



Presented by:



The  
Ultimate  
Prep Guide

**Before  
You Arrive  
In Canada**

Copyright © 2022 by New Horizons Media Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author or publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations is the sole responsibility of the reader and consumer. Neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility or liability whatsoever on behalf of the consumer or reader of this material.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

ISBN: 978-1-7779484-4-3 Online Resource (PDF)

ISBN: 978-1-7779484-5-0 Electronic Format (Kindle)

ISBN: 978-1-7779484-3-6 Paperback

Publisher: [New Canadians](#), a division of [New Horizons Media Inc.](#)

*Disclaimer: The information and resources included in the book 'The Ultimate Prep Guide Before You Arrive in Canada' are provided for informational purposes. Neither the author nor the publisher can be held responsible for the use of the information provided within this book.*

**The  
Ultimate  
Prep Guide**

# **Before You Arrive In Canada**

**Written by  
Bookie Adekanye**



<b>5</b>	<b>Foreword</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Destination Canada</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Prepare for the move</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Put together an action plan</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Arrange things for the trip</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>Develop a roadmap for your career</b>
<b>35</b>	<b>Get everything set for life in Canada</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Ready for the next phase?</b>
<b>43</b>	<b>About the writer and publisher</b>

## Foreword



Ask any immigrant to Canada about how they had prepared for the big move, and they will have lots of advice for you. Prod some more, and they might open up and share the mistakes they made and the lessons they probably learned the hard way.

The truth is, most—if not all—immigrants, myself included, thought that they were well prepared when they moved to Canada, and therefore, did not suspect any hardships once they set foot here. It was not naive of them to think that. Their confidence was backed by the exhaustive research they did about their new home, the endless pages of job listings they saw with a simple Google search, and most of all, the knowledge and experience they brought along as skilled immigrants.

The reality can be starkly different from that perception. Some challenges are understandable. After all, you are uprooting yourself, moving to a new country and starting all over again! Some other challenges are avoidable if you have access to the right information before you arrive in Canada.

Now comes the good part. In Canada, there is a lot of assistance available to you before you land here to prepare you for the journey ahead. And that's what this book is about. Giving you a realistic understanding of the country, help you get job-ready, and inform you about the tools and resources available to you to make the journey successful, long before you board a flight to Canada.

By reading this book—in which Bookie Adekanye and other New Canadians team members have shared their expert knowledge as well as learnings from their immigration experiences—you will learn how to successfully get local (work) experience, build a professional network, and how to pursue relationships, get recognition, and earn trust. These are all things that you will need to access and make use of potential opportunities down the road.

This is what we do everyday at New Canadians: connect you to trusted resources and services before as well as after

you arrive in Canada to help you build a better, successful life from the day you choose to immigrate and till you fully settle in and successfully integrate into your new home.

Enjoy this book and an accompanying checklist (in the resources section at the end) and use them as your guide to prepare for a happy, successful life in your new home.

**Gerard Keledjian**

Managing Director, New Horizons Media Inc.

Executive Producer, New Canadians

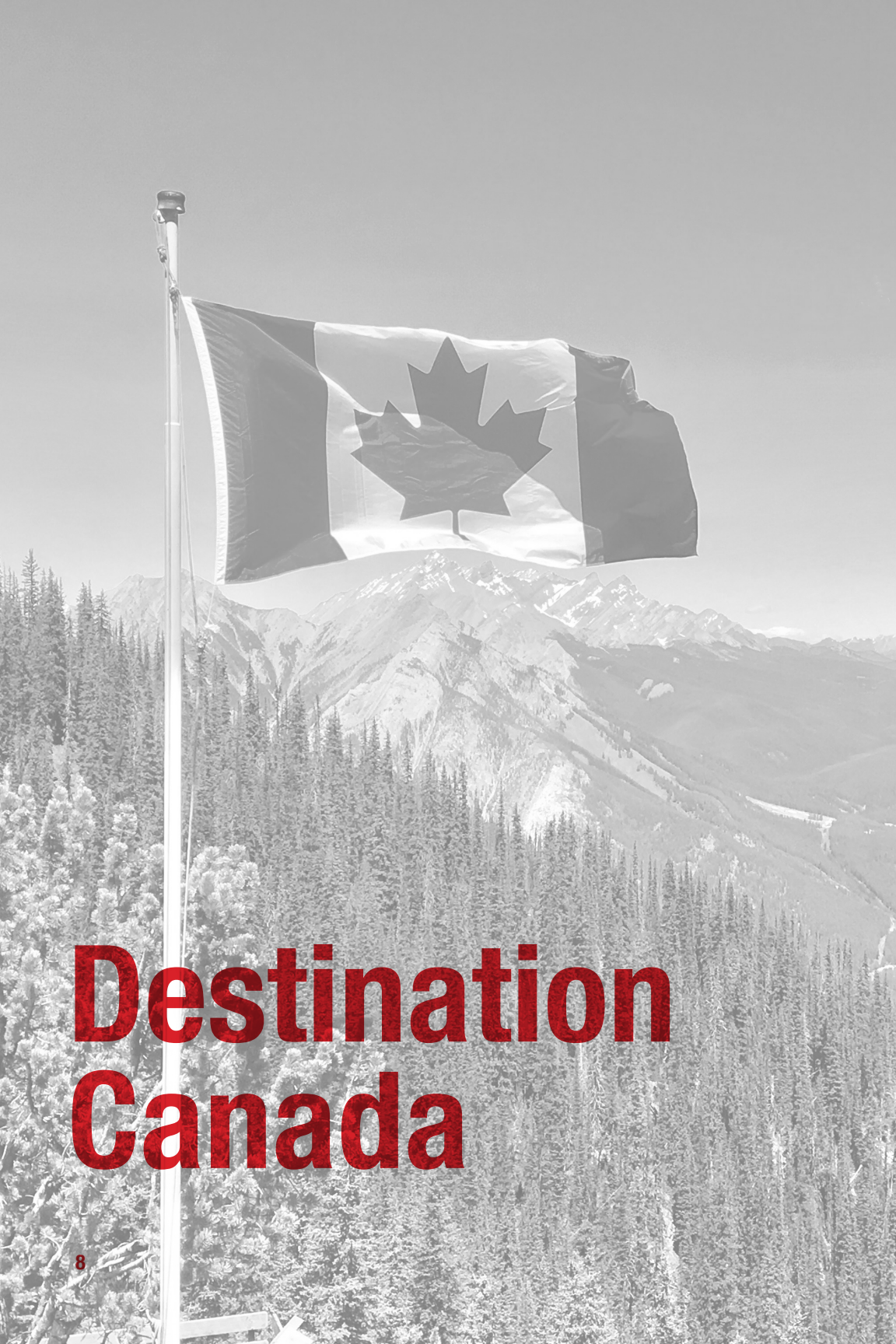
## Introduction

Migrating to a new country is a life-changing experience. Most newcomers experience surprises, both positive and negative, and in retrospect, wish they had been better prepared. As an intending immigrant to Canada, how would you feel if you had someone who has been on this journey take you by the hand and lead you through this uncharted course? Well, that is what this e-book aims to achieve!

You will find information that will:

- Help you prepare mentally for your big move and reduce the stress that most immigrants and newcomers experience
- Advise you on things to do from your home country while counting down to your arrival day in Canada
- Give you practical advice and tips from immigrants who have undertaken the same journey you are on to help you settle in quicker
- Give you a peek into what your early days of living in Canada might look like
- Show you how to build your network, connect with industry peers, and gain Canadian work experience from abroad
- Help you develop a roadmap for your career and gain traction so you can achieve your dreams faster
- Show you how to access programs and resources available to you while still in your home country and when you eventually arrive in Canada

This e-book will furnish you with essential information that is seldom available in other pre-arrival books or workshops. It is a product of experiences and insights shared by other immigrants who have the benefit of hindsight and are eager to help you have a smooth experience as you make Canada your new home.



# Destination Canada



It is likely that as you are reading this book, you are far along in your immigration process to Canada. Like most other immigrants, you might have come through several stages—from the eureka moment when you decided Canada was the country for you, to doing your research on the application process and perhaps hiring an immigration consultant, writing your language test, preparing your paperwork, filling out the application forms, making it into the pool, and receiving an invitation to apply. You are probably now looking forward to receiving the email announcing, “Your immigrant visa(s) appear(s) ready to be issued.”, and finally having your visa affixed to your passport.

No doubt, you have done a lot of research already and decided that Canada is the best country to make your new home. Well, you’re right on the money! Now, here’s a quick refresher on information you might already have about Canada and some that might be completely new to you.

## **An introduction to Canada**

With a population of over 39 million and growing, Canada is made up of 10 provinces and three territories and has the second-largest landmass in the world cutting across six time zones. Canada is known for beautiful landscapes and lakes, great inventions, iconic celebrities, diverse weather, an altruistic system and polite people.

Canada can be likened to a gentle giant and secret treasure worthy of discovery. True to the modest spirit of the Canadian people, the country holds a lot of well-kept secrets. Some notable inventions include basketball, cable TV, the first internet search engine, insulin for the treatment of diabetics, paint roller, and wheelchair-accessible bus, among many others. The more you get to know about the unbelievable achievements and rich heritage of Canadians, the more you would come to love and admire the country.

As in other endeavours, Canada has a penchant for excelling in sports. In the 2021 Summer Olympics, Canada won a total of 24 medals — seven gold, six silver, 11 bronze. Canada’s most celebrated sports are ice hockey, baseball, basketball, football, soccer, lacrosse, and tennis.

Canadians have a reputation for being friendly and extremely polite. They are known to excel in all fields of human

endeavor, numbering among world-renowned innovators, artistes, entrepreneurs, humanitarian, and global prize winners. Some contemporary Canadians you might know are Justin Bieber, Drake, Shania Twain, Celine Dion, Keanu Reeves, and Avril Lavigne.

Canada has been recognized as one of the best countries to live in and offers a high quality of life, high happiness index, good healthcare, and competitive education. Your decision to migrate to Canada is a smart one, as it will provide you with an incentive to live, work and become a citizen of one of the safest, most peaceful, and most progressive countries of the world.

Canada is a country built by immigrants. Over the last three centuries, it has opened its doors and arms to people of all nationalities and ethnicities. The Canadian government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in ensuring that you get all the support and services you need to settle and integrate into your new country, and you can start accessing some of these services even before you arrive in Canada. That is one more reason to be excited about coming here!

# Prepare for the move



Whatever stage you are at in your immigration process, you would undoubtedly have had moments of eager anticipation, apprehension, and excitement but you were probably too busy to process the journey you would be embarking on in the coming days. The reality starts to set in with every milestone towards your relocation—dropping your resignation at work or selling off your business, sorting through your stuff while trying to decide what to sell, give away, put into storage, or bring along to Canada. Last-minute visits to or from friends and family, send-off parties, and goodbye hugs, remove comma and tears give a sense of finality: “This is happening. There’s no going back now.” You are leaving the life you have known in the last couple of decades—relationships, networks, years of professional work and relevance, and routine, to start over and explore new opportunities in a new country. The initial excitement of moving to a new country might have morphed into anxiety by now.

In the first few days and weeks of your arrival in Canada, you would likely get caught up in the motions of unpacking, shopping, researching schools or housing, finding job opportunities, accessing newcomer services, filling out forms, and generally wrapping your head around your new environment. These emotions can get buried in the flurry of activities. However, the days and months ahead might present challenges that unearth and reinforce the realities of being a newcomer.

This chapter will help you anticipate some challenges you might encounter in your early days in Canada and show you how you can mentally prepare to deal with them and overcome them. Anticipating and preparing to deal with these challenges will ensure you don’t get thrown off balance when they eventually occur while enabling you to holistically resolve them and get back on track to living your best life in Canada.

## **Culture shock**

Being a newcomer to a country implies being in a different environment where you will meet new people and learn a new culture and the socially acceptable ways of doing things. Depending on the culture in your country, the changes could be quite easy or a little tricky to navigate. Canada is a melting pot of cultures and promotes diversity, inclusion, and respect for the rights of vulnerable and minority groups such as children, women, people with disabilities, racialized groups,

seniors, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. You will meet people from nationalities, cultural backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs different from yours.

You might find that certain norms in your country are unacceptable in Canada and vice versa. You might also suddenly become more aware of certain things that do not count in your country but are a major differentiator for you in Canada, e.g., your race, accent, communication style, gender roles and stereotypes, personal space, religious beliefs, and worldview. These are sensitive issues that need to be managed delicately, otherwise, they are likely to be upsetting for you and other people around you.

Another area where you might experience culture shock is in the workplace. Canadian workplace culture might differ slightly from the prevailing workplace culture in other countries. Most immigrants are highly skilled with a lot of professional experience. However, a very crucial skill for thriving in the Canadian workplace is adaptability. Most Canadian employers are looking to hire people who can easily fit into their organizational culture. It often comes as a shock to many immigrant professionals when they apply to several job openings and don't get a call back after an interview, or their resumes don't make it past the initial screening despite their great credentials and extensive experience from their home country.

One of the effects that culture shock could have on you is to make you more self-conscious as you might start to feel a little out of place. To manage culture shock, it's important to have a healthy sense of self-awareness and objectivity. Being aware of how the new culture contrasts with your original culture will help you appreciate the diversity and find the similarities between the two. This understanding will assist you in finding a bridge between both cultures and making the transition from the unfamiliar to the familiar. Self-awareness will also help you find the right vocabulary to describe your experience and compare your new realities to your previous experience.

### Prepare mentally

*"Everyone who moves to Canada must make their mental health a top priority so that they can succeed when finding employment." David Mendoza*

Like every other worthwhile endeavour, moving to a new country is a multi-layered experience that requires you to adequately prepare for settling down, integrating, and achieving

the vision you carved for yourself when you took the bold step to migrate.

Life in a post-pandemic world is still a blurry picture for most Canadians, and this is a path most have no experience at. This adds an extra layer of uncertainty and anxiety for newcomers. Consequently, mental preparation—which before now was not much talked about but has now become significant—is an important part of the migration process. The good news is a lot of pre-arrival services consider mental health as an essential part of their program to help intending immigrants prepare mentally for the changes they might have to navigate when settling into Canada. You will also continue to receive support from post-arrival organizations after landing in Canada.

### **Develop a positive mindset**

One of the sterling qualities of immigrants is courage. It takes a lot of courage to leave a familiar life behind in pursuit of a new one with no guarantees. This is true even in extreme situations where people are forced to flee their country. Your decision to move to a new country underscores the fact that you already have the essential ingredient for success. This should reassure you and fuel the ‘can-do’ spirit whenever you are faced with challenges or discouragement in the days ahead.

### **Have a long-term perspective**

Planning for success involves equipping yourself with the right information, perspective, and a long-term goal that is both realistic and achievable. It is important to break down your goals into milestones, as this will give you the latitude for celebrating progress at every point and make the journey more enjoyable. While you should have a long-term goal, you should also have a short-term strategy. For example, if part of your plan is to get Canadian education to enable you work in a particular field, you might need to consider getting a transitional job or working in the evenings and on weekends to pay your bills while attending classes during official school hours. Your plans should be flexible enough to accommodate necessary changes. You must be ready to continuously review your strategy to match your current realities and take advantage of opportunities when they present differently from what you had envisaged. This will help keep you on track to achieve your long-term goals.



# Put together an action plan

Your first few weeks or months in Canada are likely to be filled with a lot of activities, and it's easy to get confused and overwhelmed. Whether you are preparing for finding a job, enrolling in an educational program, starting a business, or settling in your new country, you would find that there are lots of things to do in your early days in Canada. You could avoid the stress most newcomers experience by starting your preparation early while still overseas. This will give you a head start, reduce your stress levels, and ultimately, facilitate your integration when you finally arrive in Canada.

## Employment

*"In Canada, one can explore their job search in multiple and/or diverse sectors."  
Sukhjot Singh*

While it's possible to get employment before arriving in Canada, the chances are slim, except your arrival date is very close or your skills are in high demand, and the employer is willing to wait until your arrival. It is advisable to spend time and effort on building your network, making connections, identifying job opportunities, and understanding the workplace culture in Canada.

Here are some things you could do while abroad to help you get a job quicker when you arrive in Canada:

## Build your network

*"It would have been advantageous for me if I had known the importance of professional networking before moving to Canada. Expanding your network will equip you with valuable information that could lead to a successful job search."  
Tyson Dimayuga*

Thanks to technology, networking across borders has never been easier. The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the need to create online visibility. You can start to connect with people in your industry and find associations in Canada that can support your career aspirations.

You can connect with industry peers and potential employers and recruiters on professional networking sites such as LinkedIn. On LinkedIn, you can follow key people in your industry, study industry trends, contribute to conversations, and share content that helps you stand out as a thought leader. If possible, it will be of advantage to update your location on LinkedIn to Canada as this will give you more visibility.

You can attend virtual industry events, trainings, or workshops that give you a peek into the professional landscape in your field of interest. Eventbrite and Meetup are platforms where you can find events of interest to you.



## **Prepare a Canadian-style resume and cover letter**

Your resume and cover letter are likely to be your first touchpoint with a potential employer. Both documents are akin to your professional marketing or branding materials. Update these to Canadian standards which might be different from the format you are used to in your home country.

You can research resources online on how to prepare Canadian-style resumes and cover letters. Also attend pre-arrival resume and job search workshops that provide in-depth knowledge about the Canadian job market.

## **Request informational interviews**

Another way of building professional connections is through informational interviews. In an informational interview, you are seeking to connect with people in your profession or industry on a one-to-one basis. If you make a good impression on them, they are likely to remember you if they come across a job opening you might fit into. Here are some tips that will help you get the best out of an informational interview:

- Connect with professionals in the field, industry, or company of your interest
- Introduce yourself and request a 15 to 30-minute informational interview
- Have them share insights into the industry, trends, relevant skills, and other insider information
- Be professional, friendly, and respectful
- Avoid the temptation to ask them for a job. Unless they request it, don't send them your resume!

## **Volunteer with Canadian organizations**

Canadian workplace experience is a plus for getting into your industry or career. This also poses a Catch-22 situation, as it seems impossible to have Canadian experience unless you have lived in Canada. Thanks to technology, it is possible to volunteer at a Canadian organization remotely. Getting volunteering experience will give you some benefits:

- It is a viable route to getting valuable work experience
- It will help you get your foot in the door
- It will help to build your industry network and keep you top-of-mind for suitable opportunities and referrals in the future
- It is seen as noble in Canada and will add to your credibility

## Research job opportunities

In planning long-term for your career, it's important to understand the trends and economics of your profession or job sector in Canada. This will help you to assess your skills and experience, identify gaps, and launch an action plan ahead of your arrival. Here are some questions to ask that will guide you in researching your employability and job prospects in Canada:

- What are the in-demand skills?
- Is your profession or field growing or ebbing?
- Are your skills relevant in the Canadian workplace?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your industry or sector?
  - What are the industry trends for the next 3–5 years?
  - In what province or territory are your skills needed?
  - What's the average income level for your industry, profession, or skill level?

You should spend time researching your career options before your arrival so you can hit the ground running.

## Build your skill set

The majority of immigrants are highly skilled professionals. It is, however, great to develop certain skills, apart from your technical skills, that would make you a preferred candidate for most employers:

### Soft skills

In Canada, soft skills are regarded as essential. Employers find communication skills, courtesy, conflict management, problem solving, teamwork, and humility very valuable.

### Bilingualism

Canada is a bilingual country. Proficiency in English and French could widen your career opportunities. While there are government-funded programs that help you improve your knowledge of a second official language, you might require a basic knowledge of the language to register for the programs; so, it is good to start learning from abroad.

### Digital literacy

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled many employers to adopt virtual or hybrid work models. Learning digital skills, i.e., the ability to use basic online tools for your work, will increase your chances of getting a job and also make your work easier.

## Register for pre-arrival employment programs

Some newcomer-serving agencies in Canada provide pre-arrival services to people who have been approved to move to Canada which helps them understand the Canadian job market, identify lucrative industries or alternative career options, determine provinces that have opportunities that match their skills, and create a roadmap for launching their careers upon arrival in Canada. You must meet certain eligibility criteria to register for a pre-arrival program. In addition to other eligibility requirements as outlined by each program, you may be asked to provide a letter from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) inviting you to receive pre-arrival services, a Confirmation of Permanent Residence (CoPR), an IRCC letter requesting medical exam results, or a single-entry permanent resident visa etc.

There are also other programs open to intending immigrants regardless of the stage of the process they are in. There are some pre-arrival services and programs you could tap into while abroad:

- New Canadians provides information and virtual activities, webinars, events, etc.
- Pre-arrival services such as Planning for Canada, Next Stop Canada, Canada InfoNet and Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) provide online pre-arrival workshops, professional mentorship, employment counselling, and settlement orientation. You can register for pre-arrival services through a centralized portal: [www.prearrivalcanada.ca](http://www.prearrivalcanada.ca)

## Education

If you prefer to get a Canadian degree or certification, there are several options to explore. You might be interested in pursuing a full-time degree program, diploma, professional certification, or even a bridging program. A good place to start is to research schools or programs that match your educational goals. Ultimately, ensure that the programs you are considering align with your long-term career goals, and you have the resources, or are eligible, to access them. This will make your education journey stress-free. Having narrowed down your options, here are some steps you could take towards preparing for your academic pursuits in Canada:

## Get your educational credential assessed

*"As an immigrant to Canada, I wish I knew that [my foreign] educational qualifications may be recognized by employers, colleges and universities. Therefore, it is important to get your credentials assessed ahead of time so that you can better prepare to work in Canada."  
Katia Hoyos*

To enroll for most educational programs in Canada, especially in universities and colleges, you will need to have your educational certificate(s) evaluated to gain the Canadian equivalency. In some cases, this credential evaluation is also required for job placements. It is highly advised that you have your credentials evaluated before coming to Canada, as the process takes time, and it might be more difficult to apply for your transcripts and educational records from outside the country of the educational institution. Some Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) organizations include World Education Services (WES), International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS), International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), Comparative Education Service (CES), and International Credentials Assessment Service of Canada (ICASC). You might want to find out which of the ECAs are accepted by your province or institution you're enrolling in.

## Get reference letters

If you decide to go back to school or get Canadian education, you will likely need to provide reference letters from past lecturers, course facilitators, project supervisors, or a member of academia who can vouch for the quality of your work. This would likely also apply for employment, especially if you have no prior Canadian work experience. You will need to provide a reference from past employers, supervisors, or professional colleagues from your country attesting to the quality of your work and character. It is good to have this ready before you move to Canada. Alternatively, you could notify the proposed referee of your intention so that they can respond quickly should the reference letter requested need to be customized.

## Have valid language test results

You might also need to submit language test results for any of the two official languages—English and French. Given the timelines for scheduling a test and closures of exam centres in most countries, there's no need to put yourself under duress, as it is possible to take these exams in Canada. However, if you can easily get it done in your home country, then it's good to have it handy before you travel to Canada.

## Prepare ahead for professional exams

If you need to take a qualifying professional exam to practice

in your field, then you should find out exam dates from the professional examination body. If you don't plan to move to Canada until close to the exam date, it might be better to contact the examination body to register and get course materials, so you could study from your home country. This will afford you more time to prepare for the exams.

## **Settlement**

Settling and integrating into a new country are likely to take some time. It is a journey rather than a destination. It is, however, possible to accelerate the process and make it less taxing by starting early. Based on their experience, some newcomers have shared useful advice which we believe will help you prepare adequately:

### **Book temporary housing**

While it's not advisable to get a long-term lease until you arrive in Canada, booking temporary housing ahead of your arrival will give you peace of mind, especially if it is your first time in Canada or you are moving to a province/city you are not familiar with. Ideally, it's best to book for only 2-4 weeks, which ought to be sufficient to search for and inspect housing options for a more permanent stay. Some options for temporary housing are Airbnb, hostels, hotels, furnished apartments, and homes of family or friends. The time before coming to Canada allows you to research housing in the province you wish to live in, neighbourhoods, and what options might be more suitable for you. Ensure that your temporary housing is located close to public transit to give you the ease of mobility in your first few days when you would need to do quite some running around.

### **Research schools for children**

Before arriving in Canada, you can research schools to see their ranking to decide on the best school for your kids. Also, in most provinces and cities, attendance boundaries are used to accommodate children who reside within close vicinity; therefore, your address will determine what school your child can attend. The school you want your child to attend could be a major consideration in choosing a neighbourhood to live in when you arrive in Canada. You could also visit the website of the school board for the region or city you plan to live in to find out which schools your child is eligible to attend.

## **Open a bank account**

Most Canadian banks allow you to open an account while still abroad so long as you have your visa or Confirmation of Permanent Residence (CoPR). This will help you move your funds to Canada ahead of your arrival. However, there might be restrictions on transactions until you arrive in Canada and your identity is verified. You might also need to be in Canada within six months from when the bank account is opened. If you decide to open a bank account from abroad, ensure you do so close to your proposed date of arrival in Canada.

## **Get a driver abstract**

Getting a driver abstract from your home country that shows you have some years of driving experience could exempt you from certain requirements and place you on a fast track to getting your driver's license when you arrive in Canada. Also, getting a report of a decent driving record from your auto insurer back home could help you negotiate lower car insurance premiums in Canada. Bringing these documents along with you could shorten your journey toward becoming a fully-licensed driver in Canada.

## **Get a short-term health insurance plan**

Depending on your province or territory of destination in Canada, you might either be able to access healthcare services immediately or have to wait for a few months. Getting temporary health insurance with international coverage from your country could save you a lot of money and help you access health services should you have a health emergency before you become eligible for free healthcare coverage in Canada.

## **Find community**

Canada has an individualistic culture that prioritizes the nuclear family. If you are coming from a country that has a more communal culture, you might feel the need to connect with a more close-knit community. In the days leading to your arrival in Canada, it might help you to research where to find homogenous groups of interest to you, e.g. ethnic groups, professional associations, faith-based groups, etc. where you can connect with people with similar interests and values. Belonging to these types of groups will help you integrate quickly as they have been known to provide resources, good information, emotional support, friendship, mentorship, and a

sense of belonging to newcomers. You also become a valuable member of a community where you can add great value to and support others in return.

## Starting a business

The Canadian business environment is highly regulated, with higher entry barriers, and might be different from what obtains in your home country. It is pertinent to learn about the Canadian business culture and landscape. Although the business environment might be different, business principles are universal. Taking steps towards building a Canadian business entity from abroad would help you understand the business terrain and gain traction faster when you arrive in Canada.

## Connect with the business ecosystem

While in your home country, there's a lot you could do to get market ready. Technology makes it possible to start connecting from abroad with potential partners in Canada's business value chain—suppliers, talent, customers, regulatory bodies, and key industry players. This will earn you credibility, help you understand the market better, and iterate your business idea to make it more suited to the Canadian market. If you are applying for a Start-up Visa, this could increase your chances of getting approved by IRCC.

## Create a plan for your business

Planning and refining your business idea is an ongoing activity that is not limited to time or location. Having decided on the type of business you would like to build in Canada, you can start by creating a plan and setting milestones towards the realization of your business goals:

- Develop a business plan
- Carry out a market research and competitor analysis
- Develop a prototype
- Find out the regulatory requirements for your product or service
- Carry out a customer discovery exercise
- Network with potential partners and strategic players in your industry and the business ecosystem e.g. chambers of commerce, industry associations, immigrant support organizations with programs for entrepreneurs
- Identify your supply chain in Canada or overseas
- Create a financial plan

- Develop milestones and create an action plan
- Identify the skills and talent needed to create your product or service
- Develop social media channels and business pages
- Raise seed capital for your business

## Attend pre-arrival business events

You can start building your network, knowledge, and business skills by attending events and workshops designed for preparing foreign entrepreneurs for the Canadian marketplace.

The Immigrant Business Network provides online workshops, events, and networking opportunities for pre-arrival immigrants who wish to learn more about the business landscape and build their network ahead of their arrival in Canada.

Some immigrant-serving organizations also offer pre-arrival workshops to teach newcomers how to start and run businesses in Canada. You should research immigrant-serving organizations in the city or region you would be moving to and the programs they have for immigrants.



### Do you know about the Pre-Arrival Canada portal?

It is a centralized registration portal that facilitates access to multiple government funded pre-arrival programs and services. By visiting [www.prearrivalcanada.ca](http://www.prearrivalcanada.ca), you can browse and register for free pre-arrival services to get help before arriving in Canada. These services offer support with settlement and employment needs, connecting you with the appropriate information and resources you require in order to successfully settle in Canada.

In just three easy steps, you can check your eligibility for pre-arrival services, complete one registration form, and begin accessing pre-arrival supports and referrals. Pre-arrival programs on the portal include Active Engagement and Integration Project (AEIP), ACCES Employment, BCCA Integrating Newcomers, YMCA Build ON, Canada InfoNet, YMCA Next Stop Canada, Pre-Arrival Support Services (PASS), and Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA).



Visit [www.prearrivalcanada.ca](http://www.prearrivalcanada.ca) to learn more!



# Arrange things for the trip



While moving house is quite a huge task, moving to a new country is an even more daunting undertaking. From deciding on items to bring and those to leave, to shipping your items, keeping abreast of travel regulations, and finding your way from the airport when you arrive in Canada, it's easy to feel lost in the maze of information you have to deal with. This chapter will help simplify the process and guide you to take steady steps in preparing for your trip, starting today until your first day in Canada.

*"Moving here without sufficient savings meant that we had to settle for jobs that were not in our preferred fields...I would advise those immigrating to Canada to make sure that they have enough funds to support [themselves] financially as they look for jobs."  
Nabeel Jabbar*

### **What to bring and what to leave**

While sorting through your stuff, it is easy to get overwhelmed and confused about what to dispose of, give away, sell or bring along to Canada. Here are some things to consider to help you get a clearer head on what might be important to bring to Canada, how to maximize your baggage allowance, and also save cost.

### **Documents**

These might be the most important items you will bring along to Canada. While everything else could be replaced or bought in a store, these cannot, and it could take a long time to process them by proxy. Ensure to have your credentials, school certificates, letters of recommendation, birth certificates, educational evaluation documents, children's school records, health records, etc. ready and handy. It is also advisable to have them in your hand luggage with you in the air cabin to save you some agitation in case your checked-in baggage goes missing, is delayed, or is wrongly routed.

### **Medication**

It is advisable to bring your prescription drugs pending when you become eligible for healthcare insurance. However, note that you would need a doctor's prescription as this might be requested at the port of entry, and you should have no more than a 90-day supply in compliance with drug control regulations. Also, some medications that are considered over the counter in other countries may not be considered so in Canada, so it's important to research any medication you are bringing to know if you would need prescriptions for them or not.

## **Clothes**

It is normal to want to be prepared for Canada's cold weather, and the tendency is to pack lots of warm clothing. The downside is that this will likely eat into your already limited baggage space. It would help to remember that Canada has four seasons, and you wouldn't be needing your winter clothes year-round. Also, what would pass for winter gear in some places might not hold up in the Canadian winter. Depending on what time of the year you arrive in Canada, you might also be able to find seasonal clothes and gears on sale. For example, winter gears are often discounted in spring and early summer. You could also buy second-hand clothing and save some money. If you will be arriving in winter or fall, it is advisable that you bring enough warm clothing for your first few days or weeks, and buy appropriate ones when you arrive. On the other hand, you might want to bring some of your business wear as they will be useful for attending interviews and networking events, and for when you eventually start work. The acceptable dress code for any of these events is business casual. If you have enough space, you could also bring your light clothing for summer, so you don't need to spend money replacing them. During the cold season, while the outdoors is usually cold, most houses are heated, and you might be able to wear your regular clothes indoors. The trick to dressing appropriately in Canada is checking the weather to determine what to wear before stepping out and knowing how to layer up when it's cold. That way, you can stay warm and comfortable all year round.

## **Comfort objects**

Some items hold great memories. They remind us of our family, culture, and memorable events in our lives. While you might not be able to bring everything that holds sentimental value for you, a few relics from home are worth bringing to Canada as they will provide psychological strength as you start to build new memories, and a new home in Canada. There are different items for different people, and you have to identify what it is for you. It could be photographs, letters, family heirlooms, childhood toys, food items you might not readily find in Canada, or even a pet!

## **Shipping your stuff**

As a new immigrant to Canada, you get a waiver on taxes for

some items, such as furniture, books, clothes, electronics, and other household items, provided they are used and not newly purchased. To qualify for this waiver, you would need to fill out a declaration form and estimate the value of the items you are shipping to Canada. While that's good news, remember that you would still need to pay a shipping fee. Generally, shipping costs have skyrocketed since the pandemic started, and most airlines now have reduced baggage allowances. It would, therefore, help to do a simple cost-benefit analysis and to determine if it's more cost-efficient to bring some items or purchase them upon arrival in Canada.

Also, keep in mind that you have a window of one year to ship in other items tax-free after your initial arrival in Canada. You will, however, need to fill out a goods-to-follow form, with an estimate of the value of the items, and submit it to the customs office when you initially arrive in the country.

A lot of people wait until the last minute to start packing their bags and when they arrive in Canada, wish they had brought or left some items. Planning months ahead helps you to determine what's important and what's not. Since you might still have some time before your proposed travel date, now is a good time to start getting your stuff together.

## **Travelling to Canada**

The pandemic has created a new model for the way we travel. The Canadian government, in a responsive effort, has put stringent measures in place to ensure that people coming through the borders do not pose a threat to public health. The requirements and protocols are constantly changing, as such, it's important to keep abreast of the travel advice from the Canadian government's public health page. You would also need to get an update from the health authority in your country to know the latest information regarding international travel. Information about air travel is also constantly changing. It is advisable to check with the airport authority of your country, and as much as possible, avoid buying flight tickets way ahead of your travel date.

## **“Welcome to Canada”**

When arriving in Canada on a permanent residence visa, you will go through immigration formalities that are different from the protocols for temporary visitors. You will be met by a Canada

Border Services Agency (CBSA) officer and requested to show your travel documents and a valid visa and Confirmation of Permanent Residence (CoPR). Note: do not sign your CoPR until you have been asked to do so by the CBSA officer. In some cases, you might be asked to show proof of funds. While this is rare, it is better to be prepared. When you have satisfactorily answered the statutory questions, you will have your passport stamped. It is at this point you are likely to get an official taste of Canadian warmth as the officer tells you, “Welcome to Canada!” and not without a warm smile.

## **Getting around upon arrival**

Finding your way from the airport is not difficult. Depending on your budget and where you are headed, you can get transportation ranging from luxury limousine services to regular cabs, train shuttle and shared shuttle. Here are some options available for getting you from the airport to your destination in Canada:

### **Taxis and cabs**

You can use the airport taxi services or use the airport’s free wi-fi to order a cab. The popular cab-hailing services in Canada are Uber, Lyft, etc. and you can download their apps to your smartphone ahead of your travel.

### **Airport shuttle**

You could also opt for an airport shuttle providing shared rides, private vans, cars, taxi cabs, chartered bus services, etc.

### **Train shuttle**

You can connect to your destination using train services to save costs. This might, however, work better if you don’t have a lot of luggage. Depending on your destination, you can find train services that connect different cities and provinces.

If you are travelling with family, and you decide to use car rentals or cabs, be mindful of COVID restrictions around passenger limits so you can find the appropriate vehicle for your family size.

### **Car rental**

There are a lot of car rental services to choose from, and you will find some brands you might be familiar with. Most car

rentals charge a daily fee and require that you have a local or international driver's license. You would also likely have to pay for insurance coverage. Most times, a credit card payment in the renter's name is required; however, if using a debit card, you will be required to make a refundable security deposit. Renting a car is not the most popular option when you are just arriving in Canada. Except you are comfortable with renting a car, you might want to consider other options.

### **Pick-up by family or friends**

Canadians, especially those who are also immigrants and have experienced being new arrivals, are very warm and welcoming to newcomers. It is not unusual to have your friends or family offer to pick you up from the airport. Arranging for a pick-up by a family member or friend could be an option for finding your way from the airport. We would still recommend that you familiarize yourself with your destination before arriving, so you can explore the different options, compare costs and decide what would work best for you.



**Register for  
pre-arrival programs.**

**To learn more, visit:  
PreArrivalCanada.ca**





# Develop a roadmap for your career



*“Whether you want to work, retrain, further your studies or start a business or non-profit, the choice is yours.”*  
*Trish Machiri*

A successful career could mean different things to different people. The first step towards building a successful career is defining what success means to you. This will help you identify the right path, plan long term, and take strategic steps towards achieving your career goals—whether you decide to get a job, go back to school or start a business. Whichever way you choose to define your career, there are opportunities you could take advantage of as a newcomer to Canada:

## **Finding a job**

Statistically, up to 80% of jobs are in the hidden job market. These jobs are not published or advertised on job sites, but employers rely on referrals from people they trust to fill these positions. Having people who know you and can recommend you for a job goes a long way in helping you land your first job in Canada. Hence, the need to build your network starting now.

If you are in a profession that is not in high demand in Canada, or you just want a career change, you might consider a career switch. This could require getting some training or getting a certification. Some high-demand fields in Canada are information technology, project management, business analysis, renewable energy, etc. Your pre-arrival employment counselor might be able to point you in the right direction and help you draw a roadmap for achieving your new career pursuits.

Lots of immigrants take on transitional or survival jobs in their first few months, either to get basic Canadian work experience in hope of getting a better job or when they are hard-pressed and running out of funds. You, however, need to be wary of the sticky-floor phenomenon i.e. staying too long on a survival job and getting stuck in it. As a rule of thumb, taking a survival job should be a last resort, and should preferably be in your field or industry as a means of getting your foot in the door so you can snap up more suitable opportunities in the industry as they become available.

## **Getting Canadian education or certification**

If you work in certain regulated professions, e.g. medicine, law, engineering, architecture, social work, etc. or just wish to upskill to launch a new career or increase your chances of getting a job in your preferred field, then you may not need to go back to school.

In a lot of cases, you may not need to go back to school. Bridging programs, which are mostly three to six-month industry-specific training programs, can provide a fast track for understanding the Canadian landscape, building industry networks, and getting hands-on experience which could help you land a job in your field. Pre- and post-arrival bridging programs will help you familiarize yourself with the standard practices in your field and gain some Canadian experience.

There are bridging programs for different fields—media, mental health, nursing, architecture, engineering, agriculture, entrepreneurship, among others. Some immigrant-serving organizations and public colleges and universities offer bridging programs that could help you transition into your field. You can research to find out what's available in your province.

## **Starting a business**

Forty percent of Canadian businesses are owned by immigrants. Starting a business in Canada is a viable option for both newcomers who might have had experience running their own business in their country and aspiring immigrant entrepreneurs with a brilliant business idea they are ready to take to the market. Particularly in the post-pandemic world, small businesses are a veritable vehicle for driving economic recovery.

The Government of Canada is partnering with business support organizations in rolling out several programs to support small businesses through business loans and grants, business advisory, workshops, sponsored research and technology development, tax moratorium, etc.

Organizations that support start-ups and small businesses are business incubators, business improvement agencies, small business centres, innovation hubs, immigrant support organizations, and others that provide advisory services, business resources, workshops, and networking opportunities for start-ups. A lot of these services are available for free and could come with co-working spaces.



# Get everything set for life in Canada

Starting from the airport, and for the first couple of months, you are likely to fill out paperwork to formalize your stay in Canada. You will also be busy sorting out basic needs towards settling and integrating fully into your new community. While these activities cannot be done until you have arrived in Canada, getting familiar with them will help you to be informed and prepared. Creating a to-do list using a scale of urgency and importance will help you get through the clutter and easily check items off your list.

### **Applying for your PR Card**

The process for getting your Permanent Residence (PR) Card is automatic once you've gone through the immigration protocols upon arrival at the airport. Your PR card will be mailed to you at the address you provided to the Canada Border Services officer. Should this address change, you will need to send an email notifying IRCC of your new address. Ensure to keep your signed Confirmation of Permanent Residence safe as you will need it when applying for your citizenship.

### **Getting your Social Insurance Number (SIN)**

Your Social Insurance Number is an essential part of your identity in Canada. You will need it to open a bank account, access government programs, and for employment. It is, therefore, necessary to get one within your first few days of arrival. Pre-COVID-19, you could apply for your SIN at the Service Canada desk at the airport after completing necessary entry formalities. You can also apply online, by email, or in person at a local Service Canada office in your province or city. Note that you can only get your SIN after you arrive in Canada.

### **Finding housing**

Housing is a primary factor in settling in as a newcomer. While getting a place to stay from your first day in Canada is a necessity, it is equally important that you don't make a hasty decision in signing a lease until you have inspected the house yourself.

Some factors to consider when renting a house are rental cost, road network, proximity to public transit, accessibility, proximity to schools (especially if you want your children to attend certain schools), and other amenities such as shopping, healthcare, transportation, green spaces, and recreational facilities.

Most landlords would request credit history and employment information, which you likely won't have in your first few weeks of arriving. It is, however, possible to rent an apartment by showing proof of savings from your bank, if you have a significant part of the rent for the lease period saved in your bank account. Alternatively, you could get a co-signer who would stand as your guarantor in case of a default.

Also, being a newcomer might qualify you for affordable housing programs and you could get housing at up to 30% below market rates. You can access this through your provinces' housing authority. The requirements are different across provinces and cities, but the primary qualification is that your household income falls within the stipulated range for low-income earners.

If you are considering buying a house either before or upon arriving in Canada, you might be able to do this without credit history or getting a mortgage if you have sufficient funds to cover the cost. You, however, have to be able to prove that the source of your fund is legitimate as it will be scrutinized by the government.

## **Opening a bank account**

Having a Canadian bank account will facilitate other things on your to-do list. In the first few days, you will need some form of identification that shows your residential address for securing your library cards, driver's license, and other important documents. Your bank statements will have your address and so will come in handy. When you get a job, you would also need to provide your account details to be onboarded onto your employer's payroll system.

Opening a bank account also allows you to get a credit card and you can start building your credit history immediately which would count for when you need a line of credit or mortgage in the future. Some banks have packages for newcomers whereby the banks offer them waivers or discounts on monthly fees.

In choosing a bank, you should consider the monthly fees, transaction limits, interest rates, and customer service. You can use the Account Comparison Tool designed by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada to make comparisons and decide which bank would be best for you.

## Getting a phone line

To get a contract on a phone line, the service provider would usually need to carry out a credit check. However, you could get a prepaid phone line without any such requirement, and you can switch over to a contract after you must have built your credit history. An advantage of having a contract on your phone line is that it could help to build your credit score, which could count towards getting a line of credit or mortgage in the future.

## Getting your library card

Public libraries are available in most cities and easily accessible to members of the community. Using a public library can save you some money as you can get a lot of services for free or at highly discounted rates through your public library card. You can use the library for reading, meetings, borrowing books, checking your email, printing, photocopying, and accessing the internet. Some public libraries also give you free access to online learning platforms for professional development, e.g. LinkedIn Learning. They also provide activities for members of the community, meetups with people with similar interests and learning objectives like arts and crafts, language learning, cooking, DIY crafts, festivals, etc. which will help you integrate into your community faster.

## Driving in Canada

Traffic in Canada is left-sided. Canada takes traffic rules quite seriously. Road offenders are penalized and depending on the extent of the violation, they might even lose their license. Irrespective of how long your travel history is in your home country, you will be required to take driving tests before you obtain a driving license.

In most provinces, you can drive with a valid driver's license from your home country, and an International Driving Permit (IDP) for a short period. The International Driving Permit will show the information on your driver's license must be printed in English or French.

There are at least two levels of the test for getting a full drivers license in Canada: a written exam on the rules of the road, and one or two driving tests. Having your driving abstract from your country could earn you an exemption from certain requirements for obtaining the full drivers' license.

## Applying for a health insurance plan

Depending on your destination province in Canada, you might be able to access healthcare services immediately after arrival or have to wait a few months. It is, therefore, better to apply as early as possible. Once you meet the eligibility criteria, you can register for health insurance at designated registration centres in your province or territory of residence. To register, you will need a valid ID(s) and other eligibility documents like a valid driver's license, a proof of address, etc. as this service is available on the provincial level.



**Ready for  
the next  
phase?**



We believe this e-book has equipped you with a knowledge of Canadian culture, and what moving to and living in Canada might look like. It has also helped you to identify what could constitute challenges for you as a newcomer to the country, and provided practical tips so you can easily navigate any hurdles you encounter. Even better, you can now start taking steps that will move you closer to a seamless and stress-free transition to Canada.

To help you track your progress in your preparation for Canada, we have created a checklist which you can download and easily check off milestones.

We know that preparing for Canada is quite a journey, which will keep unfolding as you start counting down to your arrival in Canada. Our highest aspirations are to see you become a fully integrated member of the community and achieve your fullest potential in Canada. We will be here to support you throughout this journey. In the coming days, we hope to connect with you in the New Canadians community where you can meet other immigrants who are more than eager to support you, share their success stories to inspire you, and celebrate every milestone with you, both as you prepare for and start living your new Canadian dream.

You can continue to learn more about Canada and immigrant stories through resources on our various digital channels—the New Canadians web portal, virtual event series, webinars, e-book, and our intimate Facebook community and social channels.

We are rooting for you and hoping that you have the most memorable experience in your immigration journey. We can hardly wait to see you in Canada!

## Additional resources



### Checklist:

Scan this QR code to download this pre-arrival resource and use it as a guide while preparing for your move to Canada



### Article:

Prepare for life in Canada by accessing these pre-arrival offerings

### Video:

Learn about the pre-arrival settlement services by Next Stop Canada



### Video:

Get online mentoring from Canada InfoNet

### Video:

Arrive in Canada with confidence with Planning for Canada's services



### About the writer

Bookie Adekanye is a recent immigrant to Canada from Nigeria. Her professional experience spans across travel and hospitality, entrepreneurship, business development, counseling, and writing. She is founder of SMEBizInfo and currently works as a reporter at New Canadians.

### About the publisher

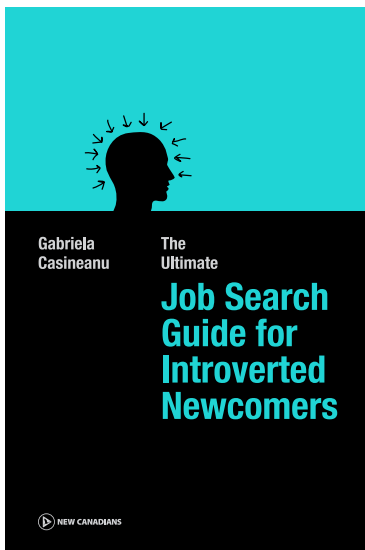


New Canadians is immigrants' trusted connection to information and resources related to immigration, settlement, education, employment and entrepreneurship in Canada. With the overarching purpose of helping newcomers, would-be immigrants and international students find success in their new home, we bring to you the latest information, handy resources, expert advice, and immigrant success stories through our national TV show, web portal, YouTube channel and virtual activities.

New Canadians is a division of New Horizons Media Inc.

[www.newcanadians.tv](http://www.newcanadians.tv)

### Also published by New Canadians



SCAN TO  
DOWNLOAD



NEW  
HORIZONS  
MEDIA

[newhorizons.media](http://newhorizons.media)