

Questions and Answers For New Immigrants 2015

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Welcome to the section of Questions & Answers (Q&A) for New Immigrants! The Settlement Workers in Burnaby School District have compiled these comprehensive questions that are frequently asked by new immigrants, who have a school-age child, or children, attending a public school, in order to address their initial settlement needs. Although we make every effort to update information in this document, please be advised that we are **NOT** responsible for any outdated information provided by other sources such as government programs or community agencies. If you have any further questions or require more information, please contact the Settlement (SWIS) Worker at your school.

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Section 1

UPON ARRIVAL



1.1 Federal programs/resources

What is a Social Insurance Number (SIN)?

Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a 9-digit identity number for a Canadian citizen, individuals living in Canada as a permanent resident, or individuals with temporary stay as approved by the Government of Canada. Each individual needs a SIN in order to access employment or receive government benefit. On March 31, 2014, Service Canada began issuing SINs in a paper format and stopped producing plastic SIN cards. Remember to keep your Social Insurance Number **safe**. Service Canada requires individuals to apply in-person. Simply gather all the original documents required and go to a local [Service Canada Centre](#). The closest centre is located at 100-3480 Gilmore Way, Burnaby, BC.

Special measures are in place to accommodate individuals who cannot apply in-person at a Service Canada point of service. Click [here](#) for more details. You may also call Service Canada at 1 800 206-7218 and select option “3”.

Who can apply for Canada Child Benefit (CCTB)?

A parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of 18 may apply for Canada Child Benefit which is a tax-free monthly payment. The child must live with their parent or legal guardian, someone whom is **primarily responsible** for the care and upbringing of the child. For CCTB purposes, when both parents live together with the child, the **mother** is usually considered the primary responsible parent and **should apply**. Requirements for CCTB include immigration and residence status. CCTB is calculated based on the family’s net income and is generally paid on the 20th of each month. Click [here](#) for more information including [application forms](#) (Forms RC66 & RC66SCH are usually needed for initial application) or [contact](#) CRA directly.

What is Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB)?

[Universal Child Care Benefit \(UCCB\)](#) is for a child under the age of 6 years and is **NOT** income-based. It is paid in installments of \$100 per month for every eligible child. Separate application is not needed. Enrollment for the UCCB is done through the [Canada Child Benefit \(CCTB\)](#) application.

What is BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit?

BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit is a tax-free monthly payment of up to a maximum of \$55 per month – or \$660 dollars per year – for each child under the age of six. This new benefit is introduced by BC government to improve the affordability of child care and assist families with the cost of raising young children. Separate application is not necessary. It will be administered on a monthly basis through the Canada Child Tax Benefit system. To be eligible to receive the benefit, families must file their personal income tax returns even if they have no income to report. The maximum benefit will be available to eligible families with family net incomes under \$100,000. Families with net income between \$100,000 to under \$150,000 will receive a partial benefit. For more details, check [here](#).

What is GST/HST Credit and who can apply for it?

GST/HST (goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax) Credit is a tax-free quarterly payment from both Federal and Provincial governments. The credit is determined based on the family's net income and paid on July 5, October 5, January 5 and April 5. All residents of Canada, for income tax purposes, 19 years of age or older may apply. For those individuals in a marital relationship, only one spouse/partner may apply. Starting with the filing of your **2014** income tax and benefit return, you **no longer** have to apply for the (GST/HST) credit. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) will determine your eligibility and will issue the GST/HST credit to all entitled individuals.

To apply for GST/HST credit based on your 2013 and/or prior returns, see question 2 "How do I apply for the GST/HST credit?" [here](#).

New immigrant families who have not filed Individual Income Tax Return may apply using a separate [GST/HST Credit application form](#).

How much can I get for CCTB and GST/HST Credit?

You may use the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) [Child and family benefits calculators](#) to check if you are entitled to the benefit and receive an estimated amount for each benefit.

How to have child and family benefits directly deposited to my bank account?

You can enroll for direct deposit immediately if you are registered for the [My Account](#) service with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). You may also fill out the [Direct Deposit Request - Individuals](#) form, sign and mail it to
RECEIVER GENERAL FOR CANADA
PO BOX 5000
MATANE QC G4W 4R6

The Government of Canada is switching to direct deposit payments. If you already provided your bank account information to the CRA for one or more payments, this bank account will be used to deposit all government benefit payments to you on or after January 1, 2015. For more information, go to [frequently asked questions about direct deposit](#).

How to check the processing time for my Permanent Resident Card (PR Card)?

Information about the processing time for the Permanent Resident Card is available [online here](#).

How do I change my address on my Permanent Resident Card?

If an address is changed before you receive your Permanent Resident Card (PR Card), in most cases you may use the [Change my address](#) online service to notify Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) of your new address.

If you were told to provide your address to CIC within 180 days of your admission to Canada in order to receive a PR Card and your address is in Canada, you may use the [Address Notification](#) online service. If you do not receive your PR Card within 30 days after sending in your address, please contact the [CIC Call Centre](#) at 1 888 242-2100. You must choose one of the first few recorded options before you can press "0" to speak with an agent.

How do I clear customs for my shipment of goods as a new immigrant?

You may go to the following Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) office to clear customs when the shipment arrives.

Canada Border Services Agency
412-4th Floor, 1611 Main Street
Vancouver BC V6A 2W5

You don't need an appointment and walk-in service is now available. You need to bring the following documents with you:

1. Passports of all family members
2. Landing papers of all family members
3. Shipping documents from the shipping company
4. List of all the goods to follow (as detailed as possible, including quantity, brand name, model, serial number, etc.)

1.2 Provincial programs/resources

How to apply for the Medical Service Plan (MSP) of BC?

The Medical Services Plan (MSP) of BC is available for those who have lived in BC for three months (the remainder of the month of arrival + 2 months). [Application for MSP Enrolment](#) form should be submitted **upon arrival in BC**. The coverage is required by law and each family must be enrolled. MSP of BC offers a basic medical coverage. There is a monthly fee called MSP premium. After enrolment each family member receives a unique lifetime identifier for health care called Personal Health Number (PHN), which is printed at the back of your [BC Services Card](#) (formerly BC CareCard). Click [here](#) for more details.

How do I change and/or remove family members from my MSP account?

Use the [MSP Account Change](#) (Form # HLTH 203) form. If you are adding family members, use the Fill, Print and Mail form and attach required documents. More information about MSP account changes is available [here](#).

What is the contact phone number for Health Insurance BC?

Call 604.683.7151 or toll-free at: 1 800 663-7100 about health related questions. Additional information is available online from the [Health Insurance BC](#).

How do I find a family doctor/physician?

Often, every BC resident has a family doctor (family physician). A child's school needs information such as the child's [MSP Personal Health Number \(PHN\)](#), formerly known as CareCard number, and the name and phone number of your family doctor, to keep on file.

To find a family doctor,

- Go to a Walk-in Clinic and ask
- Be referred by a friend
- Check the Yellow Pages (telephone book), by looking under "Physicians", or this online [BC Doctor Directory](#) for Burnaby doctors.

- Check online at [College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia](#) to search for a family physician/doctor in your or neighbouring community, and phone to find out if s/he is accepting new patients.

Is a routine eye examination covered by MSP?

People aged 18 and younger, or age 65 and older, may use their MSP Personal Health Number (PHN) to receive free [routine eye examinations](#). Routine eye examinations for individuals between 19-64 years old are NOT covered by MSP. However, all medically required eye examinations (ordered by your family doctor or by a doctor's examination referral) are still covered by MSP for all age groups.

How can I find an optometrist/eye doctor?

Check [here](#) to find an optometrist or eye doctor. Please be aware that some optometrists may charge extra fees whereas others don't charge any extra fees for your child's routine eye examinations. It is advised to call the optometrist's office and ask about any additional charges before making an appointment.

What is Fair PharmaCare and how do I register?

B.C. residents are eligible to apply for Fair PharmaCare, a plan that provides financial help with eligible prescription drugs and medical supplies. The coverage is calculated based on the family's net income from two years prior (e.g. coverage for 2013 is based on 2011 family net income). If you are a new Canadian resident who has not yet filed a tax return in Canada, you need to enter **your income from all sources inside and outside Canada for last year**. Each family only needs to register once and may complete the first step of registration [online](#) after receiving their Social Insurance Number, and when their MSP Personal Health Number (PHN) becomes active. All family members on the same MSP account are to be registered together.

Check out more about the [Fair PharmaCare Calculator](#), [PharmaCare Drug Benefit Search](#) (to see if your drug is covered by PharmaCare), [Income Reviews and Family Changes](#) (Fair PharmaCare assistance might change when family circumstances change). For further answers please check [Fair PharmaCare Frequently Asked Questions](#).

How to find a daycare in Burnaby?

- To search for ministry-funded licensed child care (including licensed Group and licensed Family) in your community by city, address and license type, use the [Child Care Map](#).
- For a full list of child care resources including Registered License-Not-Required (RLNRs) and other child care options, contact YMCA Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) at 604.294.1109 (Burnaby/New Westminster office/Metrotown Community Resource Centre, 3rd floor - 4460 Beresford Street, Burnaby) or 604.931.3400 (Tri-cities office), email: bnwccrr@gv.ymca.ca or tricrr@gv.ymca.ca Information on the child's age and postal code must be provided. Check [here](#) for their website about the office hours for both locations.
- Ask the school secretary in your child's school.

How to get financial help for daycare services if parents are at school or working?

Daycare financial aid depends on the family's residence and immigration status, parents' work or education status and the family's financial situation. Check the links below to get more information about Child Care Subsidy.

- [Child Care Subsidy eligibility and application](#)
- [Subsidy rate](#)
- [Child Care Subsidy Frequently Asked Questions for Parents](#)
- [How to renew Child Care Subsidy](#)

You may contact Child Care Subsidy at 1 888 338-6622. [Translation Services](#) are available upon request.

Do I need a BC Identification (BCID) card and how do I get it?

If you don't drive, you can use a B.C. identification card as a picture ID instead of a driver's license. Anyone 12 or older can apply for a BCID card. Before applying for a BCID card you must have a Permanent Resident (PR) Card. Upon receiving a Permanent Resident Card, you may go to an [ICBC driver's licensing office](#) to apply for a BC Identification Card (BCID). Click [here](#) for more information. Now you can use [BC Services Card](#) as an alternative to a BCID.

How to get a B.C. Driver's License?

As a new immigrant you must be 16 or older, have a Permanent Resident (PR) Card before you can take a knowledge test, a vision screening test and then a road test in order to get a B.C. Driver's license. Check [here](#) to learn more about how to get a B.C. Driver's License. Starting February 15, 2013 you may combine your B.C. Driver's License Card with [B.C. Services Card](#) if you're enrolled in Medical Services Plan (MSP).

What is a B.C. Services Card and how can I get one?

Starting February 15, 2013 the new [B.C. Services Card](#) is launched to make it easier for B.C. residents to access provincial government services. The B.C. Services Card replaces the CareCard and can be combined with your driver's license. There is no fee to get a BC Services Card. However, if you're combining your BC Services Card with your driver's license, fees that apply to the regular [driver's license renewal process](#) still apply. Most people may use it as a CareCard, a BC Driver's License and a photo ID to access services that need one. Check [here](#) to find out which kind of B.C. Services Card you should get, and [how to get a B.C. Services Card](#).

1.3 Municipal programs/resources

How to find activity programs for children?

There are many programs available at community centres and neighborhood houses for children of different age groups. Click [here](#) for more details.

Check the online interactive [Leisure Guide](#) for information regarding locations of facilities including Parks, Community Centres, Art Galleries and Museums, and the variety of programs and activities offered in Burnaby. You may also find a lot of fun [After School Programs](#) in Burnaby schools organized by Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services. Use the **online** [Webreg](#) for course registration after you get a family PIN and client number(s) for your family members. Click the "help" button on the right top corner if needed.

What is the Burnaby Recreation Credit Program?

The program is administered by Burnaby Community Connections. It provides credit points (equal to dollars) to eligible low income families residing in Burnaby. The credits are to be used within 12 months to access services listed in the [Leisure Guide](#) and the [After School Programs](#).

Click here for the [Burnaby Recreation Program](#) application form. Through the same agency, if applying in the appropriate season for [Burnaby Camping Bureau](#) or [Burnaby Christmas Bureau](#), they may provide financial assistance.

Where can I find a Burnaby Public Library?

Your library card is your key to the resources and services of the Burnaby Public Library. You can use your library card to borrow library materials, reserve a computer, download digital media, search dozens of electronic databases, and more. Check out more information about Burnaby's public library [locations and hours](#) and how to get a free [public library card](#).

Section 2

AFTER 12 MONTHS IN

CANADA



How can I apply for MSP Premium Assistance?

Eligibility for [MSP Premium Assistance](#) is for a Canadian citizen or a holder of permanent residence status (landed immigrant) who has held that status and been a resident in Canada for the past 12 consecutive months before application, and has a low family net income. There are two types of premium assistance programs that offer financial help to eligible families: [Regular Premium Assistance](#) and [Temporary Premium Assistance](#).

What is the BC Healthy Kids Program?

The BC Healthy Kids Program helps families, who are partially or fully eligible for MSP premium assistance, with the cost of basic dental care (\$1400 of basic dental services every two years) and prescription eyeglasses (lenses and basic frames once in a twelve-month period) for their dependent children under the age 19 (including the month they turn 19). To use services under the BC Healthy Kids Program you will need to show your child's BC CareCard or BC Services Card to the dental office or optical provider.

How can I apply for the BC Healthy Kids Program?

When your MSP premium assistance application has been approved, the BC Healthy Kids Program usually begins at the start of the next month. No separate application is necessary. Check for more information about [BC Healthy Kids Program](#) or call 1.866.866.0800 to check your child's status. When you call please follow the steps:
Press 2 first, then you'll be asked to enter your 10-digit phone number, press 1 to confirm; then you'll be given 3 options, press 3 brings you to the "Provincial Services Menu"; then press 2 for "Healthy Kids Program".

How can I find a dentist who provides services under the BC Healthy Kids Program?

Please note that it is the parent's responsibility to check whether a dentist or optical supplier provides services to children through the BC Healthy Kids Program.

To find a dentist who accepts patients under this program click [here](#) and make sure you check the option of "Children: Healthy Kids Program".

What is the Rental Assistance Program and how can I apply for it?

Eligible low-income working families may be able to receive cash assistance from BC Housing through Rental Assistance Program to help with their monthly rent payments if they:

- have lived in BC for the past 12 consecutive months
- have filed an annual income tax return
- are a low-income, working family
- have at least one or more dependent children
- have a gross household income of \$35,000 or less
- have less than \$100,000.00 in assets
- pay more than 30 per cent of household income towards rent for their home, or pay pad rental for a manufactured home (trailer) that they own and occupy
- have been employed at some point over the last year or has currently been employed for three consecutive months
- were not privately sponsored when immigrating to Canada
- do not own property (house, cottage, land, etc.)
- are not living in subsidized housing or co-operative housing and are a shareholder
- must permanently reside in BC when applying, and each member of the whole family must be one of the following:
 - Canadian citizens not under private sponsorship
 - Individuals lawfully admitted into Canada for permanent residence and not under private sponsorship
 - Refugees sponsored by the Government of Canada
 - Individuals who have applied for refugee status

More information about eligibility and application are available [here](#).

Section 3

OTHER RESOURCES

(In alphabetical order)



3.1 ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION

3.1.1 Language Training

What is the LINC program?

The LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) program, administered by the federal Government of Canada (CIC – Citizenship and Immigration of Canada), replaced the formerly ELSA program and began in British Columbia on April 1, 2014. It provides free English language training for adult newcomers to Canada. First, complete an [LINC Application Form](#) for an assessment. Then, mail, fax or bring the application form **and** the photocopy of your immigration document to one of the assessment centres. After the assessment the centre will mail you the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT) results. You may then go to any LINC school to register or go back to the assessment centre for information on available class times, locations and wait lists (no appointment necessary). The test results are valid for 1 year and you may NOT take the test more than one time per year.

The LINC assessment centre for individuals living in Vancouver, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Richmond, South Delta, Burnaby or New Westminister:

Western ESL Services
LINC Assessment and Referral Centre
#208 – 2525 Commercial Drive
Vancouver, BC V5N 4C1
Tel: 604.876.5756 Fax: 604.876.0134

The LINC assessment centre for individuals living in Surrey, North Delta, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Maple Ridge or the Fraser Valley:

Surrey Language Assessment Centre
LINC Assessment and Referral Centre
#202-7337 137th Street
Surrey, BC V3W 1A4
Tel: 604.507.4150 Fax: 604.507.4155

What programs does Burnaby School District Community & Continuing Education provide?

Burnaby is one of the largest districts in the province offering Community & Continuing Education Programs. Educational areas include:

- [High School Completion](#)
- [Foundations Program](#)
- [Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada \(LINC\)](#)
- [Certificates and Diplomas](#)
- [General Interest Courses](#)

For more information check [Burnaby Community & Continuing Education](#).

Are there any free ESL courses in BC?

Many colleges and universities offer free English language preparation courses for students who are Canadian citizens, Permanent Residents, Refugees and Live-in Caregivers so that students are able to continue further educational courses in that college or university. Usually you need to enroll in the college or university, and pay an assessment fee to have your English language ability assessed. Different college or university might charge a different assessment fee.

Please check with each individual [public post-secondary institution](#) to find out more updated information about it before your enrolment.

Are there any other Free or low cost English Language classes in Burnaby?

There are some free or minimal charge English classes provided by different agencies or organizations in Burnaby or neighboring cities. Please note that information may change so it is best to directly contact the agency/organization and inquire about up-to-date information.

- [Burnaby Multicultural Society](#) English Conversation classes for new immigrants & seniors
- [Burnaby Public Library](#) ESL Conversation Circle
- [Family Services of Greater Vancouver](#), New Westminster, ESL for Moms, Caregivers and Grandparents of Young Children (604.525.9144)
- [MOSAIC](#) various locations, English Language Classes
- [Nelson Avenue Community Church](#) Burnaby, ESL classes, (604.435.4123)

- [Pacific Immigrant Resources Society \(PIRS\)](#) various levels of ESL class for immigrant women, at different locations in Vancouver (604.298.5888)
- [Burnaby Neighborhood House](#) Mondays and Thursdays
1-3pm, on-going registration, free classes and \$20 registration fee for one term - 10 weeks (604.431.0400)
- [YMCA of Greater Vancouver](#), English Conversation Clubs at [Brentwood Community Resource Centre](#) Burnaby, Wednesday evenings 5:30 pm - 7:00pm (604.473.7947)

3.1.2 Post-Secondary Education

What is an Education Planner?

[Education Planner](#) is an online search tool for finding information on undergraduate program availability, application dates, tuition costs, admission requirements, program lengths, and much more at post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

How can I find information about colleges and universities in Canada?

[The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada \(AUCC\)](#) (an online search tool) may be used to find post-secondary programs and institutions in Canada.

How can I afford the financial cost for post-secondary education?

Financial assistance for post-secondary education may be received through provincial and/or federal government programs.

Check [StudentAid BC](#) and CanLearn website about [Student Loans, Grants and Scholarships](#) and for more information about eligibility and application.

For other post-secondary education financing options for a child, or children, also see [RESP](#).

3.2 BURNABY COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Where can I find Burnaby Community Resources?

Look for the [Community Resource Guide](#) provided by Burnaby Community Services.

Where can I find programs or services for parents or family members in the community?

Click here for more information

- [Burnaby Family Life \(BFL\)](#)
- [Burnaby Neighborhood House \(BNH\)](#), at different locations
- [Family Services of Greater Vancouver](#)
- [Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia \(ISSofBC\)](#)
- [M.O.S.A.I.C.](#)
- [Parent Support Services Society of BC](#)
- [Purpose Society](#) for youth and families
- [S.U.C.C.E.S.S.](#)
- [YMCA of Greater Vancouver](#) at Brentwood Community Resource Centre

What is the Helping Families in Need Society?

The Helping Families in Need Society has a group of volunteers who collect and distribute household goods (beds, chairs, tables, microwaves, etc.) to help families in need. To be eligible, families must be referred by an individual or staff of an organization. Click [here](#) for information and application.

What is the KidSport™ Burnaby Grant?

It is a community based sport-funding program to help children ages 18 and under participate in sport programs. For more info please check [here](#).

3.3 CHANGE OF ADDRESS

How can I notify different provincial government programs and/or offices about my new address?

If your family are already enrolled in Medical Services Plan (MSP) and will be moving within British Columbia, you can change your address [online](#) for your BC Services Card and your B.C. driver's license. If your BC Services Card has a photo, you will receive an updated address sticker to attach to your card. If you have an enhanced driver's license (EDL), a B.C. identification card (BCID) or an enhanced ID (EIC), you **CANNOT** update your address online – you must contact [ICBC](#) directly.

To cancel your coverage when you are moving outside BC, use online form [Permanent Move outside BC](#) (HLTH#7063).

Do I need to notify Canada Revenue Agency about my address change?

In order to continue receiving federal government benefit payments, such as [the GST/HST Credit](#), [Universal child care benefit](#), and [Canada child tax benefit](#) payments, please notify Canada Revenue Agency of any change of address **as soon as possible** (even when using [direct deposit](#) services to receive these benefits).

How can I notify Canada Revenue Agency about my new address?

Notify the Canada Revenue Agency by using ONE of the following ways:

The internet:

If you are using Canada Revenue Agency's online service, change the address through the "[My Account](#)" option.

By mail or fax (604.585.5769):

Send to [Surrey Tax Centre](#):

- a completed [Form RC325, Address change request](#), or
- a **signed** letter

In your letter include your:

- social insurance number
- new address
- moving date

To change someone else's address, including your spouse's or common-law partner's:

- Include their social insurance number
- Have them **sign** the letter authorizing the change to their new address

Phone:

Call [CRA Individual Income Tax and Trust Enquiries](#) at 1 800 959-8281 and a CRA representative will change the address over the phone after they verify your identification.

Which other parties do I need to notify about my address change?

If an individual has a child who is attending a school in Burnaby, notify the [school](#) office of the new address (and new phone number if applicable) as soon as possible. Contact a Settlement Worker ([SWIS](#)) if it is difficult to communicate with the school due to language barriers. To find out how to transfer your child to a different school due to address change, please see section "3.15 SCHOOL" under "How can I transfer my child to a new school?"

Other parties you usually need to notify about your new address include:

- Utility billers, such as [FortisBC](#) (natural gas or electricity), [TELUS](#) or [Shaw](#) (telephone, internet, cable), [BC Hydro](#) (electricity) and any long distance telephone service provider;
- Banks;
- Credit card financial companies;
- Any individuals/organizations from whom you wish to regularly receive mail.

3.4 EMPLOYMENT

I'm a new immigrant. Where can I find help with job searching?

The first step in accessing the Employment Program of B.C.'s employment services and support is to contact a [WorkBC Employment Services Centre](#) near you. This free program will make it easier to find work and provide stability for families through a wide range of integrated employment services and support.

The following WorkBC Employment Services Centres help people in Burnaby:

1. WorkBC Services Centre - GT Hiring Solutions (2005) Inc.
726 - 4710 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC
Phone: (604) 430-5627, Fax: (604) 434-5648
Email: burnaby@gthiringsolutions.ca
Website: www.gthiringsolutions.ca
Hours of Operation:
8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Wednesday
8:30 am to 3:00 pm, Thursday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Friday
2. WorkBC Services Centre - GTHS, Operating as Fraserworks
7297 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC
Phone: (604) 636-1124, Fax: (604) 636-4743
Email: burnaby@gthiringsolutions.ca
Website: www.gthiringsolutions.ca
Hours of Operation:
8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Wednesday
8:30 am to 3:00 pm, Thursday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Friday
3. WorkBC Services Centre - GT Hiring Solutions (2005) Inc.
600 - 1901 Rosser Avenue, Burnaby, BC
Phone: (604) 451-4593, Fax: (604) 451-4596
Email: burnaby@gthiringsolutions.ca
Website: www.gthiringsolutions.ca
Hours of Operation:
8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Wednesday
8:30 am to 3:00 pm, Thursday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Friday

What is the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program?

The [Skills Connect for Immigrants program \(Skills Connect\)](#) is an individualized employment bridging program that helps skilled immigrants connect to jobs in B.C. that build on their pre-arrival skills, training, knowledge, and experience. There are two streams within the Skills Connect Program – General and Health.

The goal is to help skilled immigrants obtain employment that maximizes their pre-arrival skills, qualifications, and experience. Individual client services are delivered for a period of up to one year (two years for health sector occupations).

Check [here](#) about basic requirements for both the Skills Connect General Program and the Skills Connect Health Program.

Skills Connect for Immigrants Program is free, offered by the following agencies/organizations in BC:

- [Abbotsford Community Services](#) (604.866.0257)
- [Back in Motion](#) (5902 Kingsway, Burnaby, 604.438.8214)
- [Douglas College](#) (Burnaby: 604.438.3045; Surrey/Langley: 604.588.7772; Abbotsford/Chilliwack: 604.866.1645 or 604.866.0257)
- [ISSofBC](#) (200-620 Royal Ave, New Westminster, 604.684.2561 ext. 2123)
- [MOSAIC](#) (1522 Commercial Dr., 2nd Floor, Vancouver, 604.254.0244; 5902 Kingsway, Burnaby, 604.438.8214)
- [Training Innovations](#) (Burnaby: 140-4664 Lougheed Hwy 604.298.4720 or toll-free 1.866.298.4757)
- [ASPECT](#) (Victoria)
- [Immigrant & Multicultural Services Society \(IMSS\)](#) (Prince George)

What is Job Options BC Employment Program?

If you're currently unemployed and not an Employment Insurance (EI) client, and need some assistance finding a job, then you'll want to take a look at the Job Options BC employment program. The goal of the program is to help unemployed British Columbians gain the skills, confidence, and experience they need to obtain employment. Check [here](#) about the program eligibility requirements, what kind of support the program offers, a list of Job Options Program Service Providers and more.

Where can I find websites that list job opportunities?

Finding a job in Canada might be different from finding a job in your home country. Challenges you might face include: your credentials may not be recognized, your English language skills may not be sufficient, and you may need Canadian work experience. [WelcomeBC](#) provides some information and resources to help you understand what you can do to find a job in British Columbia. Once you're ready to apply for jobs, you may visit the following websites WelcomeBC suggests:

- [WorkBC Job Bank](#)
- [WorkBC Labour Market Navigator Tool](#)
- [Canada Job Bank](#)
- [Service Canada](#)
- [Planning to work in B.C., Canada Workbook](#)
- [WelcomeBC Job Profiles](#)

Where can I find information about employment standards?

Here are the links of employment standards for workers protected by provincial or territorial laws:

- [Employment Standards \(BC\)](#)
- [Workplace health and safety \(BC\)](#)
- [Human rights \(BC\)](#)

Link for workers protected by federal laws:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/employment_standards/index.shtml

Also call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) to find out more about federal government employment standards and how to contact the provincial or territorial government. More information is also available on the Service Canada website [Service Canada - Worker's Rights](#).

Where can I find information about Employment Insurance?

Check the following links for eligibility for different types of Employment Insurance benefits:

- [Employment Insurance Regular Benefits](#)
- [Employment Insurance Maternity and Parental Benefits](#)
- [Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits](#)

- [Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits](#)

Check [Service Canada](#) website for more questions related to Employment Insurance including [Employment Insurance Special Benefits for Self-Employed People](#), or call Toll-Free: 1 800 206-7218, Teletypewriter for the Deaf (TTY): 1 800 529-3742, or visit your [local Service Canada Centre](#).

3.5 GENERAL INFORMATION FOR NEWCOMERS

How to obtain general information for Newcomers to British Columbia?

Click here to view the BC [Newcomers' Guide](#) videos, download as a PDF, or view the book in multiple languages.

Another good resource is [BC 211](#). Use this [Red Book Online](#) or simply call “211” for free and confidential information, that is multilingual and available 24 hours a day/7 days a week from anywhere in the BC Lower Mainland.

3.6 HEALTH

Where do I go for medical care, if I do not have a family doctor?

Bring your CardCard or BC Services Card and go to any Walk-in clinic in the community. Service hours of walk-in clinics may vary and change at any time. Please call and check before going.

Station Square Medical Clinic
4655 Central Boulevard, Burnaby
Tel: 604.438.8288
Second language: Mandarin

[New Walk-in Medical Clinic](#) (Walk-in starts Sep/14, Family Physician Oct/14)
9600 Cameron Street, Burnaby
Tel: 778.999.9966
Second language: French, Chinese, Cantonese, and Korean

Welcome Walk-in Medical Clinic
7885 6th Street, Burnaby
Tel: 604.526.8905
Second language: Mandarin, Cantonese

Metro Town Medical Clinic
201 – 6411 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby
Tel: 604.451.4100
Second language: Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi

10th Street Medicentre
75 – 10th Street, New Westminster
Tel: 604.526.3308
Second language: German

[Brentwood Medical Clinic](#)
4567 Lougheed Highway, Burnaby
Tel: 604.294.8540

[Burnaby Royal Oak Clinic](#)
102B – 6440 Royal Oak, Burnaby
Tel: 604.433.1703
Second language: Mandarin

Heights Medical Centre

4446 Hastings Street, Burnaby
Tel: 604.298.4491

Highgate Medical Centre

7188 Kingsway, Burnaby
Tel: 604.777.9101
Second language: Persian

Kensington Children's Walk-in Clinic

6548 East Hasting, Burnaby
Tel: 604.299.9769
Second language: French

Kensington Walk-in Clinic

6548 East Hasting, Burnaby
Tel: 604.299.9769
<http://www.kensingtonmedicalclinic.com/the-clinic/walk-in/>

Lougheed Medical Clinic

145 – 9855 Austin Avenue, Burnaby
Tel: 604.421.2555

Metro-Health Clinic

4879 Kingsway Avenue, Burnaby
Tel: 604.433.3341

Old Orchard Medical Clinic

4429 Kingsway, Burnaby
Tel: 604.431.6585
Second language: Mandarin, Cantonese, Romanian

Can I go to a hospital? Where are the hospitals in or near Burnaby?

In case of emergency, a patient can always go to any Emergency Room in British Columbia. A MSP CareCard or BC Services Card is required. If the situation is not an emergency, please acquire a family doctor's referral in order to see any doctor/specialist in a hospital setting. Some hospitals in or near Burnaby are:

Burnaby Hospital
3935 Kincaid St, Burnaby, BC V5G 2X6
General Enquiry: 604.434.4211

BC Children's Hospital
4490 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V5 (Oak St. & W. 28th Ave.)
604.875.2852

Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) - Jim Pattison Pavilion - Emergency
Department
920 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1M9
Tel : 604.875.4111

You might also want to check the following links for more information about hospitals:

[Providence Health Care](#) - is a health and wellness resource for all British Columbians, operating 16 sites including hospitals, residences and clinics in Vancouver, BC.

[Fraser Health](#)

[Vancouver Coastal Health](#)

What is the New Canadian Clinic?

The New Canadian Clinic provides medical care and social support for new immigrants and refugees whose medical needs may be complicated by language, cultural, and knowledge barriers. A referral is required from health or social service providers. This is not a walk-in clinic and service is by appointment only. It is staffed by a public health nurse and nurse practitioner, with a physician by arrangement. Check the [Fraser Health](#) website under "FIND US" for more details. Current Burnaby address can be found [here](#).

What is the "811" Nurse Line?

"811" is a 24-hour BC Nurse line. A Registered Nurse will answer questions about health concerns any time, day or night. On weekdays, you can speak to a dietitian about nutrition and healthy eating. At night, pharmacists are available to answer your medication questions.

Simply pick up a telephone and dial number "811". More information is available [online](#).

3.7 AFFORDABLE HOUSING & TENANTS' RIGHT

What is BC Housing?

The best resource for finding more affordable accommodation is [BC Housing Listings](#). Please check the [BC Housing](#) website for more information.

What resources does BC Housing have to offer?

Families are assisted either through Rental Assistance Program (See "Section 2 After 12 months in Canada") or Subsidized Housing. To learn more about these opportunities please check [here](#).

Where should I go if I have tenancy related questions and/or concerns?

For any tenancy related questions and/or concerns please check the [Residential Tenancy Office \(RTO\)](#) website.

For more information see an RTO officer in person (no appointment is necessary) at

1. 400 - 5021 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4A5
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
2. 520 Richards Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 3A2
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Closed on the last Tuesday of each month

RTO Information Line (for Lower Mainland): 604.660.1020.

I'm a tenant. What other help can I get if I have tenancy related issues?

A non-governmental resource for tenancy related issues is [Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre \(TRAC\)](#)

3.8 IMMIGRATION

How can I correct mistakes in my name or date of birth on my immigration documents?

If there is a mistake in either your name or date of birth, please visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website and go to [Request to Amend the Immigration Record of Landing or Confirmation of Permanent Residence](#) for more information. Also, discuss this with a settlement worker at ISS. They will help you complete the appropriate forms.

How can I reunite with my family members who are outside of Canada?

If qualified, there are options that help reunite family members after arriving in Canada:

- If qualifying under the “one-year window opportunity” follow [this link](#).
- To sponsor a spouse, common-law or conjugal partner and dependent children, please visit the following [link](#) for more information.

3.9 LANGUAGE CLASSES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

Where can I find Chinese classes for my child?

- [Vancouver Beijing Chinese School \(温哥华北京中文学校\)](#)
Burnaby Campus: Moscrop Secondary School (Fridays 6:30pm-8:30pm)
4433 Moscrop Street, Burnaby BC
Tel: 604.277.6835
Email: vbcs1996@gmail.com
- [Union Mandarin School \(温哥华联合中文学校\)](#)
Campus: Moscrop Secondary School (Saturdays 1:30pm-4:15pm)
4433 Moscrop Street, Burnaby BC
Tel: 604.517.8451
Email: unionmandarin@gmail.com
- [Langara First Mandarin School \(兰加拉第一国语学校\)](#)
100 West 49th Avenue, Vancouver BC
Tel: 604.323.5624
Email: mandarinschool@langara.bc.ca
- [Vancouver South East Chinese School \(温哥华东南中文学校\)](#)
Campus: Killarney Secondary School (Saturdays 6:30-8:30pm)
6454 Killarney Street, Vancouver BC
Tel: 604.430.4038 or 604.323.9366
Email: admin@chineseschool.ca
- [Pui Ying Chinese Schools \(培英中文学校\)](#)
There are various sites in Burnaby. Check online information of each site for contact and class info.

Where can I find Korean classes for my child?

- [Daegun Korean School in Surrey](#)
10222 161 Street Surrey, BC V4N 2J8
Tel: 604.588.5831
FAX: 604.588.5834

Where can I find Japanese classes for my child?

- [Burnaby Japanese Language School](#)

6990 Aubrey Street, Burnaby BC (at Lochdale Community School)
email: info@bjls.ca

Where can I find Tagalog classes for my child?

- <http://www.tulayan.org/tagaloglessons/>

Where can I find Farsi classes for my child?

- [Ghadir School](#)
- [Hadaf School](#): 778.861.5153
- [Mehr School](#): 604.379.2468
- [Iranian School](#)
Mailing Address: 2116 W. 35th. Ave. Vancouver, BC, V6M 1J3
E-mail: IranianSchool@hotmail.com
Tel: 604.261.6564 or 604.551.9593
- [AlGhadir School](#): 604.986.8786

Where can I find Russian classes for my child?

- [Pushkin school at the Russian Community Centre](#)

Address:
RCC Pushkin Russian School Administration
Registration 2014-2015 y
11811 Second Ave
Richmond, BC V7E 3L5

Check the advertisement section in Russian newspapers available in public libraries for information about Russian schools and extracurricular activities. Please contact the school directly for information about fees, class duration and schedules.

3.10 LEGAL ADVICE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

3.10.1 Help from a Lawyer

How can I get free or low cost legal representation from a lawyer?

- [BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre \(BCPIAC\)](#) (604.687.3063, Vancouver) provides free legal advice and representation for clients with problems in specific areas of law, including utilities regulation, social justice law and poverty law.
- [Community Legal Assistance Society \(CLAS\)](#) (604.685.3425, Vancouver) provides legal assistance to disadvantaged people throughout BC and currently specializes in areas of poverty, disability, workers' compensation, employment insurance, mental health, human rights and equality law.
- [Legal Services Society of BC \(LSS or Legal Aid\)](#) (604.408.2172 in lower mainland or toll-free 1.866.577.2525 elsewhere in BC) provides legal representation on legal aid tariff matters. Duty counsel provides, without charge at various courthouses throughout BC, legal advice and assists with court appearances regarding certain matters in family and criminal law cases. Recorded messages are in Cantonese, English, French, Mandarin, Punjabi and Spanish. LSS also produces [publications](#) and websites with legal information.
- [Access Pro Bono](#) (604.878.7400 or toll-free 1.877.762.6664) offer several programs serving the critical legal needs of BC's individuals and non-profit organizations of limited means, ranging from summary legal advice clinics to full legal representation services. To book a clinic appointment, please follow the 3 steps outlined on their [main page](#). Click [here](#) for many free legal resources available to the public.
- [West Coast Environmental Law](#) (604.684.7378, Vancouver) lawyers and staff provide free information and advice to help citizens confronting environmental legal barriers and disputes. It also administers an environmental legal aid program to assist citizens and groups with the legal costs associated with dispute resolution.

How can I get free or low cost legal advice from a lawyer?

- [The Lawyer Referral Service](#) (604.687.3221 in lower mainland, or toll-free elsewhere in BC 1.800.663.1919) can provide the name of a family law or immigration lawyer who can meet with clients for a 30-minute appointment. The cost is \$25 plus taxes for the half hour.
- [Access Pro Bono](#) (604.878.7400 or toll-free 1.877.762.6664, Vancouver) Summary Legal Advice Program lawyers provide up to a half-hour of free legal advice to low- and modest-income clients on a wide range of legal issues, including family, immigration, criminal, and civil law (such as debt, employment, welfare, and housing). Additional appointments may be available. Please note that NO legal advice is provided over the phone or through email. To book a clinic appointment, please follow the 3 steps outlined on their [main page](#).
- [Legal Services Society of BC \(LSS or Legal Aid\)](#) (604.408.2172 in lower mainland or toll-free 1-866-577-2525 elsewhere in BC) provides subsidized legal services including legal information and advice in the areas of criminal, family and immigration law for clients who qualify under financial eligibility guidelines.

3.10.2 Law Student Legal Clinics

What kind of legal help can Law Student Legal Clinics provide?

- [Greater Vancouver Law Students' Legal Advice Program \(LSLAP\)](#) (604. 822.5791) is a non-profit society run by law students at the University of British Columbia. LSLAP clinics are located throughout the Lower Mainland and provide free legal advice and representation to clients who cannot afford legal assistance. The LSLAP law students from UBC are assisted by accredited members of the bar who provide students with legal advice and guidance for each client. Please check [here](#) for the areas of legal issues LSLAP CAN help and CANNOT help.
- Check [The Law Centre](#) (250.385.1221) website for information about the free legal clinics and legal representation by University of Victoria law students in Greater Victoria.

3.10.3 Legal Advocacy Resources and Services

What kind of legal advocacy resources and services can I get in BC?

- [BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support \(BCCEAS\)](#) (604.437.1940) provides public legal education and advocacy assistance to seniors and their intermediaries through its legal advocacy program and provides legal representation through the Elder Law Clinic.
- [BC Civil Liberties Association \(BCCLA\)](#) (604.687.2919, email alyssa@bccla.org) provides pro bono legal advice and representation in specific cases concerning civil liberties and human rights.
- [Disabilities Alliance BC \(Formerly BCCPD\)](#) (Contacts are [here](#)) provides advocacy services for people with disabilities and publishes legal information materials on disability issues.
- [BC Human Rights Coalition \(BCHRC\)](#) (604.689.8474 or toll free 1.877.689.8474) has a provincial human rights clinic operating together with [Community Legal Assistance Society \(CLAS\)](#) to provide free legal information and advice as well as legal representation before the BC Human Rights Tribunal in Vancouver.
- Family justice counselors can provide information about the law and the court process and help people work on agreements. They work at Family Justice Centres across the province. Call [Service BC](#) and ask the operator to transfer you to the nearest centre.

Victoria: 250.387.6121

Lower Mainland: 604.660.2421

Elsewhere in BC: toll-free 1.800.663.7867

- [MOSAIC Legal Advocacy Program](#) (604.254.9626) provides free information, summary advice, referral, and legal representation in welfare, tenancy, and employment matters. The organization is known for its expertise in immigration law.
- [Pivot Legal Society](#) (604.255.9700) provides pro bono legal information, advice, and representation in criminal, housing, immigration, mental health, and child protection law.

- [TRAC Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre](#) (604.255.0546 or toll free 1.800.665.1185) is a Vancouver-based non-profit organization that offers legal information services via a province wide information hotline for tenants, publications on tenants' rights, and provides workshops to advocates and the public.
- [VictimLINK BC](#) is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across BC and Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1.800.563.0808. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime, and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence. VictimLINK BC provides service in more than 110 languages, including 17 North American aboriginal languages.
- [Workers' Advisers Office \(WAO\)](#) (Toll free 1.800.663.4621, 500 – 8100 Granville Ave, Richmond BC, V6Y 3T6) is a branch of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, operating independently of WorkSafeBC. WAO provides workers, their dependents and other stakeholders with free legal services including independent advice, assistance, representation, training and mentoring in workers' compensation (WCB) matters. WAO also offers clients a [secure online inquiry service](#) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Are there other legal information resources?

- The [Law Foundation of BC](#) website lists all the projects funded by the Foundation that provide legal advocacy and representation, legal education, legal research, law reform, or provide legal library services.
- [PovNet](#) is an online information service about poverty issues. The website has information about and links to groups that work on poverty issues. It has a helpful link for finding an advocate in various BC communities. Online discussion groups provide an opportunity for advocates to discuss issues with others working on similar topics.
- [Clicklaw](#) provides links to legal information, education and self-help resources. It also has a [HelpMap](#) that lists resources in each community that can be useful when dealing with legal issues.
- [Dial-A-Law](#) is a library of legal information prepared by lawyers. It offers general information on a variety of topics on law in British Columbia. Dial-A-Law is a free service that is available in English, Chinese and Punjabi by telephone and on the Internet.

- Lower Mainland: 604.687.4680
 - Elsewhere in BC: 1.800.565.5297 (call on charge)
 - You can also read or listen to transcripts of the Dial-A-Law tapes on their [website](#)
- [Legal Help for British Columbians](#) is a booklet that provides information about many different legal problems and resources in rural BC to help people dealing with these problems.
- [Legal Services Society \(LSS\)](#) has numerous legal publications that are free. View it online or follow the instructions online to order a hard copy.
- [People's Law school](#) has a variety of publications about legal issues as well as online resources.
- BC Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre is a drop-in service for anyone who has to go to Supreme Court but cannot afford a lawyer. This service is available only at the office: there is no phone consultation service. Several self-help resources for people going to Supreme Court on civil matters are available on the Centre's [website](#).
274 – 800 Hornby Street
Vancouver BC V6Z 2C5

3.11 MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

What does the Ministry of Children and Family Development do?

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provides programs and services to ensure that children and families are living in safe, caring and inclusive communities. For more information check the [MCFD](#) website.

What should I do if I suspect child abuse is taking place?

Call the Helpline for Children - Dial 310.1234 (no area code required). The Helpline operates 24 hours a day and is operated by child protection social workers. There is no charge for the call.

What happens after I make a report?

If it appears that the child may or indeed needs protection, a child protection social worker will start an investigation. This involves seeing and talking to the child and people who know the child, such as their parents, extended family members, teacher, family doctor or child care worker.

Depending on the kind of abuse or neglect involved, the social worker may contact other agencies such as the police, the school principal, or the local Medical Health Officer.

3.12 PARENTING

Can you provide parenting tips for newcomer parents?

- Set a good example for children so they may integrate into Canadian society comfortably.
- Parents should prepare themselves with information about the new country (e.g. watch local TV shows, visit new places beyond one's neighborhood, learn about the school system, etc.)
- Participate in school activities (e.g. volunteer for the school; attend parent nights and meetings of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), etc.)
- Attend Adult ESL classes to improve your English language skill.
- Join parenting workshops or talks organized by the school or community organizations.
- Join activities that allow children to interact with other children of their age in a safe environment.
- Expand one's social network beyond relatives/friends from the same country of origin or those speaking the same language.
- Regardless of one's schedule, spend regular quality time with your children (e.g. have dinner together, Sunday outings, shopping).
- Learn to encourage children through praise and acceptance.
- Encourage children to express their inner feelings. They also experience challenges adjusting to the new environment.
- Respect children and allow independence appropriate to their age.
- Be open-minded and accept that teenagers want to try new things and that they may make mistakes.
- Be willing to say sorry when mistakes are made – parents can be wrong sometimes.

- Help children to build a sense of belonging, in their new environment/school. Avoid regular criticism of the local systems when comparing to those of your country of origin.
- Recognize that children require a balanced and healthy lifestyle. By refraining a child from sports or recreational activities in order to achieve academic excellence is not an example of a balanced or healthy lifestyle.

Also refer to the MCFD Positive Parenting videos in the following languages:

[Mandarin](#), [Cantonese](#), [Korean](#) and [Vietnamese](#)

For more information refer to the [Child Abuse Prevention](#) website.

In case of emergency whom should I contact at school?

School counselors are available to help students who are dealing with difficulties in school or at home. However, if urgent help is needed after school hours, try the resources below for help.

If there is an emergency that requires police, fire or ambulance, call “911” immediately.

Other emergency contact numbers include:

Suicide Hot Line 1.800.784.2433

Kids Help Phone 1.800.668.6868

Crisis Line 604.872.3311

Helpline for Children 604.310.1234 (report child abuse)

After-hour Chinese Crisis Line (through S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) 604.270.8222 (Mandarin), or 604.270.8233 (Cantonese)

Which agencies provide parenting and/or counseling services?

For more information about parenting and/or counseling services refer to these agencies:

- [Parent Support Services Society of BC](#) (Burnaby, 604.669.1616)
- [B.C. Council for Families](#). Click [here](#) to find a suitable program.

- [Burnaby Neighborhood House](#) (South Burnaby, 604.431.0400; North Burnaby 604.294.5444)
- [Burnaby Family Life](#) (Burnaby, 604.659.2205)
- [MOSAIC Family Services](#). Look for specific contact by searching [here](#).
- [East Burnaby Family Place Society](#) (604.444.1090)
- [Cameray Child and Family Services](#) (Burnaby, 604.436.9449)
- [Autism Community Training \(ACT\)](#) (Burnaby, 604.205.5467)
- [Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture \(VAST\)](#) (for refugees and newcomers who have endured torture, trauma and political violence, Vancouver, 604.299.3539)
- [S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Family service](#) and [S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Counseling service](#)
For Counselling Service, individuals or families can be self-referred or referred by other agencies or ministries. For enquiry and referrals, please call the intake worker on weekdays (except Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon) during office hours by phoning 604.408.7266 or 604.684.1628). Check [here](#) about their service locations and office hours.

3.13 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

How do I use public transportation in the BC Lower Mainland (Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, Coquitlam, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, etc)?

Public transportation (buses, SkyTrain and SeaBuses) in the BC Lower Mainland is operated by Translink. It provides services in different zones, using various types of transportation like, bus, SeaBus or SkyTrain. For information about commuting by using public transportation, click [here](#), and then go to “Plan My Trip”, or call Transit Information line at 604.953.3333.

Click [here](#) for General Contact Information, including Customer Feedback, FareDealer Administration, HandyDART/HandyCard Registration & General Inquiries, Quickpass Customer Service, Compass Customer Service, etc.

3.14 REGISTERED EDUCATION SAVINGS PLANS (RESP)

What are Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP)?

A Registered Education Savings Plan is designed to help a child pay for college or university since post-secondary education is not free in Canada. Open a special “registered” account at a bank or a financial institution of your choice, and the government will contribute to this account based on the amount of your contributions. The government makes their contributions from the year the child was born (if she or he was born in Canada) or from the year of arrival in Canada until December of the year the child turns 17.

Please check [here](#) to learn more.

3.15 SCHOOL

How do I enroll my child in school?

To find out information about Burnaby public schools, call the Burnaby School Board at 604.296.6900 or refer to the [Burnaby School Board](#) website.

Which grade will my child enter when we move to Burnaby, BC?

In elementary and secondary schools, children are usually placed in a grade according to their age.

How often will I receive a report card for my child?

Three formal written report cards are issued each year: in late fall, in early spring, and in June. Check the child's school calendar or newsletter for report card issue dates, conference dates and more.

Do I have to attend parent-teacher conferences?

It's important to attend a parent-teacher conference to discuss a child's progress. If there is difficulty understanding English, you are welcome to bring a friend/interpreter to help.

What do I do when my child is sick or needs to be absent from school?

Please contact the school every time a child needs to be absent. High schools have designated absentee phone lines. While reporting your child's absence, please indicate your child's grade (secondary) or division number (elementary), name and reason for absence.

What is a combined (split) class?

A combined or split class refers to a class that is made up of students from two or more grades. Combined classes occur most frequently in elementary

schools, and are the combination of students in two different grades with one teacher teaching both curricula.

For example, a school might have a Grade 2/Grade 3 class combination or a Grade 6/Grade 7 class combination. It is important to know that older students in combined classes are not held back to the level of the younger students nor are the children in the lower grade expected to do work beyond their abilities. The prescribed learning outcomes are grade appropriate for all students, whether or not they are in a combined class.

What are student agendas/planners?

Student agendas/planners are organizers for students. They are often introduced in Grade 4. Students use them to help organize their assignments, record assignment due dates, school and extracurricular activities, and plan their academic and personal goals. Student agendas/planners are also used by teachers and parents to communicate with each other.

Does my child have to purchase his or her own textbooks?

All standard school textbooks are loaned to students for the school year. Students may be required to purchase books for a special course. Students must pay for books that are lost or damaged.

Are notebooks, pencils and stationary supplied by the school?

Schools do not provide school supplies such as pencils, pens, notebooks or stationary. At the beginning of the school year, students are given a list of supplies that parents are expected to provide.

What do I do if my child is having a problem at school?

If a child is having a problem at school, first speak with the child's teacher with the help of a [SWIS](#) worker. If the problem still cannot be resolved, request to speak with the principal. It is recommended that an appointment be made in advance to ensure that the teacher or principal will be available to meet.

What is the Advanced Placement (AP) Program?

Advanced Placement is a program of university-level courses and examinations for secondary/high school students. With successful completion of an Advanced Placement course, or courses, students are granted credit for some first-year courses upon admission to university.

What are the values of extracurricular activities?

Extracurricular school activities (activities that take place outside of classroom time) allow students to further develop skills, talents and interests in areas such as sport, music or visual arts. Most importantly, extracurricular activities provide an opportunity for newcomer students to make friends, practice their English and feel part of the school community. Many universities and colleges will look at a student's extracurricular activities and community involvement when evaluating the student's application for admission, or for scholarships.

What is a Professional Development (Pro-D) day?

In Burnaby there are six days in the school year where there are no classes so that teachers can attend additional professional training. These days are called Pro-D days.

What is the difference between a semester or non-semester secondary school?

All schools in Burnaby are organized over a ten-month period that begins in September and ends in June. All students in secondary schools are able to enroll in eight courses during that period of time. Students in a semester secondary school take the same four courses each day for the first five months and then four different courses each day for the second five months. In a non-semester secondary school, students take all eight courses through the full ten months, alternating between taking four courses one day (Day 1) and four different courses the next day (Day 2). Both semester and non-semester secondary school provide students with the same amount of instructional time.

What is the Parent Advisory Council (PAC)?

Every public school in British Columbia has a Parent Advisory Council (PAC). It is made up of a group of parents, and administrators, and may include teachers.

The PAC meets about once a month, usually in the evening.

What are the benefits of joining the PAC?

Joining the PAC is optional. However, joining it gives parents an opportunity to meet other parents, learn more about the school, and contribute ideas and ask questions.

When do I register my child for Kindergarten?

Students entering kindergarten in September should register within their catchment area. Registration starts in February. To find the Burnaby school that the child is to attend, use this [School Locator](#). For more information check the [Burnaby School Board's](#) website.

How do I register my child in the French Immersion Program?

Any child residing in Burnaby may apply to enter the French Immersion program. Registration takes place in February. Please contact the French Immersion School that serves the area where the child resides. Students can enter the French Immersion program in kindergarten ([Early Immersion](#)) or Grade 6 ([Late French Immersion](#))

Will my child read and write in both English and French while enrolled in the French Immersion Program?

Pre-reading exercises in Kindergarten are in French. Reading and writing in French begins in Grade 1. Formal instruction in English Language Arts begins in Grade 4.

What is the Welcome Centre?

The Welcome Centre is a place where new students' English language skills are assessed. This is also where new families are first welcomed and connected with the [Settlement Worker](#) in their child's school in the Burnaby school district. The Settlement Worker will provide professional school-based settlement services.

What are Strong Start and Early Learning Programs?

Burnaby schools offer free early learning opportunities for families and their preschoolers at our StrongStart Centres. For more information and location check the [Burnaby School Board's](#) website.

What is the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA)?

FSA is an annual province-wide assessment in Reading Comprehension, Writing and Numeracy administered each winter for B.C. students in Grades 4 and 7. It measures skills students have accumulated through several school years, not just over a single year. For more information check the [Ministry of Education](#) website.

How can I transfer my child to a new school?

Students who are moving into a public school in Burnaby or transferring to another public school within Burnaby should follow the [registration](#) procedure established by the Burnaby School District. Parents who are transferring their child to a new school in Burnaby are required to provide documentation establishing residency, guardianship, age, immigration status and/or citizenship.

Students who are moving out of the Burnaby School District and transferring to another public school district in British Columbia, or another province, in Canada should follow the registration procedure established by their new school district. Parents should directly contact the new school district regarding student registration process details.

Student's regular information, i.e. report card, is usually transferred between schools and/or districts without needing parental request when the student moves. However, any student's confidential information, i.e. student's medical file from a doctor, can only be released to the new school with parental written consent.

How do I register my child in summer school?

Each year Burnaby Community & Continuing Education runs summer sessions for both elementary and secondary students. Your child needs a PEN (Personal Education Number) number for a tuition-free course. Those not eligible for a tuition-free course or those signing up for courses requiring tuition must pay by cash, money order or Visa or MasterCard. Detailed

information on summer school registration will be available [here](#) around summer time.

How do I know what my child is learning at school when there is no textbook?

The BC Ministry of Education sets the education standards for students in Grades K to 12 through the provincial curriculum. These standards are called Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These PLOs outline the expectations for what students should know and be able to do at each grade and within each subject area. Your child's school and teacher will choose the materials and methods to teach in order to meet the PLOs.

You may go to the [Ministry of Education](#)'s website to check out more details. You may also set up a meeting with your child's teacher if you have further questions about your child's learning.

What is LearnNowBC?

[LearnNowBC](#) is a one-stop web portal that provides free information and services about distributed learning (online learning) in British Columbia for students K-12, parents and educators. There are a lot of online learning resources on this portal, including:

- [Course Finder](#) database, which provides information on more than 2500 courses offered by Distributed Learning schools in BC.
- [Student Centre](#), which offers free tutoring for a number of academic courses such as Math, English and Science. A student may use his/her PEN (Personal Education Number) to sign up for a [free student account](#). By doing this, they can receive 20 minutes free one-on-one live tutor Sun – Thurs 6-10pm.
- [Young Learning Centre](#) for early learners.
- [Learning Resources](#) for all students in BC by subjects, and more.

3.16 SOCIAL GROUPS FOR YOUR CHILD

Can you provide information about Social Groups for my child?

- [Scout Canada](#) (Use its [locator](#) to find a group in your neighborhood)
- [Girl Guides of BC](#)
- [St. John Ambulance \(BC/Yukon\)](#)
- [Air Cadet](#)
- [Army Cadet](#)
- [Navy/Sea Cadet](#)

3.17 SPECIAL NEEDS

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Check the [Ministry of Children and Family Development](#) (MCFD) website for the definition of the term - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The website contains helpful information on [assessment and diagnosis](#), a [Parent's Handbook](#) in multi-languages, [best practices](#) for an ASD child, [forms](#) and much more.

What financial support can I get from the government if my child is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provides two types of Autism Funding Programs to families with ASD children and youth:

- Autism Funding: Under Age 6 (up to \$22,000 per year)
- Autism Funding: Ages 6-18 (up to \$6,000 per year)

More details about Autism Funding Programs application and [eligible autism intervention service costs](#) are available [here](#).

What does “Special Needs” mean?

Check the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) website for the definition of the term [children and youth with special needs \(CYSN\)](#) and more.

What help may I find for my child with special needs?

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) works in partnership with the [Ministry of Health](#) and [Ministry of Education](#), and regional and community agencies throughout the province, to plan and coordinate services. The goal is to deliver accessible high-quality intervention and support services, for children and youth with special needs and their families, through an integrated service delivery approach. Check here for details about [Burnaby School District Learning Support Services](#) for all students from kindergarten to Grade 12, specifically those students who have learning needs.

See the children and youth with special needs (CYSN) [Links](#) page for contact information on all the related resources.

3.18 SPORTS

For information on sports and recreational activities for children check the City of Burnaby's [Leisure Guide](#) (published twice a year in the spring and fall). The publication is available at any recreational facility or at any school. Also check a lot of fun [After School Programs](#) in Burnaby schools organized by Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services.

What other extracurricular activities are available?

Here are some sports clubs in Burnaby.

- [South Burnaby Metro Club - Youth Baseball Program](#) Ages 4 to 17.
- [Burnaby Girls Soccer Club](#) under 6 to 18.
- [Balloholics Basketball](#) Grade 2 to Grade 9, register by season.
- [Burnaby Mountain Mantas Swim Club](#), email register@burnabymantas.ca for more info.
- [Burnaby Minor Softball Association](#) Ages 5 to 19. Call 604.438.1181 for more info.
- [Hastings Community Little League Baseball](#) Ages 4 to 12.
- [Burnaby Water Polo Club](#) Ages 6-13 at Bonsor Pool.
- [Burnaby Haida Speedskating Club](#), email bbyspeedskating@gmail.com
- [Burnaby Minor Hockey](#) Ages 5 and up.
- [Ringette](#) Grade K to 7. Call 604.629.6583 or email executivedirector@bcringette.org for more info.
- [Burnaby Eagles Basketball](#) Grades 2 to 9.
- [Burnaby Field Hockey](#) Ages 10 to 18. Call 604.937.0499 or 604.522.0807 for more info.
- [Burnaby Minor Baseball](#) Programs for ages 4 to 18 plus a Challenger Division.
- [Burnaby Minor Lacrosse Club](#) Boys age 5 to 16, Girls age 5 to 21.
- [Wesburn Youth Soccer Club](#) Age 5 to 17. Call 604.298.5958 or email to infowesburnsoccer@gmail.com for more info.

Burnaby's Recreation Credit Program and KidSport™ Burnaby Grant (see "Section 3.2 Burnaby Community Resources") will, partially or fully, help to cover the cost of the sport programs.

3.19 VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

How can I volunteer at school?

Ways you can volunteer vary from school to school. Some involve a short term commitment, others require longer involvement time.

- “Field Trips” or “Field Studies”

Teachers often ask adults to help when taking classes on special trips outside of the school. Helping with these trips will make the trip safer and more enjoyable for all children.

- Special School Events

Schools often have special events that require extra help from adults. These may include concerts and plays, science fairs, multicultural evenings, dinners and sports day.

Other areas that may require longer term volunteering commitment include assisting in the library by helping with such tasks as shelving or checking out books.

I am a student, how can I find volunteering opportunities?

Volunteering as a young person makes meaningful contributions to the community while gaining valuable experience that will help in the future when applying to university, and looking for employment. Energy and enthusiasm makes a difference through involvement in activities in the community.

Here are some guidelines to start:

If under 14 years old, volunteer work must be supervised by a parent or guardian;

If 14-16, volunteer in suitable positions with parental consent;

If 16+, volunteer without parental consent, some positions may require being over the age of nineteen (19+) for background/criminal record checks.

If interested in how volunteering can contribute to Career and Personal Planning, contact the Career Centre Coordinator at school.

I am not fluent in English/French, may I volunteer?

Yes, volunteering is encouraged. Some positions may have specific language requirements specified in the position description. Speaking a second language can be beneficial. If the volunteer position does not list any specific language requirements, please contact the organization directly to discuss volunteering with English/French as a second language.

How can I get involved in the community?

Offer to participate in various programs within the community. For more information about volunteering programs visit the following websites:

- [Volunteer Burnaby](#) (604.294.5533, or info@volunteerburnaby.ca)
- Go to [Burnaby Neighborhood House](#) website, check under “Get Involved” about volunteering opportunity (604.431.0400 for BNH Community Volunteer Coordinator)
- [Volunteer BC](#) (604.379.2311)
- [Go Volunteer](#)