

LABOUR MARKET NEWS

Alberta
Employment and Immigration



Fort McMurray • Wood Buffalo

Settling in: Services for newcomers to Fort McMurray

Learning a new language Settling into a new home Finding a new job

Immigrating to Canada can be a difficult journey. But there are services available in Fort McMurray to help you. Settlement services are available to landed immigrants, refugees and live-in caregivers. In this bulletin, we provide information on where and how to find those services.

Learning a new language

Adjusting to a new country is much easier if you know the language. In Fort McMurray, you can get language training at Keyano College.

Keyano offers Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and classes are offered during the day. The LINC program is free to landed immigrants, refugees and live-in caregivers (not temporary foreign workers). LINC helps students gain an intermediate level of English.

Other courses that Keyano College offers are General English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Professional Purposes and English for Skilled Immigrants (ESI). When a newcomer goes to the college

looking for language training, staff will determine which program fits each person. Some courses are free, depending on your immigration status.

“(Newcomers) have made a big decision to come to Canada. They’re very eager to get settled and get their lives back together,” says Liliam Vasquez, English language program coordinator with Keyano College. “It’s very rewarding helping these people—they’re all here to succeed.”

YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services also offers interpretation and translating services for about 11 languages.

“Right now we have 16 volunteers (interpreters and translators) and we can provide services in the following languages: Italian, Russian, Arabic, Somali, Mandarin, Spanish, Portuguese, Gujarati,

Hindi, French and German,” says Myra MacKay, programs director at YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services.

YMCA Immigrant Settlement

Services: (780) 743-2970, #201, 10011 Franklin Avenue

Keyano College, contact Liliam Vasquez: (780) 792-5615, 8115 Franklin Avenue

Settling into a new home: Finding housing

Finding a place to live in Fort McMurray is difficult for anyone. Housing prices are high and availability is low. But, it is not impossible—there are options available.

In Fort McMurray, you can rent a house, an apartment, or even a room. Some of the best places to look for rental accommodations are the local newspaper, online rental websites and by just keeping your eyes open for “For Rent” signs. For average monthly rental prices (and average monthly real estate prices) in Fort McMurray, visit Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information.

Wood Buffalo Labour Market

Information: www.woodbuffalo.net/AboutCostHouse.html, (780) 715-0222



WHAT ARE Settlement Services

Settlement services are agencies or organizations that assist immigrants and help them establish themselves in their new location.

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Process operators

This publication has been prepared by Alberta Employment and Immigration. Find us online at www.woodbuffalo.net.

Where to find rentals?

Fort McMurray Today newspaper:
(www.fortmcmurraytoday.com),
(780) 743-8186, 8550 Franklin Avenue

Places for Rent website
(www.places4rent.com)

For affordable home rental or ownership, contact the Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation. Originally created by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to help residents with the rising housing costs, the organization has helped over 700 clients since 2001.

Online, good places to look for a home to purchase are the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and ComFree. MLS lists all of the homes for sale that are through a real estate agent and Com Free lists private sales (not through a real estate agent). You will need a lawyer either way.

Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation:
www.wbhadc.ca, (780) 799-4050,
9th floor, 9915 Franklin Avenue

MLS: www.mls.ca

ComFree: www.comfree.com

Finding a new job: Accreditation and education

An important thing to consider in making the move to Canada is whether your training and education will be recognized here. While you should do this before you move, once you are here, you can access the International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS). It is a program that looks at the education of internationally-trained people and issues certificates of comparison to Alberta standards.

All tradespeople working in Alberta must have their Alberta certification from Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) or have the Interprovincial Red Seal.

IQAS: employment.alberta.ca/IQAS,
(780) 743-7192, 9915 Franklin Avenue

AIT: www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca,
(780) 743-7150,
7th floor, 9915 Franklin Avenue

Red Seal: www.red-seal.ca

Keyano College: www.keyano.ca,
(780) 791-4800, 8115 Franklin Avenue

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information (Education resources):
www.woodbuffalo.net/linksRESEd.html,
(780) 715-0222

Finding a new job: Looking for work

There are many resources in Fort McMurray for finding employment. The Government of Alberta Labour Market Information Centre (LMIC) is a good place to conduct your job search. It provides free access to fax, phone, computers, Internet and photocopiers for your job search.

Another good resource is the Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information website and hotline. Other resources and contact information are found on page 4.

Profile: Meet the Khalifa family

From: Libya

Arrived: 2002

Status: Landed Immigrant

A recent immigrant to Canada, Faruq Khalifa, is giving back to other immigrants by volunteering for the Host program (offered through the YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services).

"I like helping with this program and encouraging newcomers to think more positively," says Khalifa. He spoke of the frustrations people feel when their qualifications are not recognized here. "When someone moves to another country, especially Canada, the expectations are high—you think about something almost perfect—but it's not. The system is OK, but the system is not perfect. People can get frustrated and they might decide to leave or decide to change their career and move onto something completely different and hopefully they can make a better life for their kids."

Khalifa has been in Canada for about six years and first settled in Montreal. Realizing it was not the right place for his background (he's presently a reliability engineer for Albion Sands), he moved to Fort McMurray. Working odd jobs, he found a part-time job working in his field in Prince George, B.C., then moved to Calgary and then Fort McMurray again where he's been for a couple of years. Before coming to Canada, he had his education assessed through the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (www.engineerscanada.ca) and they considered him to be an engineer. Once he arrived in Canada, he applied for professional status.

Khalifa says some of the difficulties of moving to Canada are learning a new language, finding a job and learning how to create a proper resumé.

"When I came here, I used the Labour Market Information Centre and Lokken



Faruq, Ilan, and Tehart Khalifa

Career Training and they helped me do my resumé," says Khalifa. "I had my resumé and I thought it was OK, but I learned later that the format was different here. Now that I'm sometimes involved in hiring, I realize you have to follow a certain format because people think differently."

Khalifa says one difficulty living in Fort McMurray is that they found it hard for his wife, Tehart, to find language classes that are available in the evening. Keyano provides daytime LINC classes. (There is no provider of daytime LINC classes.)

LMIC: employment.alberta.ca, (780) 743-7149, 9915 Franklin Avenue (ask for the Labour Market Information Advisor)

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information: www.woodbuffalo.net, (780) 715-0222

Settling into a new home: Community resources

To find settlement services, start with the Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray or YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services. They provide the services available to make settling here easier.

The Host Program at the YMCA partners volunteer residents of Fort McMurray with newcomers so they can adjust to life in Canada and learn about Canadian culture and the community.

“It’s important that (newcomers) are educated about the community and the resources that are here to help them,” says Donna McKeough, project/resource coordinator with the

Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo website has information such as transit information, maps, libraries, parks, licensing, social support services, emergency services and events and festivals.

Fort McMurray is in the Northern Lights Health Region (NLHR). Contact them for public health centre locations or for information on doctors who are accepting patients.

Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray: www.mcaonline.ca, (780) 791-5186, 10003 Gordon Avenue, (closed for the summer 2008, open again in September)

YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services: www.ymca.woodbuffalo.org, (780) 743-2970, #201, 10011 Franklin Avenue

NLHR: www.nlhr.ca, (780) 791-6161

RMWB: www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca, (780) 743-7000, 9909 Franklin Avenue

My McMurray: mymcmurray.com

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information: www.woodbuffalo.net/linksRESIntro.html, (780) 715-0222

“A lot of the challenges you face coming here are not specifically a newcomer challenge,” says MacKay from the YMCA. “There’s housing, education, access, daycare, busing challenges, and a lack of resources—all of those things (that everyone faces).”

YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services: (780) 743-2970, #201, 10011 Franklin Avenue

As of August 1, 2008, Temporary Foreign Workers will be able to access settlement services through YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services as part of a pilot project funded by Alberta Employment and Immigration and will include basic settlement services.

Profile: Meet Nur Basaran

From: Turkey

Arrived: 2004

Status: Landed Immigrant

Moving to another country is a difficult adjustment, and while learning a new language and starting work may be daunting, it can be just as difficult to be at home raising a family.

“Fort McMurray is good for working people, but if you are at home, looking after a child, it is not easy,” says Nur Basaran, an immigrant from Turkey. “My husband is gone all day. He leaves at 5 a.m.—very early—and gets back at 6 or 7 p.m., depending on the traffic. And we are eating supper and then he is going to bed.”

Basaran and her family immigrated in 2004 and settled in Toronto. They have since moved and have been living in Fort McMurray for the last couple of years. Basaran and her husband originally had mixed feeling about their move to Canada.



“My husband went to work and he had problems because he came with high qualifications that didn’t mean anything when he got here,” says Basaran. “We weren’t happy because this isn’t why we came here—we wanted higher standards. In our country, we had high standards.”

Her husband found a job working in Fort McMurray that has him working in his field (senior contract administrator in oil sands construction). Basaran would like to work or volunteer in a political environment.

Basaran says a benefit to living in Canada is the education opportunities, especially for their son. In Turkey, she says, education is expensive and difficult to qualify for.

Some of the programs that they’ve accessed in Canada and found very useful are the LINC and Host programs (see contact information on page 4).

“It’s very useful to volunteer to learn the community. In Toronto, there are commercial companies that take volunteers. Qualified people come to Canada who can’t find a job easily in their field and they accept working at a job for free, for example three months, expecting they will get hired by the same company.”

Basaran mentions some differences in interviews between Canada and Turkey. “The question: ‘What are your worst qualities?’ – It’s a funny question because you can’t really be honest. You can’t say, ‘oh, I’m a bad person!’”

Resources for immigrants

General Immigration resources

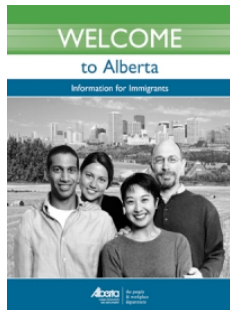
- **Canada Alberta Service Centre** – access both Government of Canada and Alberta Employment and Immigration services (see contact information on the right).
- **Alberta Employment and Immigration** website, click on **Services to Immigrants**: employment.alberta.ca/cps/rde/xchg/hre/hs.xsl/4305.html
- **Alberta-Canada** website – Alberta's official immigration website: www.alberta-canada.com/immigration
- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada** website: www.cic.gc.ca, 888-242-2100

Government resources for immigrants

- **Alberta Temporary Foreign Worker Helpline**: (877) 944-9955
- **Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (previously Provincial Nominee Program)**: www.alberta-canada.com/ainp
- **Alberta-Canada job site**: Job postings aimed at foreign workers: www.alberta-canada.com/jobs

Publications

- Useful **Alberta Learning Information Service** publications for immigrants: www.alis.alberta.ca/ep/careershop



Welcome to Alberta: Information for Immigrants – Covering a wide range of topics, this free guide provides useful information for settling and living in the province. Copies are available at your local Labour Market Information Centre (LMIC) or by downloading a copy from: www.alis.alberta.ca/ep/careershop. Also look for **Working in Alberta: A guide for internationally trained and educated immigrants**.



English Express: Looking for a job – This free publication helps people learn important job search skills. Readers will identify skills and interests, set goals, prepare a resumé, develop a backup plan and prepare for a job interview. Other similar publications are **English Express: Be safe at work** and **English Express: Employment law protects workers**. Copies of **English Express** can be found at your local LMIC, or by downloading copies from: www.alis.alberta.ca/ep/careershop.



For information on resources and career decisions in Fort McMurray, contact us at:

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
(780) 715-0222

www.woodbuffalo.net
E-mail: info@woodbuffalo.net
employment.alberta.ca

Alberta Employment and Immigration offices

Fort McMurray

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
Phone (780) 715-0222
info@woodbuffalo.net

Canada-Alberta Service Centre
Labour Market Information Centre
Provincial Building, 9915 Franklin Avenue
Phone (780) 743-7192, employment.alberta.ca

Other career and employment services

Fort McMurray

Fort McMurray Association for Community Living - CHOICES Employment Services
10010 Franklin Avenue, Phone (780) 791-3355
www.fmacl.ca

YMCA - Youth Connections
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue,
Phone (780) 791-7520, www.ymcaes.com

Franco Job
312 Abasand Drive
Centre Communautaire Scolaire, Boréal
Phone (780) 791-9779
www.acfa.ab.ca/woodbuffalo/francojob.asp

Athabasca Tribal Council Employment
9206 McCormick Drive
Phone (780) 791-7445
www.atc97.org/employment

Keyano College Career Employment Services
Phone (780) 799-1589
www.keyano.ca

Fort McKay

Fort McKay First Nation Employment & Training Office
Phone (780) 828-2430, www.fortmckay.com

Conklin

Conklin Employment Services
Nakewin Centre, Conklin
Phone (780) 559-8995

Employment and Training

Aboriginal Mine Works Program
Phone (780) 791-9946
www.aboriginalmineworks.ca

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative
Phone (780) 747-6500
(previously Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project)

Immigrant services

YMCA - Immigrant Settlement Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Phone (780) 743-2970
www.ymca.woodbuffalo.org