

The Newcomer's Checklist

Once you've stepped off the plane, follow this to-do list to guide your essential first steps in Canada.

If you come via a large airport like Toronto, before you leave the airport, check out the **newcomer welcome centre**. At the Toronto Pearson International Airport, look for the Immigrant Reception and Information Services (IRIS) kiosks in Terminals 2 and 3. These kiosks will have pamphlets and resources to help you in your first days in Canada.

Find temporary accommodation for your first few nights after landing and then start looking for a longer-term rental. Check the [Canadian Immigrant Housing Guide](#) for everything you need to know.

Obtain a good street map, a telephone book and the [Yellow Pages](#). These resources will be important tools in your first days as you get to know your neighbourhood and search out local services.

Visit a local immigrant settlement agency. Make sure to visit the local RDA (CoRDA) for information on settlement supports. In Colchester we are located at 35 Commercial Street, Suite 208, in Truro.

Such non-profit organizations receive government funding to offer newcomers services, such as free ESL training, settlement counselling, employment workshops and more. They also often have host programs that buddy up newcomers with volunteers who help guide them through their first few months in Canada.

Get your permanent resident (PR) card, a wallet-sized, plastic status card that replaces your paper IMM 1000 Record of Landing document. It's convenient proof of your permanent resident status. For more information, call 1-800-255-4541 .

Apply for your Social Insurance Number (SIN) card. Without it, you cannot get a job or apply for any government assistance or credit. Applications for a SIN card can be made through a Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) office —check the blue pages of your local telephone book under Government of Canada. Your local Service Canada office will usually provide this service.

Apply for your official health care card. Application forms for these cards are available from doctor's offices, hospitals and most pharmacies, or by calling the [provincial medical services authorities](#). Ensure you have temporary private health coverage to cover your family during the waiting period.

Open an account at a bank or credit union near your home. It's important to start a relationship with a bank as soon as possible, so you can manage your money, pay your bills and begin building a credit history.

Validate your professional credentials. Contact a local foreign credentials assessment service, such as World Education Services (wes.org) in Toronto or the [Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials](#).

Get your Canadian driver's licence. An international licence is only valid for a few months. Check with your [provincial motor vehicle branch](#) on the rules in your province.

Enrol your kids at school. Every child between the ages of five and 16 is entitled to, and in fact required to, attend school. Ask at schools in your neighbourhood or contact the [local school board](#) for guidance.