help finding information
- Borrow books, CDs, DVDs, and magazines
- Print documents for a small cost
- Meet people by participating in a variety of programs (ex. Reading programs, stitching)
- Have conversations about topics you are interested in by borrowing "human library books"
- Participate in conversation group for various languages
- Borrow a pass to the Esplanade or Family Leisure Centre
- Bring children to play

Send Mail

Many newcomers want to send mail and money back home. Mail can be sent by Canada Post or with a private courier (delivery) company.

The cost of sending a letter or parcel depends on:

- where it's going
- the size and weight of the envelope or parcel
- how soon it needs to reach the destination

****It's not a good idea to send cash through the mail. For more information on sending money home safely:**

- Send a bank transfer
- Send a money transfer for cash pick-up (ex. Use a Western Union. While fees are higher, this is a quick method and is available even in many more remote locations)
- Money transfer companies (there are specialist money transfer companies like WorldRemit, TorFX, World First, and several others)
- International Money Order (This is an international guaranteed cheque from the bank which can then be mailed overseas. This is the slowest way to send a money transfer)

Contact an Immigrant-Serving Agency

Immigrant Serving Agencies provide information and guidance to newcomers to Alberta. Staff at immigrant-serving agencies often speak several languages.

FOR PERMANENT RESIDENTS

Saamis Immigration Services Association

(403) 504-1188 | 659 3rd St SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A0H4

Website: www.saamisimmigration.com

Facebook: @SaamisImmigrationServicesAssociation

Cost: FREE

Who: Saamis Immigration Services Association (SISA) helps all permanent newcomers (refugees, family, economic immigrants) in Medicine Hat and area:

- find translation and interpretation services
- Find English language training
- Prepare to find employment
- Connect with child, youth, family, and senior services
- Connect with legal help
- Connect with financial and tax help
- Connect with the community
- Fill out forms and applications
- Complete the arrival checklist
- Assist with other general concerns related to immigration or settlement

FOR TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

Brooks and County Services Immigration (BCIS)

Contact Kofi at 403-362-0401 or (403) 362-0404 | info@bcis-brooks.ca

500 Cassils Rd E Bay 2, Brooks, AB T1R 1M6

Website: www.bcis-brooks.ca

Facebook: @bcisab

Cost: FREE

Who: Brooks and County Services Immigration (BCIS) helps all Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), Seasonal Agricultural Workers, Post-graduate Work Permit holders, and their families in southern Alberta:

- Complete the arrival checklist: obtain a social insurance number (SIN), driver's license, a place to live, provincial health care card, open a bank account, school and child care needs, getting around the city, enjoying the city, connecting with family back home
- Answer questions

- Understanding employment rights and responsibilities
- Pathways to permanent residency
- Budgeting and tax filing
- Home or renter's insurance
- Safe driving
- How to dress for winter

DIRECTORY

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

Government of Canada Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

1-888-242-2100 | cic.gc.ca

- Citizenship test preparation
- Process of applying for and receiving Canadian citizenship
- Online exam information and preparation
- Information on citizenship ceremony
- Providing information about the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens and how a Canadian permanent resident can become a citizen

Saamis Immigration Service Association (SISA)

Saamis Immigration Services Association

(403) 504-1188 | 659 3rd St SE

- Provides classes to prepare individuals to answer Canada's citizenship exam
- Information on rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND PARENTING PROGRAMS

For Children and Youth

Be Youth

403-528-8066 | 1201 Kingsway Ave SE #102

Website: www.beyouth.ca

Facebook & Instagram: @BeYOUthCentre

Cost: FREE

- For all youth age 11-17
- Supper program: encourages youth to be active in the kitchen while learning how to prepare healthy meals
- Outreach program: high risk youth is paired with an outreach staff for support and mentorship

Youth Hub

403-527-1588 | Youthopia Building at 250 2nd Street SE

Website: www.mcmansouth.ca/se_yh.html

Facebook: @McManYouthHub

Instagram: @mcmman.youthhub

Cost: FREE

The Youth Hub is a systems navigation service where youth ages 12-24 can get connected to housing, mental wellness, financial supports, or any other resources they may need to fully participate in community life.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BBBS) of Medicine Hat and Areas

403-527-6640 | 665 Kingsway Ave SE

Website: medicinehat.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca

Facebook: @bbbsmedhat

Cost: FREE

BBBS offers community mentoring programs. Young people from diverse backgrounds can be matched with a positive role model. The mentoring opportunities are for young people (age 6-24) and can be part of one-to-one mentor programs or group mentor programs. These programs are available in schools and in the community.

LEARN family literacy

403-529-3878

E-mail: Family literacy@mhc.ab.ca

Website: www.learn-council.ca

LEARN has programs for the entire family. Programs include:

- **Roving Gyms**
- **Families Learning Together**
 - A free 8 week program for parents and their children aged 0-6. This program typically includes free play, songs, gaes, stories, and socialization. It is held at **5th Ave United Church (476 4th St. SE)**
- **Growing Child, Growing Parent**
 - A free LEARN program for parents and their children. Parents can attend with or without children.
- **Project Connect**
 - A free one-day event for those in need, offering services including a hot lunch, transit services, haircuts, and many more!
 - Hosted by St.John's Presbyterian Church
- **Grandparent Group**
 - A free support group for grandparents caring for their grandchildren, hosted by Bridges Family Programs and Miywasin Friendship Center. Medicine Hat Public Library

Medicine Hat Public Library

403-502-8525 | 414 1St. SE

Website: mhpl.shortgrass.ca

Facebook and Instagram: @MHPublicLibrary

Cost: FREE

The Medicine Hat Public Library has events for all ages including children, tweens, and teens. For children ages 0-10 there are early literacy programs (story time), crafts, play time, lego

time, movies and more. For tweens (10-12) and teens (13-18) there are monthly special programs like “Techsplosion night”, “Anime night”, “Dungeons and Dragons”, etc.

Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society

24/7 helpline 403-529-1091 | Intake and Programming 403-527-8223

Website: www.mhwss.ca

Facebook and Instagram: @MHWomensshleter

Cost: FREE

The Medicine Hat Women’s Shelter Society offers programs for children and youth that have experienced or witnessed family violence. They have a children’s support group (age 6-12), a Growing Together program for parents and children, and a Youth Group for youth 13+.

Youth Programs and Activities at Places of Worship

Most places of worship have their own children and youth programs and activities. Please contact individual places of worship to find out more about these programs.

Saamis Immigration Services Association Youth Group

Saamis Immigration runs a youth group for refugees and permanent residents.

Roving Gyms

There is free gym time for children ages 0-6 and their siblings from October to March at the Family Leisure Centre and YMCA.

Symphonic Society Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Families who seek financial assistance for music programs through TAP must apply through the Medicine Hat College Conservatory of Music and Dance. An interview can be arranged by contacting the Academic Department at (403) 529-3880

KidSport Medicine Hat & Redcliff

KidSport Medicine Hat & Redcliff raises funds to provide up to \$300 per eligible kid per year to participate in a season of sport of their choice.

Free Swim and Skating

The city of Medicine Hat and town of Redcliff offer various free swim and free skate times. These can be found on the city/town websites.

Youth Employment Programs

The YMCA Employment Centre

The YMCA Employment Centre offers youth (ages 15-30), a 4 week program to attend FREE workshops that focus on employability and life skills followed by a 12 week paid work placement.

Youth Careers Southeastern Alberta

Youth Careers Southeastern Alberta offers internship and coop placements for high school students.

Community Futures Entre-Corp

(403) 528-2824 | 556 4 St SE

Website: www.mhwss.ca

Facebook: @CFEntreCorp

Instagram: @communityfuturesmedhat

Community Futures Entre-Corp runs a Youth Entrepreneurship Camp for youth age 13-15.

Parenting Programs

Bridges Family Programs

(403) 526-7473 | 477 3rd St SE

Website: www.bridgesfamilyprograms.com

Facebook: @Bridges-Family-Program

Best Babies - home visits for pregnant moms and moms with infants 0 to 9 months

Building Blocks - Home visits for families with children 0-6

Bridges Services - for individuals expecting a child or have children under 19

First Steps - Home visits to moms who are pregnant or who have a baby under 6 months and have used alcohol or other substances during pregnancy

Community Health Services

(403) 502-8215 | 2948 Dunmore Rd SE

Community Health Services has pre and postnatal classes, labour and delivery information, an oral health program for children, and vaccinations.

Nurture: Medicine Hat Pregnancy and Family Support Centre

(403) 504-8560 | 321 6 Ave SE

Website: nurturepregnancycentre.ca

Facebook: @nurturepregnancycentre

Nurture provides support for unplanned pregnancies

South East Alberta Fetal Alcohol Network Society

(403) 548-2963 | 750 3rd St SE

Website: seafan.ca

Facebook: @seafan

Provides assessments and supports for those with FASD.

YMCA Young Moms program

(403) 548-2963 | 750 3rd St SE

Website: medicinehatymca.ca

For pregnant or parenting teens - children get on-site daycare while moms attend school

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

Cultural Organizations

The Connection Intercultural Association of Medicine Hat

(403) 458-4928 | 1335 TransCanada Way SE, Bay 3, Medicine Hat

Website: www.connectionvillage.org

Facebook: @theconnectionmedhat

The Connection Intercultural Association holds social events and inclusion programs that provide Canadians and International People (newcomers) a platform to meet and build meaningful relationships.

German Canadian Harmony Social Club

(403) 548-3657 | 1 - 1St. SE, Redcliff, AB

Website: www.harmonyhall.site

The German Canadian Harmony Club was established in 1960 to support and promote the German Canadian culture in the community. The social club owns and operates the Harmony Hall

Islamic Association of Medicine Hat

5 Sage Pl SE

Website: www.islammedicinehat.com

Facebook: @islammedicinehat

Unisphere

(403) 529-2656

Website: www.unisphere.ca

Unisphere celebrates the diversity of culture worldwide.

Informal Groups and Facebook Groups in Medicine Hat

Filipino-Canadian Association of Medicine Hat

Facebook: @FilCanMedHat

Latinos en Medicine Hat Facebook Group

Spanish speaking TFWs (based out of Iglesia Hispana Evangelica De Medicine Hat Church)

United Immigrants of Medicine Hat Facebook Group

What's App Groups Based in Medicine Hat

Canadian Association of Nigerian Physicians and Dentists (CANPAD)

Hausa Speaking group (from Nigeria) in Medicine Hat

Places of Worship in Different Languages

Chinese Alliance Church

403-529-9623 | 870 4 St SE

Iglesia Evangelica Hispana De Med-Hat

1002 Yuill St SE

Medicine Hat Masjid (Mosque)

16 Sage Place SE

CULTURAL FOOD

Markets and Stores

Alam Supermarket

303 Southridge Dr SE

All Halal Goat, Lamb, Chicken, Beef and Fish. International spices.

Grace's International Market

403-487-0314 | 1667 Dunmore Rd SE

Asian and African fresh veggies, cassava, fish and meat

Starlite Convenience Store and Asian Market

403-654-0343 | 541 Allowance Ave SE

Med Hat Asian Market

403-957-0575 | 520A 4th St. SE

Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Filipino Products

Buy Food Directly From Local Farmers

Community Food Connections Association (CFCA)

(403) 502-6096 or 403-502-8200 | 2948 Dunmore Road SE

Website: foodconnections.ca

Facebook: @CommunityFoodConnections

Local Food Directory

CFCA Maintains an up-to-date Local Food Directory that can be found by clicking the link at: <https://foodconnections.ca/posts/115>

The food directory allows people to connect with farmers to purchase food directly or pick their own food. This includes all sorts of culturally appropriate food (ex. Goat meat, lamb, chickpeas, lentils, international squash, etc)

Community Gardens

CFCA coordinates two community gardens in Medicine Hat. For a \$50 fee, anyone can grow a plot of food and have access to water. This allows people to grow their own culturally appropriate fresh herbs, spices, vegetables and beans.

EDUCATION

Elementary and Secondary School

Medicine Hat Public School Division

(403) 528-6700 | 601 1 Ave SW

Public education for all students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 in Medicine Hat and area. Registration for all students including newcomers is at the local school. If a newcomer is uncertain which school they are supposed to attend, they can call central office.

Medicine Hat Public School Division also offers early learning programs (ELP) for children starting at age 3. Morning and afternoons are available. This program offers supportive environments for children to develop independence, initiative, early literacy, and to develop socially.

Medicine Hat Catholic School Board

(403) 527-2292 | 1251 1 Ave SW

Medicine Hat Catholic Schools offer publicly funded faith-based education for all children, there is no tuition to attend a Catholic school in Alberta! All children are welcome from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (English or French Immersion). We also offer Early Learning Programs (ELP_ in all 6 of our Elementary Schools for children starting at age 3, mornings and afternoons. In our ELPs, children learn through PLAY to develop language and literacy skills,

social-emotional regulation, as well as cognitive development. Registration for all students including newcomers can be done online <https://mhcbeschoolengage.ca/>. If a newcomer has questions about a school or is uncertain which school their child should attend, they can call the Catholic School Board Office at 403-527-2292 or e-mail info@mhcbes.ab.ca

Prairie Rose School Division

(403)527-5516 | 918 2 Ave, Dunmore

The Prairie Rose School Division includes schools in Redcliff, Cypress County, Bow Island and Area, Open and area, Foremost and area. This division includes a Prairie Mennonite Alternative School, an outreach school, and a colony school.

Chartered School

(403) 528-2983 | 201 5 St. SW

There is one chartered school in Medicine Hat: CAPE school which runs from K to 9. CAPE school has a personalized integrated program.

Conseil Scolaire FrancoSud

(403) 528-2881 | 20 Saamis Rotary Way SW

Public Francophone schooling for children with at least one francophone parent. The school offers K-12 programming.

Medicine Hat College

The Medicine Hat College has a free program for high school students to get help with their homework. The drop-in is on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:00pm to 6:00pm at B307 above the library.

Public Colleges and Institutes

Medicine Hat College

(403) 502-8449 (International student services)

The Medicine Hat College is a public community college. The college provides supports for international students from pre-arrival services to graduation. They support students both on and off campus.

Private Colleges

Medicine Hat Academy of Learning

Cypress College

EMPLOYMENT

Finding a Job

Alberta Supports - Employment Hub

403-529-3758 | 110, 346 - 3rd St. SE

- Information and training to find a job
- Free access to computers to search for a job

Facebook: @MedicineHatJobs

Email: mhemploymenthub@gov.ab.ca

Being Human Services

403-580-3338 | 222 South Railway Street SE

- Information and training to find a job
- Free access to computers to search for a job
- Resume writing, cover letters, practice interviewing, etc.

Facebook: @BeingHumanServices

Email: reception@beinghumanservices.ca

YMCA Employment Centre

403-529-4733 | 770 1 St. SE

- Resume writing, cover letters, practice interviewing, etc.

Training

Being Human Services

WORKPLACE INTEGRATION FOR NEWCOMERS

- This is a program that assists new Canadians with employment readiness, and language supports to develop connections to Canadian workplaces.

Ymca Employment Centre

Business and Self-Employment

Community Futures Entre-Corp

Community Futures Entre-Corp provides financing, training, and advisory services for anyone who wants to start a small business in Medicine Hat and area. They provide information on how to develop a successful business plan and how to succeed in the Medicine Hat market. They will also provide one-on-one support.

Medicine Hat College

The Medicine Hat College has an Entrepreneur Development Center (EDC) that helps students and alumni to start, manage, and grow successful businesses. Any college student can pitch their business idea for a grant to gain some start up funds.

Business Link Alberta

Business Link Alberta provides free business training, webinars, one-on-one advice, resources, and support. They offer specialized support to aspiring and established immigrant entrepreneurs across Alberta

Alberta Women Entrepreneurs

Provides advise, financing, mentoring and networking development for women entrepreneurs.

Women In Business Medicine Hat

Provides networking opportunities to women entrepreneurs in Medicine Hat and surrounding areas

Chamber Of Commerce

Provides information, connections, support and influence for businesses in Medicine Hat. The Chamber runs networking events, trade shows, learning events, information, and influences policy.

Accreditation, Qualifications Assessment, Support or Professionals

Canadian Information Centre For International Credentials

1-416-962-9725 | cicic.ca

- supports for working in Canada
- Information on processes for working in Canadian provinces
- Information on credential assessments for universities and employment both in Canada and internationally
- Information on applications and financial assistance

Career Loans

1-888-282-9516 | careerloans.ca

- provides micro loans of up to \$15,000 to help skilled immigrants fulfill their career goals in Canada
- Loan repayment up to 4 years with low-interest rates (prime plus 2%)
- Free one-on-one career counselling

Windmill Micro-lending

1-855-423-2262 | windmillmicrolending.org

- A loan of up to \$15,000 can be considered for newcomers who need help to pay for the costs associated with obtaining the Canadian licensing or training that will allow them to work in their profession or trade in Canada

World Education Services (Wes)

1-800-361-6106 | wes.org

- provides credential evaluations to internationally trained professionals and students (including a course by course comparison for licensing, which is different from the Educational Credential Assessment for Immigration purposes)
- Offers free tools and resources
- Publish articles on a wide range of topics about working and studying in Canada

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

English as a Second Language Assessment for adults

Before newcomers can be referred to English language courses, a language assessment must be completed by Karen Ziemann Consultants. Karen will assess the level of English language skills in four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. After this assessment,

newcomers will be referred to the appropriate language schools, LINC programs, or ESL program.

Saamis Immigration Services Association Language Instruction For Newcomers To Canada

(LINC) Levels 1-4

Medicine Hat College

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Levels 5-8

LEARN

LEARN is a Community Adult program to support adult learners in Medicine Hat and Cypress County with family literacy programs.

Programs include:

- **Roving Gyms**
- **Families Learning Together**
- A free 8 week program for parents and their children aged 0-6. This program typically includes free play, songs, games, stories, and socialization. It is held at 5th Ave United Church (476 4th St. SE)
- **Growing Child, Growing Parent**
- A free LEARN program for parents and their children. Parents can attend with or without children.
- **Project Connect**
- A free one-day event for those in need, offering services including a hot lunch, transit services, haircuts, and many more!
- Hosted by St. John's Presbyterian Church
- **Grandparent Group**
- A free support group for grandparents caring for their grandchildren, hosted by Bridges Family Programs and Miywasin Friendship Center.

Adult Basic Literacy Education (Able)

Evening English As A Second Language (Esl)

ABLE has an Evening ESL program for all students (Canadian Citizens, Temporary Foreign Works, Permanent Residents, Refugees, Refugee claimants, First Nations, etc). This program helps students work on reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and spelling.

To register, or for more information, email Janessa at jtruscott@mhc.ab.ca

One-On-One Tutoring

If you need help with your English, you can get matched with a volunteer tutor to support you in improving your English Language skills.

To get connected with a tutor, email Janessa at jtruscott@mhc.ab.ca

HEALTH CARE

For Information on the Alberta Health Care card and coverage, please see “important things an immigrant needs to know and do.

Finding a Family Doctor

The Palliser Primary Care Network (PCN) keeps an up to date list of doctors who are accepting new patients. To see the list, see www.palliserpcn.ca and click “Find a Family Doctor”

Community Health Care and Immunizations

Community Health Services

(403) 502-8215 | 2948 Dunmore Rd SE

Provides a wide range of health services including:

- prenatal/postpartum services
- Health promotion / disease and injury prevention services
- Immunizations
- Well child services
- Communicable disease control
- School health services

****Appointments are required. Please Call before visiting****

Dental Assistance Community Programs

- Low Income Families Dental Treatment - Children's Dental Care Program
- oral health - preventative dental services: provides preventative services, including oral health education, screenings, and fluoride application

Mental Health And Counselling

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES - MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

403-529-3500 | Provincial Building - 346 3rd St. SE

1-866-3322322 (24 hour help line)

- provides information, resources and connection to services for individuals of all ages with addiction and mental health concerns
- Provides free counselling
- Provides mental health programming

Alberta Health Services - Children Mental Health

403-529-3582 | Provincial Building - 346 3 St. SE

- Offers free services to children, youth, and families. Services are offered in individual, family and group settings.
- addiction prevention and mental health promotion
- Protection against Children Abusing Drugs Act Program
- Tobacco information, education, and cessation including support groups

Addictions And Mental Health Outreach Services

403-502-8617 | RCC Building 631 Prospect Drive SW

Programs for individuals with a mental illness or addiction including, community support programs recreation programs, therapy, and clinics.

Alcoholics Anonymous

403-527-2065

A fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Medicine Hat Family Service

(403) 504-8026 | 477 3rd St. SE

Website: mhfamilyservice.com

Facebook: @medicinehatfamilyservice

Provides counselling services to individuals, couples, and families to develop effective communication skills in order to address family issues.

Health Link 811

811 | [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca)

A telephone service that provides free 24/7 nurse advice and general health information for Albertans.

HOUSING

Temporary Housing Upon Arrival

If the newcomers cannot stay with family or friends, they can stay at:

- Hotel or motel: You can rent a room on a day-to-day basis. Some hotels and motels offer lower rates by the week. The range of cost per night for “double occupancy” (two people) in a hotel or motel in Medicine Hat ranges from \$60 to \$120
- Medicine Hat College Residences: The Medicine Hat College offers temporary housing to non-students from May to August at rates of \$60 per day for an individual.

Information on Renting or Buying Homes

Government Of Alberta - Ministry Of Service Alberta

servicealberta.gov.ab.ca

Provides information on:

- housing, property, and utilities
- renting, leasing or buying a home
- property taxes and utilities
- Rental agreements
- Tenant disputes and resolutions
- Other information relevant to tenants and landlords

****If a person rents a home, tenants’ insurance is recommended. A landlord will not pay for any lost or damaged belongings or possible liabilities. The owner of the rental property insures the building only**

If a person buys a home, a homeowner's policy insures the property and personal belongings. Depending on the core paid for, an insurance policy will pay for most of the costs to replace or fix property and belongings lost or damaged by fire or theft. **

Canada Mortgage And Housing Corporation

1-800-668-2641 | cmhc-schl.gc.ca

- information on mortgages and selling in Canada
- Providing relevant and appropriate tools, products, and resources related to housing information for newcomers
- Information on buying a first home

Affordable Rental Housing

Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS)

403-527-4507 | 516 3rd St. SE info@mhchs.ca

If you are in need of housing for low or modest incomes, you can contact the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society (MHCHS) to see if you meet the eligibility requirements. If you do, you will be placed on a waiting list for the most suitable housing program.

Lower Cost Ownership Programs

Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta

- Habitat for humanity offers no-down payment and no interest mortgages for families who have lived in southern Alberta for two years and are permanent residents or Canadian Citizens.
- habitatsouthernab.ca

Emergency Shelters

Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society

24/7 Helpline: 403-529-1091 | info@mhwss.ca

Website: www.mhwsss.ca

Facebook: @MHWomensShelter

24/7 Helpline: 403-529-1091

- The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society provides an emergency shelter and second stage shelter for individuals with or without children who are experiencing family violence. They provide a safe haven, meals, support, information, safety planning and referrals to other community resources.

Inn Between Youth Shelter

(403) 529-6367 | 178 South Ridge Dr. SW

- Provides care and support for up to 6 youth who require emergency housing and supports. These youth are either in the care of Ministry of Children's Services or may be a homeless community youth. The youth are between the ages of 12-17 and are in need of stabilization in a safe and consistent environment. While residing at the Inn Between, they are assisted with their education, increasing social skills, and accessing community resources. Supports are also available for family reunification or securing sustainable housing in the community.
- Contact program supervisor 403-529-6367

IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Free information on Pathways to Permanent Residency for temporary foreign workers and graduated international students:

Brooks and County Immigration Services

Contact Kofi at 403-362-0401 or (403) 362-0404 | info@bcis-brooks.ca

500 Cassils Rd E Bay 2, Brooks, AB T1R 1M6

Website: www.bcis-brooks.ca

Facebook: @bcisab

Serves Provides information and presentations on pathways to permanent residency

Do It Yourself (DIY) Immigration Information and Support

Holthe Immigration Law

Website: www.holthelaw.com

Provides free Do It Yourself Guide to help maximize the chance of getting an immigration application approved when you do it yourself.

Canadian Immigration Institute

Facebook: @CanadianImmigrationInstitute

Canadian Immigration Podcast

Website: www.canadianimmigrationpodcast.com

Listen to podcasts about the latest information on Canadian immigration, law, policy, and practice from a practical “how to” perspective.

Immigration Consultants and Lawyers

Dask Immigration Services

403-878-7430 | info@daskimmigration.com

Stephen Awudi

Holthe Immigration Law

holthelaw.com

Mark Holthe

Stringham LLP

403-488-8200 | 402 3 Ave SW

Luke Day

Sharp Immigration Solutions

403-529-6288 | 380 2St SE

Shyla Sharps

LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

Saamis Immigration Services Association (Sisa) Language Bank

(403) 504-1188 | 659 3rd St SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A0H4

Website: www.saamisimmigration.com

Facebook: @SaamisImmigrationServicesAssociation

SISA maintains an up-to-date list of persons who are able to offer translating and interpreting services to assist clients and the community whenever the need may arise

Language Line Solutions

1-800-752-6096

Provides high-quality phone, video, and onsite interpreting, document translation services, bilingual staff, and interpreter testing and training

Delivers fast and dependable access to highly trained and professional linguists in more than 240 languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Website: www.language.com

Languages In Motion

403-648-3010 | 404 6 Ave SW, Calgary, AB

Can support clients 24 hours a day and 7 days a week through a phone and video interpreting application. The team of 2600 interpreters are certified or accredited by provincial and federal government recognized qualifications.

Website: www.languagesim.com

Facebook: @languagesim

LAW AND JUSTICE

Medicine Hat Legal Help Centre

(403) 712-1021 | 477 3rd St SE

Website: www.mhllhc.ca

The Community Legal Clinic in Medicine Hat provides free legal information and advice to low to moderate income people who have a legal issue but do not qualify for Legal Aid. They can help with Family Law issues (including separation and divorce, child custody, child support, etc.), Employment issues, Debt and foreclosure, Immigration issues, Landlord and tenant disputes, and civil matters. They do not provide pre-presentation in court.

Medicine Hat Police Services

(403)529-8400 | 884 2 St SE

Website: www.mhps.ca

MONEY AND PERSONAL FINANCES

Financial Education

Money Mentors

coaching and seminars on money management

Paying Taxes

Canadian Volunteer Tax Program

403-977-3673

A free income tax volunteer program that helps low-income families and individuals file their tax return in March and April every year.

Financial Assistance for Local Programs

City Of Medicine Hat, Fair Entry Program

The fair entry program assists low income families/individuals to enjoy programs throughout the city through subsidized user fees. Eligible users will have access to the following:

- Recreation User Fee Assistance - 50% off up to \$100 per year for City of Medicine Hat regular priced recreation program and admissions at the Family Leisure Centre, Crestwood Recreation Centre and city-run outdoor pools
- Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Galleries (Art, Museum, Archives) - 50% off maximum of \$20 per year admission to the Galleries
- Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Education Programs - 50% off up to \$100 per year for educational programs directly provided by staff
- Senior Centre / Meals on Wheels - 50% off fees up to \$100 per year for programs and/or services that are directly provided by staff (*note: a separate application is required to access the Meals on Wheels program)

Symphonic Society Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Families who seek financial assistance for music programs through TAP must apply to the Medicine Hat College Conservatory of Music and Dance. An interview can be arranged by contacting the Academic Department at (403) 529-3880

KidSport Medicine Hat & Redcliff

KidSport Medicine Hat & Redcliff raises funds to provide up to \$300 per eligible kid per year to participate in a season of sport of their choice.

Provincial and National Financial Assistance

Alberta Works - Alberta Supports

- Financial benefits to eligible individuals and families who do not have the resources to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter
- Health benefits for eligible individuals and their dependents, prescription drugs and essential over the counter medications, eye exams and glasses, dental care, emergency ambulance services and essential diabetic supplies
- Help to obtain child support payments

Government Of Alberta - Ministry Of Community And Social Services

1-877-469-5437 | humanservices.alberta.ca

- Alberta Adult Health Benefit: Access to health services not covered by standard Alberta Health Care insurance to Albertans with low income. This includes: prescription drugs; dental care; eyewear; emergency ambulance services; essential diabetic supplies

Alberta Child Health Benefit

1-877-469-5437 | humanservices.alberta.ca

- financial assistance for health services for children that are otherwise not available through standard Alberta Health Care Insurance. This includes: prescription drugs; dental care; eyewear; emergency ambulance services; essential diabetic supplies; help to obtain child support payments

Assured Income For The Severely Handicapped (Aish)

provides financial and health related assistance to eligible adults with a severe and permanent disability

Canada Child Benefit (Cb)

18666-474-8272 | canada.ca

- tax free monthly payment made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children under age 19
- National child benefit supplement (NCBS) which is a monthly benefit for low-income families with children
- Child disability benefit (CB_ which is a monthly benefit providing financial assistance for qualified families caring for children with severe and prolonged mental or physical impairments

Service Canada

1-800-206-7218 (select option 3 | CRESC HEIGHTS OFFICE ADDRESS)

servicecanada.gc.ca

- Canada Pension Plan: 1-800-277-9914
- Provides retired contributors and their families with the following benefits: retired pension; disability benefits; survivor benefits

Employment Insurance

1-800-206-7218

- Provides temporary financial assistance to unemployed Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and those who have a valid temporary work permit to work legally in Canada
- Provides regular benefits to individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own (for example, due to shortage of work, seasonal or mass lay-offs) and are available for and able to work but can't find a hit
- Sickness
- Pregnant or caring for a newborn or adopted child
- Caring for a family member who is seriously ill with a significant risk of death

To find free newcomer services visit Government of Canada - Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship website cic.gc.ca

Career Loans

1-888-282-9516 | careerloans.ca

- provides micro loans of up to \$15,000 to help skilled immigrants fulfill their career goals in Canada
- Loan repayment up to 4 years

- Low-interest rates (prime plus 2%)
- Free one-on-one career counselling

Windmill Microlending

(formerly immigrant access fund)

1-855-423-2262 | windmillmicrolending.org

- A loan of up to \$15,000 can be considered for newcomers who need help to pay for the costs associated with obtaining the Canadian licensing or training that will allow them to work in their profession or trade in Canada

RECREATION

Leisure

City Of Medicine Hat, Fair Entry Program

The City of Medicine Hat provides a Recreation User Fee Assistance - 50% off up to \$100 per year for City of Medicine Hat regular priced recreation program and admissions at the Family Leisure Centre, Crestwood Recreation Centre and city-run outdoor pools

Free Swim and Skating

The city of Medicine Hat and town of Redcliff offer various free swim and free skate times. These can be found on the city/town websites.

KidSport Medicine Hat & Redcliff

KidSport Medicine Hat & Redcliff raises funds to provide up to \$300 per eligible kid per year to participate in a season of sport of their choice.

Roving Gyms

There is free gym time for children ages 0-6 and their siblings from October to March at the Family Leisure Centre and YMCA.

Symphonic Society Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Families who seek financial assistance for music programs through TAP must apply to the Medicine Hat College Conservatory of Music and Dance. An interview can be arranged by contacting the Academic Department at **(403) 529-3880**

Senior Services

Strathcona Centre

403-529-8307 | 1150 5th St SE

Veiner Centre

403-529-8307 | 225 Woodman Ave SE

The Strathcona Centre and Veiner Centre has programs and services that promote the health and wellness of residents over the age 50. This includes fitness and physical activities (ex. Table tennis, pickle ball, yoga, dancing, floor curling), games (ex. mahjongg, Mexican train dominoes, euchre, scrabble, billiards, bocci), The Veiner Centre choir, and arts (watercolours, quilting).

REFUGEES

▶ Government Sponsored Refugees

Saamis Immigration Services Association

(403) 504-1188 | 659 3rd St SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A0H4

Website: www.saamisimmigration.com

Facebook: @SaamisImmigrationServicesAssociation

Saamis Immigration Services Association (SISA) supports all permanent residents. They provide full services for government sponsored refugees for 1 year upon arrival.

Privately Sponsored Refugees

Medicine Hat and Area Refugee Team (MHART)

(403) 504-1188 | 659 3rd St SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A0H4

MHART helps sponsor refugees to Medicine Hat and helps them through every aspect of settlement and integration.

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER INFORMATION

Brooks and County Services Immigration (BCIS)

Contact Kofi at 403-362-0401 or (403) 362-0404 | info@bcis-brooks.ca

500 Cassils Rd E Bay 2, Brooks, AB T1R 1M6

Website: www.bcis-brooks.ca

Facebook: @bcisab

Cost: FREE

Who: Brooks and County Services Immigration (BCIS) helps all Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), Seasonal Agricultural Workers, Post-graduate Work Permit holders, and their families in southern Alberta

Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office

780-644-2584

9925 109 St NW 2nd Floor, 9925 Building, Edmonton, AB

Website: www.albera.ca/temporary-foreign-workers.aspx