

WORK CENTRAL AB

New to Canada Checklist

Your First Days, Weeks, and Months in Central Alberta

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Your New to Canada Checklist

Arriving in Canada, and in Central Alberta specifically, involves a series of practical steps in your first days, weeks, and months. This checklist-style guide walks through what to prioritize so nothing important falls through the cracks.

1. Within Your First Few Days

- Confirm your immigration documents are complete and stored safely - passport, Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) or work/study permit, and any supporting paperwork.
- Apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) at a Service Canada office; you'll need it to work and to access most government services.
- Set up a Canadian phone number and, if you haven't already, a local bank account.
- Locate the nearest settlement services organization in your community - see our Settlement Services guide for options across Central Alberta.

2. Within Your First Month

- Register for the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) as soon as you're eligible - see our Healthcare Registration guide for the full process.
- Secure permanent housing if you haven't already, and update your address with immigration authorities and any accounts you've opened.
- Register children for school (see our School Registration guide) and look into childcare if needed (see our Childcare Resources guide).
- Begin a language assessment if English isn't your first language, to determine eligibility for free LINC or ESL classes.
- Start building your resume and exploring the Work Central AB job board if you're job searching.

3. Within Your First Three Months

- Look into foreign credential recognition if you work in a regulated occupation (see our Credential Recognition guide).
- Get an Alberta driver's licence or exchange an existing one (see our Getting Your Driver's Licence guide).
- Start building Canadian credit history through a secured credit card or similar product.
- Connect with a cultural association or community group relevant to your background to build a support network.

4. Key Documents to Keep Organized

Document Checklist

- Passport and immigration documents (COPR, PR card, work/study permit)
- Social Insurance Number card or confirmation letter
- Alberta Health Care card
- Educational transcripts and credential assessment reports
- Proof of address (lease agreement, utility bill)
- Employment records and reference letters from your home country

5. Understanding Available Support

You don't need to navigate this process alone. Settlement agencies across Central Alberta, including Catholic Social Services, Care for Newcomers, and the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA), offer free support with everything from paperwork to community connections. Many services are available regardless of your immigration status or how long you've been in Canada.

6. Common Questions for New Arrivals

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do first - housing or a job? If possible, secure at least temporary housing before focusing fully on your job search, since a stable address makes almost every other step (banking, AHCIP, school registration) easier.

Do I need to wait for my SIN before working? Yes - you generally cannot be legally paid in Canada without a SIN, so apply as early as possible.

Is settlement support really free? Yes, for most federally and provincially funded services - funding comes from government programs, not fees charged to newcomers.

New to Canada Checklist Summary

- ✓ Applied for a SIN and set up a bank account
- ✓ Registered for AHCIP
- ✓ Secured housing and updated your address everywhere needed
- ✓ Registered children for school or childcare, if applicable
- ✓ Started a language assessment, if needed
- ✓ Connected with a local settlement agency

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- ✓ Began researching credential recognition, if applicable to your occupation
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Keep Settling In With Work Central AB

See the full Newcomer Resources series - Settlement Services, Credential Recognition, and Community Support Organizations - for detailed next steps. Visit workcentralab.ca/resources.