

*Moving to a Friendly Nearby Country*



# Fleeing Gilead for Canada

*A Reference Guide*

*Jon "Tokugawa" Behr*

# Preface

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Many years ago, long before we could look things up on the Web, a friend from the US had a problem: he abruptly needed to move to Canada. When we both were in university, he described how hard it had been to make the move. So we thought about writing a guide-book about his journey.

Alas, we never did. Researching it turned out to be *painfully* hard.

However, we now have the web. There is a ton of information out there. Research is still hard, but now it's a matter of finding information in the noise. What we need today is a **research guide** to all the available books and web pages, so you can find the ones you need.

## Purpose of the Book

This is a book is for:

- people for whom the United States *is* Gilead<sup>i</sup>, and need to move now,
- people who expect to be at risk later, and want to plan ahead,
- people who would like to study or work remotely from here, with an option to make it permanent, and
- everyone else who wants to move to Canada.

There are roughly five ways to move to Canada, that often overlap:

- to just visit for a while,
- as a student,
- as a “Digital Nomad”,
- as a regular applicant, or
- as a true refugee.

This book is a resource guide for persons moving to Canada from the US, ranging from student visas to refugee applications. It was originally written for American citizens who wish to become Canadian permanent residents.

I'm an incurable optimist, so I've also included some stories about the hard parts, just to keep things on an even keel.

## **Last Updated Date**

- 4 April 2026 – added resources for getting prescriptions
- 2 April 2026 – added Facebook group *Canadian Citizenship by Descent* to Chapter 6
- 31 March 2026 – Added self-defence resources to Appendix A
- 30 March 2026 – Chapter 9 now reflects the C-12 changes to refugees.

## **Organization of the Book**

This book surveys the various way an American can get into Canada, work in Canada, become a permanent resident and finally a citizen. It touches on a related subject, refugees in the US who need to flee to Canada.

It starts with the easy approaches, and works it way up to literally fleeing Gilead as a refugee. You'll arguably want to use the easiest you qualify for. Immigration anywhere is slow, bureaucratic and disorganized. Canada is no exception.

Each chapter provides an overview, containing references to available books and pages for you to drill down into.

### ***Chapter 1 – Getting started***

There are many groups in Canada who will help out. There is help:

- for LGBTQ+ people,
- for people in the health industries specifically, and
- for everyone else.

Unlike in the US, the federal and provincial governments want to help, too. They have written guides for people who want to move here.

This chapter is a list of groups that will help. With links, of course, as this *is* a resource guide.

### ***Chapter 2 – Just for a While***

*Absolutely* come and see what it's like. You can visit 6 months at a time without a visa, as long as you're either returning to Gilead or going on visit to another country.

There are also some special cases, like “Digital Migrants”, described in Chapter 4, who can work remotely for a foreign firm while visiting Canada.

### **Chapter 3 – As a Student**

There are at least four different ways you can come as a student, and you can start a regular application from here. The normal way is as a normal student, allowing you to work 20 hours a week while studying, and then up to three years after graduation.

The rest are part of *International Experience Canada*, a recruitment program:

- working holiday participants receive an open work permit that allows them to work anywhere in Canada to support their travel and stay;
- international co-op (internship) participants receive an employer-specific work permit that allows students to gain experience in their field of study; and
- young professional participants receive an employer-specific work permit to gain professional work experience within their field of study or career path.

### **Chapter 4 – As a “Digital Migrant”**

You can live here and work remotely for a company in your home country, for up to 12 months. While you’re here, you can start an application. After that period, you need to move to another country, usually as the same kind of “Digital Migrant”.

There originally was an entrepreneur program for people starting businesses, but it failed.

### **Chapter 5 – International Experience Canada’s Programs**

Canada quietly recruits desirable immigrants with three programs, which are partially applicable to Americans:

- working holiday,
- international co-op, and
- young professionals.

### **Chapter 6, “Lost Canadians” and Family Reunification**

Canada allows citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their spouse/partner and children, which we call “family reunion”.

A related path to residency is by gaining citizenship because you descended from a Canadian ancestor. The rules for this used to cause “lost” Canadians, but we fixed that last year.

### **Chapter 7, NAFTA and Work Permits**

The North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA (now CUSMA) includes an agreement that Canadians can work in the US, and Americans in Canada.

Similarly, there are regular work permits, for Canadian jobs an employer can’t fill. Both allow an application for permanent residency.

## **Chapter 8 Express Entry**

Express entry is a replacement for slow entry (:-))

It was introduced in 2015, as a streamlined path to permanent residence based on points for skills.

Express means “about six months” on a good day.

## **Chapter 9 – As a True Refugee**

This is a “last chance” approach, if nothing else works. It depends on Canada recognizing that you are not safe anywhere in Gilead, even if that’s where you grew up. The *very* thing this book is most about turns out to be the hardest way to move to Canada.

The first step is, showing you are a refugee, and at risk, after which you will be able to work and apply for permanent residence.

## **Chapter 10 – After You Get Here**

Once you’re in Canada, there are still lots of things to learn, ranging from how to find an apartment to how to transfer your kids to a Canadian school.

### **This is not Legal Advice**

Consult the law firms found in section 1.11 for that.

### **Acknowledgements**

I’d like to thank folks, but then I’d have to mention their names. *You know who you are:* thanks!

### **This is a “Live” Document**

I accept emails, problem reports, and “pull requests” if something has changed, if there is a new opportunity, or I’ve just plain got something wrong.

The readable document is found at <https://tinyurl.com/Fleeing-Gilead> in PDF, HTML and ePub. Right now, PDF and ePub are the most readable.

The repository for it is at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/>

Anyone can create a problem report or make a suggestion at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> or by sending me email at [tokugawa.behr@proton.me](mailto:tokugawa.behr@proton.me)

- i Atwood, Margaret, 1939-, *The Handmaid's Tale*. Anchor Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 1998.
- ii Duck.ai, Sketch of a "Handmaiden", AI-generated image, 2026.

# 1. Who Will Help

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It used to be draft-age men who needed to flee from the US to Canada. These days it’s *at least* 2SLGBTQI+ folks and existing refugees. It may soon be more: the number of young women who want to emigrate from the US quadrupled to 40% between 2014 and 2025.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/697382/record-numbers-younger-women-leave.aspx>

*Gilead is coming true.*

This chapter lists organizations who can help you right from the beginning. Subsequent chapters will list additional organizations and web documents related to the subject of the chapter.

As always, this book is not legal advice. For that, please see immigration lawyers, below.

### 1.1 “Please Move to Canada” Guides

Both the federal and provincial governments want to attract immigrants. Until a political problem in 2024 with undergrads and housing, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) did too. This has already started to change back: Canada is now (in 2026) trying to expedite immigration processing for university professors and grad students from the US. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

The **federal** booklet is 148 pages of everything they think you will need, entitled “Welcome to Canada, What you should know”. It ranges from planning to getting a bank account to applying for

citizenship. In effect, it's a resource guide, just like this.

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>

The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada site has the current statuses of *everything*, all written in a Canadian dialect of “bland”. A good sample and starting point is “Settling in Canada”, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/settle-canada.html>

A typical **provincial** guide is **Ontario's** “Settlement.Org, Welcome To Ontario”, a

<https://settlement.org/>

This is a web page of helpful information, including about provincial workshops you can attend for a deeper dive into some of the techniques you may need, and the whole gamut of the Ontario Settlement Services help program.

A related effort is the Ontario **Immigrant Nominee** Program (OINP)

at <https://settlement.org/ontario/immigration-citizenship/immigrating-to-ontario/immigration-categories/what-is-opportunities-ontario-provincial-nominee-program-pnp/>

This is for people with job offers in Ontario, to “nominate” them to immigration.

**Quebec** has a similar program, “Choosing to Immigrate to Québec”. It is oriented toward people who have conversational french and want to live in Quebec.

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration/permanent/choose-quebec>

There are also programs for french-speakers who wish to work *elsewhere* in Canada, part of the federal “express immigration” program. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/rural-franco-pilots/franco-immigration.html>

The rest of the province and territories' guides are

Province/Territory	Guide Title	URL
<b>Alberta</b>	Welcome to Alberta	<a href="https://www.alberta.ca/welcome-to-alberta.aspx">https://www.alberta.ca/welcome-to-alberta.aspx</a>
<b>British Columbia</b>	WelcomeBC Guide	<a href="https://www.welcomebc.ca/">https://www.welcomebc.ca/</a>
<b>Manitoba</b>	Welcome to Manitoba	<a href="https://immigratemanitoba.com/">https://immigratemanitoba.com/</a>
<b>New Brunswick</b>	Newcomer's Guide to New Brunswick	<a href="https://www.welcomenb.ca/content/wel-bien/en.html">https://www.welcomenb.ca/content/wel-bien/en.html</a>
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	Welcome to Newfoundland and Labrador	<a href="https://www.immigration.gov.nl.ca/welcome/">https://www.immigration.gov.nl.ca/welcome/</a>
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	Nova Scotia Immigration Guide	<a href="https://novascotia.ca/immigration/welcome/">https://novascotia.ca/immigration/welcome/</a>
<b>Ontario</b>	Ontario's Guide for	<a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/welcome-ontario">https://www.ontario.ca/page/welcome-ontario</a>

Province/Territory	Guide Title	URL
	Newcomers	
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	Welcome to Prince Edward Island	<a href="https://www.welcomepei.com/">https://www.welcomepei.com/</a>
<b>Quebec</b>	Quebec's Guide for Newcomers	<a href="https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration">https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration</a>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Welcome to Saskatchewan	<a href="https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/moving-to-saskatchewan">https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/moving-to-saskatchewan</a>
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	Welcome to the Northwest Territories	<a href="https://www.immigratenwt.ca/">https://www.immigratenwt.ca/</a>
<b>Nunavut</b>	Nunavut Immigration Guide	<a href="https://www.gov.nu.ca/family-services/information-immigrants">https://www.gov.nu.ca/family-services/information-immigrants</a>
<b>Yukon</b>	Yukon Community Guide	<a href="https://yukon.ca/en/immigration">https://yukon.ca/en/immigration</a>

These are all quite general: their advice is good for almost every form of immigration.

**Individuals** also do “please move here” videos: I recommend Todd Maffin’s “I Am the Very Model of a Modern-Day Canadian”, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k7OUowPPMQ>

## 1.2 What Programs to Apply For

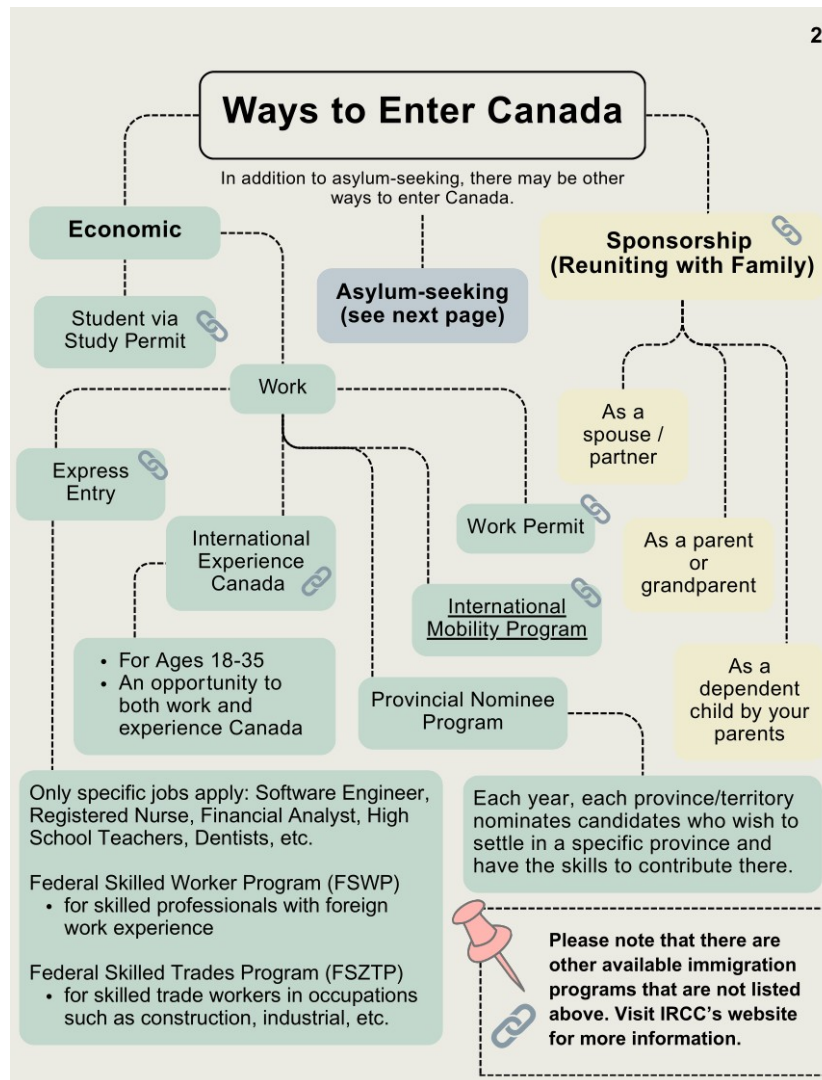
There are a ton of programs, and it can be unclear which ones meet your needs. Therefore, folks have provided guides.

- *moving2canada.com*  
[https://moving2canada.com/immigration/canada-immigration-quiz/?utm\\_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026](https://moving2canada.com/immigration/canada-immigration-quiz/?utm_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026)

An interactive guide in the form of a quiz, to see what immigration program or strategy to use

- University of Toronto *Safe Haven Toolkit*  
<https://haven.utoronto.ca/index.php/a-guide-for-lgbtqi-asylum-seekers-crossing-the-canada-u-s-border/>

The Asylum lab at the UofT has written a lovely quick-reference toolkit to immigration, with flowcharts and maps. It is aimed primarily at the community of gender and sexually diverse people, and at asylum seekers. I used some of it to guide the structure of this resource guide. For example, page 2 says



- Project Haven also has a map of services, shelters, pride centers and IRCC offices at <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1Ycmn2RnXbPcceYpjzie8sCQDumshNyA&ll=52.54292139355158%2C-87.64755717922108&z=4Map>

### 1.3 Resources Especially for Gender and Sexually Diverse People, and for Women

#### ***Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*** (really!)

<https://www.prearrivalcanada.ca/e-library/>

The government would like everyone who comes here to know what they're doing. In part that's to save themselves effort, and in part because Canadians work hard at being nice. They offer some on-line e-learning and a web/youtube e-library, and more importantly, they offer personalized planning sessions, immigrant workshops and live webinars *in the real world*.

## The 519

<https://www.the519.org/>

The 519 is a broad-based support network for the whole community of gender and sexually diverse people, and is supported in part by the City of Toronto. The name refers to its address, 519 Church Street in Toronto.

It has a rich collection of services, at least twenty-odd, specifically including:

- New to Canada – Support for LGBTQ+ Refugees and Newcomers, <https://www.the519.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Resource-Guide.pdf>
- Newcomer Information Session <https://www.the519.org/programs/nis/>
- Mock Hearing Program For LGBTQ+ Refugee Claimants, to prepare you for an immigration hearing <https://www.the519.org/programs/mock-hearing-program/>
- Legal Initiatives
  - *The 519 Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic*, [LegalClinic@The519.org](mailto:LegalClinic@The519.org), <https://www.the519.org/programs/legal-clinic/>
  - Gender Affirming Care Legal Support Clinic <https://www.the519.org/programs/gender-affirming-care-legal-support-clinic/>
  - Notary Clinic for 2SLGBTQ+ Communities <https://www.the519.org/programs/legalclinic-notary/>
- Trans-Specific
  - Racialized Trans Collective – bi-weekly meetup group for all racialized Trans identities to hang out and build community.
  - Trans People of Colour Project (TPOC) drop-in at <https://www.the519.org/programs/trans-bipoc/>
  - Trans ID Clinic <https://www.the519.org/programs/trans-id-clinic/>
- Financial services <https://www.the519.org/programs/project-unlock/>
- Health Services
- Housing Services
- Trans Youth Mentorship Program (TYMP)
- a large collection of YouTube videos are there as well,

and links to other organizations, like

- Volunteer Toronto <https://www.volunteertoronto.ca>

- The Amnesty International LGBTI+ Caucus <https://amnesty.ca/what-we-do/lgbti-rights/>

In particular, *The 519 Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic* reports (paraphrased) that it can provide support to 2SLGBTQ+ Community Members through a one-time consultation with a lawyer, over telephone or video. Advice given is free of charge for advice and referral purposes only.

### **Compass Refugee Center**

<https://compassrefugee.ca/>

<https://compassrefugee.ca/programs/assist/refugee-claim-process-support/>

A charitable organization, based in Kitchener, Ontario, helping immigrants navigate the refugee process in particular.

### **Rainbow Railroad**

<https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/the-latest/a-future-in-the-balance>

Rainbow Railroad helps LGBTQ individuals to move to other countries to escape persecution and violence, in countries where their sexual orientation or gender identity puts them at risk. They are now receiving about two-thirds of their requests from US transgender individuals.

### **Metropolitan Community Church**

<http://www.mccchurch.org/>

A supportive church for 2SLGBTQI+ people.

### **Capital Rainbow Refuge, in Ottawa**

<https://capitalrainbow.ca/qrhp>

This volunteer group aims at “Helping LGBTQI+ Refugees Arrive and Thrive”. Notably, it provides a toolkit for preparing for refugee hearings, both as a downloadable document, and in the form of a do-it-yourself online toolkit for collecting the required information. (IMHO, this is a *huge* help)

### **Friends of Ruby, in Toronto**

<http://www.friendsofruby.ca/>

This group concentrates on shelter for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, from 16 to 29, with a drop-in center and a 100-bed shelter of their own.

## **1.4 Canadian Government Services**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/come-canada-tool.html>

This Is by *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship*. We'll be back to this site many *many* times. An example is the tool above, a guided process to generate a visa application

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By8F5jD\\_zM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By8F5jD_zM)

As we mentioned above, they also provide Prearrival Canada, a guide for people to prepare to come here.

<https://www.youtube.com/citimmcanada>

They also have loads of YouTube videos in 9 categories of about 30 videos each.

The “please move here” guides we mentioned above from the federal and provincial governments are also valuable.

## **1.5 Refugee Sponsorship**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/sponsor-refugee/private-sponsorship-program/refugees-information.html>

Canada has a program for groups to “sponsor” existing refugees who are trapped in another country. Notably the US. The groups provide financial support for up to a year, or until they can get employment. Refugee claimants can apply for a work permit, while accepted refugees can immediately work in Canada. It's called the “Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program”. It's not related to *family* sponsorships of relatives.

Groups organizing sponsorships include:

### ***United Church of Canada Refugee Program***

<https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/sponsor-refugee>

Canada is one of only a few countries in the world with an LGBTIQ2+ Refugee program, and the United Church is one of only three national faith groups that can sponsor LGBTIQ2+ refugees.

### ***Anglican Church Refugee Sponsorship***

<https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/diocesan-life/social-justice-advocacy/welcoming-refugees/?lang=en>

### ***Mennonite Central Committee***

<https://mcc.org/what-we-do/initiatives/migration-refugees/refugee-sponsorship-canada>

Since 1979, MCC has helped existing refugees who have no prospect of returning home to start a new life in Canada through their sponsorship program.

## ***Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS)***

<https://jiastoronto.org/>

JIAS Toronto is the only Jewish Sponsorship Agreement Holder, allowing JIAS to sponsor existing refugees.

## ***Rainbow Refugee***

<https://www.rainbowrefugee.com/>

Supports LGBTQ refugees and refugee claimants in British Columbia who are seeking protection in Canada, including individual support in navigating the Canadian system.

## ***End of the Rainbow Foundation***

<http://endoftherainbow.ca/>

The End of the Rainbow Foundation in Calgary, Alberta creates refugee sponsorship circles (groups of five), and hosts support groups.

## ***UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency***

<https://help.unhcr.org/canada/how-to-apply-for-asylum-new/where-to-claim-asylum/>

## **1.6 Resources for Health-industry People in Particular**

<https://engageq.notion.site/infusionhosts>

Because Canada has a shortage of doctors and nurses, a series of volunteer efforts have spring into being. There may well be other industry-specific groups, but the one I know about is Canada's Healthcare Infusions.

This started in Nanimo, British Columbia, and has 19 chapters across the country. It's been notably successful at the other end of the country, in Nova Scotia. There are approximately 6,000 positions open in the province, and they're doing their best to help Americans get a job and move here. *Nova Scotia Health* hired 50 Americans in the last year alone.

I know about it because it was written up by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in an article called "A no-brainer: Why some U.S. health-care workers are moving to Nova Scotia", at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/american-healthcare-workers-moving-nova-scotia-9.7025866>

They describe a five-step process in detail, starting at <https://novascotiahealthcareinfusion.notion.site/Nova-Scotia-Healthcare-Infusion-297e74c53bba81a4b908cd47106894a6>

1. Get Free Advice & Check out our Communities,
2. Get a Job

3. Start the Immigration Process
4. Move to Nova Scotia (or 18 other places)
5. You did it! You're here! Now What?

They have a discord server for several kinds of discussions, at <https://engageq.notion.site/Join-the-correct-Discord-2f43dc1abb94801ebe5ff41529f494e1?pvs=25>

It's working: "Hundreds of American nurses choose Canada over the U.S. under Trump", NPR, Feb 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/02/25/nx-s1-5725354/nurses-emigrate-us-canada-trump> Both British Columbia and Ontario have streamlined their process of licensing US-trained nurses.

### ***For doctors in particular***

Licensing of doctors can be tricky: there are programs to help internationally-trained ones, described in How To Work in Canada as a Doctor: A Guide for Internationally Trained Physicians, <https://moving2canada.com/features/how-to-work-in-canada-as-a-doctor/>

## **1.7 Resources for Everyone**

There are several groups who help with all sorts of immigration questions, not having to do with 2SLGBTQI+ people specifically

### ***COSTI Immigrant Services***

<https://www.costi.org/>

<https://learn.costi.ca/moodle/>

Supported by Employment Ontario, it provides numerous online services, concentrating on career and employment counselling for workers,

### ***Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLA)***

- <https://www.lawcentralalberta.ca/en/refugee-hearing-preparation-guide>

Legal support for the general public, and preparation for refugee hearings, many videos on a wide range of subjects at

### ***CICS, Centre for Immigrant and Community Services***

<https://www.cicscanada.com/en/>

Volunteer charitable group in Toronto. Includes "Employment Programs for Newcomers and Internationally Trained Individuals"

### ***CISO, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization***

<https://ociso.org/>

Charitable group in Ottawa, providing the gamut of services

### **Canada-U. S. Border Rights Clinic.**

- This group provides resources and free consultations for legal advice, online or by phone  
<https://canadaborderclinic.org/>

### **My Refugee Claim**

<https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/orientation-booklet>,

The booklet is substantial, with 26 pages of help.

They also provide “ready tours”: free, virtual workshops at <https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/ready-tours/>

### **Reddit Discussion Groups**

Start by looking at their FAQs and pinned posts: they’re a collections of often-noisy opinions.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/Canadiancitizenship/>

<https://www.reddit.com/r/ImmigrationCanada/>

### **Todd Maffin**

YouTube videos about

- 11 Things Americans Must Know Before Moving to Canada! 2025,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnux5kWrVps>
- Moving to Canada: A Guide for Americans, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egRvtVTbPnY>

He is one of the founders of “Canada’s Healthcare Infusion”

## **1.8 Books about Moving to Canada**

There are a lot of books on moving here. At least two novels, one for children, one a romance.

- SADE: We're Moving to Canada! by Yewande Daniel-Ayoade  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/49263990-sade>
- He's President And I'm Moving To Canada by Stephen Cadigan,  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34328348-he-s-president-and-i-m-moving-to-canada>

And a *plethora* of specific technical books about parts of the process, including one about tax planning.

- AMERICANS MOVING TO CANADA ... - Tips To Maximize Your Assets, by Tariq Nadeem  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/5944894-americans-moving-to-canada---how-to-move-what-you-need-to-know-for-str>

Goodreads, <https://www.goodreads.com/> is a good place to start. When I last looked, there were about

120 or so books on the subject. It's popular!

If anyone has recommendations, please post them at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> and I'll list them here.

## 1.9 The Hard Part

Because the US hasn't recently been an enemy country, we have weak support for American citizens moving to Canada. As I describe in Chapter 5, the normal process is centered around ordinary skilled applicants from the US looking for Canadian jobs. Immigration is used to and understands programs like Canada-US-Mexico-Free Trade Agreement (CUSMA), the successor to NAFTA.

In *Toronto Life's*, "Dear Americans: Moving to Canada is Hard", <https://torontolife.com/life/dear-americans-moving-canada-hard>, Steve Kupferman tells about his struggles in moving here as a grad student and applying for permanent residence. As he says, "Canada's immigration system is, for the most part, designed to deal with four different types of people: students, wealthy-ish business people, skilled workers and refugees".

That's a fair description: he came here as a grad student and had to work his way through a process aimed at "average" business applicants, and currently under both load-stress and political attacks by the far right. And he had an immigration consultant that was suspiciously cash-only.

All the programs from our governments are like that. Some people fit well, or are just lucky: they breeze through. Others put a foot wrong and get stuck in the mud.

## 1.10 Commercial Resources

There are some commercial immigration sites of interest, part of a plethora of service providers and consultants.

### ***Batista Migration Law Group***

<https://www.migrationlawgroup.com/post/applying-for-a-canadian-visitor-visa-considerations-and-tips-for-avoiding-refusals>

Applying for a Canadian Visitor Visa? Considerations and Tips for Avoiding Refusals, a good resource on applying for a Canadian Visitor Visa, with dos and don'ts.

See 1.9, Law Firms. <https://www.migrationlawgroup.com/>

### ***ICC Immigration***

<https://iccimmigration.ca/new-express-entry-category-for-physicians-with-canadian-work-experience-pr-pathway-explained-2026-update/>

For-money consultancy, with a good article on an express entry program for doctors

### ***Immigration.ca***

<https://immigration.ca/>

A lawyer-sponsored advice site, sponsored by the Colin R. Singer law office.

### ***moving2canada.com***

<https://moving2canada.com/>

This is a free consultancy, funded by contributions and commissions from the services it recommends (eg, The Bank of Nova Scotia). One of the services is its own sister company, Outpost Recruitment.

It has a number of step-by-step guides, which will be mentioned throughout the book.

- A quiz on what immigration program or strategy to go for  
[https://moving2canada.com/immigration/canada-immigration-quiz/?utm\\_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026](https://moving2canada.com/immigration/canada-immigration-quiz/?utm_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026)
- A list of which programs are open  
[https://moving2canada.com/immigration/pnp/pnp-canada-live-tracker/?utm\\_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026](https://moving2canada.com/immigration/pnp/pnp-canada-live-tracker/?utm_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026)
- They provide a large collection of short videos at  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/Moving2Canadainfo>

### ***Visa HQ***

<https://www.visahq.com/canada/>

A for-money consultancy with some initial steps and guides available free, funded by affiliate marketing and charging for visa application processing.

## **1.11 Immigration Law Firms**

For non-contentious immigration cases, there is a large community of immigration consultants. Their college has a list at <https://college-ic.ca/>

For the kind of cases we're looking at, there are a number of law firms specializing in immigration. They're there to help you from getting stuck in an overloaded and/or bureaucratic process.

Four firms which have specifically 2SLGBTQI+ experience, with their contact information, are:

Law Firm/Clinic	Focus Areas	Contact Information
<b>Battista Migration Law Group</b>	Immigration law, specifically for LGBTQ+ individuals, including family sponsorship and asylum claims. A contributor to changing Canadian immigration law to include same-sex families	160 Bloor St E Suite 1000, Toronto, ON. Phone: (416) 203-2899, URL: <a href="https://www.migrationlawgroup.com/">https://www.migrationlawgroup.com/</a>
<b>Smith Immigration Law</b>	The counsel in Jenkel vs Canada. Immigration law with a focus on LGBTQ+ immigration issues, including refugee claims and sponsorship applications. Frequent media expert on immigration issues	253 Danforth Ave, Suite 200, Toronto, ON. (647) 365-1801, <a href="https://www.smithimmigrationgroup.com/">https://www.smithimmigrationgroup.com/</a>
Ivan Steele Law Office	Gay and Lesbian Family and Immigration Law- Specializes in LGBTQ+ immigration and family law. Personal experience as a gay immigrant	473 Sackville St., Toronto, ON M4X 1T5 <a href="mailto:ivansteele@ivansteelelaw.com">ivansteele@ivansteelelaw.com</a> 647-342-0568
Marku & Lee	LGBTQIA+ Immigration Advocacy- Trauma-informed care. Specialized in refugee claims and appeals	Damey Lee & Hana Marku, <a href="mailto:damey@markulee.com">damey@markulee.com</a> <a href="mailto:hana@markulee.com">hana@markulee.com</a>

The Canadian Bar Association, Ontario Immigration law section and Ontario Immigration Lawyers Association have membership lists at, respectively,

- <https://cba.org/ontario>
- <https://cila.co/directory/>

A colleague speaks well of Battista, and Smith was the lawyer in *Jenkel v. Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2025 FC 1178 (CanLII), which was a rare case of Canada giving refuge to a US resident.

Organizations like the519 will provide referrals to firms they have found helpful.

If anyone has specific experiences, post them at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> and I'll add them here.

## 1.12 Planning Ahead

There are some slow thing that you can start early, all discussed in Chapter 10, *After You Get Here*:

- A place to live, described in Section 10.1
- A bank account, Section 10.2
- Travel medical insurance until you qualify for medicare, Section 10.3
- A school for your kids, Section 10.6

If you can, start these and anything else you think of before you move here, it will save you time and angst during the move.

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## **In Short**

There are a *surprisingly* large number of sources of help, most of them free. That's very different from when I first looked at this.

I started collecting with *the519* in Toronto: I'd talk with them first, and talk to immigration lawyers second. Then everyone else.

## 2. Just for A While

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#### Coming to Visit and Reconnoiter

Do come and visit. Ontario used to describe itself as “friendly, foreign and near”, and that’s a good description. There are even a few programs that allow you to work while you’re vacationing.

#### 2.1 For Tourism

Canada is a nice place to visit. You can do everything from summer water-skiing to winter polar-bear watching in Churchill, Manitoba.

Canadians joke a *lot* about it being cold. In reality, most Canadians live in the part that’s below the top of France. Indeed, even the western provinces overlap heavily with France. About the lower 140 miles of Manitoba, for example.

There are a plethora of sites and brochures about visiting. For example, the national parks are described at <https://travel.gc.ca/canadian-tourism>. All sorts of things to do in Ontario are described at <https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca>

#### 2.2 For Reconnaissance

Read the federal and provincial tourist guides above and in Chapter 1, and plan a vacation that takes you to the areas you want to know more about.

Make a list of things you want to find out about in Canada.

- Information about cities and provinces.
- Rental costs in the cities you’re interested in.  
Toronto and Vancouver can be pricey, especially right downtown. On the other hand, if you want a one-bedroom apartment in an inner suburb of Toronto you’ll pay about \$950 US.
- Support organizations you want to know more about, like the519’s [Newcomer Information Session](#)
- Canadian professional societies if you’re an engineer, a nurse, or the like.
- Universities for your kids.

- Churches.
- Canadian branches of your company.
- Canadian immigration lawyers.

Visit family, friends or friends of friends, be a tourist and have fun, while you get a feeling for how you'd like to live in Canada.

## Resources

- Todd Maffin's video, "How to Speed-Date Canada", about a "weekend (April 24-26, 2026) where you can come visit ... the Nanaimo BC area, as maybe a place you could move with your family to". <https://2026.nanaimoinfusion.ca>
- The519's Newcomer Information Session, <https://www.the519.org/programs/nis/>
- To know what to prepare for, the federal government's "Welcome to Canada, What you should know", <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf>
- Ontario's "Settlement.Org, Welcome To Ontario", <https://settlement.org/> and the other provincial guides in Section 1.1
- Tod Maffin's videos, "I Am the Very Model of a Modern-Day Canadian", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k7OUowPPMQ> and Moving to Canada: A Guide for Americans, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egRvtVTbPnY>
- IRCC prearrival guides, <https://www.prearrivalcanada.ca/e-library/>
- For medical people, <https://engageq.notion.site/infusionhosts>

## 2.3 For "The Grand Tour"

If you prearrange visitor visas, you could visit Canada, then France, then Germany, and then perhaps Canada again, for six months to a year in each country.

The term refers to the old British custom of sending their sons (always sons) for a tour of Europe after university, with meaningful stays in multiple countries.

Canadians also have a tradition of being "snowbirds". Those are people who live in Canada in the summer, then fly south for the winter.

## 2.4 What *Not* to Do

Be careful not to tell fibs to customs. Those can mess you up later.

For example, don't say you're working unless you have preregistered into one of three specific programs:

Program	Duration	Key Characteristics	Target Group	Chapter
"Digital Nomad" Visitor-Visa	Typically 6-12 months	Remote work for international companies	Tech professionals, freelancers	4

<b>Program</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
Working Holiday Visa (International Experience Canada)	Up to 2 years	Allows temporary work for young professionals	Ages 18-35	4
International Co-Op (IEC)	12-18 months	Allows one to gain Canadian work experience while in school	Post-secondary students	3

Don't bring all your prescriptions, university degrees, resumes, or the like on what is supposed to be a visit. Similarly, don't bring a year's supply of a prescription if you're only going to be here for two weeks.

Instead, tell customs the truth. If you're coming here on vacation, the federal and Ontario guides will help you make a list of destinations. Come and visit Canadian friends if you have some, or have some other real reason, like a campus visit with a prospective student.

The criteria customs use include:

- genuine visitor intent – you aren't obviously lying about going home,
- sufficient financial resources – you have enough money or credit to pay for yourself, and a
- clear exit plan – you are going home, or if you're going to another country afterwards, you have a ticket.

### **Resources**

- Applying for a Canadian Visitor Visa? Considerations and Tips for Avoiding Refusals  
<https://www.migrationlawgroup.com/post/applying-for-a-canadian-visitor-visa-considerations-and-tips-for-avoiding-refusals>

## **2.5 Three Variants on “Visitor” Visas**

### **As a “Digital Nomad”**

Officially, there is no “digital nomad” visa, but really that just a more meaningful name for a formal visitor visa, called a Temporary Resident Visa (TRV).

You are required to work for an international employer, not a Canadian one.

If you just show up, you will be considered to be doing so under a visitor visa, but you really need to preapply for a TRV if you plan to be doing anything *other* than just touring. In particular, having a written TRV will make you look less suspicious when you show up at the border. See the “Considerations and Tips for Avoiding Refusals” page, mentioned above

All this is described in Chapter 4, Digital Nomads..

### **On a Working Holiday**

Canada has an “International Experience Canada (IEC) Working Holiday Program”. It is aimed at young professionals to work and travel, to gain Canadian experience

Typically, the program allows one to work in Canada for up to two years at “temporary work”. It is described in more detail in Chapter 5, *International Experience Canada Programs*, with the caveat that the program is aimed at countries other than the US.

Many countries have programs like these first two variants, so either or both can be used as a part of a “grand tour”.

## Resources

- Moving2canada has a rather complete (56-page!) guide on working holidays, [Moving to Canada through IEC’s Working Holidays program](#).

## As a Co-Op Student (Internship)

International Experience Canada also has a program for post-secondary co-op programs, for people registered at a university, college, vocational school or a profession-specific school, like a law school.

It allows you to take up a paid work placement or an internship in Canada, if work experience is part of your regular educational program.

It too is described in Chapter 5, *International Experience Canada Programs*.

## 2.6 Retirees

There are a few Tod Maffin videos for older folks who have a retirement income and want to live here:

- How to Move to Canada As a Retiree, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgHmZRR1DSY>
- Some advice for American seniors, wanting to move to Canada, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p49ibOA29QA>
- Also there are Reddit discussions in
  - <https://www.reddit.com/r/IWantOut/>
  - <https://www.reddit.com/r/ImmigrationCanada/>

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## **In Short**

Come as a visitor and have a look. Use that to help you decide what your next steps will be.

## 3. As a Student

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There are a number of ways to study and work in Canada, and all of them allow you to apply for permanent residence and then citizenship, once you're 18.

They are

- A study permit, available to grade-school, secondary and university students. It allows limited “work-study permissions”, but doesn't count as “Canadian experience” on an immigration application.
- A post-graduation work permit, available after completing a university or college degree. This *does* count as Canadian experience, from age 18 onward.
- An international co-op or internship placing, available to university and college students, limited to a single employer.
- A young professional program, to get an employer-specific work permit to gain professional experience in their field.

### 3.1 Caveats

Canada took *far* too many foreign undergrads up to 2024, so the quota was abruptly lowered. We added a provincial attestation letter requirement and started checking that acceptance letters were actually legit. Some fake “colleges” have now been shut down. That increased competition for fewer spaces.

More recently, it flipped the other way. US professors have publicly fled to Canadian universities. At the same time, Canadian grad students in the US are either being expelled or defunded. See <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/graduate-student.html>

The announced changes includes

- no limit on the number of grad students admitted per year
- a two-week go/nogo decision if you're a doctoral student,
- no provincial sign-off needed for grad students,

- bringing your family is allowed,
- no cap on the number of grad students admitted, and
- as before, you can stay and work afterwards.

### It's *still* a big shock to change countries

Pari Mokradi writes "I was an international student chasing stability, but Canada made me question who I was" - CBC News <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/first-person-international-student-9.7076884>

Pari describes ending up in working at a call center after graduation, and experiencing isolation and financial hardship. She writes “What carried me through weren’t the milestones of earning a degree, landing a job or receiving my citizenship. It was the small acts of care: Alycia, who gave me a pillow; Karun, who told me to own my story; Gilles and the Writers’ Collective, who showed me I didn’t have to erase myself to belong”.

She became a citizen in 2025.

## 3.2 Study Permits

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit.html>

These are available for people attending all primary and secondary schools in Canada, plus a long list of post-secondary institutions.

The various pages in the IRCC’s instruction on how to get a study permit will have road-maps, like the one on the right, to help you keep organized and not miss a required step.

The student will need to get a [letter of acceptance](#) from the school, and, for undergrads, a [letter from the province](#), a passport and proof that have funding to live on or to buy a return ticket, depending on where you’re coming from.

For anyone under 18 coming here by themselves, they’ll also need a signed [custodianship declaration](#).

### Sections

- [Who can apply](#)
- [Get the right documents](#)
  - Provincial attestation letter or territorial attestation letter
  - [Proof of financial support](#)
- [How to apply](#)
- [After you apply](#)
- [Prepare for your arrival](#)
- [While you study](#)
- [Study permit conditions](#)

They can apply from inside Canada, that's a common process.

Students are allowed to work. There is no restriction on on-campus work, and a limit of 24 hours a week, during the school year, off-campus.

For work you will need to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN). That's the equivalent of a US Social Security Number. We describe this in Chapter 10, *Afterwards*.

Oddly, work done under a study permit doesn't count toward "Canadian experience" in a regular immigration application. Work done under a post-graduation work permit *does* count.

## Resources

- New Measures Prioritize Graduate and Doctoral Student Recruitment <https://www.fragomen.com/insights/canada-new-measures-prioritize-graduate-and-doctoral-student-recruitment.htm>
- Graduate study permits: cap exemption <https://beingcanada.com/graduate-study-permits-cap-exemption-and-2-week-phd-processing/>
- Canada Streamlines Path for Graduate Students <https://theimmigrater.com/canada-streamlines-path-for-graduate-students-faster-processing-and-pal-exemptions-highlighted/>
- From Tuition to Rent. The Complete Financial Checklist for International Students. <https://moving2canada.com/study/financial-checklist-for-international-students/>

## 3.3 Post-Graduation Work Permits (PGWP)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/after-graduation.html>

After graduating from a Canadian university, college or flight school, you can apply for a post-graduation work permit within 180 days of graduation. Once you've applied, you can work until you get a decision on this permit.

If you've been in a program that lasted more than 2 years, the permit will be for three years. For shorter ones, the work period is the length of your study period, unless the course was less than 8 months: those short courses don't qualify.

This work counts as "Canadian experience" in a regular application.

## 3.4 International Experience Canada (IEC) programs

These are described in more detail in Chapter 5, *International Experience Canada*

One relevant to students is an **International Co-op or Internship**

This is for people enrolled in a co-op program that allows them to do some of their work terms in Canada

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## **In Short**

Becoming a student in Canada used to be trivial. Then it became hard for students from Africa and Asia (yes, that's racist). Then it became a bit easier if you were a grad student. Now, when we've noticed that the US was expelling foreign grad students, it became easier yet.

It's not trivial, but it's still an excellent way to get to live in Canada.

# 4. As a “Digital Nomad”

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You can live here and work remotely for a company in another country, for as long as 12 months. While you’re here, you can start an application to immigrate.

### 4.1 However, You are a Visitor (!)

Canada does not have anything official for digital nomads: a formal visitor’s visa allows you to work for a remote employer for up to a year. It used to be six months, but that was increased.

You’re going to be here longer than 180 days, so you will need to pay for a visitor’s visa. That is done by filling out a web form, providing information and paying the fee with a debit or credit card.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/apply-visitor-visa.html>

<https://ircc.canada.ca/english/information/applications/visa.asp>

The requirements for a visitor visa includes:

- Valid passport.
- Proof you work with a foreign employer.
- Proof of financial support (ie, bank records).
- Purpose of visit documentation.
- Evidence of intent to return to home country, like an airline ticket or having a home in the US.
- Have a valid health insurance policy covering your entire stay in Canada.
- A possible medical examination.
- A possible background check.

You should get a detailed letter from your employer saying what you’re going to be doing, and saying that no Canadian work will be done.

## 4.2 That's a Kind of Temporary Resident Visa

A visitor's visa is a "single-entry" visa. There is also a "multiple-entry" Temporary Resident Visa (TRV), which you can pre-request.

This uses the same process as getting a single-entry visa: you say you're a digital nomad, that you'll be visiting regularly, and that you want a multiple-entry visa. That seems to go in the "purpose of my visit" and "other" fields of an Application for Temporary Resident Visa (IMM 5257) form.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/apply-visitor-visa.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/kits/forms/imm5257/01-09-2023/imm5257e.pdf>

<https://www.ircc.canada.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=417>

These typically are valid for up to 10 years, and allow you to cross back and forth. You still have to meet the requirements and stay for a limited time per visit, but these make it clearer to the immigration officers when they find you entering Canada repeatedly.

Each time you enter Canada, you'll need to show customs your visa, say that you're a digital nomad and answer their follow-up questions, so they know you're legit.

By the way, if you're thinking of leaving, pulling a u-turn in the middle of the Ambassador bridge and coming back, don't. That's just a *tiny* bit suspicious (-:)). Instead, consider being a "snowbird": live in Canada in the summer and somewhere warm in the winter.

## 4.3 Extending a TRV

From inside Canada, you can apply to stay longer, which is called "applying for a visitor record".

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/extend-stay.html>

You can do this for a TRV as long as you do so before it expires.

## 4.4 Other Nomadic Things

Many other countries have digital nomad visas: more information is at Wikipedia, in

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_nomad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_nomad)

There are at least two books about being a nomad:

*The Digital Nomad Handbook* by Lonely Planet, as an eBook is available from Kobo at <https://www.kobo.com/ca/en/ebook/the-digital-nomad-handbook?sId=1a9f88fe-7812-4629-82cd-d4a4dda709d9&ssId=OK6scrhYzg1HX1yjSsmKI&cPos=1>

Amazon has that and *Digital Nomads For Dummies* (English Edition), in several formats.

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## **In Short**

You can live here and work remotely for reasonable periods, and get an application for permanent resident started while you're doing that.

# 5. International Experience Canada

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*Canada is recruiting for immigrants.*

*Canada is turning away immigrants.*

Both are true, sometimes even for the same person at the same time. We have to recruit, to keep our population from shrinking. In the past, Canada has had to take in about 700,00 new people a year. That’s about 1.75% of the total population. The 2025/6 targets are for around 380,000 permanent residents.

This chapter is about Canada’s program to provide “young people with opportunities to gain international work experience, learn about different cultures, and build professional networks across borders”. In other words, it’s about *recruiting*.

## 5.1 From the US

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec/eligibility.html>

The US is a preferred source for immigrants, but for some reason they didn’t do as most countries do, and sign a bilateral *youth mobility agreement* with Canada. I speculate that was to keep us from recruiting their best students.

To deal with countries without youth mobility agreements, Recognized Organizations (RO) were created, and therefor get used for US citizens. It always was something of a kluge: it works, but you need to be extra patient.

The ROs in turn deal with a number of US organizations, so-called Designated Referral Partners

Some of these are, in no particular order:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Key Features</b>
InterExchange	Work anywhere in Canada, support services in Toronto and Vancouver – Working Holiday. Targets the US <a href="https://www.interexchange.org/">https://www.interexchange.org/</a>
JENZA (SWAP)	RO Nomination programs, job placement assistance – Working Holiday– Young Professionals <a href="https://jenza.com/experiences/working-holidays/work-canada-ro/">https://jenza.com/experiences/working-holidays/work-canada-ro/</a>

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Key Features</b>	
Stepwest	Resort-focused jobs (ski resorts, hospitality) – Working Holiday– Young Professionals	<a href="https://www.stepwest.com/">https://www.stepwest.com/</a>
GO International	Personal support, job placement – Working Holiday	<a href="https://gointernational.ca/">https://gointernational.ca/</a>
A-Way to Work	Specialized in rural/agricultural placements – Working Holiday– Young Professionals	<a href="https://awaytowork.ca/">https://awaytowork.ca/</a>
IAESTE, International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience	Technical and professional opportunities, – Working Holiday– Young Professionals– International Co-op	<a href="https://iaeste.org/">https://iaeste.org/</a>
Languages Canada International	Combines language learning with work experience – Working Holiday	<a href="https://www.languagescanada.ca/en/">https://www.languagescanada.ca/en/</a>
Internship Network	Working Holidays and International Co-op	<a href="https://internship-network.org/">https://internship-network.org/</a>
INTERNeX International Exchange	Working Holiday– Young Professionals	<a href="https://internexworld.com/">https://internexworld.com/</a>
AIESEC (Association for the International Exchange of Students in Economics and Commerce)	Primarily for international students in economics and commerce, – Employer-specific work permit	<a href="https://www.aiesec.ca/">https://www.aiesec.ca/</a>
		<a href="https://www.ciee.org/about/blog/update-ciee-internship-programs">https://www.ciee.org/about/blog/update-ciee-internship-programs</a>
Academic Internship Council (AIC)	Focuses on academic internships – Employer-specific work permit	<a href="https://www.myscholarhq.com/academic-internship-council-2025/">https://www.myscholarhq.com/academic-internship-council-2025/</a>
		<a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhMUu40QU8Mwi1uG8fNltBUOoxMhFIRlb">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhMUu40QU8Mwi1uG8fNltBUOoxMhFIRlb</a>
Mennonite Central Committee of Canada / International Volunteer Exchange Program	Employer-specific work permit	<a href="https://mcc.org/get-involved/volunteer/ivep">https://mcc.org/get-involved/volunteer/ivep</a>

**Organization**  
(MCC/IVEP)

## Key Features

The country quotas typically get filled to between 90% and 95%. Most ROs see a fill rate between 85% and 95%.

## Resources, in General

These are about steps common to all three of the programs below.

- [IEC Documents Checklist 2026: What You Need to Apply](#)
- <https://dfimmigration.ca/how-to-immigrate-to-canada/iec-work-permit/>
- <https://www.matkowsky.ca/iec-international-experience-canada>
- <https://borderslawfirm.com/corporate-immigration/work-permits/international-experience-canada/>
- <https://hmdavocats.com/canadian-work-permit-lawyer/international-experience-canada-iec/>

## 5.2 Working Holiday

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec.html>

International Experience Canada (IEC) has three program for gaining Canadian experience, starting with “Working Holidays”.

This is aimed at young professionals to work and travel. It allows for up to two years or temporary work with Canadian employers, and combines a work permit with a visa.

Time working in this program counts towards Canadian experience. It used to add points toward express entry as well, but now only the experience itself counts.

### Resources

- Moving2canada has a lovely (56-page!) guide on working holidays, *Moving to Canada through IEC’s Working Holidays program*, <https://moving2canada.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Checklist-IEC-WH-9.pdf>  
A shorter checklist from them, *Working Holiday Canada: Your Ultimate Guide to work permits*, the work-permit part is <https://moving2canada.com/immigration/iec/working-holiday-visa-in-canada/>
- Pvtistes has guides on working holidays, in both French and English, at <https://pvtistes.net/> The name comes from the French acronym for Working-Holiday visas, PVT.

## Sections

- [About the program](#)
- Who can apply
- [How your family members can come to Canada](#)
- [Using a recognized organization](#)
- [Create your IEC profile and get your invitation to apply](#)
- [Submit your work permit application](#)
- [After you apply](#)
- [Prepare for arrival](#)
- [Start working in Canada](#)

## 5.3 International Co-Op

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/work/intern.html>

If you are in a program that requires you to do co-op or intern terms, you can do them in Canada under this program.

International co-op is for students who are enrolled in a program that requires all the students complete a work placement. The work can be in Canada if the school and employer agree.

You will need the permission of your school and employer, and once again, you will have to apply through a “recognized organization”.

As with other student visas, work done under a study permit doesn’t count toward “Canadian experience”. However if the school is Canadian, like the University of Waterloo, all the work terms *do* count toward Canadian experience.

## 5.4 Young Professionals

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec.html>

This is for people looking to get Canadian experience, by getting a job here. The job you’re offered must count toward your “professional development”, and fall into one of these training categories:

Category	Description	Examples
0	Management occupations	Advertising, marketing and public relations managers Financial managers
1	Occupations that usually require a university degree	Financial advisors Software engineers
2	Occupations that usually require <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a college diploma</li> <li>• apprenticeship training of 2 or more years, or</li> <li>• supervisory occupations</li> </ul>	Computer network and web technicians Medical laboratory technologists
3	Occupations that usually require <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a college diploma</li> <li>• apprenticeship training of less than 2 years, or</li> <li>• more than 6 months of on-the-job training</li> </ul>	Bakers Dental assistants and dental laboratory assistants

For the precise occupations, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/find-national-occupation-code.html> has a search function

For the eligibility rules, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec/eligibility.html>

Time working in this program counts towards Canadian experience. It used to add points toward express entry as well, but now only the experience counts.

**This is a live document.** These links will change. Always refer to the government pages for current rules. And please file an issue at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> so I'll know what needs updating.

## **In Short**

Canada has bilateral agreements to allow Canadians to work elsewhere, and people from those countries to work here. It's popular, so have a look and see if you fit a part of this recruiting scheme.

## 6. Lost Canadians and Family Reunification

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Canadian citizenship rules changed in 2025, when people who *should* have inherited Canadian citizenship from their parents and grandparents were added back into the rules.

For family members who didn’t inherit citizenship, Canadian citizens and landed immigrants can still sponsor their spouse/partner and children to come to Canada.

Reunification is backlogged, but there is now a ten-year “super visa” for parents and grandparents, created as a partial mitigation. The backlogged process was unfair to people like Maria Torres, who wrote that her “71-year-old mother can only visit on a tourist visa. Every goodbye might be the last.”

<https://immigcanada.com/the-silent-struggle-of-family-reunification/>

### 6.1 Citizenship by Birth and “Lost Canadians”

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/become-canadian-citizen/eligibility/already-citizen.html>

In 2009, a not-very-nice Prime Minister stripped away rights to inheriting citizenship that had been established in 1977. In 2025, we fixed that. Now, you can apply to gain/regain Canadian citizenship.

A Canadian citizen parent can always pass on citizenship to a child born outside of Canada if that parent was either 1) born in Canada or 2) naturalized before the birth of their child. The 2009 changes blocked people who were

- born to Canadian parents who were also born abroad (ie, the second generation abroad,)
- adopted by first-generation Canadians born abroad.

We fixed that. Now a Canadian parent born or adopted abroad can pass citizenship to their child born abroad before 2025. If the child was born after 2025 the parent would need to “spend three years in Canada prior to the child's birth or adoption”

In short, you’re already a citizen if you’re

- born in Canada
- born outside Canada and your parents were Canadian citizens at time of birth, or

- born outside of Canada, to parents whose ancestors were considered Canadian, under the same rules.

If any of these is true, you can apply for a citizenship certificate, and use that to apply for a Canadian passport. You'll need

- birth certificates,
- your parents' or other ancestor's Canadian citizenship documents, and
- proof of your parent's status at time of your birth.

It's not actually *hard*, but there is a lot of just plain work, described in

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-0001-application-citizenship-certificate-adults-minors-proof-citizenship-section-3.html>

## Resources

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada pages on the new rules
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/act-changes/rules-2025.html>
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2025/12/bill-c-3-an-act-to-amend-the-citizenship-act-2025-comes-into-effect.html>
- 2025 changes, <https://immigration.ca/claiming-canadian-citizenship-by-descent-under-canadas-new-citizenship-act-bill-c-3/>
- borderlines podcast #194 – *Are You Now a Canadian?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1siBJvxqc9Q>
- discussion group at <https://www.reddit.com/r/Canadiancitizenship/> Also see their FAQs
- facebook group, *Canadian Citizenship by Descent (Bill C-3)* at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/501813032715040>
- <https://www.cascadiadaily.com/2026/feb/28/new-law-opens-door-to-citizenship-for-lost-canadians-in-bellingham-and-beyond>

## 6.2 Family Reunification and Sponsorship

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/family-sponsorship/spouse-partner-children/who-you-can-sponsor.html>

Sponsorship for refugees is different, see Chapter 9, *As a True Refugee*.

Typical *family* reunification is citizens and permanent residents sponsoring their spouse/partner and children, as well as a program for sponsoring entire families. There is a related mechanism to grant a “super visa” for parents/grandparents to live in Canada for ten years at a time periods, to deal with the excessive backlogs.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/parent-grandparent-super-visa/eligibility.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/parent-grandparent-super-visa/forms-documents.html>

## Resources

- [immigration.ca](https://www.immigration.ca)
  - <https://immigration.ca/family-sponsorship-immigration-overview/>
  - <https://immigration.ca/what-are-the-options-for-bringing-parents-and-grandparents-to-canada-in-2026/>
- <https://moving2canada.com/immigration/family-sponsorship/>
- <https://www.fhplawyers.com/kelowna-legal-services/immigration-law/canada/spousal-sponsorships-and-family-reunification.html>
- <https://www.titanlaw.ca/family-sponsorship/>
- <https://www.canadavisa.com/cohen-immigration-law.html>

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## In Short

If you have Canadian ancestors, look and see if you're a Canadian already. If not, look at a family sponsorship.

# 7. NAFTA and Other Work Permits

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The North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA (now CUSMA), created a “low-barrier” approach to getting a “TN” visa. Those visas are a particularly popular ways to allow people to work temporarily in Canada. Non-CUSMA work permits also exist, for things like transfers or US hiring by Canadian employers.

All allow you to apply for permanent residence, but...

## 7.1 Contradictio in Terminis

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/levels/supplementary-immigration-levels-2026-2028.html>

... to *get* any of these temporary work permits, you are expected to demonstrate you're planning on returning to the US. The idea is to allow US citizens to work in Canada without affecting Canadian employment levels. That means you must have “temporary intent”, or you'd be turned away for “stealing Canadian jobs”.

Contradictorily, if someone has “established strong roots in their communities, are paying taxes and are helping to build the strong economy Canada needs”, then we'll be inviting you to stay. For 2026 and 2027, the government will “accelerate the transition of up to 33,000 temporary workers to permanent residency”. If you're an attractive immigrant who originally *didn't* want to stay, we'd *like* you to stay.

In short, if you apply for any of these temporary permits, you *need* to demonstrate you have strong ties to the US and will return there. You can change your mind ... later.

## 7.2 CUSMA (formerly NAFTA)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/foreign-workers/international-free-trade-agreements/cusma.html>

This is the “TN” visa you’ve probably heard about.

It’s good, but it’s also under “negotiation” by untrusted parties. TN visas *to the US* may well be squeezed or dropped circa July 2026. Following on from that, Canada will have to decide if it wants to limit or phase them out as well, probably driven by whether we see job losses in Canada.

CUSMA visas are good because they’re easy to get if you have a degree. Your employer doesn’t have to prove they haven’t found a Canadian for the job.

CUSMA offers distinct work categories for professionals, intra-company transferees and others. Each category has unique criteria.

Some examples of the professional or “specialized knowledge” categories are accountants, engineers, computer systems analysts, lawyers, architects and management consultants. The complete lists (there are two) are at

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/special-instructions/business-people.html>

A **professional** from one of those two lists must have

- a job offer,
- a minimum education, usually a bachelor’s degree in their field, and
- licensing where required. For example, nursing and teaching require you have a license.

An **Intra-Company Transferee** needs

- to be a US citizen, and
- be employed at a US firm which has a legitimate branch, affiliate, or subsidiary in Canada.

They need to be in a “specialized knowledge” or management job from the lists. Finally, they need to have worked for the US company for over a year.

Either of these will count as “Canadian experience” when you apply for permanent residency. You’ll fall into at least the *Federal Skilled Worker, Canadian Experience* class.

### Resources

- immigration-nation.ca, [Moving to Canada as an American: CUSMA \(Formerly NAFTA\) Work Permits & LMIA Exemptions](#)
- CUSMA hints, <https://www.calverimmigrationservices.com/post/navigating-work-permits-for-professionals-under-cusma-your-guide-to-working-in-canada>
- Compass (charitable organization) on CUSMA, <https://www.compassimmigration.ca/blog/how-to-immigrate-to-canada-from-the-us-cusma>
- List of professions, <https://www.canadavisa.com/nafta-professionals.html>

- canadavisa.com discussion group, <https://www.canadavisa.com/canada-immigration-discussion-board/>

## 7.3 LMIA's

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/hire-temporary-foreign.html>

They are pronounced “lamia”, but they’re not the ancient Greek snake-woman<sup>i</sup> who devours young men.

Instead a Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) looks to see if there is a need for a foreign worker for a particular job. It’s a hurdle, not a snake. The idea is to see if there are no qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents who will do it.

The assessment is requested by the employer via Service Canada. The employer will be required to post the job on the Government of Canada Job Bank, <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home> and advertised nationally in at least two ways, for 30 days.



<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/median-wage/high/requirements.html>

There are a number of categories where a LMIA is not required.

These are typically for jobs that Canada already knows it wants to be filled. An example is the *Francophone Mobility* work permit, which doesn’t require an LMIA you intend to live and work outside Quebec.

These are announced by the Prime Minister irregularly, when there is a clear need. In February, 2026, the PM announced one for persons who want to become a member of the Canadian Forces.

The current non-lamia set includes at least

- health care and social services workers, such as nurse practitioners, dentists, pharmacists, psychologists and chiropractors,
- trades, such as carpenters, plumbers and machinists,
- foreign-trained doctors with Canadian work experience, added in December 2025,
- the francophone mobility category, and
- the new Canadian Forces category, from February 2026.

Knowing which of these program to apply to usually requires expert advice.

## Resources

- Immigrating to Canada: Does Canada Need More of My Profession? 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gya6dqDCT0>

## 7.4 Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers.html>

This is the ordinary foreign worker program, usually known for the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), that Canada offers to people from Mexico and the Caribbean.

However, it's far wider than that. It includes both low-wage and high-wage jobs. The programs are

- the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) and
- the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), both of which are non-seasonal, and
- the Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP), which can be seasonal work.

All provide employer-specific work permits based on a job offer. Employers normally require an LMIA, unless there is a high need. For example, foreign physicians coming to work in Quebec don't need a LMIA. There is a list of these jobs [here](#).

There is even an option for an employer hire a skilled worker in support of an [application for permanent residency](#), if they expect to need the person forever. Yes, that's contradictory.

## 7.5 Open Work Permit

There are also two other forms of work permit. The first we've already seen in Chapter 2, the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP).

The other is an open work permit, that allows the person to work for any Canadian employer. These are only available for certain groups, such as spouses of skilled workers, international students, or those in the process of transitioning to permanent residency, but they avoid the need for an employer to work through a LMIA.

**Caution!** There is a false claim that Canada was considering shutting down open work permits. Not so: <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2026/02/02/ircc-refutes-reports-that-canadas-open-work-permit-programs-are-ending-this-2026/>

## 7.6 Work Transfers to Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/special-instructions/business-people.html> under *Intra-company transferees*

Canada has some special cases in NAFTA that line up with the International Mobility Program (IMP). One includes employees moving within the same company to a Canadian office, or starting a Canadian office. This isn't as easy as being a digital nomad, but allows you to live and work for your employer in Canada without being remote, and for one to three year periods, renewable for up to five years.

I worked in Minneapolis under the US version of this, which was then called a "white card".

There is no requirement for a Lamia, and time spent counts toward “Canadian experience” in an application for permanent residence.

### Resources

- <https://www.cicnews.com/2026/01/these-us-workers-have-an-advantage-in-moving-to-canada-0166211.html>
- <https://immigration.ca/intra-company-transferees/>
- <https://www.canadavisa.com/intra-company-transfer-program.html>
- <https://motivus.law/canadian-immigration/intra-company-transfers>
- <https://www.ackahlaw.com/services/canada-work-visas/intra-company-job-transfers>

## 7.8 Canada’s Healthcare Infusions

<https://engageq.notion.site/infusionhosts>

This initiative, mentioned in Chapter 1, is a grass-roots campaign to get more healthcare workers to move here.

We have a shortage of doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers, so Tod and Jocelyn Maffin started a volunteer migration-support group. They started in Nanaimo, BC and it has spread across all of Canada.

They have a map of the groups across Canada at that site, each of which has expertise in the worker needs of the area.

### Resources

Notably, there is a collection of YouTube talks by Tod Maffin:

- Find safety in Canada, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6HOJyoHrpo>
- U.S. Nurses Begin Arriving in Nanaimo, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTtbHcmD0WM>
- The Nanaimo Infusion – We're Doing It Again! 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8no3Bscpno>
- Moving to Canada as a Doctor or Healthcare Worker, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryTdNBC9mn8>
- U.S. Healthcare Workers: Want to Work in Canada? Watch This First! 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ACEPjGYJfg>

The Nova Scotia chapter has been in the news lately,

- A no-brainer: Why some U.S. health-care workers are moving to Nova Scotia”, at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/american-healthcare-workers-moving-nova-scotia-9.7025866>
- <https://novascotiahealthcareinfusion.notion.site/Nova-Scotia-Healthcare-Infusion-297e74c53bba81a4b908cd47106894a6>

## Doctors

It's harder to move to Canada as a doctor, but we've recently improved this. People certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), or the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), probably don't need to take the qualifying exam.

Once you're here, provinces offering full licenses are British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. In other words, everywhere except Ontario, Quebec, and the territories. If you don't have those qualifications, you can work as a kind or an apprentice for 12 weeks and have your supervisor approve you.

<https://moving2canada.com/features/how-to-work-in-canada-as-a-doctor/>

## 7.8 For All of These

Immigration *publishes* the criteria that immigration officers use, to avoid blind-siding applicants. Of course, it's written in bureaucratese, or perhaps parseltongue.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/foreign-workers/international-free-trade-agreements/general-agreement-trade-services.html>

*To determine eligibility, officers should consider the following factors:*

- *the intentions of the applicant*
  - *What is the applicant doing in Canada?*
  - *How long has the applicant been here?*
  - *How long is the request for?*
- *the reason given by the applicant for applying for the extension*
  - *Are the plans well thought out or merely frivolous?*
  - *Has the applicant previously received an extension?*
- *the applicant's situation in their home country*
  - *What family, employment or other responsibilities and obligations has the person left behind?*
  - *How have these responsibilities been discharged?*
  - *Is a prolonged stay in Canada reasonable and feasible?*
- *the initial intent of the application*
  - *What was the original purpose of the business visit to Canada?*
  - *Has the original purpose of the business visit been fulfilled?*
  - *If the original purpose of the business visit has not been fulfilled, was sufficient time originally granted to fulfill the purpose?*

- *the necessary license or documentation to practice the applicant's occupation in Canada in instances where an occupation is regulated at a provincial or territorial level. For example, in most provinces and territories, electrician and plumber are regulated occupations and require documentation to be practiced.*

### **Resources**

- A light-hearted Todd Maffin video on moving to Canada as a skilled worker, “11 Things Americans Must Know Before Moving to Canada”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnux5kWrVps>
- Information about background checks for jobs, [https://moving2canada.com/features/background-checks-for-jobs-in-canada-what-to-expect/?utm\\_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026](https://moving2canada.com/features/background-checks-for-jobs-in-canada-what-to-expect/?utm_source=news.moving2canada.com&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=resources-for-newcomers-march-1-2026)
- About reference checks, <https://moving2canada.com/features/reference-checks-in-canada-prepare-your-referees/>

## **7.9 Green Card Holders in the US**

Canada *may* be getting ready to relaunch its fast-track work permit for U.S. H-1B visa holders. Last year's took two days for 10,000 applicants to apply for three-year open work permits. The popularity may have something to do with the US \$100,000 fee for new H-1B visas.

- <https://moving2canada.com/features/canada-h1b-work-permit-how-to-prepare/>

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### ***In Short***

It's perfectly possible to get a job in Canada and get a work permit, if the employer agrees. That doesn't make it particularly easy, but some support groups *strongly* want you to succeed.

i Deivid.ai, Sketch of a Lamia", AI-generated image, 2026.

# 8. Express Entry

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There isn't really a "slow entry" any more. Express entry is the normal way to apply to become a permanent resident (PR).

Express entry is a replacement for an older, slower, process. In order to increase immigration, it was introduced in 2015, and created a streamlined system based on points for skills, family considerations and job offers.

When everything is working well, express entry takes about six months and results in you being granted permanent residence. It's rarely that quick, but the old version took years. In most cases, you will need one of the immigration consultants I mentioned in section 1.9 or a lawyer from 1.10.

### 8.1 Introduction

Canada has both a low birth rate and an aging population, so it's particularly open to skilled workers joining the workforce (and tax rolls). We're therefore looking for people with language skills, work experience, education, and drive.

Demographics drives express entry, but it has been derailed by happenstance, or by a US president doing something surpassingly stupid. Fortunately, demographics will win out in the end: the Canadian population dropped for the first time in 2025, causing muted consternation

### 8.2 Many Paths, one Destination

There are numerous paths making up part of express entry, notably

- Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)
- Canadian Experience Class (CEC)
- Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP)

In parallel to Express Entry itself, there are also mechanisms for immigration to specific provinces. These are qualifying mechanisms for express entry, with different options.

- Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP) and

- Quebec Skilled Worker Program (QSWP) if you wish to reside in Quebec.

Most use a system called the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS). It is a points-based system that we use to assess and score your profile and rank it in the express entry pool. It's used to assess your:

- skills
- education
- language ability
- work experience

and any other factors.

There is a calculator for your "CRS score" at <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/check-score.html>

This is a table of some of the factors, excerpted from <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/check-score/crs-criteria.html>

### Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) criteria

Factor name	Description	Points with a spouse	Points without
Age	Ages 20 to 29 have the highest scores	100	110
Education	Secondary diploma (high school graduation)	28	30
	One-year degree, diploma or certificate from a university, college, trade or technical school, or other institute	84	90
	Two-year program at a university, college, trade or technical school, or other institute	91	98
	Bachelor's degree OR a three or more year program at a university, college, trade or technical school, or other institute	112	120
	Master's degree, or professional degree needed to practice in a licensed profession, eg medicine,	126	135
	Doctoral level university degree (Ph.D.)	140	150
Languages proficiency	For each of reading, writing, speaking and listening	32	34
Canadian work experience	None or less than a year	0	0
	1 year	35	40
	2 years	46	53
	3 years	56	64
	4 years	63	72
	5 years or more	70	80
Skill Transferable			

lity factors

With good/strong official languages proficiency and a post-secondary degree	50	50
With Canadian work experience and a post-secondary degree	50	50
With good/strong official languages proficiency and foreign work experience	50	50
With Canadian work experience and foreign work experience	50	50
Certificate of qualification		
With good/strong official languages proficiency and a certificate of qualification	50	50
Additional points		
Brother or sister living in Canada (18 years or older, citizen or permanent resident)	15	15
French language skills	50	50
Post-secondary education in Canada	30	30
Provincial or territorial nomination	600	600

Each program is limited to a certain number of applicants who are above a particular score, and individuals to be invited are drawn randomly from the applicants who qualify. Draws are every 2-3 weeks. And yes, you get fewer points if you're married. Whoopie.

**Training, Education, Experience, and Responsibilities (TEER)**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/find-national-occupation-code.html>

The occupations you can apply for include:

General	Medical/allied professionals	Scientists
accountant	dentist	agriculturist (or agronomist)
architect	dietitian	animal breeder
computer systems analyst	medical laboratory technologist	animal scientist
disaster relief insurance claims adjuster	nutritionist	apiculturist
economist	occupational therapist	astronomer
engineer	pharmacist	biochemist
forester	physician (teaching or research only)	biologist (or plant pathologist)
graphic designer	physiotherapist/physical therapist	chemist
hotel manager	psychologist	dairy scientist
industrial designer	recreational therapist	entomologist
interior designer	registered nurse	epidemiologist
land surveyor	veterinarian	geneticist
landscape architect		geologist
lawyer (or notary in the province of Quebec)		geochemist
librarian		geophysicist
management consultant		horticulturist
mathematician (or statistician and actuary)		meteorologist

General	Medical/allied professionals	Scientists
range manager or range conservationist		pharmacologist
research assistant (working in a post-secondary institution)		physicist (or oceanographer)
scientific technician or technologist		plant breeder
social worker		poultry scientist
silviculturist (or forestry specialist)		soil scientist
technical publications writer		zoologist
urban planner (or geographer)		
vocational counsellor		

These break down into yet another code, a 4-digit “NOC code”, for individual jobs titles.

### Resources

- How to Choose the Right NOC Code for Express Entry, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF57PySWlj4> (from moving2canada.com)

## 8.3 Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/who-can-apply/federal-skilled-workers.html>

This as a program to get people who have done an apprenticeship or gone through college or university.

It aims at getting people with working experience in particular categories to apply. The categories are those mentioned in the TEER table above.

Your experience needs to be appropriate to the area you’re applying to, although it can be in a former job.

It formerly included points for having a job offer. That was removed, but immigration hopes to restore it, and add points for having required licenses, hopefully in 2026.



The points used in this program are different from the pools above but the minimum is published: you need 67 points in this particular scheme on the web page above.

In this and all the programs below, one of the common roadblocks is employers' lack of resources to verify foreign educational credentials and work experience,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15562948.2022.2133201>

For college and universities, get a transcript, or perhaps have a certified transcript sent directly to the prospective employer. For proof of employment, your offer letter, pay stubs W-2 or 1099 tax forms should suffice. If you're not sure about that, you can ask the employer for an official letter to verify your employment.

In any case, collect recommendations on LinkedIn that align with the jobs that you want to emphasize. This is a particularly easy way for an employer to gain confidence about you.

## **8.4 Canadian Experience Class (CEC)**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/who-can-apply/canadian-experience-class.html>

This is the program for anyone who has experience working in Canada.

If you have a year's Canadian work experience in the last three years, you qualify. You don't have to be an apprentice, attended college, or graduated university. You do have to fall into one of the [skilled jobs](#) mentioned above.

If you are a physician, there is a new category for you, starting in 2026.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/medical-doctors.html>

If you did go to a Canadian high school, college or university, you get points for that. Similarly, if you complete a college or university program elsewhere, that also pays some points.

## **Resources**

- Immigration pages on the medical category, <https://iccimmigration.ca/new-express-entry-category-for-physicians-with-canadian-work-experience-pr-pathway-explained-2026-update/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/medical-doctors.html>

## 8.5 Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/who-can-apply/federal-skilled-trades.html>

If you're a member of one of the skilled trades, there is a program for that, much like the "skilled worker" program. Typically it means you apprenticed in

- construction
- transportation
- manufacturing or other industrial work, or
- natural resources and agriculture.

You need two years experience in your trade in the five years before you apply.

In this program you will need either

- a certificate from a Canadian province saying that your qualifications are valid in Canada, or
- a job offer to work in your trade.

Like the skilled trades program, you get extra points for attending college or university, and a Canadian high school.

## 8.6 Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP)

A province can also nominate you for one of the three express entry processes. I'll look at the Ontario program as an example, but all the provinces and the northwest territories have programs, each with a certain quota for candidates.

<https://settlement.org/ontario/immigration-citizenship/immigrating-to-ontario/immigration-categories/what-is-opportunities-ontario-provincial-nominee-program-pnp>

This is specifically for people with job offers, replacing the previous scheme where offers were part of the qualifying points scheme for regular express entry.

You can qualify if you fall into one of these three streams

- Foreign Worker stream, if you a skilled foreign worker with a job offer in Ontario, or if you're a physician.
- International Student stream, for recent graduates with a job offer, and, most importantly,
- In-Demand Skills stream

The latter is for people in a list of occupations described in [in-demand skills](#). These include everything from home care workers to railroad track maintenance workers.

These streams do not require apprenticeship or a degree.

## 8.7 Quebec Skilled Worker Program (QSWP)

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration/permanent/choose-quebec>

Quebec has a similar program, “Choosing to immigrate to Québec”. It is oriented toward skilled workers, who have both conversational french and want to live in Quebec

There is a different program, *Express Entry for French-speaking skilled workers* who wish to work *elsewhere* in Canada, that is managed as part of express entry.

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/francophone-immigration-outside-quebec.html>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/rural-franco-pilots/franco-immigration.html>

## 8.8 Other Resources

- A video suggesting that if your work permit is running out, apply for Permanent Residency <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQCzY7MvXTg>
- Ontario guide on immigrating, <https://settlement.org/> (previously mentioned)
- canadavisa.com has a calculator for how many express point you have, <https://www.canadavisa.com/canadian-immigration-visas.html>
- Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP) and the Francophone Community Immigration Pilot (FCIP) are new permanent-resident programs for persons wishing to live in rural ares and for francophones wishing to live outside of Quebec. <https://moving2canada.com/features/rcip-fcip-work-permit-pdi-update>
- <https://allhod.com/canada-immigration/express-entry/>
- <https://www.bordersolutionslaw.com/canadian-immigration/express-entry/>

## 8.9 Changes for 2026

A new category was added, for “**Physicians with Canadian Work Experience**”

<https://moving2canada.com/news-and-features/news/immigration/new-express-entry-stream-plus-5000-pnp-spots-for-international-doctors/>

Note that is for folks the medical societies have already approved, so it’s sort of limited. If you’ve done this job, you’re eligible for residency.

For **US H-1B visa holders**, an escape hatch. The US is now charging a \$100,000 supplemental fee for applying for an H-1B visa, payable by the employer. Anyone needing in a new visa or extending an old one is charged this prohibitive fee. Canada is proposing to recreate a program from last year, to let those people come to Canada instead. As of April, 2026, we are awaiting a final announcement.

- <https://moving2canada.com/features/canada-h1b-work-permit-how-to-prepare/>

Also being emphasized are

- **pilots, aircraft mechanics or inspectors**, and
- candidates for the **Canadian Forces** in roles such as doctors, nurses and pilots.

This is a live document. These links will change. Always refer to the government pages for current rules. And please file an issue at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> if anything is wrong so I'll know to update it.

## **In Short**

This is the most normal, but one of the busisest ways to become a permanent resident, and eventually a citizen. And you can get started on it as soon as you arrive in Canada.

# 9. As a True Refugee

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This is a “last chance” approach, if nothing else makes sense. It depends on Canada recognizing that you are not safe in Gilead, even though that’s where you grew up or previously fled to.

The very thing this book is most about turns out to be the hardest way to move to Canada. That’s why I described all the easier ones first.

Conversely, it is the best-described, because it’s *important*.

### 9.1 Introduction

The first step is showing you **are** a refugee

If you’re applying a refugee, part of the prove-you’re-a-refugee process depends on *how* you came here:

- Being sponsored as for “refugee resettlement”.
- Applying as a refugee at the border.
- Coming as a visitor or student and applying afterwards.
- Crossing the border illegally and later applying.

#### ***Crossing Illegally***

The fourth approach *used* to be very common. Because of the so-called “Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)”, refugees in the US used to come to Roxham Road in Quebec and cross. The RCMP had a detachment there, would warn them, then take them into custody and arrange for a refugee hearing. The Roxham crossing is shut down now, in part due to the cost to Quebec, and in part due to pointed requests from the US that Canada change the agreement.

Other refugees have try to sneak in across the great plains in the winter. That’s life-threatening, and has killed whole families.

Fortunately, US citizens are *not* blocked by the SCTA, so that particular hurdle doesn't apply to them. If you're not a citizen, though, you need to look out for this. See Section 9.4, below, for more on the STCA.

### ***Applying When in Canada***

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/guide-0174-inland-refugee-claims-portal.html>

The third of the four approaches is called an “inland refugee claim”. It's currently available to anyone who has been in Canada for *more than* 14 days. That also includes people who had crossed illegally. This is a different process than applying at the border subject to the SCTA, where the most recent amendments say you must apply *before* 14 days pass.

The process starts with, of course, a form. This is called an IRB Basis of Claim (BOC) form

- [https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/forms/Documents/RpdSpr0201\\_e.pdf](https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/forms/Documents/RpdSpr0201_e.pdf)
- <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/forms/Pages/RpdSpr0201.aspx>

Because of the probability of confusion and erroneous rulings, you *should* seek legal representation, which is yet another form to fill out,

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/imm5476.html>

Finally you create an account on the IRCC Portal and complete your application on-line, from within Canada.. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/imm5476.html> This *cannot* be done from the US

Bill C-12 added a new requirement that you must apply within one year of your first (ever!) entry to Canada. That applies to US citizens and non-citizens alike. See section 9.5, below.

### ***Applying at the Border***

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/asylum/border.html>

The second approach is like applying from within Canada, with a few organizational differences.

The first step is prove your identity and give biometrics scans or fingerprints if you're 14 years of age and up.

A border security office will pre-screen you. They will ask you about your background, why you came to Canada, and what dangers you face in your home country.

#### **References:**

- Unusually, there is no official guide on what questions will be asked. <https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/guide/start-your-refugee-claim/eligibility-interview/> is a good reference, collected from other government publications and previous immigrants.

It's probably best if you skip ahead and work through the IRB Basis of Claim form first, so you will have thought about many of the questions. Resources for *that* are below, in section 9.2, under Resources for Hearings.

If you pass the screening, you will be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) to formally fill out the BOC form. You have a maximum of two weeks to do this. In addition, you will usually need to fill out a medical report form, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/medical-exams/requirements-temporary-residents.html> which in turn may require a medical examination.

### ***Being Sponsored as a Refugee***

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/sponsor-refugee/private-sponsorship-program.html>

The first of the four possibilities is being sponsored. This the one for refugees instead of for family members.

If you're already a UN "convention refugee" in the US, you can be sponsored to come to Canada by:

- An established organization or church that wants to help refugees resettle in Canada, called a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)
- Groups of 5, ordinary citizens, often neighbours or co-workers, who sponsor individual refugees or families.
- Community Sponsors, small-scale organizations, associations or corporations that sponsor refugees to come to Canada.

Refugee sponsoring gets turned off and on. For right now, it was off in 2015, and restarted in 2016, with a target of 15,000 sponsored refugees a year.

Individual programs also can be temporarily turned off, too. Right now, groups of 5 and community organizations are paused, but pre-screened SAHs can keep sponsoring.

SAHs include religious organizations, cultural groups and humanitarian organizations. For example, the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Humanity First and the World University Service of Canada Student Refugee Program, are all SAHs. There are more support groups mentioned in section 1.4, some of which are SAHs.

The full list of SAHs is <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/sponsor-refugee/private-sponsorship-program/agreement-holders/holders-list.html>

## **9.2 Steps for all four**

Who gets in as a refugee? Three broad groups of people:

<b>Status Category</b>	<b>Eligibility Details</b>
UN Refugee Convention Refugees	People with established refugee status from UNHCR.
Protected Persons	Those facing persecution in their home country such as

## Status Category

## Eligibility Details

Vulnerable Persons

LGBTQ+ people from countries with laws criminalizing sexual orientation or gender identity.

People not yet formally recognized as refugees, such as LGBTQ+ people facing severe discrimination, or potential persecution.

The third category is probably the relevant one here. You may be in Gilead, but you are not yet a protected person.

To be vulnerable, a “person in need of protection”, you must be

- in danger of torture,
- at risk to your life, or
- at risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

The best way to know if you are going to qualify is to go through the form-filling process, see what’s needed, and then arrange to get all the needed information.

The form and it’s guide are

<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/refugee-claims/Pages/ClaDemGuide.aspx>

<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/forms/pages/rpdspr0201.aspx>


Just like for NAFTA visas, Immigration publishes their interview guidelines, to avoid blind-siding applicants: *Guideline 9: Proceedings Before the IRB Involving Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics*, <https://irb.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir09.aspx>

They’re exhaustive, but genuinely hard to understand. A good immigration lawyer will help.

## Resources for Hearings

- Queer Refugee Hearings Program Toolkit
  - This available as both a printable document (133 pages) and an interactive program. It contains the suite of question to expect, such as “27. When and how did you realize that your gender identity may be different than your assigned sex at birth?” The guide includes a list of support organization, by city.
  - <https://capitalrainbow.ca/qrhq>
- The519’s mock hearings, for practice. These are one-on-one rehearsals with a lawyer,

## Sections

- 
- Meet the requirements
  - [What to expect at the border](#)
  - [If you are asked to complete your claim online](#)
  - [While you wait](#)
  - [After your hearing](#)

- <https://www.the519.org/programs/mock-hearing-program/>
- Refugee Hearing Preparation Guide, for all refugees. Contains a section on hearings
  - <https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/>
  - online “group tours” of the refugee process, at <https://myrefugeeclaim.ca/en/ready-tours/>
- Law Foundation of Ontario
  - Refugee Orientation meetings <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/refugee-orientations-online/>
  - Safe Third country Agreement: refugee protection <https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/refugee-orientations-online/>

## Clinics

- Canada-U. S. Border Rights Clinic. Visit to learn more about making a refugee claim at the Canada-U. S. border and to book a free consultation for legal advice. Online/phone, <https://canadaborderclinic.org/>
- The 519, as mentioned above, <https://www.the519.org>
- Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic (IRLC) — <https://www.irlc.ca/>

## Information

- Project Haven at UofT - The Asylum lab is a research organization, and project Haven is part of it. Two of its reports are notable:
  - The guide, <https://haven.utoronto.ca/index.php/a-guide-for-lgbtqi-asylum-seekers-crossing-the-canada-u-s-border/>
  - The Haven resource map, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1Ycmn2RnXbPcceYpjzie8sCQDumshNyA&ll=52.54292139355158%2C-87.64755717922108&z=4Map>

## 9.3 Transgender Immigration Cases in Canada

The biggest roadblocks to a successful refugee claim for an 2SLGBTQI+ person are “men of good will, lacking in judgment<sup>i</sup>”. Our immigration officers expect “students, wealthy-ish business people, skilled workers and refugees”, typically meaning refugees from distant countries. They didn’t even get timely warnings that the *US* was becoming more and more dangerous, and so rejected a trans person in 2025.

It was appealed, and became *Jenkel v. Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, 2025 FC 1178 (CanLII) <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/fct/doc/2025/2025fc1178/2025fc1178.html?resultId=70232845a72247aaa1231bc9e63c5a29&searchId=2026-02-07T15:50:47:814/321506ed2ae94f9b891a8a3beb7ecba8>



And yes, that is diametrically opposite to the law before March 2026, which said you can't apply after "irregular" entry until *after* you have been here 14 days. Think of this change as a booby-trap.

## 9.5 A Sidebar on the Safe Third Country Agreement (SCTA)

The SCTA is a bilateral deal between Canada and the US, to keep people from coming to Canada and continuing from here to the US. It is not directly relevant to US-born citizens, but it is to everyone else.

It is

- A substantial blocker for refugees transiting Canada for the US.
- Initially, a partial blocker to people transiting the US on their way to Canada.
- Not enough of a blocker to people transiting Canada on their way to the US, for the US government. They wanted more restriction.

The rules used to apply at customs points, but didn't block people crossing elsewhere. For example, Roxham Road. At the instance of the US, it was amended to close "irregular" crossing points. Think of this as adding US "exit controls", like the USSR once had.

The changes in C-12 also allow you to be expelled if you fail to apply for refuge in the first 14 days after you arrive "irregularly". The law up to March 2026 required you to hide out for 14 days instead: see Step 1 in <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/asylum/border/eligibility.html> (which is only partially updated as of 30 March 2026)

Before Mr Trump's second term began, the courts did not immediately strike down the safe third country agreement, but instead left questions to the federal court to resolve. Since then, the courts have been told to take notice of new dangers from gender-based discrimination, against refugees arriving from the US.

### Resources

- Exit Wounds, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQ\\_rE5MBOlq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQ_rE5MBOlq)

This is a live document. These links will change. Always refer to the government pages for current rules. And please file an issue at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> so I'll know what needs updating.

### In Short

This is not an easy process, but it can be worthwhile. Syn Amanuel fled Eritrea and writes "as a refugee, I hated Canada until one specific night. Now I see this as a stage in a journey. I'm sharing my

story to give hope, to tell those who just arrived that they won't always feel like a refugee”.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/syn-amanuel-first-person-refugee-1.6892865>

### **Other Resources**

Chapter 10 contains more resources, for everyone *after* they arrive in Canada. For example, it includes help on resettlement, employment and healthcare

i Adams, H. (1918). *The education of Henry Adams*. Houghton Mifflin.

# 10. After You Get Here

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Once you’re in Canada, you have all the usual problem that you’d see moving somewhere else in your home country, exacerbated by our doing everything *differently*.

The first place to look is in the “please move to Canada guides”. For example, the federal one at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/welcome.pdf> and the Ontario one at <https://settlement.org/firstdays/> Both dig into how to live here.

You will need a place to live, a bank account, your US prescriptions and a doctor. If you have children, you’ll need to transfer them to a Canadian school.

Then you’ll need a job, if you haven’t pre-arranged one.

### 10.1 Somewhere to Live

Toronto is a good example of a high-priced city. When we were last looking for an apartment there, my wife came up with an elegant trick. She drove around the neighbourhoods she was interested in, looking for apartments that *weren’t* advertised on the ‘net.

She found three low-rise buildings that had met the test of time and, more importantly, were amortized. The owners were making good money by not overpricing them, which kept them filled. Newer, taller buildings usually have to set high prices to pay off their construction debt. That keeps them from attracting residents, so they raise their rents some more to cover the large numbers of vacancies.

For example, in 2025 a one-bedroom apartment at any of three we looked it was \$2,100 a month in Canadian dollars, or \$1,512 in US dollars. In a new building or especially downtown, it would be more like \$2,700. That’s \$600 or 28% more for the same value. Unimpressive.

If you earn a middling wage, \$2,100 will be around 1/3 of your income, which is normal. If you are working minimum wage, though, it would take half your income.

We found one near a main highway and within easy walking distance to the subway. We found two more walking distance from Yonge and Eglinton, which is the centre of midtown and a main subway stop. All three qualify as being part of a “15 minute city”, with nearby stores, schools and theatres.

If you look on-line, you’ll find all the high-priced places. Then, explore the neighbourhoods you like and look for the ones that aren’t on the net. You should aim for ones that cost about 70% of the high-price ones. If you get below about C\$1,500, though, you’re looking at a basement apartment in a triplex.

### **Resources, on settling in general**

- Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) - a toolkit on settlement and integration resources across Canada, such as free pre-arrival services (by the Government of Canada), an Alberta refugee claimant resources handbook, etc.

<https://aaisa.ca/>

- BC Safe Haven Network – limited to BC - resources on the refugee claims process, how to sponsor refugees, the BC Refugee Hub, etc.

<https://issbc.org/our-programs-service/bc-safe-haven/>

- The Canadian Council for Refugees has a list of organizations that provide refugee resources and services in Canada, plus recent immigration policy updates and news.

<https://www.ccrweb.ca/en>

- CanRefugee has a resource map of settlement agencies, refugee houses, women’s shelters, and welcome churches across Canada

<https://www.canrefugee.ca/>

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) provides a toolkit on settlement and integration resources across Canada, such as free pre-arrival services (by the Government of Canada), an Alberta refugee claimant resources handbook, etc.

<https://aaisa.ca/>

BC Safe Haven Network is limited to BC, providing resources on the refugee claims process, how to sponsor refugees, the BC Refugee Hub, etc.

<https://issbc.org/our-programs-service/bc-safe-haven/>

- Aide aux Trans has a resource directory for transgender individuals across Québec, including legal aid, housing and shelters, and medical care

<https://aideauxtrans.com/en>

- Pflag U.S. and Pflag Canada connects 2SLGBTQI+ people to support resources, such as peer-to-peer support, education, resources, and events.

<https://pflagcanada.ca/>

- Sparrow, commercial listings of rooms for rent  
<https://sparrowshare.com/housemates/>
- Rentals.ca, maps of apartments, houses, and condos for rent  
<https://rentals.ca/>
  - We used this to find likely areas and list prices

## 10.2 A Bank Accountant

Most of the five big banks have programs to attract newcomers For example, Scotiabank has one called the “StartRight” program.

- <https://startright.scotiabank.com/ca/en/newcomers-to-canada-offer.html>

You’ll need id, your US bank information, and a proof of address such as a utilities bill. If you have proof of residency, so much the better. If you’re a digital native or a longish-stay snowbird, bring your visa.

### Resources

- <https://wise.com/us/blog/opening-a-bank-account-in-canada>

## 10.3 Travel Medical Insurance

You will need medical insurance, just like a visitor, until you can qualify for OHIP or another provincial health plan.

Most travel insurance is available through your credit-card issuer. For example:

Card Issuer	URL	Key Features/Comments
<b>American Express</b>	<a href="https://www.americanexpress.com/en-ca/insurance/travel/">https://www.americanexpress.com/en-ca/insurance/travel/</a>	Offers travel insurance as part of various card benefits.
<b>Chase</b>	<a href="https://www.chase.com/personal/credit-cards/education/basics/what-is-travel-insurance-and-how-does-it-work">https://www.chase.com/personal/credit-cards/education/basics/what-is-travel-insurance-and-how-does-it-work</a>	(Visa) Provides travel insurance benefits on several credit cards, including trip cancellation and medical coverage.
<b>Citi</b>	<a href="https://www.citi.com/">https://www.citi.com/</a>	(MasterCard) Certain cards include travel insurance benefits.
<b>Capital One</b>	<a href="https://www.citi.com/">https://www.citi.com/</a> <a href="https://www.capitalone.com/learn-grow/more-than-money/international-travel-insurance/">https://www.capitalone.com/learn-grow/more-than-money/international-travel-insurance/</a>	(MasterCard) Some travel cards offer travel insurance for emergencies and cancellations.
<b>BMO Financial Group</b>	<a href="https://www.bmo.com/main/personal/credit-cards/credit-card-travel-insurance/">https://www.bmo.com/main/personal/credit-cards/credit-card-travel-insurance/</a>	(Visa) Offers travel insurance benefits with their credit cards for

## Card Issuer

## URL

## Key Features/Comments travelers.

There are also sites which compare the prices of different plans.

- best quote, <https://bestquotetravelinsurance.ca/>

### 10.4 Your Prescriptions

You'll need to convert your prescriptions to Canadian. Like moving somewhere else in the US, this means you'll need a copy of your prescriptions from your doctor, and often a medical history.

You won't have a doctor yet, so reach out to an online service. In Ontario, this is *Health811.com*, the new name for Telehealth Ontario. Health811 can get you an on-line appointment with a doctor. The doctor can then "cosign" your prescription or provide you with a Canadian prescription.

They may need to look at your medical history to know about the medicines you take.

If you do not have a current prescription, Health811 can still help.

#### Resources:

- Prescriptions in Canada for Newcomers: Step-by-Step Guide  
<https://moving2canada.com/living/healthcare/prescriptions-canada-newcomers/>

### 10.5 A Doctor

Canada has free medicare, but we haven't been importing or training enough doctors, so you will probably need to work with someone like Rainbow Health Ontario to find a doctor. Health 811 will also help you find a doctor who is accepting new patients.

In the meantime, there are walk-in clinics or community health centres in most towns and cities in Canada.

#### Resources (Ontario)

- Rainbow Health Ontario has an up-to-date health resource library and health service provider map for Ontario's 2SLGBTQI+ communities
  - <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/>
  - <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/2slgbtq-health/service-provider-directory/>
- Health811 (formerly Telehealth Ontario) is a full-service health advice provider, available by phone or on-line
  - <https://health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home>
  - phone: 1-866-797-0000
- Health Care Connect, to find a doctor or nurse practitioner

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-family-doctor-or-nurse-practitioner>
- phone 1-800-445-1822.
- RateMDs, a review site. Its search allows you to find just doctors accepting new patients
  - <https://www.ratems.com/>
  - [https://www.ratems.com/best-doctors/on/toronto/family-gp/?accepting\\_patients=true](https://www.ratems.com/best-doctors/on/toronto/family-gp/?accepting_patients=true)
- How to find a family doctor
  - <https://moving2canada.com/living/healthcare/find-a-family-doctor-in-canada/>

## 10.6 School for your Kids.

You'll need a collection of documents:

Document Type	Specific Requirements	Purpose
Passport	Valid for entire family	Proof of citizenship
Permanent Resident Card/Visa	For immigrant families	Legal entry authorization
Birth Certificates	Translated if not in English/French	Proof of age, identity
School Records	Previous academic transcripts	Grade placement
Immunization Records	Complete vaccination history	School registration
Custody Documents	If applicable	Guardianship verification

In some languages, you'll need certified translations of these.

Contact local school board as early as possible, to do things like scheduling health screenings.

School is mandatory from ages 6 to 18, and all children, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to attend public schools. If you do not have proof of permanent residency or a work/study permit, reach out to school and school board.

To reduce culture shock, there are government and school board support programs for newcomers.

Resource Type	Details	How to Access
Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)	Free support program for newcomer students	Contact local school board or school directly
Government Newcomer Youth Services	Help during/after school, recreational activities	Over 500 service providers across Canada
School Board Support	Cultural liaisons, social workers, guidance counselors	Provided at most schools with newcomer students

## Resources

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/settle-canada/youth-services.html>

- <https://www.canadavisa.com/canadian-education.html>

## 10.7 A Job

The best, of course, is to continue with your existing employer. After that, you're into the job-hunting process, which is an entirely different book.

Fortunately, there are people who will help.

### Resources to help you find employment

- Centre for Immigrant and Community Services is a volunteer charitable group in Toronto. It has "Employment Programs for Newcomers and Internationally Trained Individuals"
  - <https://www.cicscanada.com/en/>
- COSTI Immigrant Services is supported by Employment Ontario, to provides numerous online services for workers who have immigrated
  - <https://www.costi.org/>
  - <https://learn.costi.ca/moodle/>

### Job blockers

Regrettably, many of the skilled trades have non-tariff barriers. Reach out to the self-governing body as early as you can, or you may need to come as a student and take Canadian training in your industry. The medical profession is *famously* reluctant to let anyone reduce the demand for doctors.

Profession	Requalification Requirements	Bridging Programs?
<b>Medical Doctors</b>	Must pass the Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination and may need provincial licensing exams.	Yes, limited slots
<b>Dentists</b>	Require the National Dental Examining Board (NDEB) exams and provincial registration.	Some
<b>Nurses</b>	Must obtain license from the Canadian Nurses Association and, in some provinces, pass the NCLEX-RN exam.	Some, see also <i>Canada's Healthcare Infusions</i>
<b>Pharmacists</b>	Need to pass the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) exams and provincial registration.	Some provinces
<b>Engineers</b>	Must be licensed by a provincial engineering regulatory body, requiring assessments or exams of qualifications.	Some provinces
<b>Teachers</b>	Often need provincial certification, which may include additional education and tests.	Yes
<b>Accountants</b>	Must meet Canadian Accounting standards and may need to pass the CPA exam.	Some
<b>Electricians</b>	Licensing is province-specific, often requiring local exams and proof of trade qualifications.	No
<b>Plumbers/ Pipefitters</b>	Require provincial trade certification that may involve additional assessments or apprenticeships.	Limited
<b>Social Workers</b>	Provincial license is usually necessary, with specific requirements varying by region.	Some provinces

## 10.8 A SIN

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html>

No, not the religious kind, a *Social Insurance Number*, as used by employers and banks to remit taxes. Think of a Social Security Number in the US.

This is available to anyone who is legally working, so you can pay your taxes. The government suspects that a black market exists:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/protection.html> Fortunately if you start in *any* of the proper channels, you will get one, good for life.

## 10.9 Medicare

If you are a permanent resident, an accepted refugee or have a work permit, you can join your provinces' Medicare plan. For the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan (OHIP) in particular, you can either apply in person at ServiceOntario offices, or online. You will have to spend 153 days out of the next year in Ontario, though, to permanently qualify as an Ontario resident.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/apply-ohip-and-get-health-card>

## 10.10 A Canadian Driver's License

You can drive on your US or other license for between 60 and 90 days, and that includes the time you're waiting for a license-exchange appointment. That waiting can eat up much of your time, and if you exceed it, you will need to stop driving, so apply as soon as you arrive.

### Resources

- <https://moving2canada.com/living/driving/drivers-license-in-canada>

## 10.11 A US to Canadian Dictionary

Here's a few "translations" of store names from US to Canadian, courtesy of Nova Scotia Healthcare Infusion.

from Nova Scotia healthcare infusion, ask for permission or rewrite

Category	Canadian Company	US Company
Pharmacy & Health		
	Shoppers Drug Mart	CVS / Walgreens
	Guardian / IDA – Independent neighbourhood pharmacies	

Grocery Stores	
Sobeys	Krogers
No Frills – discount grocer	Aldi
Giant Tiger – Discount grocery / general store	
Retail Stores	
Canadian Tire – Large-format general retail (automotive, home and seasonal)	
Winners	TJ Maxx
Dollarama	Dollar Tree
HomeSense	HomeGoods
Mark’s – Workwear and casual clothing	Dick’s
Sport Chek – Sporting goods retailer	
Mountain Equipment – Outdoor gear	
Home Improvement	
Kent	Lowe’s / Menards
RONA	Lowe’s
Home Hardware – a smaller-scale Home Depot	
Gas stations	
Petro-Canada – National gas station brand	
Ultramar – Regional gas station chain	
Irving Oil – Major regional gas station chain in the east	
Coffee, fast food	
Tim Hortons, a main coffee chain. Usually called “timmies”	

Second Cup
A&W Canada – A popular burger chain, available in some US markets.

## 10.12 Forums and Discussion Groups

<https://www.expatexchange.com/expats-living-in-canada/canada-expat/forum/183/1>

Canada Expat Forum

<https://www.expat.com/en/forum/north-america/canada/>

Expat.com

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/movingtocanadacommunityandchat/>

Facebook

<https://discord.com/servers/journey-to-canada-r-immigrationcanada-994709047288791120D>

Discord server for Reddit [r/ImmigrationCanada](https://www.reddit.com/r/ImmigrationCanada)

This is a live document. These links will change. Always refer to the government pages for current rules. And please file an issue at <https://codeberg.org/tokugawa-behr/Fleeing-to-Canada/issues> so I'll know what needs updating.

### In Short

Lots of organizations don't help immigration, but do help immigrants

