

YORK REGION LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP



Questions, Answers and Resources

On February 9, 2021, York Region's Local Immigration Partnership hosted "Opening Doors for Newcomers in York Region." This event provided community agency staff with information about programs and services available in York Region to support newcomers, and tools they can use to help newcomers effectively navigate the system. The following questions were raised during the meeting.

1. What tools are available to support agency staff?

The COVID-19 Community Services and Facility Finder

This free tool allows staff, service providers and municipalities to:

- Improve residents' lives by offering a single source of trusted, complete and up-to-date information about the Region's programs and services
- Search for information by name, address, municipality or type of service
- View information on a map and summarize it in a report

As staff serving immigrants, this integrated tool will help you find the information you need in one place without having to search through many different websites.

You can find the COVID-19 Community Services and Facility Finder tool, in addition to many tools and resources, by visiting the [YorkMaps.ca](https://yorkmaps.ca) homepage. Each tool can help you find information about different services that your clients may need.

To open tool, click the word **VIEW**. You can mark any tool as a "favourite" by clicking on the heart at the bottom of the square, which will make it easier to find the next time that you return to the YorkMaps.ca page. Please be patient as the tool takes a few seconds to load and open.

York Region Newcomer Guide

In 2021, York Region published a Newcomer Guide to help immigrants learn more about the Region, including information about programs and services that are available to help individuals and their families settle here.

You can access the [Newcomer Guide](#) electronically. It is not currently available in hard copy form. The Guide will be updated regularly (at minimum, annually), and we are working on a French translation.

2. Please list the non-profit organizations that help with various newcomer needs.

You can run a report using York Region's COVID-19 Community and Facility Services Tool Finder, which is available at [YorkMaps.ca](https://yorkmaps.ca), to search available programs and services that can address a variety of newcomer needs, including (but not limited to):

- Pre-arrival services

- Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
- Settlement Services
- Language Services
- Health, Housing and Social Services
- Financial Supports
- Education and Training
- Employment and Accreditation Services
- Places of Worship and Ethnocultural Organizations

3. How can we help a newcomer who speaks limited English find employment?

You can use the COVID-19 Community Services and Facility Services Tool Finder, available at [YorkMaps.ca](https://yorkmaps.ca), to search for agencies that may be able to help. Click on “Find Services,” then select “Findhelp/211 Services” to locate agencies. The languages available at each agency can be found in the **Languages** section under the full description of services.

There are also many other language supports available from agencies serving newcomers, such as:

- Language assessments (for York Region residents, please visit achev.ca/lasysd)
- Language training
- Literacy and basic skills

Newcomers that want to learn a new language can access government-funded language training programs. To access these programs, newcomers must complete a language assessment through a government-funded language assessment [centre](#). This assessment helps learners understand where they are in their learning process.

Many community programs are available to support specific newcomer needs, including:

- Career counselling
- Job readiness / pre-employment preparation programs (including English language skills and information to help them understand the Canadian labour market and workplace/business etiquette)
- Industry-specific employment training
- Job search programs (including job search assistance, one-on-one coaching and work experience placements)
- Bridging programs for internationally trained professionals, which are designed to combine international training, education and experience with what you need to work in Canada
- Self-employment programs

4. Most services target young people skilled in the trades. Are there more focused services for mid-level professionals (40 years of age and older) in regulated professions?

Information shared by participants about their programs and services, which may support mid-level professionals and newcomers in regulated professions, included:

- **Job Find Club:** Enhanced program at Job Skills that supports newcomers who are international professionals: jobskills.org/job-find-club_enhanced
- **Seneca College OSLT (Occupation-Specific Language Training):** Offers free language training for professionals in specified sectors: senecacollege.ca/ce/oslt/#OSLTSchedule
- **Windmill Microlending:** Offers low interest loans to support newcomers who require support to finance their professional development and (re)certification in their chosen professions: windmillmicrolending.org

- **Accreditation and Qualification Information Services:** Available at all York Region Welcome Centres, and through a mobile unit in northern York Region, this information and accreditation planning service helps internationally-educated professionals and tradespeople in regulated and non-regulated professions get professional recognition in Canada. Call 1-877-761-1155 or e-mail: accreditation@welcomecentre.ca
- **JVS pre-arrival, CWC, iPLAN (for Architects) and JSW programs for newcomers:** jvstoronto.org/workshop-calendar/job-search-for-newcomers-6/

5. What French services are available for newcomers in York Region?

There are many programs and services available to help French immigrants settle and succeed in York Region. These services offer information and guidance on many topics, help build social connections through activities, and assist students, parents and guardians adjust to school.

Francophone newcomers, or agencies that would like to work together to support French newcomers, can email Rose Marie from Association Francophone at teec.cae.afry@gmail.com or call 647-887-1645. AFRY is a not-for-profit agency that helps the Francophone community in York Region in all its diversity.

6. Where can people get mental health supports that are available in different languages?

When using the COVID-19 Community Services and Facility Finder tool, available at YorkMaps.ca, click on the link to the 211ontario.ca website to search agencies that offer the information you require. The languages available at each agency can be found in the **Languages** section under the full description of services.

The [Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe](http://CanadianMentalHealthAssociationYorkandSouthSimcoe) provides services with interpretation for residents, and internal resources for culturally-specific services (e.g. staff from a particular culture/language group). They also actively connect and reach out to organizations from other cultures (e.g. Hong Fook, Muslim Women of Vaughan, etc.) to provide mental health services and partnerships.

7. Do Welcome Centres offer services for newcomers with a student visa or work permit?

For newcomers with student visas, we recommend you consult with a settlement worker. Referrals are made based on individual needs. If a newcomer has a work permit, the Welcome Centre will provide settlement services and make referrals to community partners based on eligibility and need.

8. Can agencies refer clients who want to find out about eligibility criteria or documentation requirements to remove some of the barriers they experience?

There are several steps to complete before a client can access the programs and supports they may need. Confirming eligibility requirements is one important step as agencies must confirm that the client meets the criteria and lives within the area of service. They must also confirm information like required documentation and age or citizen status requirements, which vary by program and by agency delivering the program.

When using the COVID-19 Community Services and Facility Finder tool, available at [YorkMaps.ca](https://yorkmaps.ca), click on the link to the 211ontario.ca website to search agencies that offer the information you require. Once on this site, read the **Description of Services** section, which provides information on eligibility requirements for each program or service.

Agencies often accept referrals from other agencies and understand the challenges that clients face when trying to access services.

9. How do service providers update information about their offerings?

[211](https://211.ca) is a free service that connects individuals and families to a complete list of government, health, community and social services in their communities.

211 will contact agencies that have not updated their 211 program record to ensure their information is current. Please help the 211 team make sure your information is accurate. Agencies can also update their records directly in the 211 database [here](#).

10. What services are available for individuals who have precarious or non-immigrant status?

The [Vaughan Community Health Centre](#) provides free, in-person and virtual services in Vaughan and Keswick. The Centre serves children, youth, adults, seniors and families with a variety of needs:

- No health coverage/insurance (no OHIP or people that face other barriers to accessing health services)
- Serious health issues
- Unable to speak English or French
- Inadequate housing
- Unemployment
- Lack of transportation to medical appointments
- Mental health and addiction issues

Services are available free of charge for eligible individuals.

Additional Resources

Connecting clients in a culturally sensitive way

- [TED Talk on cross-cultural communications](#): Pellegrino Riccardi
- [Tensions We Hold, Refugee Livelihood Lab](#): A resource to support conversations in your organization
- [Cultural Atlas](#)
- [Cultural Insights on more than 100 Countries and Regions from Global Affairs Canada](#)

Additional resources posted during the session

- [ACCES Employment - Job Search Workshops](#): Provides newcomers with the opportunity to meet and network
- [Humber College Mentoring Program for Newcomers](#): Brings together recent skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships.

You can also connect with Maggie Alongi-Maxwell by email at Maggie.Alongi-Maxwell@humber.ca

- [Humber College Bridging Programs](#)
- [Self-Employment Pathways for Newcomers](#): Shows newcomers how to create a business plan, set your goals and make your dreams of starting a business come to life
- [YMCA Greater Toronto website for employment services](#): Provides support to newcomers looking for a new job or career, or who are starting a new life in Canada
- [Learning Enrichment Foundation's Employment Services](#): Supports newcomers to Canada, those out of the workforce for a period of time, new graduates, those recently completing training or looking for training

Links to health, housing, financial and legal supports

- York Region [Housing Options for Residents](#)
- York Region employment and [Financial Assistance](#) programs to help residents meet basic needs
- [Ontario Works Program](#)
- [Ontario Disability Support Program](#)
- [Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services](#)
- [Ministry of Health](#)
- [Community Legal Clinic of York Region](#)