

Canada Ultimate Masterclass

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SETTLING IN CANADA AS A NEW IMMIGRANT

ACCOMMODATION FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS

A lot of people waste lots of money in their first few weeks/months of landing in Canada due to ignorance.

You need to arrange where you will be staying when you are moving to Canada. If you don't have any friend or relative, then, you need to arrange for your own accommodation.

Let's take a look at a few options for accommodation we have for new immigrants coming to Canada;

- 1) <http://www.safehomestay.com/>
- 2) <http://www.staystudio6.com/>
- 3) <http://www.budgetpathotel.bc.ca/>
- 4) <http://www.welcomebc.ca>
- 5) <http://www.rentbc.com>
- 6) <https://www.airbnb.ca/>

In searching for accommodation, you can use the following Sites;

- <http://www.hometrader.ca>
- <http://www.capreit.com>
- <http://www.kijiji.ca>
- <http://www.mls.ca>
- <https://4rent.ca/>
- <https://www.rentfaster.ca/>
- <https://www.trovit.ca/>
- <https://www.kijiji.ca/>
- <https://www.craigslist.ca/about/sites>
- <http://www.apartmate.ca/>
- <https://www.padmapper.com/apartments/>
- <http://www.viewit.ca/>
- <https://www.rentcompass.com/>

- <https://condos.ca/>
- <http://www.rentseeker.ca/>

BANKING IN CANADA

Banking in Canada, is easy, convenient and reliable. It doesn't require the several back and forth we face in Africa.

If you have recently immigrated to Canada or plan to do so soon, this post covers what you need to know about the best banks for newcomers.

Newcomers to Canada have their hands full when they first get here. You need many things to figure out...housing, jobs, education, banking, investing, and more.

To help you become established in Canada and set you up for financial success, you will find this piece very useful.

The Best Newcomer Bank Accounts in Canada (Big Banks)

Some of the best newcomer bank accounts are offered by the big banks. These financial institutions are well-established, with branches and ATMs across the country.

The Big 5 banks are:

- Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
- TD Canada Trust (TD)
- Bank of Montreal (BMO)
- The Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotiabank)
- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC)

Two other large banks with noteworthy new immigrant banking packages are:

- HSBC Bank Canada
- National Bank of Canada

1. HSBC Bank Canada Newcomers Program

HSBC is one of the biggest banks in the world, and HSBC Bank Canada is the top international bank in Canada.

As an international bank, HSBC offers accounts and services uniquely suited to newcomers, including multi-currency savings accounts, globally-accessible bank accounts, and \$0 wire transfers.

These accounts are available whether you are a permanent resident, foreign worker, or international student.

For the HSBC Premier chequing accounts, you get access to unlimited transactions, premium credit cards, a dedicated relationship manager, foreign currency savings accounts (USD, Euro, GBP, HKD and RMB), easy money transfers, and other perks. There is no fee for the first 12 months if you meet the eligibility requirements. After the first year, the monthly cost of \$34.95 continues to be waived if you meet deposit requirements.

The HSBA Advance chequing also includes unlimited transactions and no monthly fees if you meet the eligibility conditions. Otherwise, this account has a \$25 fee.

2. BMO NewStart Program

This program is available to newcomers who have arrived in Canada within the last 5 years.

The BMO Newstart Program offers 1-year of no-fee banking under its Performance Plan.

This banking package comes with:

- No monthly account fees for 1 year (\$16.95/month after the first year); waived with a \$4,000 daily balance
- Unlimited debit and Interface-Transfer transactions
- Unlimited BMO Global Money Transfers with no fee for a year
- 1 free non-BMO ATM withdrawal per month (in Canada)
- \$60 rebate with a small safety deposit box for 1 year

Newcomers also get access to other banking products, including credit cards, international money transfers, investments, mortgage loans, and more.

Its promotional offer includes up to a **\$400 cash bonus** and various other savings and benefits.

3. Scotiabank StartRight Program

Scotiabank is the third-largest bank in Canada by asset size. Through its StartRight program, newcomers can access a free chequing account (for 12 months), savings, credit cards, mortgages, personal loans, free credit score checks, and more.

The Scotiabank StartRight program caters to newcomers who have been in Canada for 0-3 years.

You can open a Scotiabank Preferred Package Chequing account and get:

- **Up to a \$300 promotional offer** when you meet the eligibility requirements
- No monthly fees for 12 months (costs \$16.95 after the first year), or it can be waived after the first year if you maintain a minimum balance of \$4,000
- Unlimited debit and Interac e-Transfers
- One free withdrawal/month from a non-Scotiabank ATM
- Access to a high-interest savings account
- Up to \$150 fee waived on Scotiabank credit cards in the first year
- Free credit score check

- Earn rewards on debit transactions via the Scene+ Rewards program

4. RBC Newcomer Advantage

The RBC Newcomer Advantage program is offered by Canada's largest bank to permanent residents and international students.

Under the program, you can open an RBC Advantage Banking account, RBC Signature No Limit Banking account, or RBC VIP Banking account and pay no monthly fees for 12 months.

These accounts will cost you \$11.95/month, \$16.95/month, or \$30/month, respectively, after your first year.

The RBC Signature No Limit Banking comes with unlimited debits and Interac e-Transfer transactions. You also get:

- Two free international money transfers per month for 12 months
- Free small safe deposit box for two years
- Access to credit cards, mortgages, car loans, business accounts, and investments
- 1 NSF fee rebated each year
- Free personalized cheques

Without a credit history, you can also apply for one of Royal Bank of Canada's no annual fee credit cards such as the RBC Cash Back Mastercard.

5. CIBC Welcome To Canada Banking Package

CIBC's welcome to Canada banking package is available to newcomers who obtained their permanent resident status within the past 5 years and

temporary resident workers who have a Canadian work permit issued for 12 months or longer.

A CIBC Smart for Newcomers account offers:

- No monthly fees for 2 years (up to \$16.95/month after)
- Unlimited debit and Interac e-Transfer transactions
- One free non-CIBC ATM withdrawal per month in Canada

CIBC makes it easy to qualify for your first credit card with no income, security deposit, or credit history required.

Newcomers can also access mortgages, personal loans, and investment products.

6. TD New To Canada Banking Package

TD's New to Canada Banking is for permanent and temporary residents who have been in Canada for two years or less.

You can open a TD Unlimited Chequing Account and get:

- No monthly fees for six months (\$16.95/month after; waived with a \$4,000 balance)
- Unlimited transactions (debit and Interac e-Transfers)
- No TD fee on any ATMs in Canada
- Fee rebate on select credit cards for the first year
- Unlimited international transfers for up to 12 months

TD also offers a variety of credit cards, loan products, investments, and savings accounts.

7. National Bank Newcomers Package

You can open a National Bank account – The Connected or The Total package – and pay no flat monthly fees for the first year.

The Connected account has a standard \$15.95 fee/month, but this fee is waived if you maintain a \$4,500 daily monthly balance.

This account includes unlimited transactions and \$30 off the annual fee of an eligible credit card.

Depending on the products you sign up for, you could also get a fee reduction in years 2 and 3.

All seven big banks discussed above have thousands of ATMs their clients can use across Canada. They also have physical bank branches you can walk into to conduct transactions.

Lastly, National Bank often has promotions for new accounts, and you can score free cash when you join.

8. Best New Immigrant Bank Accounts (Online Banks)

Online banks offer newcomers access to regular no-fee chequing accounts that pay interest and are non-promotional.

You can use a full-fledged online bank as a primary bank or a secondary bank to complement your other accounts.

An online bank can save you hundreds of dollars in annual banking fees because the no-monthly-fee status of your chequing account does not end after 12 months.

Online banks in Canada provide security similar to their traditional bank counterparts, and you enjoy deposit protection through the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC).

Also, many of them are owned by larger and more established banks.

9. Simplii Financial

Simplii Financial is the online banking arm of CIBC. It has almost 2 million clients, and its no-fee chequing account offers:

- \$350 cash bonus when you open a new account and meet the eligibility requirements
- No monthly account fees...ever
- Unlimited debit and Interac e-Transfer transactions
- Access to 3,400 free CIBC ATMs across Canada
- Access to a high-interest savings account
- Interest on your chequing account balance
- International money transfers
- Mobile cheque deposits
- Free cheques

Simplii also offers a no-fee cash back credit card, a high-interest savings account, mortgages, personal loans, and investment funds.

9. EQ Bank

EQ Bank is an online banking choice for new Canadians. It is owned by Equitable Bank, a federally regulated Schedule I bank with over \$42 billion in assets under management.

EQ Bank offers one of the best savings rates in Canada.

While this bank does not replace your primary bank (i.e. it offers a limited selection of products), you can use EQ bank to hold your savings and send international money transfers.

The EQ Bank Savings Plus Account offers:

- Zero monthly account fees
- High interest rate is paid on every dollar
- Hybrid account options (savings + chequing) with unlimited debits and Interac e-Transfers

- Cheap international money transfers
- Free mobile cheque deposits

EQ Bank also offers GIC products with varying term lengths, and you can open a registered account for tax-free savings (TFSA) or registered retirement savings (RRSP).

10. Tangerine Bank

Tangerine Bank is the direct online banking arm of Scotiabank (a Big Five bank). It is one of the most popular online banks in Canada.

Tangerine's No-Fee Daily Chequing Account offers the following:

- No monthly account fees
- Unlimited debit and Interac e-Transfer transactions
- Interest on your chequing account balance
- The first chequebook of 50 cheques is free
- Free mobile cheque deposits
- 24/7 phone support
- Access to 3,500+ free Scotiabank ATMs across Canada

Tangerine Bank offers a full suite of financial products, and newcomers can take advantage of its 2% money-back credit card which has no annual fee.

You can also access personal loans, mortgages, investment funds, GICs, a home equity line of credit, and a high-interest savings account.

What To Look For in the Best Newcomer Bank Accounts in Canada

Canada has a robust and safe financial system. For day-to-day banking needs, newcomers can choose from various financial institutions, including traditional banks, online banks, and credit unions.

Some things you should consider when choosing your first bank account as a new immigrant are:

Banking Needs

What do you need in a bank account? How many transactions will you conduct every month? Are you comfortable with online-only banking? Do you want to open other accounts (e.g. mortgage, investments, savings, credit cards, etc.) in the same place? Will you be sending international money transfers? Do you need things like bank drafts?

For the best deals and to save on fees, you may need to open accounts at more than one financial institution. For example, some banks offer higher savings interest rates or have no monthly bank fees, and others have excellent credit cards.

Monthly Fees

Typically, traditional banks will offer you a promotional period (usually 12 months) when you don't pay a monthly account fee. Afterward, a regular fee may apply. Consider whether these fees are worth your while. Some banks will continue to waive their monthly fee if you keep a minimum balance.

Digital banks often offer regular no-fee chequing accounts with free transactions.

Transaction Fees

In addition to the monthly account maintenance fees, you should also be aware of transactional and service fees and limitations, e.g. ATM withdrawal fees, Interac e-Transfer fees, cheques, online bill payments, and others.

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In addition to the monthly account maintenance fees, you should also be aware of transactional and service fees and limitations, e.g. ATM withdrawal fees, transfer fees, cheques, online bill payments, and others.

Convenience and Access

How accessible is your bank? While most banking transactions can easily be completed from the comfort of your home, you should choose a bank with branches close to where you live if you plan to conduct many in-branch transactions.

Online-only banks like Tangerine and Simplii Financial have little to no physical branches you can walk into. However, they have thousands of ATMs you can access for free across Canada.

Some banks even allow you to open an account before you land in Canada.

Interest Rates

You want to earn a competitive interest rate on the funds in your savings account. Compare interest rates across banks and read the fine print.

Some online banks will pay you interest on your chequing account balance

Credit Cards

Can you qualify for a credit card without requiring Canadian credit history? A bank that offers credit cards through its newcomer program can make it easier for you to build a credit history.

How To Open a Bank Account as a Newcomer

To open a new bank account after you land in Canada, you will need to visit a branch and bring the following documents with you:

- Permanent resident card or confirmation of permanent residence (IMM5292 or IMM5688)
- Work permit, if applicable (for foreign workers – IMM1422)
- Study permit for international students (IMM1208)
- Social Insurance Number
- 1-2 pieces of valid government-issued photo ID, such as a passport or driver's license
- Proof of enrolment in a post-secondary school (applicable for students)

Before visiting the bank, find their contact number online and book an appointment. You can also start the online application process until you get to the point where it asks you to book an appointment.

Some banks allow you to start the account opening process while you are still abroad. In that case, you will need to complete an application form and send it in. After becoming a landed immigrant, you will need to attend a bank branch to finalize the process.

The application process is completed online for online banks, and you may have to scan your documentation.

How Does Banking Work in Canada?

If your home country is like mine and you are not used to paying a monthly fee to keep a chequing (aka current or checking) account open, welcome to Canada!

Here, a traditional chequing account includes monthly maintenance fees. However, some banks waive this fee if you consistently maintain a minimum balance in your account throughout the month.

The two main Canadian bank accounts you will need are a chequing and a savings account.

Chequing Account

This bank account holds money for everyday transactions. If your employer pays you by direct deposit, this is the account it is deposited.

You can also use this account for bill payments, e-Transfers, and pre-authorized debits. Your client or debit card is connected to your chequing account.

There are many chequing accounts, including general, seniors, student, youth, and business accounts.

You can request cheques with your bank account and use these for issuing payments.

Savings account

This account is where you keep the money you don't need immediately. It pays interest, and your balances increase over time.

There are many types of savings accounts, including high-interest savings accounts, tax-free savings accounts (TFSA), registered retirement savings accounts (RRSP), U.S. dollar savings, and more.

Other terms you should be familiar with in Canada's banking industry are:

Bank fees: These are the fees you pay for keeping an account open (monthly maintenance fees) or for specific transactions (service and account transaction fees).

Interac-Transfer: This is a fast method for sending money from your bank account to anyone with a Canadian bank account. To complete an Interac e-Transfer, you need the recipient's email and/or mobile telephone number.

ATMs: Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) or Automated Banking Machines (ABMs) are electronic cash dispenser machines you can use to deposit or withdraw cash.

Depending on your account package, transactions at your bank's ATMs may be free; however, when you use another bank's ATM, there may be a convenience fee.

NSF fees: A non-sufficient fund (NSF) fee is charged when your cheque or pre-authorized debit payment bounces because you don't have sufficient funds in your bank account to cover a transaction. This fee can be as high as \$48 per NSF transaction.

SIN CARDS:

After 'landing' we'll have to visit the nearest Services Canada Office for the SIN Card. We get the SIN No. immediately as a 'print-out' -signed & stamped upon applying, the same day, the same time. That'd suffice for all our further actions in Canada, viz Job Search, Bank a/c, House Hunting etc. The card shall come to us in approx. 3 weeks. For its collection -ditto applies as above, for the PR Cards.

NOTE: Remember, we don't need the SIN Card for anything. Only the SIN No. Which we'll get the same time as we apply for it. It'd be wise to visit Services Canada Office the very next day upon arrival.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Both PR Card & SIN Cards are Federal documents. Meaning? One card for the entire nation - Canada.

HEALTH CARDS

Health is a provincial matter. It is NOT FEDERAL. Thus, if you change provinces, you'll have to AGAIN get that province's Health Card. And the waiting period* shall apply. Of course, a previous province's health card remains valid for few days/months in another province, but not all benefits could be availed.

The Waiting Period

As I know, Alberta [eg. Calgary, Edmonton etc] & Manitoba [eg. Winnipeg] are the Only provinces where there is NO WAITING period for the Health Insurance. In other provinces there is waiting time to get the Health Benefits'. In Ontario [eg. Toronto, Ottawa etc.] it is 3 months.

Temporary Health Coverage

It's wise to obtain a 'temporary' health coverage before you fly. Off course not required if you are going to Alberta or Manitoba. That temp. coverage shall come in the way of "Travel Insurance", which you can obtain from ANY insurance company in your homeland. The costs depend on the length of coverage. Usually, we should take it for 3-4 months, as that is the waiting time in all provinces.

Arriving In Canada With Children: What To Expect

After passing through immigration and customs, you can finally say that you've made it to Canada with your loved ones!

So what's next? This is the list of what to expect and the steps you should take during the first few weeks in Canada.

Expect to do a lot of researching and working on the administrative tasks in the first week.

1. **Make sure to apply for your Social Insurance Numbers (SIN)**
and figure out what local schools or universities you'd like to register your child at.

2. **You'll most likely do a lot of exploring.**
Hence, it would be best if you took long walks around the neighbourhood with your children so both you and your family could familiarize themselves with their new daily environment.

3. **ALL provinces in Canada have amazing natural and indoor attractions!**

What's great about Canada is that there's nothing to lose no matter what city you choose to live in.

It's best to check out some local attractions during your first few weeks before both you and your children start school and work.

Treat your first few weeks as if you are on holiday.

4. **Expect for culture shock to start kicking in after your first week, or even as early as the day you arrive.**

Immigrant families should be able to adapt to the Canadian culture.

After all, it's expected of you the minute you decided to apply for permanent residency.

Start to learn the ways of Canadian locals and teach them to your spouse and children.

It may take a long process to adapt to a new country, but Canada is a relatively easy country to adapt to.

5. Prepare to be sociable. Canadians are relatively friendly, so try making some new friends within the neighbourhood.

You can start by taking your kids to the nearest park and starting conversations with other Canadian parents.

Take note that you should always say hello and address your name before approaching locals.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO YOU NEED TO RELOCATE WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Canada is one of the best countries in the world to raise a family. Once you decide to, you will need to get the following documents for your child:

1. Immunization Records since birth. Please note that this must be duly signed and stamped by your Doctor.
2. Original Birth Certificates, names, date of birth, must be same as on International passport /Permanent Residency Card.
3. Educational Transcripts and Transfer Certificates, signed by school attended. (Optional, may come in handy so why not get it?)
4. Catholic Baptismal Certificate (If you are Catholic or want your child / children to attend the Catholic Public Schools.)
5. Extra Passport photographs. (Optional)

You will need to show or submit, copies of these documents during the process of getting your child enrolled in school. The process of enrolling children in

school is pretty hassle free. You can check school ratings online, read reviews, ask around about the schools, you can even schedule appointments to go and have a look at the schools before you make your final decision.

It's very important for you not to settle, go for whichever your heart is happy with. Remember part of the reason, if not the number one reason you are here in the first place is for these children. So, choosing the best schools for them should be a priority.

PRE-ARRIVAL SERVICES

You and your family can get free in-person and online services to help prepare for and adjust to life in Canada. We call these **pre-arrival services**.

Pre-arrival services can help you to

- Prepare for your move to Canada
- Get your education, work experience and credentials recognized in Canada
- Connect with employers to find a job
- Connect with free services after you arrive in Canada

You can access all of the services for free

To access the services, you need one of the following:

- An IRCC invitation letter to obtain pre-arrival services,
- A Confirmation of Permanent Residence (COPR) letter,
- A passport request letter that indicates Permanent Resident visa issuance,
- An IRCC request that an applicant for permanent residence complete medicals, A Single Entry Permanent Resident Visa, or
- A Permanent Resident Visa pick up notification letter

Examples Of Pre-Arrival Services Include:

- Active Engagement and Integration Project (AEIP) - Overseas services such as community engagement programs and job training. Provided by SUCCESS.

Link: <https://aeipsuccess.ca/>

- Build ON - Online services for newcomers who want to work in the Skilled Trades in Ontario. Provided by the YMCA.

Link: <https://www.ymcaywca.ca/employment-immigrant-services/pre-employment-skills-training-programs/buildon-pre-arrival-services/>

- Canadian Employment Connections - A program that provides sector-specific training and job search services to newcomers as they prepare to immigrate to Canada. Provided by ACCES Employment.

Link: <https://acesemployment.ca/programs/pre-arrival-programs/canadian-employment-connections>

- ConnexionsFrancophones.ca - Offers employment services to Francophone newcomers before you land in Canada. Provided in partnership by La Cité.

Link: <https://www.connexionsfrancophones.ca/fr>

- Integrating Newcomers provided by British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) - Helps newcomers find jobs in construction in British Columbia.

Link: <https://bccassn.com/skilled-workforce/bcca-integrating-newcomers/>

- International Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) - Orientation initiatives for refugees, economic and family class immigrants, including spouses and dependents. COA has 20 permanent training sites internationally and operates in 40 countries. Provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Link: <https://coa.iom.int/>

- Next Stop Canada - An online pre-arrival service offering essential and updated information and orientation on topics such as settlement, employment, housing, health, language and much more. Provided by the YMCA of Greater Toronto.

Link: <https://ymcagta.org/immigrant-services/next-stop-canada>

- Orientation to Ontario - Offers online webinars, resources and a settlement plan personalized to your needs to help you start preparing to come to Ontario. Provided by COSTI Immigrant Services.

Link: <https://orientationontario.ca/en/>

- Planning for Canada - In-person and online orientation sessions to economic and family-class immigrants worldwide. Gives access to information, resources, and contacts to help you and your family succeed in the Canadian workplace and community. Provided by Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) and the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP).

Link: <https://www.planningforcanada.ca/>

- Pre-arrival Supports and Services (PASS) - Online supports and services to internationally trained nurses to start their career in Canada. Provided by the CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses.

Link: <https://pass4nurses.org/>

- Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) - Pre-arrival orientation, employment, and workplace culture support for new immigrants focusing on job search, job readiness and job retention. Provided by ISANS.

Link: <https://arriveprepared.ca/>

FOR TECH

GO Talent Canada

<http://www.ictc-ctic.ca/go-talent/>

FOR SKILLED TRADES

Build On: Pre-Arrival Trades in Ontario

Link: <https://www.builtonbatit.com/en/Home>

FOR FRENCH SPEAKING

Francophone

Link: https://www.vivreencb.ca/predepart/index?lang=en_US

BRITISH COLUMBIA

SETTLERS IN BC INTERESTED IN CONSTRUCTION

Link: <https://www.bccassn.com/jobs-&-careers/bcca-integrating-newcomers/>

WISHING YOU SUCCESS IN YOUR RELOCATION JOURNEY