

Location : [Home](#) > [Opening Doors](#) > Building Your Career in Ontario


Opening Doors

Welcome to Ontario – home to one of the world’s most diverse populations. Canada’s leading industries are located in our province. That means people with the right skills and experience are in demand.

Every year, half of the people who come to Canada make Ontario their home. These people enrich our province both culturally and economically. We owe it to new Ontarians, and we owe it to ourselves, to speed their participation in our economy. We must also eliminate barriers that prevent immigrants from gaining certification in their professions or skilled trade.

The Ontario government knows that economic prosperity cannot be taken for granted. It knows the importance of a job to a family and a community. So we’ve taken action to promote economic growth throughout Ontario, including expanding opportunities for the internationally trained – whether they are just starting out or have previous work experience – to help them find the jobs they need to continue their careers and help grow Ontario’s economy.

Customs and laws concerning employment differ from country to country. So if you are internationally trained, this booklet provides helpful suggestions on how to find work and make the best use of Ontario’s services. The provincial government values the high level of skills that many internationally trained people bring to Ontario. We will work to ensure that highly qualified internationally trained tradespeople and professionals can work in their chosen field here, in their

chosen province.

This guide answers thirteen questions that new arrivals in Ontario frequently ask about working in the province. It describes the essential steps you have to take to work in Ontario. It also provides useful information on a variety of related topics.

Look for detailed information about the following essential steps:

- You must have a social insurance number to work in Ontario, and you should open a bank account.
- If you intend to practise a profession or skilled trade, find out what skills, education, or training you will need to become licensed to practise in Ontario.
- It will help your job search to have your educational qualifications assessed so employers can compare them to Ontario standards.
- You may wish to participate in an employment program designed for immigrants and the internationally trained that will provide you with any additional skills or experience you need to start your career.

1. [Where should I start in my search to find work in Ontario?](#)
2. [How can I get a social insurance number and open a bank account?](#)
3. [I'm ready to work, but how do I look for work in Ontario?](#)
4. [Where can I get help developing my job-search strategy?](#)
5. [How – and why – should I have my academic qualifications assessed?](#)
6. [How are the qualifications for skilled trades and professions assessed in Ontario?](#)
7. [What steps must I take to register to work in a skilled trade or profession?](#)
8. [What programs are available to help me expand my skills to meet Ontario standards?](#)
9. [Are there standards for fair treatment in the workplace?](#)
10. [Are there opportunities to start my own business in Ontario?](#)
11. [Is financial support available for education or training?](#)
12. [How fluent should I be in English or French to find a job?](#)
13. [Are there other resources I can turn to in my job hunt?](#)

1. Where should I start in my search to find work in Ontario?

If you are new to Canada and want information on settling in Ontario, start with *Opening Doors to Internationally Trained Professionals and Tradespeople*, on the ministry's website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/openingdoors/. This site provides an overview of Ontario government programs that are designed to help you. It's also useful to visit www.settlement.org, a comprehensive site funded by the Ontario government and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to offer information on a wide range of services, including language training and health services, including language training and health services. Another helpful site is the recently launched [211Ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca), which provides information on human services across Ontario and includes a guide for the internationally trained called **Your Guide to Working in the Professions and Trades in Ontario**. Visit www.211ontario.ca.



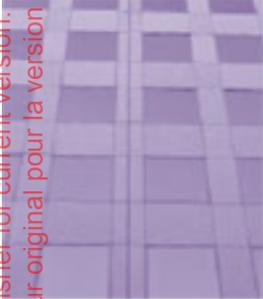
In addition:

- Agencies that provide the Ontario government's **Job Connect** program are an excellent first step: they can offer you free advice on how to create a résumé, how to develop a job-search strategy, and what employment programs and services are available to help you. (A list of key agencies is given on the last page of this booklet.) *Call the JobGrow Hotline at 1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769), or 416-326-5656 in Toronto.*
- Your résumé should clearly describe the experience, achievements, skills, and educational qualifications you have that are related to the job you are seeking. Your résumé plays an important part in how a potential employer will respond to your application, so it should be concise and error-free.
- As part of your job search, you will often be asked to provide references – a list of former employers or colleagues from workplaces or volunteer agencies who will tell potential employers about your skills, expertise, and work habits. Be sure you have the agreement of the people you intend to list as references so they will not be surprised by a phone call. Letters from employers in other countries (translated into English) that describe your qualifications and abilities are also useful.
- Computer literacy is essential in most workplaces. Basic computer training courses are available, some for no fee, through colleges and universities, community centres, and public libraries. Computer training companies provide courses for a fee.

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To find out more, go to
www.edu.gov.on.ca
then scroll to the **Spotlight** section
and click on **Opening Doors**.

2. How can I get a Social Insurance Number and open a bank account?



A social insurance number (SIN) is important identification. You will need it to apply for services from both the federal and provincial governments, or to open a bank account. To get the social insurance card application forms:

- contact any local Human Resource Centre of Canada. You can find the centre nearest you by telephoning Human Resources Development Canada. You'll find the number in the blue pages of the telephone book under "Employment and Unemployment"; or
- **call 1-800-206-7218 for information.** If you live in a remote area, you can get the forms by mail, and then mail them and all the necessary identification back. You can also download the forms from www100.hrdc.gc.ca/sinnm1e.shtml.

When you're ready to apply for your card, bring your completed application in to the centre nearest you, along with either your Immigration 1000 form or your passport with a landed immigrant stamp. You will be given a receipt to confirm that you have made an application. If you are looking for work before you get your card, take the receipt with you. It will prove to an employer that your card is on the way.

The staff at the centre will process the form and you will be mailed a plastic card with your social insurance number. This is a very important document – keep it in a safe place.

- A section of the *Settlement.org* website provides detailed information about applying for a social insurance number. Visit www.settlement.org.

You should also open a bank account as quickly as possible. In most cases, you must have an account to be able to cash a cheque made out to you. Banks, trust companies, and credit unions

are found in communities throughout Ontario and offer a variety of financial services. Discuss your individual needs with the staff of different financial institutions to determine which has the services that best match your needs and financial situation.

A social insurance number
is important identification.

For information call

1-800-206-7218.

You should open a bank account
as quickly as possible.

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3. I'm ready to work, but how do I look for work in Ontario?

Finding a job can require energy and persistence. Many jobs are not advertised and are filled through personal contacts. You can find work in a variety of ways:

- It can be most effective to talk to friends and neighbours or people you have met through immigrant service agencies, volunteer agencies, community associations, professional associations, employment resource centres, your place of worship, or clubs.
- Newspapers have classified advertisements that list jobs according to trade, profession, and industry. In some cities, you will find weekly or monthly employment papers that advertise jobs. These publications are usually free and are available at many locations including public libraries and employment resource centres.
- Community-based agencies delivering the Ontario government's Job Connect program can provide information, resources, and services designed to help you find work related to your training and experience. For further information, call the JobGrow Hotline at **1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769)**, or **416-326-5656** in Toronto.
- Agencies funded by Human Resources Development Centres of Canada help people find jobs, as well as provide access to training in job-search techniques, résumé preparation, and interview skills.



- There are many Internet sites designed to help people find work. Many also provide job-hunting information. Useful advice can be found at the Ontario government's site at www.gov.on.ca. Click on the heading Looking for a Job. Other sites can link you with employers wanting to hire and will ask you to post a résumé and provide an e-mail address.
- Many public libraries can provide free access to the Internet, as well as books with advice on how to look for work.

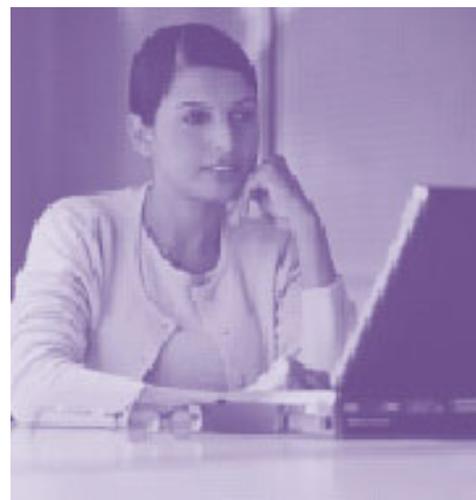
For useful advice go to
www.gov.on.ca and click on
the heading **Training and Jobs**.

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4. Where can I get help developing my job-search strategy?

Finding work can be challenging, especially in a new country. If you are like most job seekers, you probably have more skills than you realize, but may need help to prepare an effective résumé and job-search strategy.

Agencies that participate in the Ontario government's Job Connect program can provide free advice on how to create a résumé, as well as how to develop a job-search strategy; many will also coach you for a job interview.



*For further information, call the JobGrow Hotline at **1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769)**, or **416-326-5656** in Toronto.*

The following websites provide useful Canadian job-search and training links:

- the ministry's website for people who are internationally trained – www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/welcome.html. Scroll to the Spotlight section and click on Opening Doors.
- Settlement.org - managed by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, this

site is funded by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada

– www.settlement.org

- 211Ontario.ca – Your Guide to Working in the Professions and Trades in Ontario
– www.211ontario.ca
- Skills for Change – Job Search Link Page
– www.skillsforchange.org
- ONESTEP Links
– www.onestep.on.ca
- CanWorkNet
– http://www.workinfont.ca/cwn/english/main_e.cfm
- Government of Canada
– www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/



You can get
free advice at agencies
that provide the Ontario government's
Job Connect program.

5. How – and why – should I have my academic qualifications assessed?

The Ontario government recognizes and provides financial support to **World Education Services Canada (WES)** to provide an academic credential assessment service that assesses secondary and postsecondary educational qualifications from more than 180 countries and compares them to Ontario standards. The service helps employers gain a better understanding of the academic achievement of internationally trained individuals. It also helps individuals determine whether there are any gaps in their education that they need to fill in order to meet the qualifications for working in a regulated profession or skilled trade.



To contact WES, call **416-972-0070** or **1-866-343-0070**, or visit their website at www.wes.org/ca/.

It is important to note that procedures for academic credential assessment may vary from one profession to another. If you need to have your academic credentials assessed for the purpose of becoming licensed in a regulated profession, you should contact the occupational regulatory body to check which assessment service to use. *For more information, visit the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.*

World Education Services Canada helps individuals determine whether their education meets the **qualifications for working** in regulated professions or skilled trades.

6. How are the qualifications for skilled trades and professions assessed in Ontario?



Certain skilled trades and professions are regulated in Ontario in order to ensure high quality, safety, and excellence for consumers.

There are about 150 skilled trades in Ontario. Some examples are automotive service technician, tool and die maker, auto body repairer, electrician, plumber, early childhood educator, and network cabling specialist. Examples of professions include surgeon, medical doctor, nurse, pharmacist, dentist, engineer, engineering technician, teacher, and accountant.

These trades and professions are governed by regulatory bodies, which have the exclusive right to issue licences or certificates for entry into their professions and to set entry and training requirements.

It's important to plan ahead and learn about the regulatory framework if you intend to practise a skilled trade or profession in Ontario. You must register with the regulatory body that governs a given profession in order to work or use the title of the profession.

Working with industry, employers, and professional regulatory groups, the Ontario government has prepared career maps on requirements for employment in regulated trades and professions. These career maps are available through international visa offices, or online, so that immigrants can study them prior to coming to Canada. Go to the ministry's website at www.edu.gov.on.ca, scroll to the Spotlight section, and click on Opening Doors, then on Opening Doors to Internationally Trained Professionals and Tradespeople, and then on Career Maps.

Ontario government provides
on requirements for employment

fact sheets

in various regulated trades and professions.

7. What steps must I take to register to work in a skilled trade or profession?

Trades



If you are planning to work in a skilled trade in Ontario, visit a local office of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Bring any documents and letters that can explain the skills that you have and the length of time you have practised them. Staff can advise you on whether you can immediately practise your trade, whether you will need more training to learn what is required to meet Ontario standards, or what you need to study to pass a test for a Certificate of Qualification."

For general information about Ontario's apprenticeship training system and the location of a Ministry of Training, intend to work in a regulated profession, it is important Colleges and Universities office near you, call the JobGrow Hotline at 1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769), or 416-326-5656 in Toronto, or visit Skills Connect at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/skills.html>.

Professions

To work in a profession, you must register with the regulatory body of the profession. You will need to have documents related to your education and work experience translated into English. Community settlement agencies (such as COSTI, www.costi.org) and private translation agencies can provide translation services. In most cases, you will have to write one or more professional examinations. Some examinations are available in either French or English, but most are available in English only.

The registration process will take time and money. If you intend to work in a regulated profession, it is important that you contact the occupational regulatory body to fully understand the process. That way, you can make informed choices before you begin.

For more information about registering in a regulated profession, visit:

- the Ontario government website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/welcome.html . Scroll to the Spotlight section and click on Opening Doors to a Skilled Workforce;
- the Work Destinations website at www.workdestinations.org;
- the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials at www.cicic.ca.

If you **intend to work** in a
contact the occupational

**regulated profession,
regulatory body.**

8. What programs are available to help me expand my skills to meet Ontario standards?

The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is funding the development of bridge training projects to enable internationally trained people to acquire any skills and knowledge they may need to practise their occupation, profession, or skilled trade in the province, without duplicating what they have already learned elsewhere.



These innovative bridge training projects help employers, regulatory bodies, and educational institutions assess an individual's skills and competencies and provide training and workplace experience to help people move quickly into the labour market.

Bridge training projects are available in Ontario across a wide range of occupational sectors, including nursing, pharmacy, medical radiation, medical laboratory technologies, respiratory therapy, teaching, manufacturing, computer technology, midwifery, engineering, and biotechnology.

For information about current projects, visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/welcome.html>, scroll to *Opening Doors*, click on *Opening Doors to Internationally Trained Professionals and Tradespeople*, and then click on *Bridge Training Projects*.

Call the JobGrow Hotline at **1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769)**, or **416-326-5656** in Toronto.

Bridge training projects provide
to help people **move**

training and workplace **experience**
quickly into the labour market.

9. Are there standards for fair treatment in the

workplace?



In Ontario, there are workplace standards that must be met by all employers. The purpose of the standards is to ensure a work environment that is fair, safe, productive, and healthy for both employees and employers.

The issues covered by workplace standards include hours of work, minimum wage, overtime pay, wage statements, pregnancy leave, and public holidays. Men and women receive equal pay for performing work of equal value.

For more information, contact the Ontario Ministry of Labour's Employment Practices Branch, 400 University Avenue, 9th floor, Toronto, ON M7A 1T7.

- Telephone: 416-326-7160 or 1-800-531-5551
- Fax: 416-326-7061
- Website: www.gov.on.ca/LAB/english/es/

For information about workplace safety and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, which oversees Ontario's workplace safety education and training system and its no-fault workplace insurance system, visit: www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/public/Home_e or call 1-800-387-5540 or 416-344-1000.

Call **1-800-531-5551** for more information
or visit **www.gov.on.ca.**

10. Are there opportunities to start my own business in Ontario?

Ontario is an excellent place to start and grow a business. The Ontario government's Small Business Enterprise Centres can provide support to small enterprises during their first five years of operation. The centres provide a wide variety of resources including:



- free start-up consultations with a qualified business consultant
- review of business plans
- referrals to lawyers and accountants
- guidance on licences, permits, registration, regulations, and other forms and documents required to start and build a business
- on-site access to current reference material including directories, trade indexes, and books
- import and export information
- information on patents, copyrights, and trademarks
- mentoring and networking opportunities
- Internet and computer access for business research and planning

To find the centre nearest you, call 1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769) or visit www.ontariocanada.com/ontcan/en/home.jsp.

Small Business Enterprise Centres can provide **support** to small enterprises.

1. Is financial support available for education or training?



Financial support for university or college studies is available to residents of Ontario, including landed immigrants. Ontario has a system of financial support aimed at helping qualified students from lower income families meet education costs and basic living expenses through loans and grants.

To find out if you are eligible to receive support, visit the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) website at osap.gov.on.ca/.

If you have already decided to attend a specific university or college, talk with the institution's financial aid office to find out what your options are. Individual colleges and universities may provide their own support programs, including support from the Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Funds in the form of awards to help students in need.

You may find it worthwhile to explore CanLearn Interactive, at www.canlearn.ca, an online resource centre maintained by the federal government. The site has an online search engine, Scholarship Search, at www.studentawards.com, which lists thousands of scholarships, bursaries, awards, grants, and other forms of financial assistance that are supported by private-sector and not-for-profit organizations.

If you are a new apprentice, the Ontario government's Loans for Tools program offers a loan to help buy the tools and equipment you will need to perform the trade in which you are registered.

For more information, call the JobGrow Hotline at **1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769)**, or **416-326-5656** in Toronto.

Ontario has a system of financial support aimed at helping qualified students from lower-income families.

12. How fluent should I be in English or French to find a job?

English is the language of business for most employers in Ontario, though some business is conducted in French and other languages. Fluency in English and a knowledge of English-language workplace expressions and terms are critically important in Ontario's competitive job market.



A knowledge of French and another language, in addition to English, can help in a job search, especially for positions in customer service and marketing. Ontario employers expect their employees to be able to communicate in both speech and writing.

You may find that, while you have the highest qualifications in your profession, lack of fluency in English or French is affecting your ability to find a good job. If you are not fluent in English or French, you should try to improve your language skills as much as possible before coming to Ontario.

Most professional and occupational regulatory bodies require proof of English fluency. If you have already arrived in Ontario, and you want to improve your ability to communicate in English, you have a number of options:

- Most Ontario school boards offer English as a Second Language training at no cost. The Ministry of Education's website can help you locate the school board serving your neighbourhood, and tell you how to make contact. *To find your local school board, visit the Ontario Ministry of Education website at sbinfo.edu.gov.on.ca.*
- If you live some distance from a school, or would prefer to pursue your studies at home, visit the *TVOntario Independent Learning Centre website at www.ilc.org*. Courses for obtaining a high school equivalency are available in English and French.
- 211Ontario.ca lists human services organizations across Ontario, including language services. Visit www.211ontario.ca or dial "2-1-1" in participating communities.
- You can take higher-level courses in English as a Second Language, or courses to improve specific skills such as writing, at colleges and universities, for a fee:
 - *To find the university nearest you, visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/list/univers.html.*
 - *To find the college nearest you, visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/list/college.html.*
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) training is available free at centres across Ontario. Contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
 - *Telephone: 1-888-242-2100, or 416-973-4444 in Toronto;*
 - *Fax: 613-954-2221;*
 - *Website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/guide/section-04.html for instruction in English, and www.cic.gc.ca/francais/vivre/nouveaux/section-04.html for instruction in French.*

- While most Job Connect agencies provide links to English-speaking employers, some provide services for people who want to work in French. Please call the JobGrow Hotline at **1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769)**, or **416-326-5656** in Toronto, to discover the agency that can help you.
- In the Toronto area, Skills for Change can provide help for the internationally trained who are looking for work and speak either English or French.
 - *Telephone: 416-658-3101.*
- Your local YMCA may have a language assessment centre that can help you assess your ability to work in English. Look in the telephone book for the agency nearest you.

If you are **not** fluent in **English** or **French**, you should try to
improve your language skills
as much as possible **before** coming to **Ontario**.

13. Are there other resources I can turn to in my job hunt?

The following organizations and services in the Greater Toronto Area and elsewhere work together to offer information resources and/or employment services to internationally trained professionals and workers. These organizations are a good place for newcomers to start looking for and finding work in Ontario:



- ACCES – Toronto
489 College Street, Suite 100
Toronto ON M6G 1A5
416-921-1800
- ACCES – Scarborough
2100 Ellesmere Road, Suite 250
Scarborough ON M1H 3B7
416-431-5326
- COSTI – Caledonia
700 Caledonia Road

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Toronto ON M6B 4H9

416-789-7925

- COSTI – Vaughan
7800 Jane Street, Unit 1
Concord ON L4K 4R6
905-669-5627
- Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
15 Colborne Street East
Oshawa ON L1G 1M1
905-579-1821
- London Unemployment Help Centre
114 Dundas Street, 2nd Floor
London ON N6A 1G1
519-439-0501
- Lutherwood-CODA – Guelph
30 Wyndham Street North
Guelph ON N1H 4E5
519-822-4141
- Niagara Falls Employment Help Centre
6100 Thorold Stone Road, Unit 7
Niagara Falls ON L2J 1A3
905-358-0021
- St. Catharines Unemployed Help Centre
122 B Queenston Street
St. Catharines ON L2R 2Z3
905-685-1353
- The Working Centre
58 Queen Street South
Kitchener ON N2G 1V6
519-743-1151
- Windsor Unemployed Help Centre
6955 Cantelon Drive
Windsor ON N8T 3J9
519-944-4900

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For more information, call the JobGrow Hotline,
1-888-JobGrow (1-888-562-4769), or **416-326-5656** in Toronto.

The web site for the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration provides information about Ontario government services and links to other organizations that can help. Go to <http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/english/index.html> and click on Immigration and Settlement to learn more.



ISBN 0-7794-6758-2

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