



# Rainbow Newcomers Toolkit

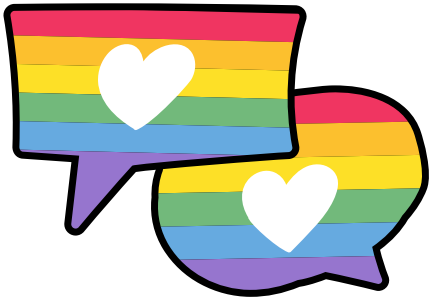
**A Guide to Help 2SLGBTQIA+  
Newcomers to Settling in  
Waterloo Region, Canada**



# Welcome!

## Who are we?

Founded as Waterloo Region's first-ever 2SLGBTQIA+ community space, Spectrum is an organization that serves, affirms, and supports the well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in the Waterloo Region and broader community through peer support, resources, education and training, local partnerships, and events.



## What do we do?

Spectrum offers over 40 different groups and activities each month, including: transgender peer support groups, games nights, a book club, Rainbow Newcomers Connect, Spectrum Prime for 2SLGBTQIA+ adults age 50+, and multi- sport drop-ins.

## How do we do it?

As a registered charity, Spectrum depends on support from the community. To learn more about SPECTRUM and support the work that we do, visit [ourspectrum.com/donate](https://ourspectrum.com/donate)



The information provided in this document does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials are for general informational purposes only. Information in this toolkit may not constitute the most up-to-date legal or other information. This toolkit contains links to third-party websites. Such links are only for the convenience of the reader; Spectrum does not necessarily recommend or endorse the contents of the third-party sites.

This toolkit was created by Rhea Bhat, funded by the Menich Award from Wilfrid Laurier University.

Supervised by Scott Williams.

Special thanks to Yesenia Torres and to Josi Pape.

# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Terminology & Pronouns.....                            | 4  |
| Quick History.....                                     | 5  |
| Land Acknowledgement.....                              | 6  |
| 2SLGBTQIA+ Laws.....                                   | 7  |
| Refugee Statuses.....                                  | 11 |
| Resident Statuses.....                                 | 12 |
| Housing in Canada.....                                 | 13 |
| Searching for a House.....                             | 13 |
| Securing a House.....                                  | 14 |
| Staying Housed & Deciding to Move.....                 | 15 |
| Banking in Canada.....                                 | 16 |
| Opening an Account.....                                | 16 |
| Debit Cards.....                                       | 17 |
| Credit Cards.....                                      | 18 |
| Government Documents.....                              | 19 |
| Sex Designations.....                                  | 19 |
| Social Insurance Number (SIN).....                     | 20 |
| Ontario Photo ID.....                                  | 21 |
| Permanent Residency Card.....                          | 23 |
| Working in Canada.....                                 | 24 |
| Schools in Canada.....                                 | 25 |
| Driving in Ontario.....                                | 26 |
| Driver's Licenses.....                                 | 26 |
| Driver's Education.....                                | 27 |
| Public Transportation.....                             | 28 |
| Grand River Transit (GRT).....                         | 28 |
| GO Transit.....  | 30 |
| Postal Services.....                                   | 31 |
| Healthcare in Ontario.....                             | 32 |
| OHIP & Applying for a Health Card.....                 | 33 |
| Registering Children for OHIP.....                     | 34 |
| UHIP & Workplace Benefits.....                         | 35 |
| Hospitals & Emergencies, 2SLGBTQIA+ Friendly Care..... | 36 |
| Finding a Family Doctor.....                           | 37 |
| Mental Health.....                                     | 39 |
| Literary Picks.....                                    | 40 |
| Fiction Picks.....                                     | 41 |
| Non-Fiction Picks.....                                 | 44 |
| Library Services.....                                  | 47 |
| Staying Safe.....                                      | 48 |

# This Toolkit

We understand that moving to a new place can be difficult, so we created a toolkit to give you some quick insights into settling and living in Canada.

## Some Things to Note

As Spectrum is located in Kitchener, Ontario, a lot of this information is focused on Waterloo Region, Ontario (Waterloo Region consists of: Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, and the townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich). The procedures may vary by city or province.

We have picked the most relevant information individuals might require when moving to Canada. However, there may be more information that you require on a certain topic. In this case, we have listed resources within each section for further research at your discretion.



# Terminology & Pronouns

## What is 2SLGBTQIA+?

2SLGBTQIA+ is a shortened form of an umbrella term that refers to the most commonly discussed queer identities and/or orientations:

- **2 Spirit** - a culture-specific gender identity coming from some Indigenous Canadian traditions
- **Lesbian** - a woman who is attracted to women
- **Gay** - a man who is attracted to men. Also used more generally referring to people who are not cisgender or straight.
- **Bisexual** - people attracted to more than one gender (but possibly not all genders)
- **Transgender** - someone whose biology does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth
- **Queer/Questioning** - historically used as an insult, reclaimed as a positive term meaning anyone who is not cis or straight, or someone who is unsure or questioning their gender or sexuality
- **Intersex** - someone whose biology has both male and female traits, or whose biology is ambiguous
- **Asexual/Aromantic** - someone who doesn't experience sexual or romantic attraction and may or may not experience other kinds of attraction

Both because there are **many** queer identities and orientations not covered by the 2SLGBTQ+ initialism and because the list changes and grows as our understanding evolves, we use the + to include all of the other identities not covered by the shortened initialism.

# Quick History

## Indigenous History

This history stretches long into the past before the arrival of the European newcomers with diverse interactions among different peoples, flourishing trade and fierce conflict, and competition for lands and resources.

## Residential Schools

For over a century, Indigenous children were removed from their families and homes, sometimes forcibly, and taken to residential schools where they were housed and educated under the authority of the Government of Canada

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered an historic apology to former students of Indian residential schools and their families and sought forgiveness for the suffering and the long-lasting impact the schools have had on First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture, heritage and language.

Alongside the 2008 apology, the successful ongoing implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement is a key factor in the Government of Canada's efforts to forge a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences.

## National Indigenous History Month

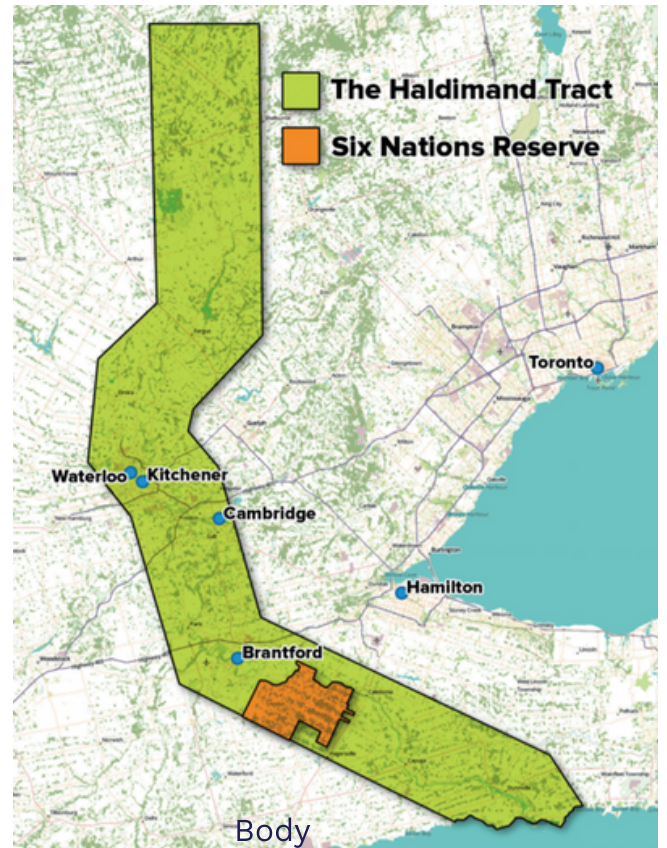
In 2009, June was declared National Indigenous History Month, following the passing of a unanimous motion in the House of Commons. This provides an opportunity to recognize not only the historic contributions of Indigenous peoples to the development of Canada, but also the strength of present-day Indigenous communities and their promise for the future.

# Land Acknowledgment

Spectrum acknowledges the truth that we are situated on the Haldimand Tract, which is the land of the Haudenosaunee and Mississauga Anishinaabe nations. It is also the traditional territory of the Chinonton Peoples who were entirely eliminated by colonization of this land.

Indigenous peoples recognise Two-Spirit as a sacred way of being, an individual who carries in them the medicines and teaching of many genders and sexualities. This traditional regard for Two-Spirit peoples has set them apart in their knowledge but also that they have been always regarded as important, respected, and fully accepted members of their communities. We recognise that the histories and teachings of Two Spirit peoples have always influenced and added to Indigenous ways of knowing.

This territorial acknowledgement alone cannot accomplish justice. We are committed to working towards reconciliation and ensuring that our programs, services, and practices are culturally relevant and accessible to Indigenous peoples in our community.



This flag represents  
2-Spirit people



# 2SLGBTQIA+ Laws

Canadian government passes a bill decriminalizing private sexual acts between two people, 21 or older

→ **1969**

**1978** ←

Canada gets a new Immigration Act. Under the act, homosexuals are removed from the list of unacceptable classes

Bill Allan, a UW student diagnosed as HIV positive, establishes ACCKWA (AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo & Area)

→ **1985**

**1991** ←

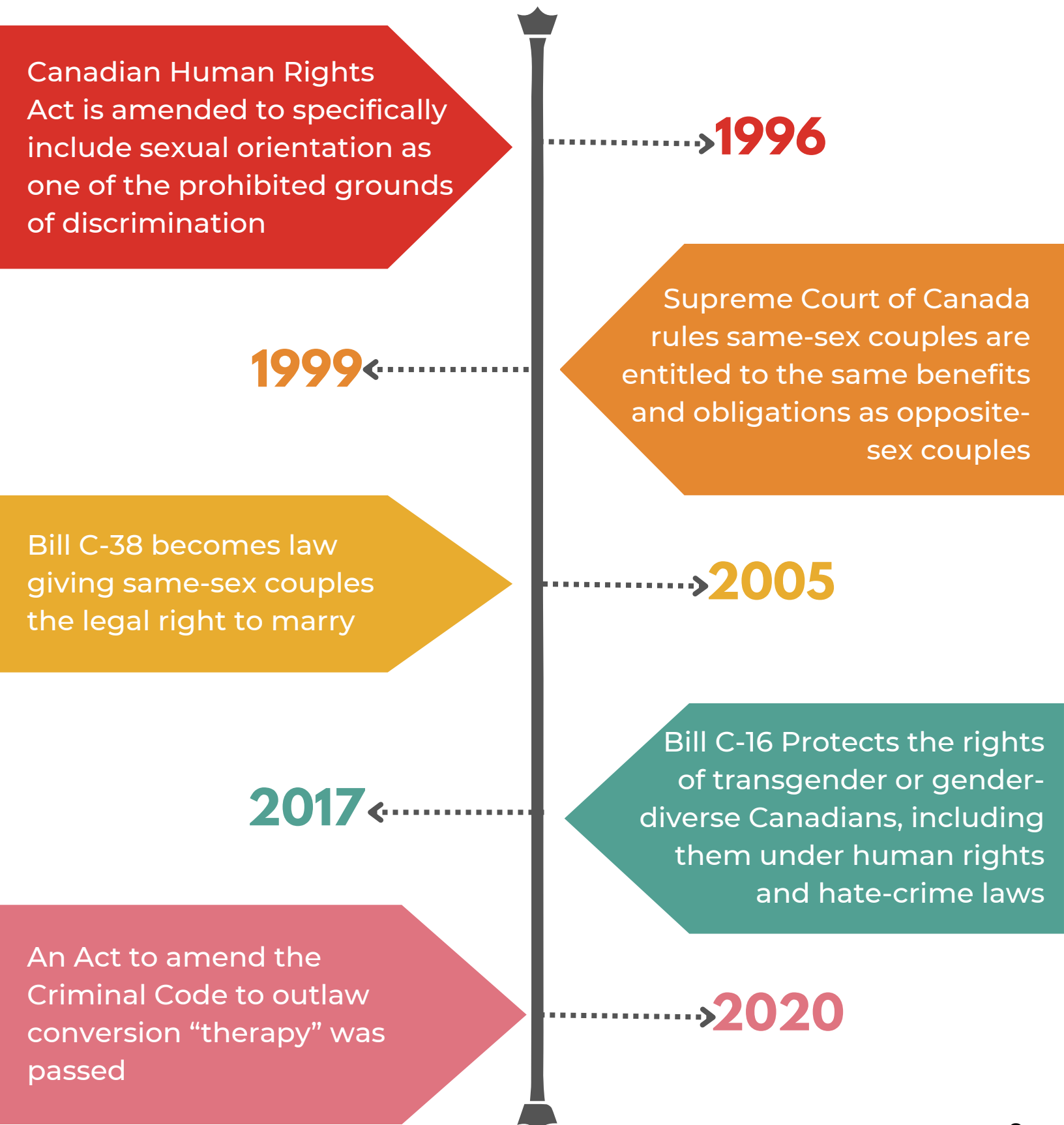
Municipality of Waterloo changes its employee benefit package to include same-sex partners

The first local Pride celebration was held in the Rotunda of Kitchener City Hall

→ **1995**



# 2SLGBTQIA+ Laws



# Rainbow Newcomers Connect

Rainbow Newcomers Connect is a gathering hosted by Spectrum on the 2nd Sunday afternoon (3–5pm) of the month.

The main purpose of these social gatherings is for us to learn from each other as a diverse community. We are not only 2SLGBTQIA+ people but we also come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.



**We have activities and discussions that allow us to get to know one another, learn from each another, and share about our experiences. It is our hope that this time will not only be educational, but that it will also build friendships and connections within the community.**

**[www.ourspectrum.com/events](http://www.ourspectrum.com/events)**

# Safe Spaces



**The Rainbow Pages is a directory of businesses and organizations that are either owned by 2SLGBTQIA+ people or affirming of 2SLGBTQIA+ people.**

**It lists restaurants, shopping, mental health services, and much, much more!**

**Visit:**

**[www.ourspectrum.com/resources/directories](http://www.ourspectrum.com/resources/directories)**

# Refugee Statuses in Canada

In Canada, there are various refugee statuses. It is important to understand your status to learn more about the rights, rules, and benefits that apply to you.

## Refugee Claimant

- A person who has made a claim for protection as a refugee. This term is more or less equivalent to asylum-seeker and is standard in Canada, while asylum-seeker is the term more often used internationally.

## Protected Person

- According to Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, a person who has been determined by Canada to be either:
  - (a) a Convention Refugee or
  - (b) a person in need of protection (i.e. a person who may not meet the Convention definition but is in a refugee-like situation defined in Canadian law as deserving of protection, for example because they are in danger of being tortured)

## Asylum-Seeker

- A person who is seeking asylum. Until a determination is made, it is impossible to say whether the asylum-seeker is a refugee or not.

## Resettled Refugee

- A refugee who has been offered a permanent home in a country while still outside that country. Refugees resettled to Canada are determined to be refugees by the Canadian government before they arrive in Canada (whereas refugee claimants receive a determination in Canada).

## Internally Displaced Person

- A person who has been forcibly displaced but is still within their home country.

## Stateless Person

- A person who is not recognized as a citizen by any state. Some refugees may be stateless but not all are, and similarly not all stateless people are refugees.

# Resident Statuses in Canada

In Canada, there are various resident statuses. It is important to understand your status to learn more about the rights, rules and benefits that apply to you.

## Permanent Resident

- A permanent resident is someone who has been given permanent resident status by immigrating to Canada but who is not a Canadian citizen
- Permanent residents are citizens of other countries

## Temporary Resident

- A temporary resident is a foreign national who is legally authorized to enter Canada for temporary purposes
- A foreign national has temporary resident status when they have been found to meet the requirements of the legislation to enter and/or remain in Canada as a visitor, student, worker, or temporary resident permit holder

## Convention Refugee

- You are afraid of persecution because of your race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and
- You are outside Canada;
- You are outside your country of nationality and unable or, because of your fear, unwilling to obtain the protection of your country; or
- If you have no country of nationality, are outside your country of former habitual residence (home country) and are unable or, because of your fear, unwilling to return to that country

## Country of Asylum Class Refugee

You are a member of the Country of Asylum Class if you:

- are seriously and personally affected by civil or armed conflict or a massive violation of human rights in your country of nationality or habitual residence (home country), and
- are outside Canada;
- are outside your country of nationality and unable or, because of your fear, unwilling to obtain the protection of your country; or
- if you have no country of nationality, are outside your country of former habitual residence (home country) and are unable or, because of your fear, unwilling to return to that country

# Housing in Canada

## Understanding Housing Terms

- Rent: signing a contract with an individual landlord or renting company
- Lease Takeover: Signing onto an existing lease
- Sublet: making an agreement with an individual who is not the landlord or rental company (usually at a discounted price and a shorter time period, but not always)
- Mortgage: (or mortgage loan) is an agreement between you and a lender that gives the lender the right to take your property if you fail to repay the money you've borrowed plus interest. Mortgage loans are used to buy a home or to borrow money against the value of a home you already own.

## Searching for Housing

What does planning for a housing search involve and why is it important?

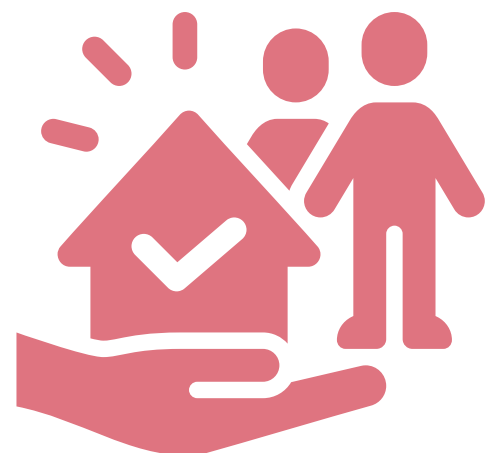
- Planning for a housing search involves understanding your budget, your needs and wants, setting up an apartment comparison sheet, and getting all necessary documents in order
- It is important to do this as it helps narrow down housing in your budget range that have what you are looking for
- It also makes it easier to compare all housing you may view.
- The Region of Waterloo's Renter's toolkit has worksheet to help you in this process.
  - [https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/the-renter\\_s-toolkit.aspx#Searching-for-housing](https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/the-renter_s-toolkit.aspx#Searching-for-housing).

## Need Help with the Process?

- Lutherwood Housing Support Services
- The Working Centre's Housing and Money Hub
- Thresholds Homes and Supports

## Looking for Housing Online?

- Kijiji - [www.Kijiji.ca](http://www.Kijiji.ca)
- Gottarent - [www.Gottarent.com](http://www.Gottarent.com)
- Padmapper - [www.Padmapper.com](http://www.Padmapper.com)
- Viewit - [www.Viewit.ca](http://www.Viewit.ca)
- [Homes for Queers Waterloo Region Facebook](#)



# Housing in Canada

## Securing Housing

What is a lease?

- A lease is a legal agreement between you and the landlord that sets out both of your rights and responsibilities
- It also sets out the terms and conditions you have agreed on, making it easier to resolve any misunderstandings and disagreements
- Typically 12 Months (1 year)
- In Ontario, the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) sets out rules about what a landlord can and cannot require of a renter in private market rental housing. Here is a helpful guide created by the guide created by the Landlord Tenant Board:

<https://tribunalsontario.ca/documents/ltb/Brochures/A%20Guide%20to%20the%20Residential%20Tenancies%20Act.html>

What are the typical conditions of a lease?

- What the cost of rent is
- What's included in the rent
- Whether rent will increase
- Always remember to read the lease as there may be sections that are unlawful. These can be restrictions on visitors or pets

What are the differences between a rental agreement and a lease?

- The main difference is that the rental agreement does not specify the length of time for the tenancy; you can give two months (60 days) notice and move out at that time without financial penalty

What is tenant insurance?

- Tenant insurance covers property damage and liability claims.
- It is important to understand that even though the landlord is responsible for the building and grounds their insurance policy will not provide any protection to you the tenant
- When picking an insurance be sure to consider property overage, liability coverage and deductible

Helpful Links:

- [Lutherwood Housing Support Services](#)
- [House of Friendship](#)
- [Thresholds Homes and Supports](#)
- [Homes for Queers Facebook](#)
- [The Renter's Toolkit](#)

# Housing in Canada

## Staying Housed

How to respond if issues arise during the tenancy

- Your landlord is responsible for the maintenance and repair of your rented unit including things that come with it (for example: appliances, plumbing) and common areas (for example: parking lots, hallways and elevators)
- If appliances or fixtures stop working, contact your landlord as soon as possible

What programs are available to help with unpaid utility bills?

- Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program (WREAP)
- Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

What to do if your lease is expiring?

- The tenant does not have to sign another lease as the first one expires
- A one-year lease automatically converts into a month-to-month lease

## Deciding to Move

How long are notice periods?

- Typically 2 months for the notice to be legal
- count the number of days starting on the day after your landlord would get the notice and ending on the termination date.
- If you mail your notice, start counting on the sixth day after you mail it to account for the time it takes to get delivered by Canada Post

In what cases are shorter notice periods permitted?

- The **Residential Tenancy Act** allows tenants who need to move because of sexual or domestic violence to give only 28 days' notice to their landlord (for resources, visit: [Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region](#))
- This applies to situations in which either the tenants or a child living with them has experienced the abuse
- The Landlord and Tenant Board can help you determine these dates

What and when are eviction notices given?

- An eviction notice is a written notice from your landlord to end your tenancy
- The eviction notice must tell you the reason why your landlord wants you to leave
- This reason must be one of the reasons listed in the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA)
- The notice must also include the date your landlord wants you to leave by and must be given to you before your termination date.
- If you believe you are being wrongfully evicted you may legally remain in your unit until your landlord schedules a hearing with the Landlord Tenant Board. It is recommended to seek out legal advice. You can also seek advice from a peer support worker from the [Eviction Prevention Program](#) which is a branch of the Social Development Centre Waterloo Region.



# Banking in Canada

## Opening an Account

### General Things to Understand

- You can open a bank account even if you:
  - don't have a job
  - don't have money to put in the account right away
  - have been bankrupt
- Information received when you open an account
  - Information about fees, increases in charges and new charges
    - This applies even if you open another account at that same bank

### How to open a bank account if you are not a Canadian Citizen

- Identification
  1. Provide 2 documents from a reliable source
    - one document indicating your name and address
    - the other document indicating your name and date of birth; OR
  2. Provide any document from a reliable source that indicates your name and date of birth - Identity needs to also be confirmed by:
    - a customer who is in good standing with the bank, or
    - someone who is of good standing in the community where you are opening the account
- Considerations
  - What is the account being used for?
    - Regular spending, sending money back home, savings, etc.
  - Charges or fees
  - Interest earned
  - Deposit insurance

### Which banks do not require SIN to open an account?

- RBC Royal Bank
- TD Bank
- Scotia bank
- CIBC
- National Bank of Canada



# Banking in Canada

## Debit Cards

What is a debit card?

- A debit card is a payment card that deducts money directly from a consumer's checking account when it is used

What fees and daily limits are linked to it?

- Debit cards usually have daily purchase limits
  - you can't spend more than a certain amount with them in one 24-hour period
- There may be a credit history check to set the limit
- The limit is based on
  - cash withdrawals
  - in-store purchases
  - online purchases

What are co-badged debit cards?

- Has two logos on the front of the card
  - The Interac logo with the logo of another payment brand such as Visa Debit or Debit Mastercard
- In addition to the types of transactions you can make with a traditional debit card, a co-badged debit card allows you to:
  - make online purchases
  - have greater access to debit transactions when travelling abroad
- NOTE: A co-badged debit card is not a credit card
  - Funds will still be deducted from either the checking or savings account
- You may be charged an ATM transaction fee if you use your debit card to withdraw cash from an ATM that's not affiliated with the bank that issued your card



# Banking in Canada

## Credit Cards

What is a credit card?

- Can be understood as small loans that need to be paid back within a given time frame
- As you pay your balance - more access to credit
- Your credit limit is the maximum total amount you can spend

What are credit limits?

- The maximum amount you may spend on your credit card.
- Limit can be reduced or increased.
- Over-the-limit fees
- If you spend over your limit you may be subject to fees
- Set by the financial institution

What are the interest rates on credit cards?

- Interest is charged if you don't not pay your credit balance in full by the due date
- It will be charged until it is paid back in full
- Rates vary depending on the financial institution and type of transaction

Helpful Links:

- [Government of Canada - Managing your money](#)
- [The Canadian Banking Association](#)



# Government Documents

## Sex Designations

"Sex" and "Gender" are often confused in Canada. On a government ID, you will most frequently hear about sex designation. Unfortunately, the process of changing these designations on ID is rarely easy. Any change in gender on government documents for claimants is very difficult if not impossible up to about the Permanent Resident stage.

The Refugee ID that claimants receive – and which the entire rest of their immigration process uses as a starting place – is based on what is on their passport. If their passport shows as M, for example, then even a trans woman who has been living as a trans woman for 20 years will have M down on their Refugee ID.

How do I change sex from male to female (M to F) or female to male (F to M) on a driver's license or an Ontario photo ID card?

- You need to visit a to a Service Ontario centre near you and bring an original and valid document that indicates the updated sex designation, male (M) or female (F), from the list below:
  - birth certificate
  - birth certificate with parental information, or
  - certified copy of birth registration

How do I Change sex to an other gender marker (X) on a driver's license and an Ontario Photo ID?

- You need to visit a Service Ontario centre
- You do not have to bring any supporting documents

Helpful Links:

- [SIN](#)
- [Ontario Photo ID](#)
- [Permanent Resident Card](#)



# Government Documents

## Social Insurance Number (SIN)

What is SIN?

- A 9-digit number known as a Social Insurance Number (SIN) issued by Service Canada
- Needed to work in Canada or access government programs and benefits

Who needs a SIN?

- Canadian citizens, permanent residents and temporary residents
- Children 12 years of age or older may apply for their SIN
- Parents, legal guardians or legal representatives can apply for a SIN for children under the age of majority in their province, and for adults in their care

**NOTE: You should never share a SIN with anyone except an employer or the government**

What is the application process?

- No fee to apply
- There is a tool to help determine which documents you need to submit
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/apply.html>
- Can be done online
- Documents
  - Primary Identity Document - proves identity and status in Canada
    - If applying online remember to provide both sides of the document as there may be identity information on the back as well
  - Secondary Document
    - Confirms identity
    - Must be issued by the Canadian Government (federal/provincial/ territory) or be a foreign passport
- Supporting Document
  - Required if name on any document does not match the name on SIN application

What are the wait times?

- Applying online: Usually processed within 10 business days
- Applying by mail: usually processed within 20 business days
- If your application did not meet the requirements, you will get a letter containing guidance on what is required to obtain a SIN

How do you receive your SIN?

- Should arrive by mail
- You may begin work once you have applied for a SIN

# Government Documents

## Ontario Photo ID

What is an Ontario Photo ID?

- Provides government-issued identification to Ontarians
- This is only needed if you do not have a driver's license
- If you choose to get a license after receiving your photo card you will need to turn it in as part of the application process
- Helps to do things such as open a bank account and any other activities that require official identification



What is the cost and delivery of the card?

- \$35
- The fee may vary depending on your Ontario health card renewal date

How long is it valid?

- Valid for 5 years after which it needs to be renewed
- To match your health card expiry date, your Ontario Photo Card renewal period may be less than 5 years or longer than 5 years

Where can you apply for it?

- Service Ontario - might be able to book an appointment in advance
- Waterloo Locations
  - Lexington and Dearborn
    - Located at: 105 Lexington Road, Unit 16, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 4R7
- Kitchener Locations
  - Duke and Ontario (Kitchener)
    - Corporation Square, 30 Duke Street West, 2nd Floor, Kitchener, Ontario N2H 3W5
  - Victoria and Frederick (Kitchener)
    - 1151 Victoria Street North, Unit 5 Kitchener, Ontario N2B 3C8
  - Manitou and Cress (Kitchener)
    - 30 Manitou Drive, Unit 2A Kitchener, Ontario N2C 1L3
  - Cambridge Location
    - 561 Hespeler Rd Unit 1B, Cambridge, ON N1R 6J4

# Government Documents

## Ontario Photo ID

What are the application requirements?

- To be eligible you must:
  - not have a driver's licence
  - be a resident of Ontario
  - be 16 years of age or older
- Documents required:
  - Original identity documents to prove legal name and date of birth
  - The list can be found here
    - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/acceptable-identity-documents>
  - Marriage certificate if applying under a married name
- Photo
  - Must be:
    - completely visible
    - free of any obstructions
    - a neutral expression (no smiling)
- Headwear worn for religious or medical reasons can be worn, but must not cover any part of your face.



# Government Documents

## Permanent Residency Card

What are you entitled to as a Permanent Resident (PR)?

- Most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive like healthcare coverage
- Live, work or study anywhere in Canada
- Eligible to apply for Canadian citizen
- Protection under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- As a PR you must pay taxes and respect all Canadian laws at the federal, provincial and municipal levels



What is a PR Card?

- A valid permanent resident (PR) card is used to prove you're a permanent resident
- Especially when you return to Canada from another country
- It is issued for 5 years but can sometimes can be issued for one year instead
- If you find a mistake on your PR card you can ask for it to be reissued

Who can apply?

- New Permanent Residents
  - Do not need to apply
  - IRCC/ Government of Canada will send you one when you immigrate
  - It will be sent to the Canadian Mailing Address you provide
  - You have a 180 days after immigrating to provide that address
- Eligibility
  - be a permanent resident
  - Submit your application in Canada
- Only apply for a PR Card if
  - your card has expired or will expire in less than 9 months
  - your card is lost, stolen, or destroyed you didn't receive your card within 180 days of immigrating to Canada
  - you need to update your card to:
    - legally change your name
    - change your citizenship
    - change your gender designation
    - correct your date of birth

Apply online at <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/pr-card.html>



# Working in Canada

## Work Permits

Do you need a work permit to work within Canada?

- To find out if you need a work permit and which kind of work permit you need, you can use this tool on IRCC's website:
  - [What are you entitled to as a Permanent Resident \(PR\)?](#)
  - [Most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive like healthcare coverage](#)
  - [Live, work or study anywhere in Canada](#)
  - [Eligible to apply for Canadian citizen](#)
  - [Protection under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.](#)
  - [As a PR you must pay taxes and respect all Canadian laws at the federal, provincial and municipal levels](#)
- Two Types of Work Permit:
  - Employer-specific work permit
  - Open work permit

## Job Searching

Where can one look for jobs online?

- [YMCA](#)
- [KW Multicultural Centre](#)
- [Workforce Planning](#)
- [The Working Centre](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- Government Of Canada Job Bank - Federal Jobs
- Glass-door
- Indeed
- Online job board

What resources are available for job searching?

- When it comes to employment supports there are several agencies in Waterloo Region:
  - [Lutherwood](#)
  - [In Her Shoes](#) for Women Newcomers
  - [Region Of Waterloo Community Services](#)
  - [Immigration Waterloo Region](#)
- Services within these agencies include:
  - Assessment of your skills and experience
  - Job search workshops including information on different careers, occupations and the local labour market
  - Coaching and assistance on developing search strategies and resume writing, interview skills and networking
  - Mentorship, employment and training opportunities

# Schools in Canada

## All About Schooling

Most children and teenagers in Canada attend a public school. In Waterloo Region, there are two school boards you can consider:

- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board

How do I enroll a child in primary (elementary) and secondary (high) school?

- Contact the local school board
  - <https://www.wrdsb.ca>
  - <https://www.wcdsb.ca>
- The first time a child is enrolled in a Canadian school, the school or school board will
  - assess their education level and decide:
    - what level they should be placed at
    - whether they need free support (like English or French language classes)

What documents do I need to enrolment?

- birth certificate
- proof of guardianship or custody
- proof of residency
- record of immunizations (to prove that your child's vaccines are up to date)

There are settlement workers at both school boards. Here is a link with more information:

<https://www.ymcathreerivers.ca/settlement-services/school-settlement-services>



# Driving in Ontario

## Driver's Licences

What are the requirements for driving in Ontario?

- In Ontario, there are 12 different classes of licenses. Each one qualifies you to drive a different type of vehicle. The class of license you have must match the type of vehicle you are driving. The Driver's License Classification Chart shows you what class of license you need to drive different vehicles
- This section focuses on driving a car with a Class G (full license)



How do you apply for a license?

- To apply for a license, you must show proof of your legal name and date of birth (showing day, month and year of birth).
- Documents must be original and valid. Photocopies and expired documents are not acceptable.
- You must pay a fee when you apply.
  - This fee includes the cost of the knowledge test (G1), your first road test (G2) and a five-year licensing fee.
  - There are more charges for your second road test and for any retests you may need to take.
- You must apply at a drive test centre or online: [www.drivetest.ca](http://www.drivetest.ca)

What is the graduated licensing system?

- A graduated licensing lets new drivers get driving experience and skills gradually.
- The two-step licensing process takes at least 20 months to complete
- To apply for a license, you must be at least 16 years old, pass a vision test and pass a test of your knowledge of the rules of the road and traffic signs. You can read The Official Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Driver's Handbook online.
- After you pass these tests, you will enter Level One and get a Class G1 license.
- You must pass two road tests to become fully licensed.
  - Passing the first road test lets you move to Level Two (Class G2),
  - The second one gives you full Class G driving privileges.

# Driving in Ontario

## Driver's Education

What does an approved BDE course give you?

- A beginner driver education (BDE) course in a driving school that has been approved by the provincial government can teach you the skills and attitudes you need to be a safe and responsible driver.
- The BDE course may also make you eligible to take your road test sooner and allow you to save money on insurance premiums.
- Ministry-approved BDE courses, offered by driving schools, must last a minimum of 40 hours.
  - This may consist of at least 20 hours in-class, 10 hours in-vehicle and 10 hours of flexible instruction
  - There are many driving schools in the region and there will be a cost for lessons.

What is the license exchange program?

- If you are a new resident of Ontario and have a valid driver's license from another province or country, you can use that license for 60 days in Ontario. If you want to continue to drive after 60 days, you must get an Ontario driver's license
- Driving customs vary from place to place. That is why experienced drivers from other countries should familiarize themselves with Ontario's laws. The Official MTO Driver's Handbook and the [Ministry of Transportation website](#) are great resources

License Exchange for Countries with Reciprocating Jurisdictions

- Ontario has license-exchange agreements with every Canadian province and territory (including Canadian Forces Europe). There are also agreements with Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Japan, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan and the United States.
- If your country is not listed here you may still be eligible to get credit for your past experience.
  - <https://drivetest.ca/licences/exchanges-foreign-licences/>

Helpful Links:

- [Getting Your Driver's License](#)



# Public Transportation

## Grand River Transit (GRT)

Where do the buses operate?

- The GRT buses help you get around Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Elmira and New Hamburg
- Express Bus Services
  - Provide frequent limited stop services along major routes in the Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge area
    - A list can be found here:
      - <https://www.grt.ca/en/about-grt/express-buses.aspx>



Where does the ION light rail operate?

- ION light rail travels between Conestoga station in Waterloo and Fairway station in Kitchener
- At Fairway station, the ION light rail passengers can transfer to the ION Bus connecting to the Ainslie Street Terminal in Cambridge.

What accessible services are available?

- Regular buses and IONS are fully accessible
- In addition, GRT provides specialized transit services and door-to-door services

What are the fares?

- GRT provides numerous fares and passes
- Each of these can be stored on an EasyGO fare Card.
- Paying your fare on the bus
  - Can be paid with cash
    - Only accepts coins

There is an [Affordable Transit Program](#) which offers a 48% fare discount for low income households. It requires one proof of address, and one proof of income which can include a Letter from a Registered Social Worker indicating that the applicant's yearly household income is below a certain amount.

# Public Transportation

## Grand River Transit (GRT) Fares

How to get an EasyGO fare Card?

- Costs: \$15
  - Cost of a new EASYGO fare card - \$5
  - Stored value - pre-loaded - \$10
- Online:
  - Fill out the form at [grt.ca/OrderCard](http://grt.ca/OrderCard)
  - The Card will be mailed to you at the address you provide in 7 - 10 days
- In Person
  - Fare Vending Machine
    - These vending machines can be found at all 19 stations of the ION Light Rail
    - At the vending machines, you can also
      - Add money to your card
      - Purchase a single ticket
      - Check your balance or history
      - Purchase a multi-ride card
      - Pay for your fare
  - GRT Customer Service locations
    - 105 King St. E., Kitchener
    - The Ainslie Street Terminal
  - Can also be purchased on Campus
    - Conestoga College Doon Campus Bookstore
      - 299 Doon Valley Dr., Kitchener
    - UW Turnkey Desk
      - Student Life Centre, University of Waterloo
  - Kiwanis Transit
    - 13 Industrial Dr., Elmira ON



# Public Transportation

## GO Transit

Where does GO Transit operate?

- Regional public transit services for the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) and Hamilton Area
- They provide trains and buses that run on an hourly schedule to different cities through Southern Ontario
- The train to Union Station in Toronto departs from Kitchener Go station



What is the Connect-to-GO Program?

- GRT customers can access free travel to and from the Kitchener GO station
- You can use this by registering your EasyGO Fare card in the Connect-to-GO program
- Enrol in the program by
  - Filling out the GRT feedback form
  - Visiting a customer service centre
  - Calling 519-585-7555
- You will need to tap your EasyGO Fare Card at the Validator located at the Kitchener GO station (126 Weber St W, Kitchener, ON N2H 3Z9).

What are the fares?

- You can pay for your fare using a presto card, tapping your debit/credit card, buying an E-ticket or pass, or buying a paper ticket
- A presto card allows you to travel cashless across GO transit and 9 other local transit agencies within the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- You can reload your presto card online or at a GO Fare Vending Machine
- Paper tickets can also be pushed at the GO Fare vending machine
- E-tickets can be purchased online at <https://tickets.gotransit.com/en-us/>

Where can you find the bus and train schedules?

- You can either plan a trip around a particular time or see all the trains and buses running between your dispersed locations on the schedules
- All of the information can be found on their website:  
<https://www.gotransit.com/en/plan-your-trip>

# Postal Services

## Canada Post

Canada Post is the primary postal operator in Canada.

How and where do I receive mail and documents?

- Most of the time government documents like the permanent residency card, drivers license, and SIN arrive through mail
- Government documents like these are usually sent through Canada Post



What is the difference between a mailing address and a permanent address?

- Your permanent address or your residential address is where you live
- Your mailing address is where your mail and packages get addressed and delivered to
- These two addresses can be the same or different
  - You can live in one place but have mail delivered elsewhere like a post office box

What are community mailboxes?

- When you move to a neighbourhood there may be a Canada Post community mailbox.
- This lets you receive your mail and parcels at a central unit in your neighbourhood.
- It allows you to access your personal mail 24/7 with keys to your compartment.
  - You can learn more about the community mailboxes here: [Get started with your community mailbox](#)

What is a post office box (PO Box)?

- This is a small mailbox that you generally rent at a Canada Post location
- You can only access PO boxes while the Canada Post location (or the store it is located inside of) is open

You might also make use of United Parcel Service (UPS) which is a separate company from Canada Post.



# Healthcare in Ontario



**OHIP**



**Family  
Doctors**



**Insurance**



**Mental  
Health**

## **NOTE:**

This is just an overview of healthcare in Ontario. Healthcare procedures may differ in different provinces. There are links within each section that direct you to the corresponding website to gather more information. One should also note that it may be difficult to find certain health services in the community and the level of service may differ.

# Healthcare in Ontario

## OHIP and Applying for a Health Card

What is OHIP?

- OHIP is Ontario's healthcare plan
- Through this various medical services are needed

Who is eligible?

- Minimum Qualifications
  - be physically in Ontario for 153 days in any 12-month period
  - be physically in Ontario for at least 153 days of the first 183 days immediately after you began living in the province
  - make Ontario your primary residence



What is the application process?

- Must apply in person at Service Ontario
- Three separate documents from the list of qualifying documents
  - one original document that proves your Canadian citizenship or OHIP eligible immigration status
  - one document (original, printed or digital/electronic document as noted on the list) that proves your residency in Ontario
  - one original document that proves your identity



# Healthcare in Ontario

## Registering Children for OHIP

How do I register a child born in Canada?

- You must complete an Ontario Health Coverage Infant Registration form
  - Hospital staff or a registered midwife will supply this form after your child is born
- For this form, you will need to:
  - Provide your child's name, birth date and mailing address
  - Confirm that your child's primary place of residence will be Ontario
  - Confirm that your child will be physically present in Ontario for at least 153 days in any 12-month period
  - Detach the bottom of the form and keep it for your records. It contains the Health Card (OHIP) number assigned to your child
- You can use this portion of the form to access health services for your child until you receive a plastic OHIP card for your child by mail

How do I register a child born outside Canada?

- If your child is born outside of Canada
- You can apply for your child's Health Card (OHIP) in the following way:
  - Get an application form online or at your local Service Ontario office
  - Complete it
  - Collect the documents you need. You must have original documents. You cannot use photocopies
- Submit your application and documents at your local Service Ontario office
- Many settlement agencies can help you apply for your child's Health Card (OHIP)

Helpful Links:

- OHIP: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/apply-ohip-and-get-health-card>
- UHIP: <https://uhip.ca>



# Healthcare in Ontario

**In addition to government healthcare through OHIP, there are other insurance providers you may encounter.**

## UHIP

What is UHIP?

- UHIP is the primary healthcare plan for those studying and working at universities within Ontario
- It provides similar benefits to OHIP

Who is eligible for UHIP?

- You are eligible for UHIP if you study, work or are a dependent of someone within an Ontario university that is affiliated with UHIP

What does UHIP cover?

- UHIP's policy year is September 1 to August 31. We provide up to \$1,000,000 CAD for primary health care services, similar to OHIP for eligible medically necessary services.
- You can learn more about coverage through your university and through UHIP's website:
  - <https://uhip.ca/uhip-services/coverage-details/>

## Workplace Benefits

What are workplace benefits?

- Employers or associations can sometimes provide benefits to cover the cost of things that may not be covered by provincial/ territorial health care plans
- The costs of the benefits are shared with a group therefore they are often more affordable than a personal health and dental plan

What do these benefits cover?

- These benefits generally can help pay for things like prescription drugs, dental, hospital, vision, paramedical and ambulance services.
- Do reach out to your employer to find out more about your workplace benefits

# Healthcare in Ontario

## Hospitals and Emergency Services

What number do I call for an emergency?

- The number to call is **911**
- This number gives you access to emergency services like Police, Fire, and Paramedic Services

What hospitals are in the KW area?

- Grand River Hospital - 835 King St. W., Kitchener
  - 519-749-4300
- Freeport Campus, Grand River Hospital - 3570 King St. E., Kitchener
  - 519-742-3611
- St. Mary's General Hospital - 911 Queen's Blvd., Kitchener
  - 519-744-3311
- Cambridge Memorial Hospital - 700 Coronation Blvd., Cambridge
  - 519-621-2330

## 2SLGBTQIA+ Friendly Care

- We understand it is important to find 2SLGBTQ+-friendly service providers. The Rainbow Health Service Provider directory is designed to help you with this.
- Using this tool allows you to narrow down health and social service providers in your area who have expressed a commitment to providing competent and welcoming care to LGBT2SQ people in Ontario.
  - <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/lgbt2sq-health/service-provider-directory/>
- TransNAV GPS is a service that has been developed to help transgender-identifying people find service providers within and outside of the Waterloo Region. The directory is organized by categories: Medical, Mental Health, Employment, Legal, Housing, Social, Personal, and Other.

# Healthcare in Ontario

## Finding a Family Doctor

What is a family doctor/ nurse practitioner?

- A family doctor or nurse practitioner is your primary healthcare provider
- they are the person you make an appointment with when you have a new, non-emergency health concern

What can family doctors and nurse practitioners do?

- A family doctor and a nurse practitioner can provide:
  - diagnosis and treatment for common illnesses and injuries
  - referrals to healthcare specialists who can help with a specific condition
  - support in managing a chronic condition (such as diabetes or high blood pressure)
  - prescriptions for medication
    - regular check-ups including physicals and routine screening tests (e.g., for cancer)

How do you find a family doctor or nurse practitioner?

- There are 2 ways of finding a family doctor or nurse practitioner
  - Register with our Health Care Connect service and have a nurse find a doctor or nurse practitioner for you.
  - Contact an Ontario physician to ask if they are accepting new patients.
    - Use The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's Find a Doctor search.
    - Choose "Advanced Search" to find a doctor near you (by city/town or postal code).
    - Click on "Additional Search Options" to narrow your search (to family doctors and/or language spoken).
    - Contact the doctor to check if they are accepting new patients
- You can also have a family doctor or nurse practitioner find you through Health Care Connect

Helpful Links:

- [Finding a Family Doctor:](https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-family-doctor-or-nurse-practitioner)

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-family-doctor-or-nurse-practitioner>

- [Rainbow Health Service Provider:](https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/lgbt2sq-health/service-provider-directory)

<https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/lgbt2sq-health/service-provider-directory>

# Healthcare in Ontario

## Finding a Family Doctor

How can you have a family doctor or nurse practitioner find you through Health Care Connect

- Who can use this program?
  - you must:
  - not currently have a family health care provider (learn how to remove yourself from your current provider's patient list)
  - have a valid Ontario health card
  - have an up-to-date mailing address associated with your health card (here's how to update it if you need to)
- How to join the program
  - To sign up for the program, you'll be asked for your name, health card number and some basic health information that will help determine your health needs.
  - There are two ways you can give this information and sign up:
    - Visit Health Care Connect online at any time.
    - Call 811 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Your request will be given to a Health Care Connect nurse in your community and they will:
  - review your request
  - try to find you the right family health care provider in your community who is accepting new patients
  - contact you if a provider is found for you, and give you their contact information
- Some things to note about the program
  - About 88% of people who join the program find a family health care provider this way
  - however, joining Health Care Connect does not guarantee that:
  - a family health care provider will be found for you – those who need urgent care will be placed with a family health care provider first
  - one family health care provider can take your whole family

# Mental Health

## Counselling

What is counselling therapy?

- Counselling is a form of talk therapy wherein a licensed counsellor sits down with a client to help them work through their issues in a safe, confidential environment
- These sessions can be held in person, online or through telephone sessions

Where can I find counselling centers?

- You can find 2SLGBTQ+ friendly through these two directories
- Spectrum's [Rainbow Pages](#)
- [Rainbow Health Service Provider Directory](#)

Does OHIP cover therapy fees?

- Sometimes
- OHIP coverage for therapy depends on the mental health professional and whether the clinic is private or government funded
- It is always best to call the clinic and check with them for the particular therapist you want to meet with

What does counselling cost?

- Counselling fees can vary from clinic to clinic based on multiple factors such as type of therapy, therapist's education and experience

## Support Groups

What are peer groups?

- Give you the opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences in a caring and open atmosphere
- They give you the opportunity to form friendships and connections within the community in order to reduce the isolation that 2SLGBTQIA+ people experience and expand their network of support

Helpful Links:

- [Spectrum Support Groups](#)
- [The Glow Centre - University of Waterloo](#)
- [Rainbow Centre - Wilfrid Laurier University](#)



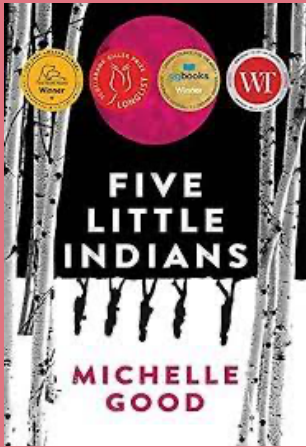
# Literary Picks



**There are times when reading about experiences similar to ours helps us feel a little less alone in the world. We have compiled a list of recommendations that are either written by 2SLGBTQIA+ immigrant authors or look at various immigrant and Indigenous experiences.**

**If you wish to read any of these books, we have a section on accessing free public library services**

# Fiction Recommendations



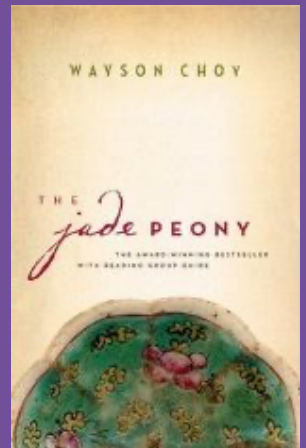
## Five Little Indians - Michelle Good

Taken from their families when they are very small and sent to a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are barely out of childhood when they are finally released after years of detention. Alone and without any skills, support or families, the teens find their way to the seedy and foreign world of Downtown Eastside Vancouver, where they cling together, striving to find a place of safety and belonging in a world that doesn't want them. The paths of the five friends cross and crisscross over the decades as they struggle to overcome, or at least forget, the trauma they endured during their years at the Mission.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous**

## Jade Peony - Wayson Choy

Taken from their families when they are very small and sent to a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are barely out of childhood when they are finally released after years of detention. Alone and without any skills, support or families, the teens find their way to the seedy and foreign world of Downtown Eastside Vancouver, where they cling together, striving to find a place of safety and belonging in a world that doesn't want them. The paths of the five friends cross and crisscross over the decades as they struggle to overcome, or at least forget, the trauma they endured during their years at the Mission.



**Tags: Canadian, Immigrant**

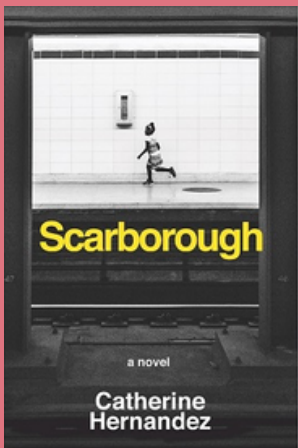


## A Broken Blade - Melissa Blair

Keera is a killer. As the King's Blade, she is the most talented spy in the kingdom. And the king's favored assassin. When a mysterious figure moves against the Crown, Keera is called upon to hunt down the so-called Shadow. She tracks her target into the magical lands of the Fae, but Faeland is not what it seems . . . and neither is the Shadow. Keera is shocked by what she learns, and wonders who her enemy truly is: the King that destroyed her people or the Shadow that threatens the peace? As she searches for answers, Keera is haunted by a promise she made, one that will test her in every way. To keep her word, Keera must not only save herself, but an entire kingdom.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous, Queer**

# Fiction Recommendations



## Scarborough - Catherine Hernandez

Scarborough the novel employs a multitude of voices to tell the story of a tight-knit neighbourhood under fire: among them, Victor, a black artist harassed by the police; Winsum, a West Indian restaurant owner struggling to keep it together; and Hina, a Muslim school worker who witnesses first-hand the impact of poverty on education. There are the three kids who work to rise above a system that consistently fails them: Bing, a gay Filipino boy who lives under the shadow of his father's mental illness; Sylvie, Bing's best friend, a Native girl whose family struggles to find a permanent home; and Laura, whose history of neglect by her mother is destined to repeat itself.

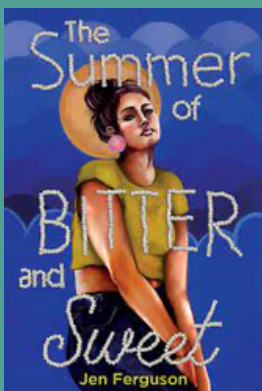
**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous**

## Bad Cree - Jessica Johns

In this gripping, horror-laced debut, a young Cree woman's dreams lead her on a perilous journey of self-discovery that ultimately forces her to confront the toll of a legacy of violence on her family, her community and the land they call home. The novel centres around a young woman named Mackenzie who is haunted by terrifying nightmares and wracked with guilt about her sister's untimely death. Bad Cree is about an Indigenous character's attempt to reconnect with their land and culture.



**Tags: Canadian, Immigrant**

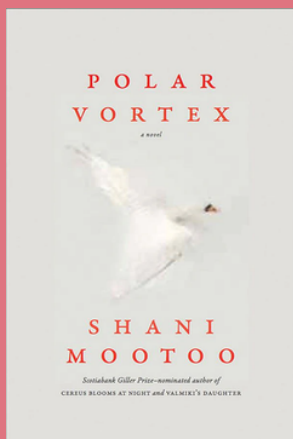


## The Summer of Bitter and Sweet - Jen Ferguson

The Summer of Bitter and Sweet follows a recent high school graduate and Métis girl named Lou living in the Prairies. Lou is working in her family's ice cream shack with her ex-boyfriend and former best friend and must find a way to navigate the inevitably uncomfortable summer ahead of them. Meanwhile, she is also figuring out how she identifies as someone who does not experience desire in the same way as a lot of her peers. When she suddenly gets a letter from her biological father, Lou's summer becomes a lot more complex than she anticipated.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous**

# Fiction Recommendations



## Polar Vortex - Shani Mootoo

Priya and Alexandra have moved from the city to a picturesque countryside town. What Alex doesn't know is that in moving, Priya is running from her past—from a fraught relationship with an old friend, Prakash, who pursued her for many years, both online and off. In no time, Prakash discovers Priya online and contacts her. Impulsively, inexplicably, Priya invites him to visit her and Alex in the country, without ever having come clean with Alex about their relationship—or its tumultuous end. Prakash's sudden arrival at their home reveals cracks in Priya and Alex's relationship and brings into question Priya's true intentions.

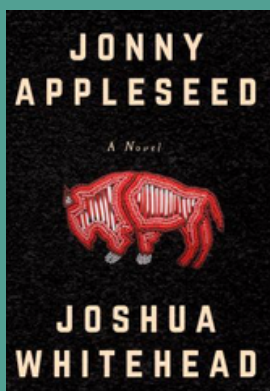
**Tags: Canadian, Queer**

## The Subtweet - Vivek Shraya

Indie musician Neela Devaki has built a career writing the songs she wants to hear but nobody else is singing. When one of Neela's songs is covered by internet artist RUK-MINI and becomes a viral sensation, the two musicians meet and a transformative friendship begins. But before long, the systemic pressures that pit women against one another begin to bear down on Neela and RUK-MINI, stirring up self-doubt and jealousy. With a single tweet, their friendship implodes, a career is destroyed, and the two women find themselves at the centre of an internet firestorm.



**Tags: Canadian, Queer**



## Jonny Appleseed - Joshua Whitehead

Off the reserve and trying to find ways to live and love in the big city, Jonny becomes a cybersex worker who fetishizes himself in order to make a living. Self-ordained as an NDN glitter princess, Jonny has one week before returning to the "rez"—and his former life—to attend the funeral of his stepfather. The seven days that follow are like a fevered dream: stories of love, trauma, sex, kinship, ambition, and the heartbreaking recollection of his beloved kokum (grandmother). Jonny's life is a series of breakages, appendages, and linkages—and as he returns home, he learns how to put together the pieces of his life.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous, Queer**

# Non-Fiction Recommendations



## We Have Always Been Here - Samra Habib

Samra Habib has spent most of their life searching for the safety to be themselves. When their family came to Canada as refugees, Samra encountered a whole new host of challenges: bullies, racism, the threat of poverty, and an arranged marriage. So begins an exploration of faith, art, love, and queer sexuality, a journey that takes them to the far reaches of the globe to uncover a truth that was within them all along. A triumphant memoir of forgiveness and family, both chosen and not, *We Have Always Been Here* is a rallying cry for anyone who has ever felt out of place and a testament to the power of fearlessly inhabiting one's truest self.

**Tags: Canadian, Queer**

## God In Pink - Hasan Namir

The debut book by Hasan Namir is a revelatory novel about being queer and Muslim, set in war-torn Iraq in 2003. Ramy is a closeted university student whose parents have died, and who lives under the close scrutiny of his strict brother and sister-in-law. They exert pressure on him to find a wife, leaving him anguished and struggling to find a balance between his sexuality, religion, and culture. Desperate for counsel, he seeks the advice of Ammar, a sheikh at a local mosque, whose tolerance is challenged by the contradictions between Ramy's dilemma and the teachings of the Qur'an, leading him to question his own belief system.



**Tags: Canadian, Queer**

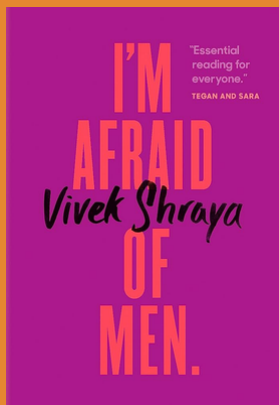


## Indigenous Relations: Insights, Tips & Suggestions to Make Reconciliation a Reality - Bob Joseph and Cynthia F. Joseph

*Indigenous Relations* equips you with the necessary knowledge to respectfully avoid missteps in your work and daily life, and offers an eight-part process to help business and government work more effectively with Indigenous Peoples - benefitting workplace culture as well as the bottom line. *Indigenous Relations* is an invaluable tool for anyone who wants to improve their cultural competency and undo the legacy of the Indian Act.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous**

# Non-Fiction Recommendations



## I'm Afraid Of Men - Vivek Shraya

Vivek Shraya has reason to be afraid. Throughout her life she's endured acts of cruelty for being too feminine as a boy and not feminine enough as a girl. In order to survive, she had to learn to convincingly perform masculinity. As an adult, she makes daily compromises against everything from verbal attacks to heartbreak. Shraya delivers an important record of the cumulative damage caused by misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia, releasing trauma from a body that has always refused to assimilate. I'm Afraid of Men is a journey from camouflage to a riot of color and a blueprint for how we might cherish what us different and conquer all that makes us afraid.

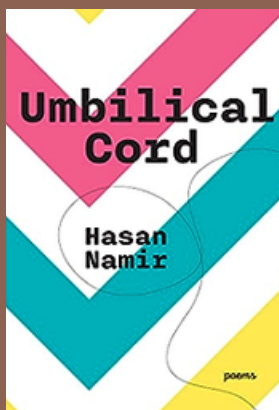
**Tags: Canadian, Queer**

## Angry Queer Somali Boy: A Complicated Memoir - Mohamed Abdulkarim Ali

Kidnapped by his father on the eve of Somalia's societal implosion, Mohamed Ali was taken first to the Netherlands by his stepmother, and then later on to Canada. Unmoored from his birth family and caught between twin alienating forces of Somali tradition and Western culture, Mohamed must forge his own queer coming of age. What follows in this fierce and unrelenting account is a story of one young man's nascent sexuality fused with the violence wrought by displacement.



**Tags: Canadian, Queer**

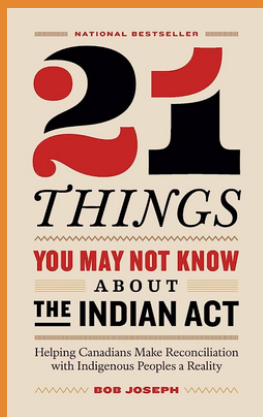


## Umbilical Cord - Hasan Namir

Lambda Literary and Stonewall Book Award-winner Hasan Namir shares a joyful collection about parenting, fatherhood and hope. These warm free-verse poems document the journey that he and his husband took to have a child. Between love letters to their young son, Namir shares insight into his love story with his husband, the complexities of the IVF surrogacy process and the first year as a family of three. Umbilical Cord is a heartfelt book for parents or would-be parents, with a universal message of hope.

**Tags: Canadian, Queer**

# Non-Fiction Recommendations



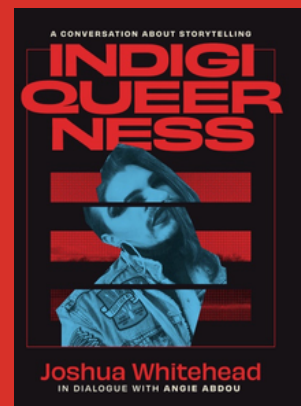
## 21 Things You May Not Know About The Indian Act - Bob Joseph

Since its creation in 1876, the Indian Act has shaped, controlled, and constrained the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Peoples, and is at the root of many enduring stereotypes. Bob Joseph's book comes at a key time in the reconciliation process when awareness from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities is at a crescendo. Joseph explains how Indigenous Peoples can return to self-government, self-determination, and self-reliance - and why doing so would result in a better country for every Canadian.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous**

## Indigiqueerness - Joshua Whitehead and Angie Abdou

Evolving from a conversation between Joshua Whitehead and Angie Abdou, Indigiqueerness is part dialogue, part collage, and part memoir. Beginning with memories of his childhood poetry and prose and travelling through the library of his life, Whitehead contemplates the role of theory, Indigenous language, queerness, and fantastical worlds in all his artistic pursuits. This volume is imbued with Whitehead's energy and celebrates Indigenous writers and creators who defy expectations and transcend genres.



**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous, Queer**



## Indigenous Toronto - Denise Bolduc, Mnawaate Gordon-Corbiere, Rebecka Tabobondung

Beneath many major North American cities rests a deep foundation of Indigenous history that has been colonized, paved over, and silenced. Few know that Toronto has seen twelve thousand years of uninterrupted Indigenous presence and nationhood, along with a vibrant culture and history that thrives to this day. This unique anthology explores the poles of cultural continuity and settler colonialism that have come to define Toronto as a place known as a Meeting Place long before European settlers arrived.

**Tags: Canadian, Indigenous**

# Library Services

## Libraries in Waterloo Region

Waterloo Region has several library services, and many of them are linked so you can sometimes borrow materials from a different branch if you don't find them where you are. Living anywhere in Waterloo Region entitles you to a free library card at any of these:



- [Idea Exchange](#) (Cambridge libraries)
- [Kitchener Public Library](#)
- [Waterloo Public Library](#)
- [Region of Waterloo Libraries](#)

All four libraries are also members of the Library Settlement Partnership, which allows you to book a one-on-one meeting with a settlement worker in the library.

Many libraries offer newcomer-related programs like English conversation circles and resume writing workshops.

The library is also a good place to go for affordable printing and scanning services.

Membership with a library gives you full access to the library's books, music, and DVD collections; eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines & newspapers, online language and learning courses and much more.

To become a library member, adults must provide personal identification AND proof of current address.

Spectrum also has a small private library with 2SLGBTQIA+ books. You can view our [catalogue online](#).





# Staying Safe

Even though 2SLGBTQIA+ people are protected by law, there are still people in Canada who hate us and it is not always safe to share your 2SLGBTQIA+ identity.

Hate crimes are criminal offences based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor.

Waterloo Regional Police Service asks us report incidents of hate so they can investigate and work to make the community safer. If you feel comfortable involving the police you call them at these numbers:

**Emergency: 911**

**Non-emergency: 519-570-9777**

You can learn more about how the police manage hate crimes at:  
<https://www.wrps.on.ca/en/staying-safe/hate-crimes.aspx>

An alternative to reporting an incident to the police is to report using a community tool like the [ReportingHate.ca](https://www.reportinghate.ca) website that was created by the Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo. This means the police will not investigate.

If you have been the victim of a hate incident you can connect with Victim Services of Waterloo Region through their website at [www.vswr.ca](https://www.vswr.ca) They will help you find resources to heal from the incident.

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services provides free legal assistance to low-income individuals and families. You can connect with them through their website at [www.wrcls.ca](https://www.wrcls.ca)

Finally, the Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region is a wonderful resource for newcomers to the community. Connect with them through their website at [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca](https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca)

