

**FCJ Refugee Centre**  
*Walking With Uprooted People*

# EMPLOYMENT TOOLKIT

# Empowering New Beginnings

## For Refugee Claimants

# Introduction

**This toolkit is designed to support you as you await your work permit and begin the process of settling in Canada. It also provides guidance on how to prepare for your job search.**

## About Us

**FCJ Refugee Centre serves refugees and others at risk due to their immigration status, and welcomes anyone asking for advice, counsel and support regarding these issues. We address systemic issues that newly arrived refugee claimants face in Canada including lack of resources, marginalization, and discrimination.**

**Countless people are touched by our services. Some become residents at one of the houses, and use our refugee settlement services, while some only use the Centre's refugee protection services.**



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**Settlement Resources**

**All resources and links are available on 'Settlement Resources' (page 14), for your review and reference. Please consider that these are just a few of the available resources out there, and we have tried to make it as simple as possible to support you in the employment process. Additionally, the information here is tailored to meet specific needs.**



# SECTION 1: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

## Apply for Ontario Works:

Ontario Works provides Government's financial assistance for those who cannot afford their living expenses in Canada. Financial Assistance may include money for food, shelter, clothing and other household costs, the cost of prescription medications, and other help with health costs.

If you don't have enough money for food and housing, or if you have a disability and are in financial need, you can apply for financial and employment assistance through Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

## Eligibility

You might be eligible for Ontario Works if you:

- are in financial need, meaning you and your family do not have enough money to cover your living expenses
- are 16 or older
- live in Ontario (and are not a visitor or a tourist)
- have assets within the allowable asset limits

## Monthly Ontario works amounts

The monthly amount of assistance someone can receive from Ontario Works depends on family size, housing costs and income. You could receive up to **\$733 a month for basic needs** and shelter if you are single.

## How to Apply

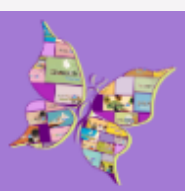
If you do not have enough money for food and housing and are in financial need, you can apply for Ontario Works assistance online (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/social-assistance>). You can also apply by calling 1-888-999-1142.

## Open a bank account:

Opening a bank account and having a Canadian phone is a must for financial assistance and phone numbers to be used in all government related documents or applications.

- To open a bank account, go to the bank in person with acceptable identification.
- Ensure your identification is original and valid:  
Passport Certified copy, Acknowledgement of Claim

***Having a bank account will help you receive payments from Ontario Works.***



# SECTION 2: SECURE HOUSING IN TORONTO

## Housing – In case of searching for housing without a reference

- Resume
- Rental agreement lease
- FCJ Refugee Centre – Letter of reference
- Volunteer work

## Tips on what to consider when looking for a residence

1. Try to find a residence where utilities (heating, lighting and water) are included in the rental amount.
2. Where possible, stay as close to a subway station or TTC bus route.
3. Try to find a place that already has a refrigerator and a stove.

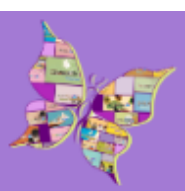
## Tips on how to find a residence

1. Call a housing-help agency in your area of interest.
2. Talk to your friends, your housing worker and other refugee claimants who are in a similar situation.
3. Visit other shelters where there may be people from your community who may be looking for someone with whom they can share accommodations.
4. Phone the City of Toronto Housing Information Service at 416-392-0566 or a City of Toronto Housing Help Centre at one of the numbers below:
5. **Check online platforms like...**
  - Kijiji.ca
  - Viewwit.ca
  - Facebook
  - Marketplace

**Ontario Works financial Assistance** is the financial support that will help you with the financial support month to month until you find or receive your work permit or you secure a job in order for you to have a financial stability.

Financial Assistance may include money for food, shelter, clothing and other household costs, the cost of prescription medications, and other help with health costs.

***Visit the place in person, bring with you all the above information with you and speak to your landlord.***



# SECTION 3: BEING JOB READY & NETWORKING STRATEGIES

Please note that as you are waiting for your work permit, you can consider the following tips and tricks. You might need to make some changes in your professional career that you have been pursuing in your home country. It may also take some time to resume certain professions. Whether you decide to continue on the same path or make some changes, this document is for you.

## Build a professional network in a new country

- Attend local community events, job fairs, and workshops to meet people and potential employers.
- Join online forums and social media groups related to job hunting in your area.
- Connect with local community and refugee support organizations for guidance and networking opportunities.
- Join mail listings and newsletter for events and job fairs
- Visit your local library for events, and workshop.
- Volunteering opportunities.

## Settlement worker support from Ontario Works

Settlement workers are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **to assist newcomers with the following free and confidential services:**

- Information on education, employment, healthcare, housing and more
- Referrals to community services and City programs
- Access to language-specific supports across the city of Toronto

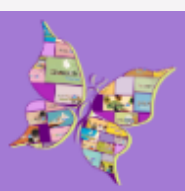
To book an appointment you can call **416-338-0688**. You can also connect with settlement workers at **Newcomer Services Kiosks** across the city.

## Courses and certification

Consider taking courses or certifications to enhance your skills, making you a more attractive candidate to employers.

## Government and non-government support

Seek assistance from government agencies and non-governmental organizations that specialize in helping refugees integrate into the workforce.



# How to Be Job Ready

## Gather documentation

Determine whether your chosen occupation or industry in your new country demands particular licenses, certifications, or accreditations that vary from those in your home country. Reach out to the appropriate professional organizations or government authorities to gain insight into these prerequisites

## Educational Credential Assessment (ECA)

Some countries require newcomers to obtain an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) for their foreign educational qualifications. This assessment evaluates your academic credentials and determines their equivalency in the new country's education system.

## Research licensing and certification requirements

Find out if your profession or field in your new country requires specific licenses, certifications, or accreditations that are different from your home country. Contact relevant professional bodies or government agencies to understand these requirements.

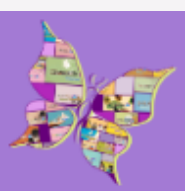
## Language Proficiency Assessment

Determine your level of language proficiency in the official languages of your new country. This is crucial as language skills are often a fundamental requirement for many jobs. Consider taking language proficiency tests such as **IELTS or TOEFL for English, or TEF for French, if required.**

There are many centres around the city that provide IELTS and TOEFL exams. The following are just examples or a place to start from.

## Centers that provide English exams

- **British Council:** Provide with locations you can visit to take the IELTS Exam  
<https://www.ielts.ca/register-for-ielts/>
- **COSTI:** COSTI's Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) program, assists individuals in achieving their academic or professional goals by helping them to develop the skills necessary to achieve a score of 600 or more on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): Master formal English; expand vocabulary; improve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills; develop accuracy in correct grammar; prepare a well-developed 200-300 word essay on a general topic.  
[https://www.costi.org/programs/program\\_details.php?program\\_id=133](https://www.costi.org/programs/program_details.php?program_id=133)



## Language Skills

If you need to improve your language skills, it's good to get assessed and start with your English language classes. This will also benefit you in the future with your citizenship application.

### Adult language learning

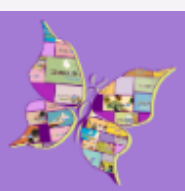
Refugee Claimants and convention refugee/ protected persons are eligible to enroll in language skills training offered by the government to help them learn or improve their English or French language skills.

- FSL French & ESL English classes are designed to individuals whose first language is not English or French. These classes aim to help non-native speakers develop their language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Many government-funded programs offer ESL and FSL classes to support newcomer looking to integrate into their communities or workplaces.

In Canada, if you're a newcomer and you want to have your foreign educational credentials evaluated, you can use the services of credential evaluation organizations. These organizations assess your educational qualifications and provide an official report that outlines how your foreign credentials compare to Canadian educational standards. **Here are a few key credential evaluation services in Canada:**

- **Comparative Education Service (CES):** Offered by the University of Toronto, CES provides assessments of international educational credentials for immigration, employment, or educational purposes.  
<https://learn.utoronto.ca/comparative-education-service>
- **International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS):** ICAS evaluates foreign educational documents for individuals seeking employment or admission to Canadian educational institutions.  
<https://www.icascanada.ca/home.aspx>
- **World Education Services (WES):** WES provides credential evaluation services for immigrants and international students. They assess academic qualifications from various countries. When using these services, you will typically need to submit your academic documents, such as transcripts, diplomas, and certificates, for evaluation. The evaluation reports produced by these organizations will help Canadian employers and educational institutions understand the equivalency of your foreign credentials to the Canadian system.  
<https://www.wes.org/ca/>

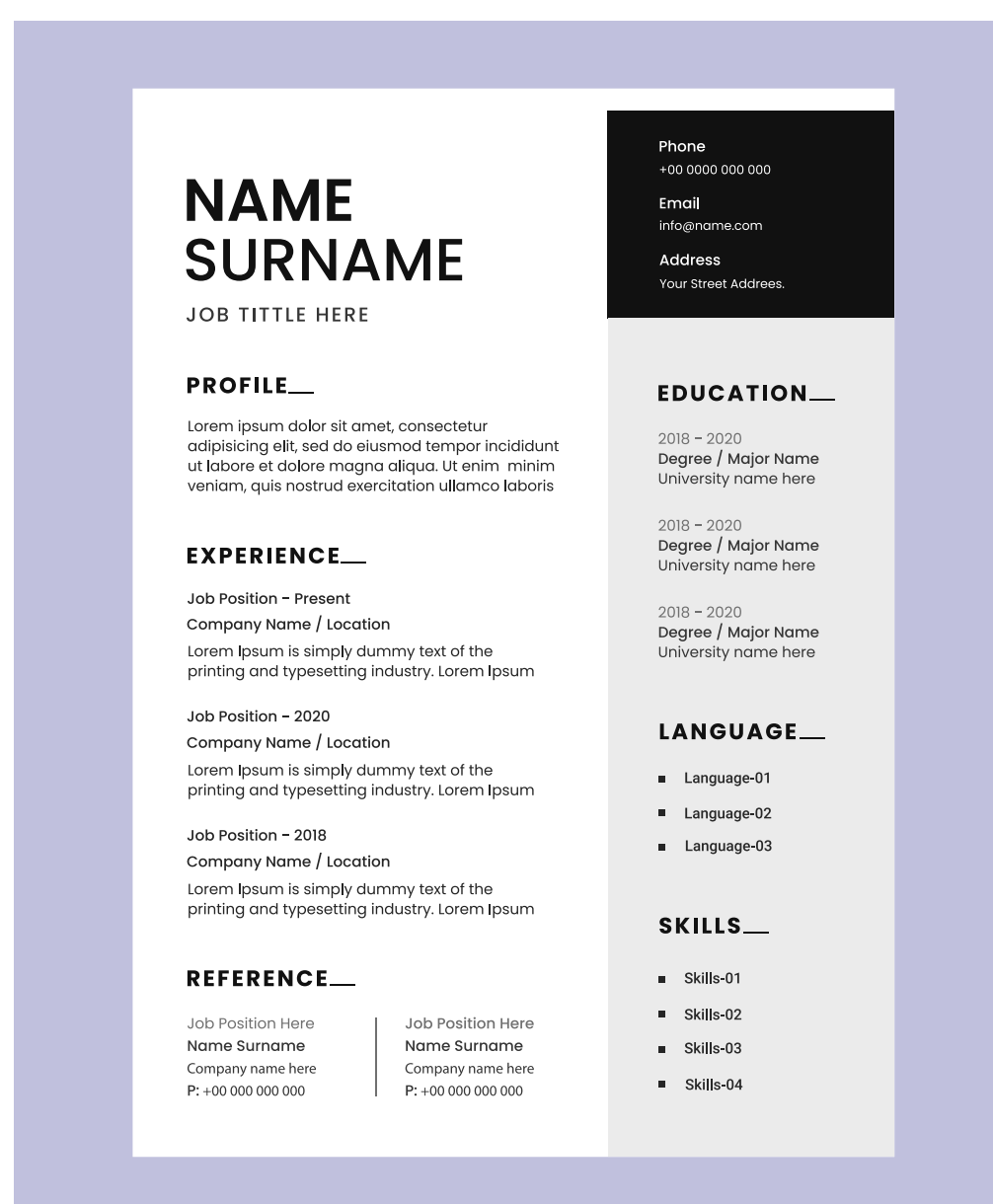
***If you are under Ontario Works and you are receiving financial assistance, ask your caseworker if you are exempt from the fee for WES evaluation.***



# Resume and Cover Letter Tips

## Resume Tips

- **Tailor Your Resume:** Customize your resume for each job application by highlighting the most relevant skills, experiences, and qualifications that match the job requirements.
- **Choose the Right Format:** Use a clean and professional format. The most common formats are chronological (listing work experience in reverse order) and functional (emphasizing skills and qualifications). Choose the one that suits your career history and the job you're applying for.
- **Include Contact Information:** Provide your full name, phone number, email address, and, if applicable, your LinkedIn profile or professional website.
- **Create a Strong Summary or Objective:** Write a concise summary or objective statement at the top of your resume to give employers a quick overview of your career goals and what you can bring to the role.
- **Highlight Achievements:** Use bullet points to showcase your accomplishments and contributions in previous roles.
- **Emphasize Relevant Skills:** List your key skills, both hard and soft, that are pertinent to the job. Ensure that these skills align with the job description.
- **Include Education and Certifications:** Mention your educational background, degrees earned, and any relevant certifications or training you've completed.
- **Use Action Verbs:** Begin each bullet point with a strong action verb to make your achievements sound more dynamic and impactful.
- **Be Concise:** Keep your resume succinct and to the point. Aim for a one-page resume for less experienced candidates and a maximum of two pages for those with extensive experience.
- **Proofread and Edit:** Check for typos, grammatical errors, and formatting issues. Ask someone else to review your resume for a fresh perspective.



## Cover Letter Tips

- **Customize Each Cover Letter:** Tailor your cover letter for each job application. Address it to the specific hiring manager if possible.
- **Engaging Opening:** Start with a compelling opening that grabs the reader's attention. Mention how you heard about the job or what excites you about the company.
- **Explain Your Fit:** Clearly explain why you're a good fit for the role. Highlight specific skills, experiences, and achievements that match the job requirements.
- **Show Enthusiasm:** Express your enthusiasm for the position and the company. Convey your genuine interest in working for them.
- **Share Stories:** Use anecdotes or stories to illustrate your skills and experiences. Stories can make your cover letter more engaging and memorable.
- **Address Potential Concerns:** If there are gaps in your resume or other potential concerns, briefly address them and explain how you've overcome challenges.
- **Research the Company:** Demonstrate that you've done your homework by mentioning specific aspects of the company that appeal to you. This shows that you're genuinely interested.
- **Professional Closing:** End your cover letter professionally, expressing your desire for an interview. Thank the employer for their consideration.
- **Proofread:** Carefully proofread your cover letter for errors, and ensure it's well-structured and free of typos.
- **Follow Submission Instructions:** Adhere to any submission guidelines provided by the employer, such as document format or application procedures.

[Your name]  
[Email]  
[Address]  
[Phone number]

[Date]

Dear [Hiring manager's name],

I was excited to see that [company name] is hiring for [position] that I found on [how you learned about the position]. Please accept this letter as a sign of my sincere interest in working for your organization. I know of your company through [how you know about their business, such as their website, social media, or a shared contact] and know that your organization is [offer a compliment about an award, achievement, innovation, or leading the way in a particular area].

My [area you've worked in] skills are well documented in my [how many years you've worked]. I currently work as a [position] and focus on [key projects] where I've achieved [provide quantitative results].

Through my experience, I've developed an understanding of [responsibilities highlighted in the job description]. I also feel confident meeting and exceeding [goals or standards] set by the organizations I've worked for.

I hope to discuss my qualifications further with you in an interview, as I'm prepared to handle the intriguing challenges your position presents. I have attached my resume for your review. Please let me know if you require additional information, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards,  
[Your name]



# Employment Support Agencies In Toronto

## Toronto Public Library provide access to computers

Access to computers, training, resources, job search, etc.

- <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/>

## Matthew House

- <https://www.matthewhouse.ca/>
- Tel: 416-203-7848; Email: 20admin@matthewhouse.ca

## Costi

- <https://www.costi.org/>
- Tel: 416-658-1600; Email: info@costi.org

## YMCA of Greater Toronto

The YMCA Employment Services team offers job search support, resume writing, interview skills, access to employers, and more - all FREE of cost.

- Tel: 416-928-9622 or 1-800-223-8024
- <https://www.ymcagta.org/>

## Accessible Community Counselling and Employment

- Services: <https://accesemployment.ca/>
- ACCES Employment Toronto : Tel: 416-921-1800
- ACCES Employment Scarborough Tel: 416-431-5326
- ACCES Employment Mississauga Tel: 905-361-2522
- ACCES Employment North York 416-443-9008

## Newcomer Women Services Toronto

- <https://www.newcomerwomen.org/>
- Tel: 647-224-1371; Email: info@newcomerwomen.org

## Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council

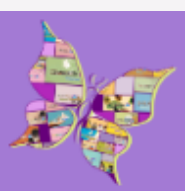
- <https://triec.ca/>
- Tel: 416-944-1946; Email: inquiries@triec.ca

## Skills for Change

- <https://skillsforchange.org/>
- Tel: 416-658-3101

## Toronto Employment and Community Services

- Tel: 416-488-0084; Email: service@tces.on.ca



# Access to Internet and Computers in Toronto

- **Public Libraries:** Offer computers with Internet access, as well as a free Wi-Fi network.
- **Service Canada Center:** Most Service Canada Centers provide computers with Internet and free Wi-Fi.
- **reSTART Program:** The reSTART program provides computers at below retail cost for people receiving social assistance.

## Online platforms for volunteer opportunities

Volunteering is a great opportunity for newcomers to gain valuable skills, learn more about the culture and the system, and become more integrated.

- **Volunteer Canada** ([volunteer.ca](http://volunteer.ca)): Volunteer Canada's website offers a comprehensive database of volunteer opportunities across the country. You can search for positions by location, type, and area of interest.
- **GoVolunteer** ([govolunteer.ca](http://govolunteer.ca)): This platform focuses on volunteer opportunities in British Columbia. It allows you to search for positions and get involved in various causes.
- **United Way** ([unitedway.ca](http://unitedway.ca)): United Way chapters across Canada often have volunteer opportunities listed on their websites .
- **Local Community Websites:** Many local community websites and government sites have sections dedicated to volunteer opportunities.

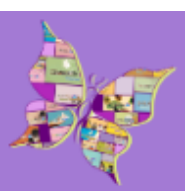
*After you receive your work permit, the next step you need to follow, which is very important, is to apply for your Social Insurance Number (SIN) from Service Canada.*

## How to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN):

A SIN is a 9-digit number that is personal, confidential, and unique to you. You need it to:

- **receive benefits and credits**
- **work in Canada**
- **open most types of bank accounts**

1. You need: identification document (passport), work permit issued by IRCC, and TRP if applicable. They must be presented in their original form and must be valid.
2. Go to the closest Service Canada office to be assisted on a first-come, first-served basis..
3. Give your documents to the officer. If everything is in order, they will give you your SIN during your visit.
4. Before leaving the Service Canada office, make sure your information is correct on the document issued by the officer.
5. Your SIN is confidential, and you should only share it when necessary, such as starting a job or dealing with official matters. NEVER share it over the phone or in text messages, as this is how criminals attempt fraud.



## SECTION 4: HOW TO APPLY FOR A JOB

After you've gained some experience volunteering and received your work permit, as well as applied for a SIN number, it's time to start applying for jobs.

Many countries have online job portals where you can search for job listings and post your resume. Websites like LinkedIn, Indeed, and local job search websites can be very useful. The following websites are some of the most popular platforms to find jobs in Canada. Additionally, you can revisit section 3 on how to be job-ready and follow the steps again on how to tailor your resume and cover letter to the job description.

### **Indeed Canada** ([ca.indeed.com](https://ca.indeed.com))

- One of the largest job search websites globally, it provides a wide range of job listings in Canada.

### **Workopolis** ([workopolis.com](https://workopolis.com))

- Workopolis is a well-established Canadian job search platform, offering various job postings across different sectors.

### **LinkedIn** ([linkedin.com](https://linkedin.com))

- The professional networking site has a job search feature that allows you to search for jobs based on location, skills, and industry. It's also a platform where you can build a network of connections that can help you connect with others or find a job. It's the perfect platform for job searching and networking.

### **Job Bank** ([jobbank.gc.ca](https://jobbank.gc.ca))

- This is a government-run platform that offers a wide range of job opportunities across Canada. It also provides information about the job market and the latest updates. All resources are tailored to match your situation and provide better support for your job search journey.

### **Monster** ([monster.ca](https://monster.ca))

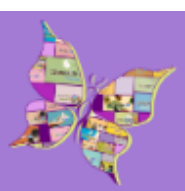
- Monster is a job board that offers a vast array of job postings, allowing users to search for jobs by industry, location, and skillset.

### **Glassdoor** ([glassdoor.ca](https://glassdoor.ca))

- Glassdoor not only provides job listings but also offers company reviews and salary information to help job seekers make informed decisions about their career.

### **CareerBuilder** ([careerbuilder.ca](https://careerbuilder.ca))

- CareerBuilder offers job listings and resources to help job seekers find employment opportunities and improve their job search strategies.



# SECTION 5: FILLING TAXES

## Who should be filling taxes

- Permanent Residents (including those with "approval-in-principle" from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada)
- Refugees (Protected Persons)
- Temporary Residents (students, workers, temporary permit holders)

## Residency status for taxes

- The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) considers you a newcomer to Canada for the first year of your residency
- You become a tax resident when you establish enough residential ties in Canada, usually on the day of your arrival

## Residency include:

- A home in Canada
- A spouse or common-law partner and dependents who move to Canada to live with you
- Personal property in Canada, such as a car or furniture
- Social ties in Canada

## Other ties that may be relevant include:

- A Canadian driver's licence
- Canadian bank accounts or credit cards
- Health insurance with a Canadian province or territory

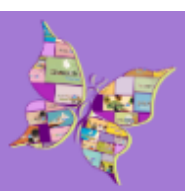
## Tax filing requirements

You must file a tax return if:

- You have to pay tax
- You want to claim a refund

## Tax credits and benefits

- You don't need to file a tax return to start receiving benefits and credits in your first year in Canada. However, you must file a tax return to continue receiving benefits and credits in subsequent years, even if you had no income.
- Filing your first tax return may make you eligible for more tax credits and benefits. This means that when filing initial tax return in Canada, it provides an opportunity to access additional financial benefits and deductions. This can include various tax credits and benefits offered by the Canadian government to support individuals and families, based on income, family size, and specific circumstances. Filing the first tax return allow the government to determine eligibility for these programs, including the Canada Child Benefit, the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) credit, and various provincial or territorial tax credits.
- Filing tax return is not just a legal obligation; it's also a way to ensure financial support and assistance based on individual situation, which can be very helpful for newcomers.



# SETTLEMENT RESOURCES

## Section 1: Financial Assistance

Ontario Works Financial Assistance

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/social-assistance>

## Section 2: Secure Housing in Toronto

Helpline that easily connects people to social services, programs and community supports

- <https://211ontario.ca/>

## Section 3: Being Job Ready & Networking Strategies

English classes, Pre-apprenticeship programs, etc.

- <https://skillsforchange.org/>

Skills training and settlement support to newcomers

- <https://newcircles.ca/>

Bridging programs

- <https://mnlct.org/>

English classes, pre-apprenticeship programs, etc.

- <https://skillsforchange.org/>

YMCA language assessment and referral services

- <https://ymcagta.org/immigrant-services/language-assessment-and-referral-services>

French as a Second Language (FSL)

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/adult-learning-french-second-language>

English as a Second Language (ES)L:

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/adult-learning-english-second-language>

British Council:

- <https://www.ielts.ca/register-for-ielts/>

ETS for TOEFL Exams:

- <https://www.ets.org/login.html>

COSTI's Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) program

- [https://www.costi.org/programs/program\\_details.php?program\\_id=133](https://www.costi.org/programs/program_details.php?program_id=133)

Comparative Education Service (CES)

- <https://learn.utoronto.ca/comparative-education-service>

International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS)

- <https://www.icascanada.ca/home.aspx>

World Education Services (WES)

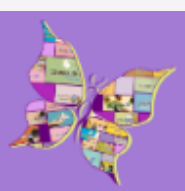
- <https://www.wes.org/ca/>

Training, resources, job search, etc.

- <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/>

Volunteer Opportunities in Toronto

- <https://www.volunteertoronto.ca/>
- <https://www.unitedway.ca/>
- <https://volunteer.ca/>



## Section 4: Apply for a Job

Indeed Canada

- [ca.indeed.com](https://ca.indeed.com)

Workopolis

- [workopolis.com](https://workopolis.com)

LinkedIn

- [linkedin.com](https://linkedin.com)

Job Bank

- [jobbank.gc.ca](https://jobbank.gc.ca)

Monster

- [monster.ca](https://monster.ca)

Glassdoor

- [glassdoor.ca](https://glassdoor.ca)

CareerBuilder

- [careerbuilder.ca](https://careerbuilder.ca)

## Section 5: Filing Taxes

Get your taxes done at free clinic

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/community-volunteer-income-tax-program/need-a-hand-complete-your-tax-return.html>

Benefits, credits, and taxes for newcomers (CRA)

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/international-non-residents/individuals-leaving-entering-canada-non-residents/newcomers-canada-immigrants.html>

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# Contact Us



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