

WELCOME – IMMIGRATION AND NEWCOMERS

The City of Vernon takes pride in welcoming and supporting the integration of newcomers and in helping to ensure that they are able to contribute to our local economy and succeed in Vernon and the North Okanagan. It is our hope that the following information will make your decision to immigrate to Vernon a simpler task and that after you arrive, you are able to locate and utilize some of our local services that will assist you in making Vernon your home.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Immigration and Citizenship

If you are considering immigrating to the North Okanagan from another country, it is important that you check the Citizenship and Immigration web sites to ensure you have the information you require to make your transition as smooth as possible.

The web site for Canadian Citizenship and Immigration Canada is: www.cic.gc.ca that was created to:

- Respond to the needs of communities in all parts of the country by creating opportunities for individuals to come to Canada to make an economic, social, cultural and civic contribution while also realizing their full potential, with a view to becoming citizens;
- Support global humanitarian efforts to assist those in need of protection.

This web site answers many of your questions about immigrating to Canada such as:

- Should I use a lawyer or other legal representation to immigrate to Canada
- How to immigrate to Canada as a skilled worker
- Who can start a business in Canada
- How to bring your family to Canada
- How long will it take to process your application
- Who can apply as a skilled worker
- Find Canadian Visa Office, Consulate or Canadian Immigration Office in your country
- How to apply for a work permit
- Countries and territories whose residents need a visa to enter Canada.

Multiculturalism

The Government of Canada is committed to reaching out to Canadians and Newcomers and is developing lasting relationships with ethnic and religious communities in Canada. It encourages these communities to participate fully in society by enhancing their level of economic, social and cultural integration. The website to obtain more information on Multiculturalism in Canada is www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism.

British Columbia Immigration Information

The Government of British Columbia has a host of information on their website at: www.welcomebc.ca that provides data on:

- Immigration – Settling in British Columbia
- Communities in British Columbia – Building a Welcoming community
- Service Providers – Provides Services to Newcomers

Provincial Nominee Program – Advocacy

This Provincial Program (BC PNP) accelerates the Permanent Resident application process for skilled and experienced workers, experienced business persons and their family members who want to settle in British Columbia permanently. Nominees can apply for permanent residence status through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Under the fast tracked BC PNP stream; this process can be faster than applying through many Federal Immigration streams. Contract BC Provincial Nomination Program Advocacy - www.welcomebc.ca.

BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network

This organization is a partnership of internationally trained professionals from around British Columbia, working cooperatively, to improve access to meaningful employment for all immigrant professionals in B.C. Their primary focus is to empower internationally trained professionals (ITPs) to enter into constructive dialogue with stakeholders and to act on self identified goals. Their website can be found at www.bcipt.net

2006 Census Data about Vernon and the North Okanagan

At www.statcan.gc.ca you can find 2006 census data on populations, resources, economy, society and cultures of Vernon and the North Okanagan. The census is updated every 5 years. The site contains statistical information that is vital to an open and democratic society.

SERVICES FOR NEWCOMERS

Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society

Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society primary focus is to provide Employment Services to immigrants in Vernon. Other services that are offered are: Adaptation and Orientation to Canada and Vernon; English Classes; Cross Cultural Awareness; Para-Counseling; Document Assistance; Basic Interpretation and Translation and Citizenship Instruction. They can be found at:

#100 – 3303 – 30th Street
Vernon, B.C. V1T 9J5
Phone 250-542-4612

Fax 250-542-6554
E-mail infovernon@vdis.com
Website www.vdis.com

North Okanagan Employment Enhancement Society

This Society, in partnership with ASPECT, delivers the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program which helps immigrants find an employment fit, provide career counseling, and career planning services. They can also provide financial assistance to upgrade your job specific skills, and hands on workplace experience. NOEES can be found at:

102 – 3201 – 30th Street
Vernon, B.C. V1T 9G9
Phone 250-545-0585
Fax 250-545-5418
E-mail skillsconnect@noees.com
Website www.noees.com

Service Canada

This is a Federal Government Department that offers a multitude of program and services to Canadian Citizens, Immigrants and Newcomer to Canada. You will find services such as a Local Job Bank, Social Insurance Numbers, Employment Insurance, Local Labour Market Information, GST Credits, Passports, and Apprentice Grants. Information is also available to the Newcomer on The Canadian Citizenship Program, Host Program, and Immigration Loans Program. Permanent Resident Program and the Right of Permanent Resident Fee Loan and Temporary Resident Visa Program. This site provides information on many aspects of Canadian Life and is the gateway to most Federal Funded programming. Locally the Service Canada office is located at:

Vernon Service Canada Centre
3202 – 31st Street
Vernon, B.C.
V1T 5J1
Website www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Foreign Credentials Referral Office

This is a Federal Government Service offering information for Immigrant Individuals on making your transition to life in Canada easier by determining if you are ready to work in Canada, the challenges you may face when trying to get a job and what documentation you will need in finding and obtaining a job. There is also assistance with Credential Recognition, Language Skills, Jobs in Canada, a Workbook for Newcomers, an Occupational Worksheet and a Working in Canada Tool. You can check out their website at www.creentials.gc.ca for further information.

Going to Canada

This website allows you to explore links, to information and services when planning a temporary stay or making Canada your new home. Topics include: Get to Know Canada, Move to Canada, Live in Canada, Immigrating to Canada, Working in Canada, Visiting and Studying in Canada. It also contains the Entry Requirement Toolkit which determines the requirements to enter Canada that may be specific to your situation. This website can be found at www.goingtocanada.gc.ca

Living in Vernon

The Vernon Community Profile provides a detailed analysis of the City of Vernon. The comprehensive document provides the following information: Demographics, Educational Institutions, Health Care, Housing Prices, Labour Force Activity, Major Employers, Major Projects Overview, Recreation and Cultural Activities and Resources Sector Overviews. To obtain your copy of the Vernon Community Profile, contact: ecdev@vernon.ca

Local Entrepreneurs/Business Contacts

Community Futures of the North Okanagan is a community based, not for profit organization, offering a comprehensive selection of business and employer services, employment assistance services, and economic development as determined by local and regional communities.

Projects that may be of interest to immigrants wishing to relocate to Vernon as entrepreneurs:

- Vision North Okanagan – This project has identified major ideas, challenges, issues and opportunities of focus. The Visions North Okanagan Council work on a variety of initiatives aimed at economic development and enhancing the quality of life for citizens of the region. Visit the project at www.visionsnorthokanagan.ca
- Our Okanagan – Connecting the Valley – Creating Opportunities – This project leads the development of a web based portal that allows businesses to link together, source local suppliers, post job openings and identify local products from the Okanagan Valley as well as provide information on a myriad of business resources and opportunities. More detail on this project can be found at www.ourokanagan.ca
- SharED Program – This program offers Managers and Executive Directors an opportunity to share expertise, experiences, best practices and problem solving strategies and share training. It provides an opportunity to access leadership, management ideas, and advise from both their colleagues and from guest speakers. For information on this and other services of Community Futures of the North Okanagan contact:

Community Futures of the North Okanagan
3105 – 33rd Street
Vernon, B.C. V1T 9P7
Phone 250-545-2215
Fax 250-545-6447

Aboriginal and Cultural Groups

Okanagan Indian Band

The Okanagan Indian Band is part of the Okanagan Nation, which is comprised of 7 Indian Bands, including Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Upper Similkameen Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Westbank First Nations, Upper Nicola Indian Band, and the Okanagan Indian Band. The Okanagan Indian Band is located at the head of Okanagan Lake in Vernon, B.C. and totals 11,282 hectares. There are currently about 1688 Okanagan Indian Band Members. Approximately ½ of the members reside on reserve while the other half reside off reserve. The goals of the Okanagan Indian Band are to:

- Increase Aboriginal Voice
- Promote knowledge of Aboriginal language, culture and history for all
- Ensure effective use of resources.

The mailing address for the Band is:

Okanagan Indian Band
12420 Westside Road
Vernon, B.C. V1H 2A4
Phone 250-542-4328
Toll Free 1-866-542-4328

For more information on the Band, visit their website at www.okib.ca

Spallumcheen Indian Band

970 Old Vernon Road
Box 3010
Enderby, B.C.
VOE 1V0
Phone 250-838-6496
Email: spallinfo@spall.net
Web site: www.secwepemc.org/spallumcheen

First Nations Friendship Centre

The First Nations Friendship centre provides services to Native People who reside off reserve in the North Okanagan area. It is designed to improve the quality of life for First Nations People in an urban environment by supporting self determined activities which encourage equal access to, and participation in Canadian Society and which respect Native cultural distinctiveness.

You can contact the First Nations Friendship Centre at:

2902 29th Ave
Vernon, B.C.

V1T 1Y7
Phone 250-542-1247
Email fnc@junction.net

For more information on the First Nations Friendship Centre, visit their website at:
www.bc-payc.com

Metis Community Services Society

The Metis Community Service Society has a mandate from the Metis citizens to provide integrated, holistic, family centered, wraparound services to all of those who need assistance, with special emphasis on Aboriginal populations, specifically Metis populations. They can be contacted at:

The Metis Community Services Society
2913 B – 29th Ave
Vernon, B.C.
V1T 1Y8
Phone 250-545-0350

Visit their website at www.mcsbc.org

School District 22 – Aboriginal Education Department

This program is for Aboriginal students from Kindergarten through to grade 12. It is dedicated to surrounding Aboriginal Students with the best educational opportunities and learning experiences by keeping them knowledgeable and current on the most successful and prominent Aboriginal pedagogical practices locally, provincially, nationally and globally. You can contact the Aboriginal Education Department at:

School District 22
1401 – 15th Street
Vernon, B.C. V1T 8S8
Phone 250-542-3331

Please visit their website for further information at www.sd22.bc.ca

Cultural Groups in Vernon

Sadok Ukrainian Dancers

2400 – 44TH Ave
Vernon, B.C.
Phone 250-558-2959
Email: sadok@shaw.ca
Web site www.geocities.com

Sen'Klip Native Theatre Company

Phone 250-542-1247

Vernon Japanese Cultural Society

4895 Bella Vista Road

Vernon, B.C.

Phone 250-545-4162

Web site www3.telus.net/aubcom/VJCS.HTM

Zirka Ukrainian Dancers of the Okanagan Valley

The Arts Centre – Polson Park 2704A Hwy 6

Vernon, B.C.

Phone 250-545-5234

Vernon Spanish Club

Drop in Services at Pantry Restaurant,

Vernon, B.C.

Korean Veteran's Association

Vernon, B.C.

Phone 250-542-8030

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA)

Phone 604-718-2780

Email: amssa@amssa.org

Web site: www.amssa.org

Belize Outreach Program

Vernon, B.C.

Phone 250-549-1185

North Okanagan Gay and Lesbian Organization (NOGLO)

Box 1419

Vernon, B.C. V1T 6N7

Phone: 250-542-4670

Email: noglo@noglow.com

Web site: www.noglo.com

YouthGlo

Email: youthglow@hotmail.com

Sookinchoot Youth Centre

3705 – 27th Street

Vernon, B.C.

Phone: 250-549-2921

Email: sookinchoot@shaw.ca

Urban Aboriginal Youth Program

2750 Highway 6

Vernon, B.C.

V1T 5G5

Phone: 250-549-1783