

English

INFORMATION FOR
**REFUGEE
CLAIMANTS**

BRITISH COLUMBIA



Call 2-1-1

www.bc211.ca

For more information or for further assistance,
Call 2-1-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Common Acronyms	5
Legal Services	6
Legal Aid	6
Ready Tour	6
Free Legal Advice Clinics	7
Settlement Services	8
Neighbourhood Houses	11
LGBTQI+ Services	12
Health Services	13
Medical Clinics	14
Interim Federal Healthcare Package (IFH)	16
Immigration Medical Exam	17
Counselling and Support Services	17
Housing Services	18
Food	20
Clothing	22
Public Transportation	23
Additional Information	25
Important Government Agencies	25
Public Libraries (free internet access)	26
Sending your children to school	26
Special Note about Parenting	26
Domestic Violence	26
Smoking	27
Notes on Geography of the Region	27
Safety	27
Financial Assistance	28
Understanding Phone Numbers	29
Understanding Addresses	29
Family Reunification	29
Other important Phone Numbers	30

INTRODUCTION

This Information Kit for Refugee Claimants is intended to provide refugee claimants in BC with information on services available. This kit is produced in multiple languages and can be downloaded for free at www.bc211.ca/resources

In addition to the Information Kit, bc211 provides refugee claimants with one place to access assistance on arrival through a 24-hour, multi-lingual phone line offering information and referral services for free. Every effort will be made to accommodate your language, please be patient as phone agents connect you with an interpreter.

Over the phone assistance includes:

- Accurate, timely information
- Referrals to legal, paralegal and health services, settlement agencies, housing, food and clothing services, interpretation and translation services, counselling services, support groups, and other services

Bc211 services are offered in a non-discriminatory, non-judgmental manner and with respect and sensitivity. For feedback on the program or staff, please contact help@bc211.ca

COMMON ACRONYMS

BOC	Basis of Claim form	IME	Immigration Medical Exam
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency	LSS	Legal Services Society
DCO	Designated Country of Origin	MSD	Ministry of Social Development
DFN	Designated Foreign National	MSP	Medical Services Plan
ESL	English as a Second Language	LSLAP	Legal Students Advice Program (UBC)
GST	General Sales Tax	PRRA	Pre-Removal Risk Assessment
H&C	Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds	PST	Provincial Sales Tax
IFH	Interim Federal Health Program	RAD	Refugee Appeals Division

LEGAL SERVICES

Find Legal Help Immediately!

The refugee claim process is a legal process. You should try to obtain legal assistance to help you with understanding the refugee claim process, filling out the legal paperwork (including your Basis of Claim form), representation at your refugee hearing, and assistance at other key stages of the process.

LEGAL AID

Free legal assistance is available for people who cannot pay for a lawyer. To apply for free Legal Aid, it is necessary to show proof of income and identification documents. Legal Aid currently covers the cost of a lawyer and the cost of an interpreter to help the lawyer prepare for your case. It will take 3-5 business days for the Legal Aid office to decide if you qualify for a lawyer.

To find out if you qualify for a free lawyer:

- Call the Legal Aid Immigration Line: 604-601-6076 or 1-888-601-6076
- Go to the Vancouver Legal Aid office: Suite 425 – 510 Burrard Street, Vancouver
- Legal Aid Hours:
 - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8:30AM – 4:30PM
 - Wednesday: 8:30AM – 12:30PM

To learn more about Legal Aid, visit: www.legallaidbc.ca

READYTOUR

The ReadyTour offers refugee claimants the opportunity to gather information, familiarize themselves with the refugee hearing procedure and see inside a real hearing room. The tour takes place at the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) and is highly encouraged for individuals making a refugee claim.

- To register, phone 604-328-3132 or email ready@refugeeclaim.ca
- Download the Ready Hearing Preparation Guide: <http://refugeeclaim.ca>

FREE LEGAL ADVICE CLINICS

The following services offer free legal clinics offering information refugee claims, immigration, visas, work permits, and other legal guidance.

UBC Law Students' Legal Advice Program (LSLAP)

- For legal advice, you will have to schedule an appointment by calling: **604-822-5791**. UBC LSLAP cannot give legal advice over the telephone.
- To set up a Chinese language appointment at the Chinatown clinic, please call: 604-684-1628.
- If you need help making an appointment, please call 2-1-1 and request assistance in making the appointment. An agent will be glad to assist you.

Access Justice (Access Probono)

- To book an appointment, you will have to call 604-878-7400 or call the toll free line at 1-877-762-6664
- Appointments will be made at one of the many legal clinics throughout the Lower Mainland
- If you need help making an appointment, please call 2-1-1 and request assistance in making the appointment. An agent will be glad to assist you.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement services are the agencies that offer assistance to help newcomers adjust to their new life Canada. The services they provide are varied.

In BC, settlement services are offered based on your status in Canada. Many immigrant settlement agencies may not be able to assist refugee claimants until you become a Permanent Resident. The following agencies are specialized with working with refugee claimants and are conveniently all located in one location at the **ISSof BC Welcome House**, located at **2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver**.

If you are interested in contacting an agency, it is best if you call first and make an appointment. If you need assistance in making an appointment, please call 2-1-1 and an agent can assist you.

AGENCIES LOCATED AT 2610 VICTORIA DRIVE:

Inland Refugee Society 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 778-328-8888 http://inlandrefugeesociety.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing assistance• Clothing Bank• Food Bank• English Language Classes• Government photographs• Bus passes• Orientation to life in Canada
Settlement Orientation Services 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 604-255-1881 http://www.sosbc.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 5PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orientation to the Refugee Claims Process• Assistance filling out government application and immigration forms• Support in applying for legal aid• Cultural Orientation• Settlement Services• Orientation to the IFHP (healthcare)• Case management support for those living with HIV• Healthy Living
Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST) 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 604-255-1881 http://vast-vancouver.ca Monday-Friday 9:30AM – 5:30PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual and group counselling• Mental Health support services• Agency referrals• Assessments for post traumatic stress disorder• Orientation to Canada• Peer group sessions for claimants

For more information or for further assistance,
Call 2-1-1

<p>VANCITY 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC To make an appointment with VANCITY, please call SOS or Inland Refugee Society for a referral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking services for Refugee Claimants • Provides financial literacy classes • Free bank accounts and services
---	--

The following agencies are not located at the ISSofBC Welcome House, but also provide settlement services.

OTHER SETTLEMENT AGENCIES SERVING REFUGEE CLAIMANTS:

<p>MOSAIC 1720 Grant Street, Vancouver BC (Moving to: 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver BC. in May 2017) Phone: 604-254-9626</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Settlement services for refugee claimants • Employment services • Family and children’s programming • Legal advocacy
<p>Options Community Services 13520 78 Avenue, Surrey, BC Phone: 604-572-4060 Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Settlement Services • Housing Services • Applications to social assistance • Employment services • Family and children’s programming • English Conversation • Workplace English Conversation • Computer Classes • Community Connections Activities
<p>La Boussole 651 East Broadway, Vancouver 604-683-7337 laboussole@lbv.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 3PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement services for French speaking refugee claimants • Food and clothing assistance • Housing assistance • Accompaniment and interpretation services
<p>Mennonite Central Committee 660 East 51st Street, Vancouver 604-325-5524 Monday – Friday 9AM – 4:30PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General settlement services • Food and clothing bank • Support services • Post hearing claim support • English language classes
<p>Settlement Workers in Schools Vancouver: 604-713-5999 Surrey: 60-543-3060</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement assistance for newcomers with children in schools
<p>Pacific Immigrant Resources Society 1874 Kingsway, Vancouver 604-298-5888</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for women and their children • English practice, community connections, childcare, preschool

For more information or for further assistance,
Call 2-1-1

<p>Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society #300-637 Bay Street, Victoria BC 1-250-361-9433</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement services and support for refugees in Victoria. • Referrals • Family support
<p>Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria 930 Balmoral Road, Victoria BC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement services for immigrants and refugees. Newcomer support and community connections
<p>Kelowna Community Resources 120-1735 Dolphin Avenue, Kelowna BC immigrantservices@kcr.ca</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and referrals for newcomers in Kelowna and Okanagan
<p>Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society of Prince George 1270 – 2nd Avenue, Prince George BC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, referrals and settlement services for newcomers into Prince George and surrounding Northern communities

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

Neighbourhood Houses offer a variety of services for everyone of all ages, nationalities, and abilities. Services at specific neighbourhood houses vary but generally they offer a safe space to gather, childcare, family resources, newcomer support, community dinners, support for youth and seniors, referrals to community resources, interpretation and sometimes accompaniment services.

You can visit the website, visit the houses to receive services, or call ahead and find out what services can be available for you. If you require assistance with this, call 2-1-1 and an agent can assist you.

<p>Alexandra Neighbourhood House 2916 McBride Avenue, Surrey BC http://www.alexhouse.net/ Phone: 604-535-0015</p>	<p>Kiwassa Neighbourhood House 2425 Oxford Street, Vancouver BC http://www.kiwassa.ca/ Phone: 604-254-5401</p>
<p>Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub 12740 102 Ave, Surrey BC www.oanh.ca Phone: 604-582-7088</p>	<p>South Vancouver Neighbourhood House 6470 Victoria Drive, Vancouver www.southvan.org Phone: 604-324-6212</p>
<p>Burnaby Neighbourhood House (North House) 4463 Hastings Street, Burnaby BC http://www.burnabynh.ca/ Phone: 604-294-5444</p>	<p>Little Mountain Neighbourhood House 3981 Main Street, Vancouver BC http://www.lmnhs.bc.ca/ Phone: 604-879-7104</p>
<p>Burnaby Neighbourhood House (South House) 4460 Beresford St., Burnaby BC http://www.burnabynh.ca/ Phone: 604-431-0400</p>	<p>Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House 800 East Broadway, Vancouver BC http://www.mpnh.org/ Phone: 604-879-8208</p>
<p>Gordon Neighbourhood House 1019 Broughton Street, Vancouver BC http://gordonhouse.org/ Phone: 604-683-2554</p>	<p>Kitsilano Neighbourhood House 2305 West 7th Ave, Vancouver www.kitshouse.org Phone: 604-736-3588</p>
<p>Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House 4065 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC http://www.cedarcottage.org/ Phone: 604-874-4231</p>	<p>Collingwood Neighborhood House 5288 Joyce Street Joyce Street, Vancouver BC http://www.cnh.bc.ca/ Phone: 604-435-0323</p>
<p>Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House 2131 Renfrew Street, Vancouver BC http://www.froghollow.bc.ca/ Phone: 604-251-1225</p>	<p>North Shore Neighbourhood House 225 East 2nd Street, North Vancouver http://www.nsnh.bc.ca/ Phone: 604-987-8138</p>

For more information or for further assistance,
Call 2-1-1

LGBTQI+ SERVICES

LGBTQI+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex or those questioning their sexual identity or gender. It refers to a population of people who have gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual or cisgender majority.

Canada is generally welcoming of LGBTQI+ individuals and it is recognized that this may be one of the reasons you are making a refugee claim. Rainbow Refugee Society is an organization that works specifically with refugee claimants who identify as LGBTQI+. Rainbow Refugee Society does not have its own office but works out of the Qmunity Community Centre. Rainbow Refugee hosts support groups, orientations to the refugee claims process, orientation to community resources, and provides education, awareness and general support services.

Rainbow Refugee Society 1170 Bute Street, Vancouver BC Email: info@rainbowrefugee.ca http://www.rainbowrefugee.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for LGBTQI+ individuals• Individual and group social support groups• Orientation to refugee claims process• Orientation to community resources• Education and awareness
Qmunity 1170 Bute Street, Vancouver BC Email: info@rainbowrefugee.ca http://www.rainbowrefugee.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for LGBTQI+ individuals• Resource center• Drop in and socials for LGBTQI+ individuals• Assistance in searching for LGBTQI+ friendly housing• Support groups, youth groups, adult groups• Referrals to community support

HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH EMERGENCIES (CALL 911)

For emergencies where you need help from the police, ambulance or fire service, call **911**. If you or someone with you has chest pain, difficulty breathing, or severe bleeding, it could be life-threatening, call 911. This emergency service is free, accessible 24 hours a day, and is available in every language. When you call, say “police”, “fire”, or “ambulance” and the language you speak.

Many hospitals have emergency services open 24 hours a day. At any time, if you need to see a doctor for an emergency, you can go to the nearest hospital emergency room. For dental emergencies, go to the emergency service of the nearest hospital.

If you are concerned about a poisoning or exposure to a toxic substance, call Poison Control.

911 Dial 911 from any phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency line to quickly access the police department, fire department, or an ambulance.• When you call 911, an emergency operator will immediately connect you to the person you need.• Language interpreters available.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Say your language and be patient. A non-English speaking caller may hear a short conversation in English and some clicking sounds as an interpreter is connected.
Poison Control Greater Vancouver 604-682-5050 or 1-800-567-8911	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• poisoning or exposure to a toxic substance• 24 hour a day service• English only. Call 911 if you need a different language

NOT SURE IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY? *CALL HEALTHLINK BC AT 811 FROM ANY PHONE IN BC*

HealthLink -Dial 811 from any phone in BC -Dial 711 for deaf and hearing impaired www.healthlinkbc.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidential health information and advice service available 24 hours a day.• Registered nurses can answer your questions about health topics and they can help you identify symptoms and decide when to see a doctor.• Available in all languages and is available to everyone.
--	--

MEDICAL CLINICS (NON-EMERGENCY)

If you have the Interim Federal Health package, there are few health clinics that will assist you without charging you a fee. Bridge Clinic and the Welcome House Medical Clinic offers free primary healthcare for refugee claimants and new immigrants for up to 1 year upon their arrival or until they are able to find a family doctor in their community.

If you need to see a doctor and it is a non-emergency service, please call the clinic and make an appointment.

If it is urgent or an emergency, please call 911 or visit an emergency room.

Bridge Clinic 3425 Crowley Drive Vancouver, BC Phone: 604-872-2511 Hours: 9AM—4PM (by appointment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop in services daily until Noon (no guarantee of services, appointment preferred)• Public health screening and primary health care• Referrals
Welcome House Medical Clinic 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver Phone: 604-684-7868	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IFH or MSP required• Appointment Only• Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday's 9AM – 5PM (by Appointment) Closed on Tuesday's. Saturdays and Sundays

REFUGEEHEALTH.CA

Health information specifically for refugees in the Vancouver region is available in English online at www.refugeehealth.ca. The website provides information about medical clinics, physiotherapists, dentists, optometrists, mental health and counselling services and other healthcare providers that specialize in refugee services and are familiar with the Interim Federal Health (IFH) program.

NO HEALTH COVERAGE

If you have not yet made an official refugee claim in Canada through either Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and/or Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), it may be that you are without health coverage. If you think that you are without health coverage, it is important to understand how this could impact you and your family. For an overview of what to do without medical coverage in Canada, please make an appointment with Settlement Orientation Services (SOS).

For more information or for further assistance,
Call 2-1-1

FREE WALK IN COMMUNITY CLINIC (FOR EVERYONE)

The Purpose Society hosts a free walk in clinic where no identification is required to seek service. This is a community clinic and not for emergency use. If it is an emergency, go to your closest Hospital or call 911.

<p>Purpose Society 40 Begbie Street, New Westminster Phone: 604-526-2522 Email: info@purposesociety.org</p> <p>Adult Clinic Thursday 9AM – 1PM</p> <p>Youth Clinic (age 13-21) Tuesday: 2:30PM – 6:00PM Thursday 3:30PM – 7:30PM</p> <p>HiM Clinic (for gay men) Monday 4PM – 9PM Wednesday 4PM – 9PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical exams• Disease and injury prevention• STI testing• Immunizations• Chronic or acute disease management• Evidence-based health screening• Referrals to specialized• Hepatitis C and HIV testing and care
---	--

INTERIM FEDERAL HEALTHCARE PACKAGE (IFH)

The Interim Federal Health (IFH) package provides temporary coverage of health care benefits to refugee claimants up until the point they are eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance.

The Interim Federal Health Package does not cover services or products that a person may have under their own private insurance plan.

The IFH is intended to cover the Immigration Medical Exam and basic medical services, procedures, medications, and vaccinations. An overview of the package for claimants is below, to get a detailed orientation and understand your personal coverage, please make an appointment with the Health Coordinator at Settlement Orientation Services (SOS) located at the Refugee Welcome House.

Settlement Orientation Services (SOS) 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 604-255-1881 http://www.sosbc.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 5PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orientation to the IFH Healthcare Package• Case management support for those living with HIV• Healthy Living
--	--

INTERIM FEDERAL HEALTHCARE PACKAGE (IFH) OVERVIEW FOR REFUGEE CLAIMANTS

Refugee Claimants are eligible for Interim Federal Health (IFHP). IFH is provided to you at the time you are considered Eligible to make a refugee claim. Coverage includes:

- Basic health-care services (i.e. standard physician and hospital care)
- Supplemental Services, including limited vision and urgent dental care, and
- Prescription drug coverage

IFHP Coverage for refugee claimants will continue until you become eligible for Provincial/Territorial health insurance or if you leave Canada. Your coverage will be cancelled if you:

- Withdraw your refugee claim, or
- The IRB has determined you have abandoned your refugee claim
- You are ineligible to make a refugee claim and are not eligible for PRRA

If you are unsure of your coverage or have more questions about your health coverage, please call SOS and make an appointment with the Health Coordinator.

IMMIGRATION MEDICAL EXAM (IME)

All refugee claimants must go for an Immigration Medical Exam (IME) as part of the claim process. The IME must be completed after a month from the date that you received your eligibility document from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Not all doctors will perform the Immigration Medical Exam. For help in finding a doctor who will perform the IME, you can make an appointment with Settlement Orientation Services.

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

In Canada, it is common for people to access counselling and support services after dealing with an emotional experience. The following agencies provide free counselling and support for refugee claimants:

Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST) 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 604-255-1881 http://vast-vancouver.ca Monday-Friday 9:30AM – 5:30PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual and group counselling• Mental Health support services• Agency referrals• Assessments for post traumatic stress disorder• Orientation to Canada• Peer group sessions for claimants
Rainbow Refugee Society 1170 Bute Street, Vancouver BC Email: info@rainbowrefugee.ca http://www.rainbowrefugee.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for LGBTQI+ individuals• Individual and group social support groups• Orientation to refugee claims process• Orientation to community resources• Education and awareness

HOUSING SERVICES

REFUGEE HOUSING

There are some temporary housing available specifically for refugee claimants. These refugee housing providers usually offer settlement services directly onsite for refugee claimants in addition to other various supports. Refugee specific housing usually allows residents to live in the house until their refugee hearing is completed. There is limited refugee housing available and demand is high, so you will have to register with Inland Refugee Society to get your name on a list to access this housing. Not all refugee claimants may be able to enter into refugee housing. Inland Refugee Society can assist refugee claimants find alternative housing solutions if they are unable to enter refugee housing.

RENTAL HOUSING AND HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE

If you are receiving social assistance or have enough money to rent your own room, then this may be the ideal solution for you. If you need help finding a place to live, there are two agencies that support refugee claimants with this process. Options Community Services is located in Surrey and will assist you with finding housing in the Surrey area. Surrey is close to Vancouver, is very accessible by public transit and housing rents are generally considerably lower than in Vancouver.

Inland Refugee Society also has a number of volunteers that can assist you with finding housing throughout the greater Vancouver area.

Options Community Services 13520 78 Avenue, Surrey, BC Phone: 604-572-4060 Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Settlement Services• Housing Services• Applications to social assistance• Employment services• Family and children’s programming• English Conversation• Workplace English Conversation• Computer Classes• Community Connections Activities
Inland Refugee Society 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 778-328-8888 http://inlandrefugeesociety.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing assistance• Clothing Bank• Food Bank• English Language Classes• Government photographs• Bus passes• Orientation to life in Canada

FREE PUBLIC SHELTERS

Shelters are free and are located in every major city. Free shelters may not always be safe. If you do not have a place to sleep, call 2-1-1 and an agent will assist you in finding a shelter appropriate to your needs.

Shelters can vary dramatically in services and type. Some may be single occupancy rooms, some may have dormitory type rooms, or others may be large rooms with several beds. Most shelters offer at least 1 meal.

If you stay in a shelter, always make sure to keep belongings close and keep important documents (like identification) and money protected at all times. Some shelters provide storage space, but they do not provide a lock. A lock must be purchased separately. Many shelters are open 24 hours, but in some cases they will require guests to be out during the day. Shelters are generally filled up on a first come first serve basis. To locate a free shelter near you, you can dial **2-1-1** from any phone.

HOTELS

Hotels can be an expensive option. Prices vary drastically depending upon the time of year and if there are any major events happening in the city. Hotels can range between \$120-\$300 per night for 1 room. Some hotels may also require a deposit to be paid that can be refunded at the end of your stay providing there is no damage or loss to the room.

If you need help finding a hotel room in your price range, you may call 2-1-1 and an agent can assist you. Let the agent know how much you can spend and every effort will be made to assist you.

HOSTELS

Hostels are not as expensive as hotels. Prices range between \$40-80 per night. Most hostels are dormitory type rooms, meaning there may up to 8 people sleeping in one room. Many hostels also have shared washrooms and bathing facilities. There are some hostels that offer private rooms but these options may be limited.

You will need to have picture ID in order to stay in a Hostel.

If you would like help finding a Hostel in your price range then please call 2-1-1 and an agent will assist you.

FOOD

FOOD BANKS

A food bank is a place where donated food is available for free. Community organizations run these to assist low-income people. Food banks are offered on a weekly basis. It may be necessary to register for these services, and frequently photo identification will be required. At some food banks, a one-time crisis bag may be offered without any identification.

Many of the neighbourhood houses also have a food bank available. See the section on **Neighbourhood Houses** to enquire with the one that is closest to you.

Inland Refugee Society has a food bank specifically for Refugee Claimants open on Wednesday afternoons starting at Noon. You can visit Inland Refugee Society to access the foodbank.

If Inland Refugee Society is closed and you are requiring food, please call 2-1-1 and an agent will assist you in accessing food.

Inland Refugee Society 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 778-328-8888 http://inlandrefugeesociety.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing assistance• Clothing Bank• Food Bank• English Language Classes• Government photographs• Bus passes• Orientation to life in Canada
---	---

FREE MEALS AND LOW COST MEALS

Some settlement agencies, outreach organizations, churches, temples and Neighbourhood houses offer free meals to the public. For a listing of free hot meal times in Vancouver, see: <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/low-cost-food.pdf> or visit the interactive map at:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1XEmhBp-1P0xxH7ZPFMc76sBFb2U&ll=49.24757314212656%2C-123.14065679999999&z=12>

If you need assistance finding a hot meal near you, ask a settlement worker or call 2-1-1 and an agent will assist you.

GROCERY STORES

Grocery stores are located through Vancouver and the surrounding areas. Check prices, as they may vary from one store to another. Tax will be charged on products that are for immediate consumption (i.e. a ready to eat sandwich)

If you need assistance finding a grocery store near you, you may ask a settlement worker or call 2-1-1 and an agent will assist you.

CLOTHING

WEATHER AND SEASONS

In Vancouver, there are 4 distinct seasons. The summer weather (approximately June-September) is generally sunny and warm. The rainy period usually starts in October or November lasts until April or May. Winter (from December to February) is the coldest season. Temperatures may at times go down to the freezing point or below. It is important to have appropriate clothes and shoes to protect from the rain and cold.

FREE CLOTHING

The Inland Refugee Society has a collection of clothing, household items, and furniture which are available for free to refugee claimants. If you are at the Airport, the Airport Chaplaincy also has a small collection of warm clothing you can access.

Airport Chaplaincy Located at International Arrivals, across from Tim Horton's Cafe Phone: 604-303-3010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency bed available at the airport• Quiet space for prayer• Referrals to community agencies• Emergency warm clothing
Inland Refugee Society 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 778-328-8888 http://inlandrefugeesociety.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing assistance• Clothing Bank• Food Bank• English Language Classes• Government photographs• Bus passes• Orientation to life in Canada

INEXPENSIVE CLOTHING

In Canada, it is common to buy second-hand clothes (clothes that belonged to someone else before). They are found in stores that are called second hand stores or thrift stores. These stores sell clean used clothing. There are many second-hand stores throughout the region.

If you need help finding a thrift store near you, please call 2-1-1 and an agent will be able to assist you.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

In Canada, taxis are expensive. It is more affordable to use the public transportation system which is a combination of:

- Buses
- Skytrain (above and below ground train)
- Seabus (boat)

ZONES

The transit system divides Vancouver and the surrounding cities into 3 zones which are identified the map below. The number of zones travelled during your trip determines the fare that you will pay. For example, travelling from Burnaby (zone 2) to Downtown Vancouver (Zone 1) requires a 2-zone fare.

Note that the zone system does not apply if only taking buses. It does not matter how far you travel by bus, you will only pay for 1 zone.



Credit: <http://www.translink.ca/en/Fares-and-Passes/Fare-Zone-Map.aspx>

SINGLE FARES:

Zone	Adult Price	Concession Price
1 Zone	\$2.85	\$1.80
2 Zones	\$4.10	\$2.80
3 Zones	\$5.60	\$3.80

DISCOUNT FARES:

After 6:30PM on weekdays and all day Saturday, Sunday and Holidays, discount fares apply and purchasing a one-zone ticket will allow you to travel through all zones.

At all times, children under the age of 5 years ride for free when accompanied by an adult.

Children aged 5-13 years can ride under the concession price.

Seniors, aged 65 years and older, ride under the concession price.

TICKETS:

To pay fare directly on the bus requires cash and must be exact change. Bus drivers do not carry change.

At Skytrain and Seabus stations, you can purchase a single day ticket, monthly transit pass or single use tickets from a Compass Vending Machine.

Be sure to pay before entering the Skytrain, Seabus or Bus. Transit police may ask to see a proof of payment and can issue a fine for riders who have not paid.

SCHEDULES AND MAPS

Public Transit schedules and maps can be found at www.translink.ca or by calling **604-953-3333**.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

<p>Immigration and Refugee Board — Refugee Protection Division (IRB-RPD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews your Basis of Claim (BOC) Form • Conducts your refugee hearing • Decides whether your refugee claim is accepted or rejected <p>Contact: Library Square, 16th Floor 300 West Georgia Street Vancouver BC V6B 6C9</p> <p>Phone: 604-666-5946 or 1-866-787-7472 Fax: 604-666-3043 Website: www.irb-cisr.gc.ca</p>	<p>Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines eligibility to make a claim at a Port of Entry • Controls the Canadian borders • Arranges removal from Canada if you receive a negative decision on your refugee claim • Has the right to detain if they cannot confirm your identity, if they believe you may be a danger, or if they believe you may not comply with Canada immigration laws <p>Contact: Library Square, 7th Floor 300 West Georgia Street Vancouver BC V6B 6C9</p> <p>Phone: 1-800-461-9999 Website: www.cbsa.asfc.gc.ca</p>	<p>Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines eligibility to make a refugee claim from within Canada • Processes work permits and Interim Federal Health Insurance (IFH) <p>Contact: 1148 Hornby Street Vancouver, BC V6Z 2C3</p> <p>Phone: 1-888-242-2100 Website: www.cic.gc.ca</p>
--	--	--

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (FREE ACCESS TO INTERNET)

There are public libraries in each municipality, and there is free Internet access at most of them. Some settlement agencies also have computers that are available for use. Computers at public libraries may have time limits on use but they will be free. For help finding a public library near you, you may call 2-1-1 and an agent will assist you.

SENDING YOUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL

School is free and mandatory for children until the age of 16. The school year starts in September and finishes in June. Each child must be registered at the local school board. Most school boards in the Greater Vancouver area have settlement workers who speak a wide range of languages and who can help with registration. Call 2-1-1 for information about local Settlement Workers in Schools.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT PARENTING

Hitting / slapping children as discipline is not tolerated in Canada and the parent could be reported to the child welfare authorities. In cases where the authorities feel that the child is being abused, the child could be taken away from his/her parents. Some settlement agencies have support groups for parents who are new to Canada and would like to know more about parenting in a Canadian context. If you're interested in receiving an orientation to Canada, many of the settlement agencies provide this service. See the section on Settlement Agencies or call 2-1-1 and an agent can assist you.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is illegal in Canada and may result in police intervention and criminal charges. Domestic abuse occurs when one person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person. An abuser doesn't "play fair" and uses fear, guilt, shame, and intimidation to wear you down and gain complete power over you. An abuser may threaten you, hurt you, or hurt those around you. Domestic abuse that includes physical violence is called domestic violence. If you are afraid for your immediate safety or the safety of others in your care, call 911. You can also call VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-

0808 for assistance and information (this service is available 24 hours a day in many languages). There are also places called ‘transition houses’ where women can go if they want to leave their relationship and need a safe place to go. Call 2-1-1 for more information or for help to contact a transition house.

SMOKING

Smoking is not allowed inside buildings. You can be fined for smoking indoors including most hotels, all restaurants and all office buildings.

NOTES ON THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

Vancouver refers strictly to the city of Vancouver.

Metro Vancouver and Greater Vancouver refers to Vancouver plus the surrounding cities, which includes Burnaby, New Westminster, Surrey, Richmond, Delta, White Rock, Langley, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, and a few other smaller cities.

The Lower Mainland is Metro Vancouver plus the Fraser Valley Regional District (which comprises the cities of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission and Hope).

SAFETY

Canada is not a dangerous country and the crime rate is relatively low, but there are areas and neighbourhoods that are not as safe as others. One of them is an area generally referred to as the Downtown Eastside, which is located just east of the Vancouver downtown area. There are homeless people who sleep on sidewalks and a number of people who have drug addictions in this area. Most people in this area are not dangerous, but it is important to remain careful at all times when in this area.

The following safety tips will help you remain safe:

- Avoid narrow alleys and poorly lit streets, and take the long way if it is safer
- Tell friends or family when and where you are going
- Avoid travelling alone if you can

- Pay attention to what happens around you at all times (on the street, the bus, the SkyTrain, etc.)
- Make note of emergency numbers (i.e. 911 and see “Other Important Phone Numbers” in this section)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Social Assistance, often called ‘Welfare’ or ‘Income Assistance’ is available for people with low or no income. This is money or benefits that the provincial government (Ministry of Social Development) gives to people who qualify because of financial hardship. Settlement agencies can help with application for Employment Assistance.

To receive this financial assistance requires acceptance by IRCC as eligible for the refugee claim process. The following is needed:

- An immigration eligibility document also known as “Refugee Protection Claimant Document”
- Proof of absence of other resources to finance basic needs such as shelter and food
- An address, even if it is temporary (the name and address of a shelter, for example)
- Address of the closest welfare office; the welfare office needs to see the address including postal code

You can make an appointment with Settlement Orientation Services for assistance in completing the Social Assistance application form.

<p>Settlement Orientation Services 2610 Victoria Drive, Vancouver BC Phone: 604-255-1881 http://www.sosbc.ca Monday – Friday 9AM – 5PM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to the Refugee Claims Process • Assistance filling out government application and immigration forms • Support in applying for legal aid • Cultural Orientation • Settlement Services • Orientation to the IFHP (healthcare) • Case management support for those living with HIV • Healthy Living
--	---

UNDERSTANDING PHONE NUMBERS

604, 778, and 236 are the 3 telephone area codes in Greater Vancouver. The urbanized area north of Greater Vancouver to Whistler uses the 604, 778 or 236 area code. The area code for the rest of the province is 250, 778 or 236. Phone numbers are composed of the area code + the local phone number. To make a call, all 10 numbers must be dialled (area code + local phone number, for example 604-709-6600).

Almost all phone numbers in the Greater Vancouver area are local calls. A recorded message will play if the call is a long distance number and redialling instructions will follow. To call long distance, dial -1- before the area code (for example 1-604-709-6600).

Local calls are free from a landline in a house or an office. To call from a public telephone (the phones located outside on the street or main commercial areas, etc.), requires two 25¢ coins.

A toll-free number is a special number beginning with 1-8xx that can be called without charge. They include 1-800, 1-888, 1-877 and 1-866. If calling from a public phone, it may be necessary to insert a 25¢ coin. It is different for each number. 1-900 numbers are not free.

Other special numbers are 3-digit emergency numbers such as 911. They are free of charge from any phone, anywhere in British Columbia.

UNDERSTANDING ADDRESSES

Addresses in Canada are often written as follows: suite or apartment number, followed by the street number and name, city, province and postal code. For example, 900 - 3400 Lake City Way, Burnaby, BC, V5A 4Y2 would indicate that the apartment or suite is 900 and that the building is located at 3400 Lake City Way in Burnaby. If there is no suite or apartment included in the address only the building number will be indicated.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The Canadian Red Cross works in partnership with other Red Cross and Red Crescent National Society's around the world to reconnect families that have been disconnected and lost due to natural disaster, conflict, or humanitarian

crises. If you have been separated from your family or would like more information on this program, please email familylinks@redcross.ca.

OTHER IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- **Alcohol and Drug Line:** Free alcohol and drug counselling in your area. Call 604-660-9382 or 1-800-663-1441.
- **Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of British Columbia:** 24 hours a day. Call 604-872-3311 or 1-800-784-2433.
- **Victim Information Line (VictimLINK):** Assistance and information for people who have been victims of any type of crime. Available 24 hours a day in many languages. Call 1-800-563-0808.
- **Youth Against Violence Line:** 24 hours a day, any language. Call 1-800-680-4264.