
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Expanding multi-language support, services for newcomers

LANGLEY – Newcomers to British Columbia will have more help getting started in their new communities with expanded services and a new online multi-language information hub.

“As an immigrant myself, I can relate to the unique challenges that newcomers face when they are starting out in a new community,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “My ministry is listening and we understand the need for more supportive services. We took action and quadrupled the annual funding to \$25.6 million, the largest investment in newcomer services in our province’s history, so more people can get more comprehensive support when they come to British Columbia.”

Starting Monday, April 1, 2024, a new and expanded newcomer-services program will increase support for people to settle into their new communities, practise their English and find work. The new Safe Haven program will offer refugee claimants and others in vulnerable situations specialized services, such as trauma counselling, help finding housing and English-language instruction.

The Province has more than quadrupled funding for newcomer services, from \$6 million to \$25.6 million per year, partnering with 30 organizations throughout British Columbia. This annual support includes \$13.4 million through the new BC Newcomer Services program and \$12.2 million through the Safe Haven program.

Combined, these new programs are expected to serve more than 40,000 people per year, compared to 26,000 in 2021-22.

“To help people more quickly feel at home, newcomers can now receive end-to-end service in their language of choice for the services they need,” said George Chow, Minister of Citizens’ Services. “Service BC is the one-stop shop for government services, and 11 of the most popular are now available online in simplified and traditional Chinese, Punjabi, and French, in addition to services provided in 220 languages through interpreters.”

The new multi-language resources website provides key information about health care, driving, taxes, emergency resources and anti-racism initiatives, as well as how to get help in-person and over the phone through Service BC. This website complements existing newcomer-focused multi-language resources available on WelcomeBC.ca, which is dedicated to helping people navigate their journey to a new life in British Columbia.

“Understanding the hurdles newcomers face in B.C., we’re taking meaningful steps to help,” said Ravi Parmar, Parliamentary Secretary for International Credentials. “Our government’s expansion of the BC Newcomers Services program is all about connecting individuals with the essential supports to thrive in their new communities, ensuring they have every opportunity to

succeed here in B.C.”

Quotes:

Andrew Mercier, MLA for Langley –

“Diversity is a strength, and not only does welcoming newcomers make our communities more vibrant and cultural, but it also brings more skilled workers here to help fill good jobs and helps our economy thrive. Navigating settling into a new place is challenging enough without significant language barriers. This new multi-language tool and expanded funding will help newcomers here in Langley and across the province.”

Megan Dykeman, MLA for Langley-East –

“As parliamentary secretary for non-profits, I know how essential local organizations are in helping newcomers feel welcome and helping people navigate provincial systems. Expanding funding to Langley Community Services Society, and other non-profits across the province will help people moving to British Columbia fit into their chosen communities and build a beautiful life here.”

Refugee claimant family from Palestine –

“When we first arrived in Canada, we had difficulty finding a house. Langley Community Services Society staff worked tirelessly to find our family a home and guided us as we got settled. We are grateful for the important humanitarian work that the society does for families who are new to Canada. I thank God that my family is now in a safe country.”

Sanjeev Nand, executive director, Langley Community Services Society –

“Initiatives like the BC Newcomers Services Program are essential for the social and economic success of newcomers. Expanding support for locally deep-rooted non-profits like Langley Community Services Society, with over 50 years of grassroots service, ensures effective support systems are in place to meet newcomer needs. By locally addressing social and economic challenges, we create a thriving environment where diversity and inclusion flourish, shaping a brighter future for communities across B.C.”

Queenie Choo, CEO, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. –

“We’ve seen a growing need for programs that serve diverse clients in their preferred languages. Our goal is to provide quality, client-centred and culturally appropriate care to newcomers. The launch of the new BC Newcomer Services and Safe Haven programs will help provide more in-language settlement support, an excellent step toward smoothing the path for people coming to British Columbia.”

Quick Facts:

- The new multi-language resources website provides information about key government services and programs in English, French, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese and Punjabi.
- Service BC provides interpretation services over the phone in more than 220 languages.

Learn More:

More information about the updated newcomer services will be available on Monday, April 1, 2024, online:

<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Start-Your-Life-in-B-C/Settlement-Services>

To view the multi-language resources website, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/tourism-immigration/multi-language>

For in-language support over the phone, and for more information about accessing government services, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home/get-help-with-government-services>

Newcomer-focused multi-language resources are also available online: <https://WelcomeBC.ca>

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