

WORK CENTRAL AB

Community Support Organizations

Practical Help for Food, Housing, and Family Needs

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Community Support Organizations in Central Alberta

Beyond settlement-specific agencies, Central Alberta has a broad network of community organizations offering practical support - from food security to housing assistance to family services. This guide highlights the types of support available and how to connect.

1. Family and Social Supports

- Alberta Supports Contact Centre connects residents with a wide range of family and social service programs, including financial assistance and support for persons with disabilities.
- Family resource centres across the region offer parenting support, playgroups, and connections to other local services.
- Crisis and distress lines are available for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis or urgent need for support - call 211 for a referral to appropriate local services in Alberta.

2. Food and Basic Needs

- Local food banks operate across Red Deer and surrounding communities, providing groceries and, in some cases, additional supports like clothing and household items.
- Community meal programs and drop-in centres offer additional support for individuals and families facing financial hardship.
- Many of these services operate with no long-term commitment required - you can access support during a temporary rough patch without ongoing obligation.

3. Housing Support

- Emergency shelters and transitional housing programs exist for individuals and families facing housing insecurity.
- Some organizations offer rent assistance programs or connections to subsidized housing options - Alberta Supports can help direct you to current programs.
- Tenant advocacy resources can help if you're experiencing a dispute with a landlord or need to understand your rights under Alberta's Residential Tenancies Act.

4. Volunteering and Giving Back

Many newcomers and long-time residents alike find that volunteering is one of the fastest ways to build community connections while contributing something meaningful. Organizations across Central Alberta, including settlement agencies, food banks, and recreation centres, regularly welcome volunteers, often without requiring extensive experience.

5. How to Find the Right Organization

Getting Connected

- Call 211 (Alberta's free, confidential helpline) for a referral to services matching your specific need.
- Visit your local library or municipal office, which often maintain updated lists of community resources.
- Ask your settlement agency (see our Settlement Services guide) for direct referrals - they typically have close relationships with other local organizations.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

Do I need to prove financial hardship to access a food bank? Most food banks in the region have simple registration processes and are designed to be accessible without extensive documentation.

Is calling 211 confidential? Yes - 211 is a free, confidential referral service available across Alberta.

Can newcomers access these services immediately? Generally yes - most community support organizations do not require a minimum length of residency to access basic support.

7. Supports for Specific Life Stages

- **Seniors** - programs offering social connection, transportation assistance, and access to health and financial supports for older adults.
- **Youth** - mentorship, after-school programming, and mental health resources tailored to teens and young adults.
- **New parents** - prenatal and postnatal support groups, parenting classes, and connections to other local families.
- **Persons with disabilities** - Alberta Supports and related organizations can connect residents to disability-specific programs and financial assistance.

Community Support Checklist

- ✓ Saved 211 as a resource for referrals to local services
- ✓ Identified organizations relevant to your specific needs (food, housing, family support)
- ✓ Explored volunteering opportunities as a way to build community
- ✓ Connected with your local library or municipal office for resource lists

Keep Settling In With Work Central AB

See our Cultural Associations guide for community and identity-based groups, and explore more at workcentralab.ca/resources.