

A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES

For

**Refugees and Other Newcomers
to Kitchener-Waterloo**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

This guide is for individuals and families who have been forced to leave their countries as refugees and who have come to live in Kitchener-Waterloo. It is also for the people and organizations that will welcome and support these new members of our community.

We cover topics that are among the most important for people trying to find their way in a new community and society. The information you find here will not answer all of your questions, but we hope that it will:

- provide some answers;
- encourage you to ask more questions;
- help you discover where you can go in Kitchener-Waterloo for more information.

This directory has been prepared in print and electronic formats. Copies of this directory are available through the Survivors of Torture and Collective Trauma Working Group (see address below) or through the website www.settlement.org It is also available from the "primary refugee serving organizations" listed on **page 4**. The Working Group will attempt to update this directory regularly, so please give us your suggestions or comments. We will be consulting with community partners to determine if we can and should translate the directory, in whole or in part, into other languages.

The services and supports included in this directory are for Kitchener-Waterloo. If you live in Cambridge or Guelph you may wish to contact:

YMCA of Cambridge, Settlement and Integration Services (519) 621-1621 30 ParkHill Rd. West, Dickson Arena, Cambridge	Guelph Multicultural Centre (519) 836-2222 214 Speedvale Ave. West, Unit 7, Guelph
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The development of this directory has been a project of the Survivors of Torture and Collective Trauma Working Group of Kitchener-Waterloo. The Working Group exists to inform its members and the larger community of the reality and impact of war, displacement, torture, and refugeeism. It is also concerned with building a supportive community for refugee survivors in K-W. For more information about the Working Group, please contact us at:

Survivors of Torture and Collective Trauma Working Group
(519) 571-1912
c/o Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support
58 Queen Street South, Kitchener (in the Working Centre building)
N2G 1V6

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Survivors of Torture and Trauma Working Group
Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario
March 30, 2000

INTRODUCTION TO KITCHENER-WATERLOO

Kitchener (population 186,285) and Waterloo (90,000) are separate cities in the Region of Waterloo in southern Ontario. The cities are commonly referred to as Kitchener-Waterloo, or K-W, because they lie next to each other.

Many of the early settlers in the Waterloo Region were Mennonites who came as refugees from Europe, Russia and the United States of America. Refugees and other immigrants continue to be attracted to this region because it:

- has a long standing history of hospitality and generosity in supporting refugees
- is a clean, medium-sized community close to Toronto
- has an increasingly ethnically diverse population
- has two excellent universities and a community college, and
- has a strong economy

Canada is a nation of many immigrants and this is evident in Kitchener-Waterloo. Between 1990 and 1995 more than 10,600 immigrants arrived in Waterloo Region and thousands more have come in the past five years. A large number of these people were forced to leave their homes as refugees, like the Mennonites who arrived here many years ago.

K-W continues to be shaped and influenced by people who arrive here from many other countries. Diversity is a defining aspect of life in Kitchener-Waterloo. This diversity, represented by the more than 50 languages spoken in the community, signifies the important resources that are available to continue to develop K-W as a strong, supportive, and healthy community.

PRIMARY REFUGEE SERVING ORGANIZATIONS IN K-W

There are many different organizations and offices mentioned in this guide. The following organizations, however, have general responsibilities to help refugees settle in K-W. The locations of these offices are shown on the map on the following page.

For general support and information about refugee/immigrant settlement, contact:

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622 Market Square, third level 25 Frederick St., Kitchener (at the corner of King and Frederick St.)	K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531 Market Square, lower level 25 Frederick St., Kitchener (at the corner of King & Frederick)
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If you are in the refugee claim process, contact:

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, 571-1912 58 Queen St. South, Kitchener (in The Working Centre building) – near the Bus Terminal

If you are in the refugee claim process or looking for information about refugee sponsorship:

Lutheran Refugee Committee - call for an appointment 744-2521 (on Monday or Thursday) 581-9883 (answering machine)

The local government office for immigration and citizenship information is:

Waterloo-Wellington Canada Immigration Centre 29 Duke St. East, Kitchener (at the corner of Frederick St. and Duke in downtown Kitchener) The Immigration Call Centre telephone number in Ontario is 1-888-242-2100 (if you live outside Greater Toronto Area)

For general information about Kitchener-Waterloo community services, contact:

The Community Information Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo, 579-3800 68 Queen St. North, Kitchener

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Academic Credentials Evaluation Services (ACES) (416) 736-5787	700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario M3J 1P3	
Comparative Education Service (University of Toronto) (416) 978-2185	315 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1A3	
Community Information Centre of Waterloo Region 579-3800	68 Queen St. North (at Weber St.), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology 623-4890	299 Doon Valley Dr., Kitchener	10(from Fairview Mall)
International Credential Assessment Service Canada (519) 763-7282 or 1-800-321-6021	35 Harvard Road, P.O. Box 21001, Guelph, ON N1G 4T3	
K-W English School (at University Heights Secondary School) 885-0123	108 University Avenue East, Waterloo (near Weber St.)	8A (University Via Weber) or 8B (University Via Westmount)
K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St. (Market Square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Training Consultant, Waterloo Area Office 571-6009 or 1-800-265-6180	285 Weber Street North, Waterloo	8A (University Via Weber)
Ontario Student Plan (807) 343-7260		
St Louis Adult Learning Centre 745-4277	75 Allen Street East, Waterloo (near King St. West and Allen St.)	7C or 7 D
Wilfrid Laurier University 884-1970	75 University Ave. West, Waterloo	7C or 7D
University of Waterloo 885-1211	200 University Ave. West, Waterloo	7D or 8B (University Via Westmount)
Waterloo District Catholic School Board 578-3660	91 Moore Ave., Kitchener	4 (to Glasgow)
Waterloo Region District School Board 570-0300	51 Ardelt Ave., Kitchener	3 (to Ottawa South)
YMCA Cross-Cultural And Community Services 579-9622	25 Frederick St. (Market Square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the main bus terminal

How can I improve my English? What is the best option for me?

English classes for newcomers are often called ESL classes. ESL stands for “English as a Second Language.” In Kitchener-Waterloo, ESL classes are offered through the public and

separate or Catholic boards of education. You may hear English classes referred to as ESL or LINC. LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) classes are only available to landed immigrants

If you are not sure where to begin looking for ESL classes that meet your needs, you can first go to the Language Assessment Centre, located at the *YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services*. Phone to make an appointment. If you are a refugee claimant, you are not eligible for this service.

Some ESL classes are offered during the day. Others are offered in the evening or on the weekend. Childcare is only available at some ESL classes. Some classes are continuous, but many have waiting lists.

I'm a refugee claimant. Where can I go to learn English?

If you are a refugee claimant, you cannot go the Language Assessment Centre to have your English level assessed. You are also not eligible for LINC classes. You are still eligible for regular ESL classes. You can register for ESL classes by going directly to the school that you want to attend and speaking to the teacher. If you are not sure what class location or level is best for you, contact:

St. Louis Adult Learning Centre
K-W English School

Refugee claimants need permission from the Immigration Canada Department to study more than 15 hours a week. You can request more information from the *Canada Immigration Centre* or the *Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support*.

I want to go to school (high school/college/university/special interest or continuing education courses). What are my options?

There are many reasons why you might want to take courses – learning for credit/accreditation or learning for interest. The local high school and college/university systems offer programs, diplomas, degrees, and interest courses in many topic areas. Contact each

organization, or your local library, for more information about what is offered. They will tell you what you need to apply for courses.

It is possible that a school will want your previous educational documents translated. *The K-W Multicultural Centre* has a list of interpreters who can translate your documents for you. There is a charge for this service.

I want to learn a trade. How do I begin?

To become a tradesperson in Canada, you need to go through an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is hands-on training for people who want to work in a skilled trade. Apprentices receive on-the-job or practical training and some in-school training. To become an apprentice, a candidate must be 16 years old and have at least a Grade 10 education or its equivalent. Some employers and labour organizations require higher levels of education. If you have worked as tradesperson in your country, you may be able to re-certify in Ontario.

I have a university degree or trade qualifications from my country. How does it compare to Canadian standards or requirements?

If you have professional or trades qualifications from your home country, there are specific steps you need to take. For assistance through this process contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

New Canadian Program

Also see the EMPLOYMENT section of this guide.

How can I pay for my studies?

If you are looking for high school credit courses, the fees are generally quite low or free. For more information, contact:

St. Louis Adult Learning Centre

K-W English School

If you want to attend college or university, the fees are much greater and you may need some help. The first question to ask yourself is whether you plan on attending school part-time or full-time. If you plan to attend part-time and you are working, you might be able to afford the school fees with your employment income. If you are on Ontario Works, or Employment Insurance, you might be eligible for training allowances. You should contact your caseworker and ask him/her what opportunities exist for you.

If you are planning to attend school full-time, you may need to get loans to finance your education. There are different ways to obtain educational funding. These can be in the form of bursaries, private loans, scholarships, work-study plans, or part-time employment. These include the *Ontario Student Assistance Plan –OSAP*, *Ontario Special Bursary Plan*, *Ontario Work Study Plan*, and the *Canada Student Loans Program*. You should contact the institution you plan on attending for more information about funding assistance, especially bursaries and scholarships.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that you need to make a plan before you apply for your program of study. It is important to consider how you will pay for your schooling before you actually begin your studies.

EMPLOYMENT

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Business Enterprise Centre (Kitchener City Hall) 741-2604	200 King St. West, 2 nd Floor Kitchener City Hall	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Employment Resource Centre 576-7676	25 Frederick St. (Market Square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Focus for Ethnic Women (for women only) 746-3411	33 Bridgeport Road East, Waterloo (near King St. & Bridgeport Rd.)	7C or 7D
Human Resource Centre 579-1550 (Employment Centre) 571-6831 (Employment Insurance)	409 Weber St. West, Kitchener	8A (University Via Weber), 18 (Guelph St.)
Job-Finding Club for Professionals (for highly skilled professionals) 747-2727	279 Weber St. North, Unit 21, Waterloo	8A (University Via Weber), 18 (Guelph St.)
Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St. (Market Square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Lutherwood CODA 570-9675	165 King St. East, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
New Canadian Program (for professionals and tradespeople) 883-0216	12 Dupont St. West, Kitchener	7C or 7D
Ontario Ministry of Labour, Employment Standards Branch 885-5191 or 1-800-531-5551	285 Weber St. North, Waterloo	8A (University Via Weber)
PWL Manufacturing Inc 746-1500	266 Marsland Dr., Waterloo	12 (from Conestoga Mall or Fairview Mall)
Volunteer Action Centre 742-8610	68 Queen St. North, Kitchener (near Kitchener Public Library)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Waterloo Region Community Legal Services 743-0254	170 Victoria St. South, Kitchener	11 (Victoria Hills)
Waterloo-Wellington Immigration Centre 1-888-242-2100	29 Duke St. East (at Duke and Frederic)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
The Working Centre 743-1151	58 Queen St. South, Kitchener	Near the bus terminal
Working for Work 570-3552	75 Frederick St., Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622 Business Quest (YMCA)	25 Frederick Street (Market Square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

When can I start working?

A permanent resident can begin working at any time. If you are making a refugee claim,

you must do several things before you can work.

Every worker in Canada needs a Social Insurance Number (SIN). To apply for this number, you must complete an application at the:

Human Resource Development Centre

After you complete the application, give it to the Resource Centre receptionist along with your immigration document. The receptionist will make a copy of your immigration document and return it to you. It will take several weeks to receive your Social Insurance Number card. People who are not permanent residents (e.g. refugee claimants) are given temporary numbers that begin with the number 9. When you become a permanent resident, go to the Human Resources Development Centre and apply for a new number.

If you are a refugee claimant you must first pass your immigration medical and complete your Personal Information Form. Then you must apply to Immigration for permission to work (called *employment authorization*). For help with this application contact the Waterloo-Wellington Immigration Centre or the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support.

How do I find a job?

There are many things you can do to find a job. Speak to people you know in the area and read advertisements. Most people find jobs through their friends or people they know. You can also look in the Classified (“Help Wanted”) pages of local newspapers (The Record, Cambridge Reporter, or Waterloo Chronicle) and the job listings at the Human Resources Development Centre. You could also look for signs in store windows that say, “Help Wanted.”

Where can I go for extra help?

There are local community agencies that offer employment counselling and help people find work. However, these agencies can not guarantee you a job. Finding work is not always easy. It is important to keep trying and to not give up. Many of these agencies provide a number of services and resources such as:

- training sessions/workshops in resume preparation, letter writing, interviewing, and job searching

- English as a Second Language assistance
- work placement
- computers and Internet access
- entrepreneur classes for those interested in starting their own business

Some agencies offer specific employment support for newcomers:

Focus for Ethnic Women (for immigrant and visible minority women)

K-W Multicultural Centre

New Canadian Program (for professionals and tradespeople)

PWL (People Working and Learning)

Working for Work

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Will volunteering help me to get a job?

Volunteerism has a long and rich tradition in the Canadian way of life. Volunteers engage in activities that benefit both the volunteer and the organization. Volunteering has helped many people obtain employment opportunities. Some of the benefits of volunteering are:

- helping others
- learning new skills and developing your current skills
- gaining Canadian experience
- becoming more comfortable and confident working in a Canadian workplace
- meeting new people and learning more about the K-W area.
- increasing your chances of finding a job

Where can I find a place to volunteer?

You may be able to find a place to volunteer in your neighbourhood or through people that you know. For help in looking into volunteer opportunities in Kitchener-Waterloo, you could contact:

The Volunteer Action Centre.

The Centre matches volunteers with community organizations that need help. You should think about your skills, experiences and interests. The Centre will suggest organizations you can go for volunteering.

I'm a professional. How can I work in my field here?

Finding work is not always easy. Even you are highly skilled or university-educated, you may find that you are not able to work in your chosen field when you first come to Canada. You may have to take other kinds of work until you receive the license or approval needed in your field. More information on getting your foreign qualifications evaluated can be found in the *EDUCATION* section of this directory.

If you have completed study or training programs outside of Canada and you want to attend school here, you will need to have your documents evaluated. If your educational documents are not already in English, you will probably have to have them translated before they can be submitted for evaluation.

Your profession may have a professional association in Ontario. It is a good idea to contact the appropriate association related to your profession to find out if there are any special

requirements for having your education/experience translated and evaluated. They may accept evaluations only from specific organizations. As well, they may only accept translations from certain accredited translators. Each profession has its own rules about who is allowed to use the professional designation. You need to contact the appropriate professional organization directly. For a list of professional associations, you could contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Where do I get my educational documents evaluated?

The following are three organizations that evaluate educational documents. Contact them directly to find out how to use their service:

The Comparative Education Service of the University of Toronto evaluates foreign degrees and diplomas for general and employment purposes in Canada, but not for university admissions. However, some colleges and institutes accept a letter of assessment for admissions. Check with the school you wish to attend to see if they accept a letter from this service.

Academic Credentials Evaluation Service (ACES), Admissions Office evaluates credentials from secondary or post-secondary schools, usually for employment purposes.

International Credential Assessment Service of Canada - evaluates elementary, secondary and post-secondary school credentials for employment or for admission to education programs.

I'm a tradesperson. How do I work in my trade here?

If you are a tradesperson and want to find out how to compare your experience in Canada, you need to contact an Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities training consultant who can evaluate your qualifications.

Evaluation is based on an assessment of your training and employment experience. If you have letters from previous employers describing the work you have done. You will need to provide them. If you do not have these letters, you can submit a statutory declaration that

describes your work experience. A lawyer, community legal clinic, public notary or the ***K-W Multicultural Centre*** can help prepare one for you.

In order to work as a tradesperson you need a Certificate of *Qualification from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities*. To get a Certificate of Qualification you must pass an examination. Before you can write the exam, you must show that you have experience in the trade. The Ministry has an apprenticeship office where training consultants evaluate your qualifications.

The Certificate of Qualification examination is given only in English or French, but you are allowed to bring an interpreter approved by the Ministry, as well as a dictionary.

How do I start my own business?

There are organizations in K-W where you can get help to start your own business. Good starting points are:

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services – Business Quest

Business Enterprise Centre - Kitchener City Hall

Lutherwood-CODA

What are my rights at work?

The Ontario Human Rights Code helps protect against discrimination based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap. If you feel that you have been, or are being, discriminated against, you can find out more about what you can do at:

K-W Multicultural Centre

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

How much does my employer have to pay me?

In most jobs you must be paid at least \$6.85 an hour. If you work serving alcohol you must be paid at least \$5.95 an hour. If you work in your home, or someone else's home, you must be paid at least \$7.54 an hour. If you are a student under 18 and you work during school

holidays, or less than 28 hours a week during the school term, you must be paid at least \$6.40 an hour.

Do I have to work more than 8 hours a day?

In most full-time jobs you have to work 8 hours a day. In some full-time jobs you have to work 12 hours a day. You do not have to work more than 48 hours a week unless you want to.

Does my employer have to pay me overtime?

In most jobs, with some exceptions, you should get overtime pay when you work more than 44 hours a week. You are to be paid 1 ½ times your hourly pay for each hour of overtime.

What breaks do I get?

In most jobs you are entitled to a 30-minute break after every 5 hours of work. You do not have to be paid for this time.

Do I get paid holidays?

On public holidays such as Christmas Day, most people have the right to get the day off with pay. If the right to paid holidays applies to your job, to get the day off with pay you must:

- have worked for your employer for at least 3 months
- have worked at least 12 days during the 4 weeks before the holiday
- work your regularly scheduled days just before and after the holiday

What is vacation pay?

Employers must provide employees with paid vacation time or money in place of paid vacation time. If you do not have paid vacation time, you must be paid a minimum of 4% of your total wages over the 12 months that you must work to qualify for paid vacation. If you have worked less than 12 months when your job ends, you must be paid at least 4% of all wages you earned working for that employer.

What do I need to know about on the job safety?

Under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act you have 3 basic rights:

- the right to know if your working conditions are safe

- the right to participate in making sure that your workplace is safe
- and, above all, the right to refuse to do unsafe work

You, your supervisor, and your employer have a responsibility to ensure that you have a safe and healthy workplace. Always keep a record of the dates and hours you work. Any time you have a problem, make sure that you follow the correct procedures that your employer must provide for you and your fellow employees to address problems at work. If you do not know the procedures, ask your supervisor or employer. Always keep a record of what problem happened, when, and what you and your employer did in response. Also tell someone else, so that they know what is happening to you. Do not take chances with your health. Do not let your employer take chances with your health.

I've been injured at work. What can I do?

The Workers' Compensation system provides benefits to people temporarily or permanently disabled because of a work-related injury or disease. You must file a claim with the local Workers' Safety and Insurance Board if you are injured at work. Your employer must file this claim on your behalf. If your employer tells you not to file a claim, you should get help to find out what your rights are. For more information contact:

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

What if I lose my job?

Employment Insurance (EI) is run by the federal government and provides benefits (a percentage of your wages) to people who have lost their jobs. There are rules to decide who qualifies for EI and how long they can collect benefits. The local Human Resources Development Centre has more information.

If you quit job or are fired, you may have trouble collecting benefits. No matter what, make sure that you get your *Record of Employment* from your employer. They must give you this document within 2 weeks after your last day of work. You will need this form to apply for EI. If you do not have this form, you should still apply for EI. The Human Resources Development Centre counsellor will help you get the form.

My employer is paying me in cash, or with a cheque, but without payroll deductions. What does this mean?

If you are not receiving a regular paycheck with deductions from your wages for income tax, Employment Insurance, or Canada Pension Plan, then you are not eligible for EI benefits when you leave the job. For example, you may be working as a *contract worker*. This means that you are not considered an employee on salary, but as someone who is doing work either for a specific period of time, or as a casual worker.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Catholic Family Counselling Centre 743 6333	70 Weber St W , Kitchener	Walking distance from bus terminal
Children's Needs Distribution Centre 745-9461	135 Highland Rd. W. Kit (in Highland Baptist Church)	15 (Forest Heights)
Generations 886-6226	50 Bridgeport Rd., Waterloo	7C or 7D
House of Friendship Food Hamper Program 742-0662	807 Guelph St., Kitchener	6 (Bridgeport) 18 (Guelph Street)
K-W Crisis Pregnancy Centre – Care Closet 886-4001	22 King St. South, #303 Waterloo	7C or 7D
K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St., (Market Square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support 571-1912	58 Queen St. S., Kitchener (in TheWorking Centre)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Mennonite Thrift Shop 743-5021	335 Lancaster St. W., Kitchener	6 (Bridgeport)
Revenue Canada – Income Tax Office 579-2230	166 Frederick St., Kitchener	15 (Frederick)
Rockway Thrift Shop 578-8640	137 King St. East, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Salvation Army, Family and Community Services 745-4215	657 King St. E., Suite 2, Kitchener	7 (Fairview)
Salvation Army Thrift Shops 886-3020 578-4800	25 King St. S., Waterloo 1436 Victoria St. N., Kit	7C or 7D 15 (Frederick)
St. John's Soup Kitchen 745-8928	23 Water St. N., Kitchener (in St. John's Church)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop 742-8622	97 Victoria St. N., Kitchener (near Weber St.)	18 (Guelph Street)
Value Village 576-4403	120 Ottawa St. North (at Weber St.), Kitchener	7 (Fairview) or 8B (Fairview Via East Avenue)
YMCA, Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622	25 Frederick St., (Market Square, third floor), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

What is financial management?

This guide talks about financial management for different reasons. It has information about banking, income tax, and some government financial benefits. The guide also talks about financial management because, for many people, it can be financially difficult to live in Canada.

This is especially true if you are paid a low wage or you receive social assistance (welfare). Therefore, this section includes suggestions of how people can have the things they need for as little money as possible.

How do I open a bank account?

There are different bank companies. The services they offer are very similar. Which bank you use is a personal choice. It may be the bank that is close to where you live or where you can easily open an account.

Most banks will ask for three pieces of identification with your signature when you want to open an account. You can use your Social Insurance Number card, your Canadian immigration document, and something like a driver's license or passport. You may not have three pieces of identification when you first arrive in K-W and you may have some trouble opening an account. You may have to try several banks before you will be able to open an account. For advice on opening a bank account, you could contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (refugee claimants)

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

What type of bank account should I have?

Banks have different types of accounts. You will be asked what type of account you want to open. This is your choice. You probably want to choose the one that is the cheapest and most convenient for you. Each type of account will charge you a certain amount for using bank services. You should know how much you pay for these services and when (monthly or each time you use the bank). After you have opened an account you can ask the bank to change it if you decide that another kind is better.

What is a bank machine?

A bank machine is an automated, self-serve banking service that you can use even when the bank is closed. You can use these machines to get cash from your account, to pay bills, or to deposit cheques. You may be very familiar with bank machines or you may be using one

for the first time. If you are not familiar with bank machines, ask your bank to explain how it works. You can use a bank machine once you have opened an account and you have received a bank card. It is important that you do not tell your secret bank card number to any other person.

Do I need a credit card?

Credit cards are very popular in Canada. Many people have them but you are not required to have one. It is very convenient to buy items with credit cards. It is also very expensive and it may become a serious problem if someone is unable to pay his or her credit card bill in full every month.

Many businesses encourage people to buy their products *on credit*. This sounds very attractive but it is often done to encourage people to buy items that they may not be able to afford. Once you begin to pay interest on your credit then it also becomes very expensive. If someone is unable to pay their credit account, then the company can take back their product without returning any money to the customer.

It is very important for a person to make sure that they can afford to use credit. If someone is having problems because they cannot pay their bill, they can find help in the community. They can receive help to plan how to pay their bills. They can have help talking to the people and companies to whom they owe money. For this free service contact:

Catholic Family Counselling Centre

It is expensive to live in Canada. Are there places where I can find food, clothing, furniture, and other things at a lower price?

Different stores charge different prices for food, clothing, and other things you need to live. You may want to ask your relatives, family, friends, or fellow ESL students where they shop for good prices. There are also special services or stores in K-W where you can find different items for free or a low price. This guide does not provide a list of all of these places. It only gives examples of places to go for:

1. Clothing

Children's Needs Distribution Centre (free used clothing, toys, and equipment for babies and children)

K-W Crisis Pregnancy Centre Care Closet (free used clothing for babies, very young children, and pregnant mothers without partners)

Salvation Army Family and Community Services (call for an appointment)

2. Clothing and small household items

Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Shop

Rockway Thrift Shop

Salvation Army

Value Village

3. Furniture

Generations

St. Vincent de Paul Society

Salvation Army (at 1436 Victoria St.)

4. Food

House of Friendship Food Hampers (a free box of food every 2 months)

St. Johns Soup Kitchen (free lunches every Monday-Friday, 11:30am-1pm)

Salvation Army (call for an appointment)

5. Recreation

You and children may be eligible for help to participate in City of Kitchener or City of Waterloo recreation programs. For more information on this, see the *Socialization and Integration* section of this Guide.

You may also be able to find used furniture, bicycles, and other items by looking at advertisements in the **K-W Record's Classified** section, or a free magazine called the **Penny Saver**. It is also very popular in Canada, especially in the summer and fall, for people to hold

special sales outside their homes or in their neighbourhoods. These are called *garage sales*.

Do I need to complete an income tax form?

Every Canadian resident (citizen, permanent resident, refugee claimant, or work visa resident) must complete an income tax return (form) every year. This form is a report to the government of how much money you received and how much income tax you paid in the past year. You must submit an income tax return in order to receive government benefits such as the child tax credit and the GST credit.

Where can I get help to complete my Income Tax Return?

You must complete your income tax return and send it to the government by April 30. Some organizations have volunteers who can help you complete your tax form. Ask for this help before the middle of April. For this help contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

Revenue Canada Income Tax Centre

When do I apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit?

The Canada Child Tax Credit is a monthly benefit paid by the government to families with children less than age 18. To be eligible for this support you must be a citizen, permanent resident, or recognized Convention refugee (if you were a refugee claimant). Your child or children must be living with you. You can apply for this benefit as soon as you have immigration status, your child is born, or your child comes to live with you. Apply at:

Revenue Canada Income Tax Office

HEALTH SERVICES

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Canadian Mental Health Association 744-7645	607 King St. West, Suite 202, Kitchener (at Frederick St.)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Catholic Family Counselling Centre 743-6333	70 Weber St. West, Kitchener	Walking distance from the main bus terminal, or 8A
Community Health Helpers 745-4404	49 Queen St. South (Kitchener Downtown Health Centre)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Grand River Hospital 742-3611 Emergency 749-4242	835 King St. West, Kitchener	7 C or 7D
Interfaith Pastoral Counselling 743-6071	151 Frederick St., Kitchener	15 (to Frederick)
Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre 745-4404 (check the address when you call)	49 Queen St. North, (c/o St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church), Kitchener.	Walking distance from the bus terminal
K-W Counselling Services 884-0000	75 King St. S., Waterloo Town Square Office Tower, 3 rd Floor, Waterloo	7C or 7D
K-W Crisis Pregnancy Centre 886-4001	22 King St. South #303, Waterloo	7C or 7D
Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support 571-1912	58 Queen St. S, Kitchener (in the Working Centre)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Ontario Ministry of Health (OHIP) 1-800- 268-1154	1400 Weber St. East, Unit 2B, Kitchener	8B (Fairview Via East Ave) or 7B (Fairview Via Weber)
St. Mary's General Hospital 744- 3311 Emergency 749-6410	911 Queen's Blvd., Kitchener	1 (Queen South)
Urgent Care Clinic 748-2327 745-2273	385 Fairway Rd. South 751 Victoria St. S.	7 (to Fairview Mall) 11 (Victoria Hills)
Waterloo Region Community Health Dept 883-2000 (general information)	99 Regina St. North, Waterloo	7 (to U of W or Conestoga Mall)
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622	25 Frederick St, (Market Square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

How do I pay for or receive health services?

In Canada each province is responsible for the delivery of health insurance services. In Ontario the health insurance program is known as the *Ontario Health Insurance Plan or OHIP*.

OHIP covers a wide range of basic and emergency health services. OHIP does not, however, pay for dental care, medicines, or the cost of eyeglasses. If you want to receive OHIP you must be a permanent resident of Canada or be accepted as a Convention refugee. You must also live in Ontario for at least 6 months each year.

When you apply for an OHIP card you need to take:

- your original immigration paper
- proof that you live in Ontario (for example a bill from the electricity company)

You will need to complete an application for each family member. To apply, go to:

The Ministry of Health, Ontario Health Insurance Office

I am not allowed to have OHIP. What is the Interim Federal Health Program?

You cannot receive OHIP, even if you are a permanent resident, until you have lived in Canada for three months. You also cannot receive OHIP if you are a refugee claimant. You can have health insurance under the Interim Federal Health (IFH) Program.

What does IFH provide? IFH does not give you as much health coverage as OHIP. It does cover emergency health services and the cost of having a baby. If you have questions about the Interim Federal Health program, you could contact:

The Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (if you are a refugee claimant)

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services (if you are a permanent resident)

<p>Make sure you take your OHIP card or IFH form with you anytime you go for medical help.</p>

Is dental work covered by OHIP?

OHIP does not pay for dental work unless it is a very serious emergency that requires a hospital. You must pay the cost of your dental work unless:

- you have dental coverage through your employment health plan, or,
- you receive social assistance. If you are having a problem with your teeth you must tell your caseworker you need to go to the dentist. You must make an appointment with a

dentist who agrees to be paid by welfare.

➤ you are a child in school. Dental help for school age children may be available from:

Waterloo Region Community Health Department, Dental Health Services - 883-2001

Are eye examinations and eyeglasses covered by OHIP?

OHIP will pay for an eye examination once every two years if you are between 20-64 years of age or once every year for people under 20 or over 65. OHIP does not help with the cost of buying eyeglasses. Some help is available to you if you are on social assistance. Speak with your caseworker.

How do I find a family doctor?

Every person should have a family doctor for their basic health care, even if they do not go to their doctor very often. It is especially important to have a family doctor if you have a serious ongoing medical problem. Unfortunately there are not enough family doctors in K-W for all of the people living here. You can try asking workers at a settlement office if they know of any doctors who are taking new patients.

Where can I go for medical help if I do not have my own family doctor?

There are urgent care medical clinics where people can go if they do not have family doctors. You do not make appointments at these clinics. You go there and wait until it is your turn to see the doctor. When you arrive at the clinic you must sign in with the receptionist. Make sure the office knows if you think you need help immediately. Go to the:

Urgent Care Clinic (please notice that there are two Clinic locations)

If you think you may be pregnant but you do not have a health card, or a family doctor, than you can go for a free pregnancy test and medical advice about pregnancy to:

K-W Crisis Pregnancy Centre

If my family or I suddenly become very sick, where can I go?

There are times when you need more help than your doctor or health clinic can offer. For example, you or someone in your family may:

- become very sick or have a lot of pain very suddenly
- be hurt in an accident
- become unconscious
- have difficulties breathing

In these situations you should go to the hospital nearest to your home:

Grand River Hospital

St. Mary's Hospital

Drive in your car or call a taxi (***Kitchener City Cabs - 742-4407; Waterloo Taxi - 886-1200***). If you need medical help immediately phone **911** for an ambulance. Do not worry if you do not speak English. Stay on the phone and an ambulance will come. When you call 911, a fire truck and police car are also sent to your home.

When you arrive at the hospital go to the Emergency department. The receptionist will ask you what is wrong and ask you for your health card. A nurse will examine you. You may have to wait to see a doctor if your problem if the emergency department is busy. If you do not speak English, the hospital will look for an interpreter over the telephone.

Where do I get help if I am pregnant?

You should ask your family doctor or the Urgent Care Clinic about getting the specialized medical help you want and need. You can have the help of an obstetrician. You can also ask for a midwife. Both services are covered by your health insurance. If you are a single mother you can go for pre-natal classes at the:

K-W Crisis Pregnancy Centre

Are there special programs to help my child stay healthy?

The ***Waterloo Region Community Health Department*** has special programs for parents of babies and young children (as well as programs for youth and adults). These programs include:

Breast Feeding and Baby Nutrition - 883-2002, ext. 5300

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children - 883-2002

Healthy Children Information Line - 883-2245

Multicultural Child Health Infoline – 883-2002, ext. 5252 (information is provided in different languages)

Child Immunization – 883 –2007, ext. 5273

Grand River Hospital also has special programs for new mothers:

Prebirth Services - 749-4300, ext. 2792

New Mothers' Support - 749-4300, ext. 2263 (for information and support in breastfeeding)

For more information about programs that support children, youth and parents, see the Parenting section of this guide.

Does the Waterloo Region Community Health Department offer other public health services?

The Health Department also offers special programs for:

Communicable Diseases & Sexuality - 883-2006 or 883-2251

Sexual/Reproductive Health - 883-2009

Youth Health - 883-2003

Environmental Health - 883-2008

Food Safety & Infection Control - 883-2009 or 883-2005

Resource Centre (a library on health issues) - 883-2256

You may need immunisation if you are travelling to some other countries. For more information contact:

Waterloo Region Health Department, Travel Clinic – 883-2007, ext. 5274

What is the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre?

The *Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre* will combine primary health care (such as that provided by family physicians) with health promotion, health education and illness prevention. The Health Centre will serve people living in downtown Kitchener and also new Canadians who do not have a family doctor. The Centre would be providing primary care by September 2000. Look for more news about when the Centre will be open to the public. The

Health Centre is currently at 49 Queen St. South (at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church), but will move during the summer of 2000. Call the Centre to check the new address.

Can I get health information and support from someone who shares my ethnic background?

There is a special program of health promotion workers who speak different languages and come from different ethnic backgrounds. Someone in this program may speak your native language and be able to help you with your health concerns or to understand the health care system in Canada. If you are interested in health you may want to help with this program. Contact:

Community Health Helpers Program

Where can I go for special medical information or support?

There are groups in K-W that offer help and information about different health issues such as diabetes, the heart, depression, and cancer. Some of these groups are listed in the Yellow Pages of the phone book under "Social and Human Service Organizations". You can ask your family doctor for this information, or you can contact the:

Community Information Centre

I feel depressed, don't want to eat, have bad dreams, or have problems of sleeping. Can someone help me understand why I am feeling this way?

Any person who moves to a new country experiences many changes in their life. You have left family, friends, work, and your home. At different times in Canada you may feel homesick, lonely, or sad. These are normal feelings. When you feel this way, it can be important to get out of your house to visit, talk, and be with other people, even when you do not feel like doing that. It can be helpful to talk to other people who may be feeling the same things or to people who will understand what you are feeling.

Often the feelings a person has are a response to bad experiences that they have had. An adult, child, or youth may have lived through war, the stress of a refugee camp or other difficult experiences. You may also be concerned about family or friends who remain in a difficult situation. These experiences and feelings can result in *trauma*. This is a normal human reaction to bad memories and experiences.

Sometimes the feelings someone has are so strong, or continue for so long that they can affect your health. It is very important to seek help at these times. Asking for support at these times is the sign of a very strong person. You need to decide what help you think will be useful to you or your family member. There are different places where you can begin looking for support:

- your family doctor
- a settlement agency
- a counselling centre, such as:

Catholic Family Counselling Centre

Interfaith Counselling

K-W Counselling Services

- a religious leader

There are special community supports for children who are experiencing trauma. For more information contact:

Catholic Family Counselling Centre

Interfaith Counselling

K-W Counselling Services

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA cross-cultural and Community Services

Where can I or someone else find help with mental health problems?

There are many community agencies and groups that give information and support for different mental health problems. For more information about these groups you can contact the:

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).

The CMHA also has a library of resources on different mental health issues, including the effects of war experiences, torture, and refugeeism.

HOUSING

Organizations Listed in this section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Bell Canada 310-2355	Conestoga Mall or Fairview Mall	7D (to Conestoga Mall), all 7 (to Fairview Mall)
Anselma House 742-5894 or 741-9184	Not available	
House of Friendship 742-8968	63 Charles St. East, Kitchener (near Benton St.)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Independent Living Centre 746-1312	446 Kingscourt Dr., Waterloo	7B to (Fairview) and 10 (Chicopee)
Kitchener Housing 741-2611	200 King St. West, 5th Floor, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
K-W Multicultural Centre 741-2351	25 Frederick St. (Market Square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro 581-1260	301 Victoria St. South, Kitchener	11 (to Victoria Hills)
Lutherwood-CODA 743-2460	165 King St. East, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Mary's Place, YWCA 744-6507	84 Frederick St., Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
North Waterloo Housing Authority 893-6080	385 Fairway Rd. S., Suite 202, Kitchener	7(to Fairview Mall)
St. Vincent de Paul 742-8622	47 Victoria St. North, Kitchener	8A (University Via Weber)
Salvation Army 578-4800 886-3020	1436 Victoria St. North 40 King St. N. Waterloo	11 (Victoria Hills) 7C or 7D
Waterloo North Hydro 886-5090	300 Northfield Dr. East, Waterloo	7C (to Conestoga Mall) and then walk or take a taxi
Waterloo Region Community Legal Services 743-0254	170 Victoria St. South, Kitchener	11 (Victoria Hills)
Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health 742-3191	501 Krug St., Unit 112, Kitchener	1 (Stanley Park)
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622	25 Frederick St., (Market Square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

I need a good place to live. What should I do?

A good place to live is very important. It may take time to find a good apartment because Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge do not have enough apartments for low rent.

I have questions about looking for an apartment. Who can help me?

Offices where you can get advice about looking for an apartment are:

Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Kitchener Housing

Lutherwood- CODA (for young people ages 16-24)

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (for refugee claimants)

Independent Living Centre (for adults with a physical disability)

What questions should I ask when I look for an apartment?

What rent can I afford? Social service experts recommend that you do not pay more than 30% of your monthly income for rent. If you pay more, you may be using money you need for food or transportation. If you are on welfare or working for a low wage, it will be hard to find an apartment you can afford. If you are a single person you may want to share an apartment with a friend. Some single men and women live in *rooming houses* with other single people. Rooming houses can be noisy and uncomfortable.

How do I find an apartment? The K-W Record newspaper advertises apartments for rent. You can ask your friends or other people you know for their suggestions. If you know where in the city you want to live, you can walk or drive around the area. You may find signs in front of buildings advertising "apartment for rent. Usually, you will have to phone and make an appointment if you want to look at an apartment. You may have to make many phone calls and visit different apartments before you find the place you want. It is also important to find out how close it is to buses, shopping, schools and other services you may need.

How much is my rent? Often the rent for an apartment is *inclusive*. This means you do not pay more for electricity, heat, or parking. Other apartments charge extra money for *heat and hydro* (electricity). Ask how much this will cost each month (before you sign a lease you can ask an office to help you find out how much heat and hydro will cost). Avoid places that use *electric heat because it is very expensive!*

I found an apartment. What do I do now?

Do I have to sign a lease and give the superintendent "post-dated" cheques? Not everybody wants to sign a *lease* because this means you cannot change apartments until your lease is finished. Usually a lease is for one year. You may be asked to sign a "housing agreement" and to give the landlord a cheque for two months rent before you even know if you can live there. This is legal although the date you write on your cheque should be one week or two weeks in the future. You should ask for this cheque back if you are not given the apartment. A landlord will often do a *credit check* on you before they will rent to you.

If you are on social assistance, you must get the approval of your worker before you rent any apartment.

Do I have to pay a rent deposit (or "last month's rent")? Many places ask for an extra month's rent if you want the apartment. This is called a "rent deposit." It is legal, but make sure you are given a receipt to show that you have paid this. Keep this receipt until you move from the building. When you move remember that your last month rent is already paid. Do not pay it again. When you move, your landlord must pay you interest on the deposit you paid (this may not be very much money). You will probably have to remind your landlord that you are owed this money.

If you have just come to Canada and you are applying for welfare, you can ask your welfare worker for help with the rent deposit.

How do I get repairs made in the apartment before I move in? An apartment may have a cracked window, broken stove, dirty carpet, or other problems you want fixed. You should talk about these problems before you move in. Some problems should be fixed before you agree to move into the apartment. You may agree to take an apartment if the landlord agrees to make repairs before you move in. It is important to have this agreement in writing. Only pay rent from the day you start living in the apartment.

Can I get help to find furniture? If you are applying for welfare after coming to Canada,

you can ask your worker for help to buy beds. There are many stores where you can buy used furniture for less money, such as:

St. Vincent de Paul

Salvation Army

Value Village

You can ask these stores if they will deliver the furniture to your apartment and if they charge for this service.

How do I get phone service? Phone service is provided by a company called ***Bell Canada***. Bell has offices in Conestoga Mall (bus 7C) and Fairview Mall (buses 7, 7A, 7B). You can call, or go to these offices and complete an application. You may be asked to pay a deposit (maybe \$200) or to have a friend sign your application. Bell must return your deposit (with interest) after you have fully paid six consecutive phone bills. Call Bell if you do not receive your refund on time.

What about long-distance phone calls? This can be very expensive. You can end up with a very large bill very quickly. Bell may cancel your phone service if you do not pay your bill. You can purchase long-distance *phone cards*. These can be purchased in many stores. Phone cards may be more expensive than direct calls but they may help you limit how much money you spend on long distance calls.

What is public or *subsidised* housing?

The government rents some apartments and townhouses where you can receive a *rent subsidy*. This means that the less money you have, the less rent you pay. You must apply to live in these buildings. It is important to apply as soon as you arrive in Kitchener-Waterloo because many people are waiting to live in these places (on *waiting lists*). You can also apply for special housing or a rent subsidy if you are 65 years or older or if you have a physical or mental disability. To apply for subsidised housing go to:

Kitchener Housing

North Waterloo Housing Authority

What other housing options do I have?

Housing Co-operatives (co-ops) are townhouse or apartment complexes that are not owned by the government or a landlord. Co-operatives have special rules and applications. People who live in co-ops are called members and all the members are responsible for operating the co-op. You must contact each co-operative separately. Ask the K-W Multicultural Centre or the Community Information Centre for more information.

Buying a house is not possible until you have thousands of dollars for a down payment. Ask the K-W Multicultural Centre where you can go to get more information about home buying and how to plan and budget to buy a house.

I need a place to stay immediately!

If you have arrived in the city and have no place to live or if you have had to leave your apartment suddenly, there are *emergency shelters* where you can go for help:

Mary's Place, YWCA - women and women with children

House of Friendship - men and boys 16 years and older

If you are a woman (with or without children) who must leave your home because of abuse, you can go to ***Anselma House***. Call a taxi or get on a bus and say you need to go to a shelter. Do not worry if you do not have money with you.

What can I do if people will not rent to me because I am on welfare or because of how I look or speak? What can I do if my landlord is not respecting my rights as a tenant?

It is against Canadian human rights law to be refused housing because you are on welfare or because someone does not like the way you look or speak. There are people, however, who may discriminate against you. You can ask for advice about this. The ***K-W Multicultural Centre*** or the ***Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support*** (if you are a refugee claimant) will assist you.

You have both rights and responsibilities as a *tenant* (someone who rents the place where they are living). It can be important to know the rights and responsibilities of a tenant.

For more information or help on these questions contact:

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services (you can get free legal advice from this office, if you cannot afford a lawyer. Call for an appointment.)

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Do I have to tell my landlord when I want to change my apartment?

You can move from your apartment, but there are some things you should know. If you have signed a lease, the law says you cannot move until your lease is finished (unless your landlord gives you a letter saying you can move). Anytime you move, even if you do not have a lease, you must *give notice*. This means that you must give your landlord a written letter two months before you plan to move. (*Example: If you are going to move on June 1, you must give your landlord or superintendent a letter on April 1.*)

Remember that if you paid a rent deposit, you do not have to pay rent for your last month. If you do not *give notice*, however, you lose your deposit.

How can I get my mail at my new address? What other things should I do when I move?

When you move you will want to make sure that your mail goes to your new home. You can go to a post office outlet and complete a *change of address* form. This costs money and lasts four months. You will need to give your new address to your friends, bank, and any other places that send you mail. If you do a change of address but your mail still goes to your old address, go to the post office and tell them the problem.

Call the phone company (Bell) and tell them you are moving. You may be given a new phone number even if you are only moving from Kitchener to Waterloo.

If you pay your own heat and hydro you need to go to the office where you pay these bills. Tell them to cancel service at your old apartment beginning the day after you move. If you are paying heat and hydro in your new apartment, you will need to set up an account before you move. If you have applied for subsidised housing, let the proper office know your new address so that you can be contacted when a place becomes available.

IMMIGRATION/CITIZENSHIP

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St., (Market Square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Lutheran Refugee Committee	Call for an appointment: 744-2521 (Monday and Thursday) or 581-988 to leave a message	
Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support 571-1912	58 Queen St. South, Kitchener (in The Working Centre)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Ontario Legal Aid 743-4306	50 Queen St. North, 8 th Floor Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Passport Office 1-800-567-6868	101 Frederick St., 6 th floor, Suite 630, Kitchener (near Weber St.)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
St Louis Adult Learning Centre 745-4277	75 Allen Street East, Waterloo (three blocks from King St.)	7C or 7D
Waterloo-Wellington Citizenship and Immigration Centre	29 Duke St. East, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622	25 Frederick St., (Market Square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

What is my immigration status in Canada?

Refugees enter Canada in different ways. This may affect your immigration status and your rights to employment and training, sponsoring your family members to Canada, applying for a passport and other things.

- *government-sponsored refugee* – a refugee sponsored by the Canadian government to come to Canada. This person usually comes to Canada as a permanent resident.
- *privately sponsored refugee* – a refugee sponsored by a group of 5 people or an organization. This person usually arrives in Canada as a permanent resident.
- *refugee claimant* – a person who arrives in Canada and asks to be allowed to stay in Canada as a refugee. This person must go through a refugee hearing in Canada.
- *Convention refugee accepted in Canada* – a person who is accepted as a refugee at their refugee hearing. This person can apply to become a permanent resident.
- *permanent resident* – an immigrant or refugee who has the right to live permanently in Canada. This person does not have all the rights of a Canadian citizen until he/she

apply and are accepted for Canadian citizenship.

Where can I go for help about immigration or refugee questions?

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

K-W Multicultural Centre

Waterloo-Wellington Citizenship and Immigration Centre

For information about the refugee claim process contact:

The Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support

The Lutheran Refugee Committee

Where can I find help settling in Kitchener-Waterloo?

If you are new in Canada or in Kitchener-Waterloo you may want information or practical support to help you settle in this community. You may also want to contact people from your country of origin or who speak your first language. For more information contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Communication Services

Can I bring my family or relatives to Canada?

You can apply to bring some family members to Canada, including children under 19 years old, your husband or wife, your fiancé/fiancée, and your parents. You can bring some other relatives in special circumstances. There are rules about when and how you can assist someone. This may depend on your immigration status, your financial situation, and the health of your family member. It can take the Canadian Immigration Department a long time to approve your application and sometimes they say "no". The application costs money. You also must promise to financially support your family member for ten years. It is important to get good advice before you send your application to Immigration.

I came to Canada without my spouse and (some of) my children. Can I sponsor them to come to Canada?

Sometimes refugees (including people who were refugee claimants) must come to Canada

without their spouse or all of their children. You may have special rights to bring your spouse to Canada, but only for a certain period of time. You should get some advice as soon as possible.

Can an organization or non-relatives help me bring my family member to Canada?

Organizations (for example, churches or mosques that have permission from Immigration) or groups of 5 people can use *private sponsorship* to bring people to Canada. The government must agree that the people who are sponsored are refugees or are in danger in their own country. For more information contact:

Lutheran Refugee Committee

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

K-W Multicultural Centre

Do I need the help of a lawyer or immigration consultant?

(A lawyer has formal training, must belong to a formal association, and can represent clients in court. Anybody can be an immigration consultant. They do not have to register with a professional association. Be careful when you pick your lawyer or consultant.)

You do not always need a lawyer or immigration consultant to complete an immigration application or to get good advice. You may be able to complete your application by yourself or with the help of a community agency. Sometimes you may want or need a lawyer or consultant. Lawyers and consultants can cost a lot of money. Make sure you know how much they will cost. You may want to ask for help finding a lawyer or consultant. No lawyer or consultant or agency can guarantee that your application will be successful.

Can I get financial help to pay a lawyer?

In some situations you can ask for the Ontario government to help to pay a lawyer (Legal Aid cannot help you pay a consultant). You can apply for *Legal Aid* if you are making a refugee claim. You can apply if your application to sponsor your spouse or children has been refused. You can sometimes apply for a humanitarian application. In some cases your legal aid application may not succeed. You can apply at: *Ontario Legal Aid*

Can I get help with my immigration case from my Member of Parliament?

Your Member of Parliament (MP) represents the part of the city where you live in the Government of Canada (called the House of Commons). Your MP has a local office and workers who can help you contact the Immigration Department if you have questions about your immigration file.

You can go to your MP's office without an appointment during the hours it is open. You have to make an appointment if you want to speak directly with your MP. To find out who your MP is, contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Can I leave Canada if I am not a Canadian citizen? When can I get a Canadian passport?

You can leave and return to Canada if you are a permanent resident. You usually cannot leave the country for more than 6 months in one year. If you have to leave for a longer period of time, talk to an Immigration officer first. Ask for a *returning resident permit*.

You cannot get a Canadian passport until you are a citizen but you can apply for a *travel document* to help you travel to and through other countries. It is not easy to get this document and the government may refuse your application. When you travel, make sure you take your permanent resident document with you. Keep it in a safe place. You will need it to re-enter Canada. Applications for a Canadian passport or travel document are available from the ***Passport Office***.

What do I do if I lose my permanent resident paper?

It is important to keep your immigration and citizenship documents in a safe place. It is also helpful to make photocopies of your documents and keep them in a different, safe place. If your permanent resident paper is lost or stolen, you must pay a fee to Immigration and apply for a formal copy of the document.

How do I become a Canadian citizen?

You can apply to become a Canadian citizen 3 years after you become a permanent

resident (this time may be different if you became a permanent resident after you came to Canada). First, you must pass an examination to be accepted. To prepare for the examination contact:

***YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services or
St Louise Adult Education***

To apply for citizenship go to:

Waterloo-Wellington Citizenship and Immigration Centre

INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
K-W Multicultural Centre 742-2531	25 Frederick St, (Market Square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622	25 Frederick St., (Market square, third level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

Where can I look for help if I need an interpreter?

You may want someone's help interpreting when you are speaking with your doctor, caseworker, child's teacher, or in other situations. You may have relatives, friends or children who help you when they can. Perhaps your friends and family ask you to be an interpreter. This informal help is very important but sometimes it is necessary or more comfortable for people to use formal interpreters.

Formal interpreters have been trained to interpret accurately and to respect your privacy. If you need an interpreter, call and ask if you will have to pay for this service. In some situations the cost of the interpreter may be paid by the agency that is asking to speak with you. You cannot phone and ask to have an interpreter immediately. You need to call several days or a week before. For more information contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Can I help people by being an interpreter?

If you are interested in receiving formal training to become a cultural interpreter, contact:

K-Waterloo Multicultural Centre

Where can I go to have my written document translated?

If you need a certified (formal) translation from another language into English, you must go to a person or agency that has a licence to do formal translations. You will be expected to pay for a certified translation. For more information or to find a certified translator, contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

Are there special requirements to have my academic/educational document translated?

You must contact the educational institution or professional organization needing your document to find out what procedures they require for a properly translated document. (For more information about this, read the *Employment* section of this guide.)

A translation of official documents that you submit to a government or many other agencies must be accompanied by an *affidavit*. This is a written document signed by the translator and validated ("notarized") by a notary public. A translator states that he or she is fully proficient in both languages and takes responsibility for the accuracy of the translation. You can get a document notarized at the ***K-W Multicultural Centre***.

Before you pay for a translation, check it for accuracy. Discuss any questions or concerns with the translator. Every detail of translation is important, including spelling and proper names of organizations.

PARENTING

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Catholic Family Counselling Centre 743-6333	70 Weber St. West, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal or bus 8A
ChildCare Connection 741-1811	1770 King St. East, Suite 5, Kitchener	7B (to Fairview Mall)
Community Information Centre of K-W 579-3800	68 Queen St. North, Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Cradlelink 749-0977	165 King St. E., Kitchener (across from Market Square)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region 576-0540	200 Ardelt Ave, Kitchener	11 (Country Hills)
Interfaith Pastoral Counselling 743-6071	151 Frederick St., Kit	15 (to Frederick)
K-W Counselling Services 884-0000	75 King St. S., Waterloo Town Square, 3 rd Floor	7C or 7D
K-W Multicultural Centre 742-2531	25 Frederick St, Market Square, lower level) Kit	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Lutherwood-CODA Youth Employment Centre 743-2460	165 King St. E., Kitchener (across from Market Square)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Our Place 571-1626	800 King St. East (First Mennonite Church), Kitchener	7 (to Fairview Mall)
Waterloo Region Social Services 883-2195 Child Care Subsidy 883-2200 Home Child Care Program 883-2200	99 Regina St. South, Waterloo	7C or 7D
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services 579-9622 A.R. Kaufman Branch 743-5201 Waterloo Branch 885-3500	25 Frederick St., Kitchener 333 Carwood Dr., Kitchener 145 Lincoln Road, Waterloo	Walking distance from the bus terminal 8A (Fairview via Courtland) 8A (University via Weber)

Is being a parent different in Canada?

There will be small or big differences between parenting in Canada and in your native country. These differences can be about the school system, government support for families, recreation opportunities for children, social expectations of what youth can or cannot do, and even laws about the rights of parents and children. Also, you may begin to depend on your child to

translate English for you, and this can be very uncomfortable. Your situation is also different because you have left the support of many family, friends, and neighbours.

You may feel good about some differences here in Canada. You may feel confused, frustrated, or even angry about other changes. These feelings are understandable. You care about your children and you want what is best for them and for your whole family.

Being a parent is not always easy. Every family has different specific needs but all parents and families need to feel that they have support. There are different places where you may want to look for this support in K-W. Some of these appear in the organizations listed for this section.

Does Canadian law let me discipline my child?

Parents can and are expected to discipline their children in Canada. Canadian law, however, says that certain forms of discipline are not allowed. For example, it is against the law to use much physical force against your child. You are allowed to spank your child very lightly but anything harder can be called physical abuse. This is considered a crime, and the police and *Family and Children's Services* must investigate any report they receive about possible abuse.

You may believe that physically disciplining your child is your responsibility as a parent and an important way of teaching your child what is right and wrong. You may sometimes hit your children when you are frustrated, even though you love and care for them. The laws in Canada may confuse and frighten you. It can be very important and helpful for you to understand what rights and responsibilities both parents and children have in Canada under the law. You may want to talk about how parents can teach and discipline their children without using physical force. You may need to find a place or a person where you feel safe to ask these questions. You might do this in a group with other parents or you may want to do this alone with one other person.

You can begin to look for information and support as a parent by going to:

K-W Counselling Services

K-W Multicultural Centre

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Where can I go with my child to meet other parents (mothers or fathers) and their children?

What programs are in my neighbourhood?

Many parents take their children to the park or to the schoolyard to play. It is acceptable in Canadian society to speak to strangers although other parents may react to you in a more or less friendly way.

Your neighbourhood may have a *community centre* or *neighbourhood association* with special programs for children and parents (a local church might also have a parent-child program). These programs are for anyone who lives in the neighbourhood. They may be free or cost a small amount. Usually you must stay in the building with your child although there may be special programs or activities for the adults, such as English classes or guest speakers. For more information read the "Socialization" section of this guide, ask a neighbour, or phone:

Community Information Centre

What programs are outside my neighbourhood?

There are different community programs for parents and children. These programs may have information on a child's physical and mental development, activities for children, information about Canadian law, and a place for parents to share ideas about parenting. These programs may also have libraries where you can borrow books, videos, and toys for your children. These services are often free and the programs may be able to help you with bus tickets. You can ask what help each program offers.

A.R. Kaufman YMCA or Waterloo YMCA

Catholic Family Counselling of Waterloo Region

K-W Counselling Services

Live and Learn Program, House of Friendship

Our Place (Our Place makes a special effort to welcome new Canadian parents)

My teenage children are looking for some support in their education or in looking for work.

Where can they go for support?

Information and support to teenagers and young people between the ages of 16 to 24 years is available at:

Lutherwood-CODA Youth Employment Services

I have a child under one year of age. There is stress in my life. Is there a little help I can receive at home?

There is a community program that provides a little support to parents who have stress in their lives. There can be one or two parents at home. A person will come to your home for a few hours each month to provide parents with some relief and support. To ask for this support you must contact:

Cradlelink

How do I allow my child to be comfortable in Canadian society without losing our family values, language, and traditions?

As a parent you want to teach and give your child what he or she needs to grow up well. You may want your child to have friends and to be comfortable in Canadian society. You also may want to them to learn the values that you feel are important and to keep your native language, religion, and traditions. You may feel that your child is becoming too Canadian. Your child may feel that you will not let them be Canadian. This is difficult for any family. You may want to discuss these issues with other parents, with your child's teachers, or with people from some of the organizations listed in this section.

Will my child's education be harmed if we do not speak English at home?

People who have studied this question say that your child will learn English more easily and better, if they have also learned to speak, read, and write well in the language of their parents. You are helping your child, then if you speak and read with them in your first language, even if your child does not appear to enjoy this. Using your first language can also be very important to share feelings, teach values, and to help your children become adults.

Can my children go to school to learn our native language?

There are some heritage language programs and schools in K-W. Classes are held outside of your child's regular school program. If there are no heritage language classes in your

native language, you may want to talk to other parents about starting a program. For more information contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre or YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

Can I speak to my child's teacher or the school principal?

You can ask to speak to your child's teacher at any time. You do not have to wait for the teacher to call you or for a parent-teacher night. You may expect your child's teacher to call you if your child is having difficulty in school but this may not happen. It may be necessary for you to find out how your child is doing at school and to contact the school if you feel there is a problem. You may want to take an interpreter with you or ask the school to arrange for an adult interpreter.

Should I be involved in my child's education?

Parents in Canada are encouraged to be involved in their child's education. This involvement may be different (more or less) than what is familiar to you. It may be helpful for you to meet with other parents to discuss how you can and want to be involved in your child's school.

What is the school Parent Council?

Each school should have a Parent Council. These councils are to encourage parent involvement in a school. But each one may do this in a different way. You can find out more about the Parent Council at your child's school by asking for the name and phone number of the parent in charge of the council.

Can I volunteer to help at my child's school?

Schools are often looking for parents to help in their child's school. You may be able to help tutor other children, help in the school library, or help in your child's classroom. This may depend on what interests you, how comfortable you are with English, and the activities offered at the school. Volunteering at your child's school may be a good way to be more involved in your child's education, to meet other parents and teachers, or to practice your English.

I have young children but I need to work. Who will look after my children?

You may need to look for someone outside your family to help look after your child if you must go to school or work. Finding childcare or a babysitter that you trust can be difficult and

also expensive. Talking to other parents, neighbours, and some of the organizations listed in this section can be helpful.

Can I receive childcare help through Waterloo Region Social Services?

Social services has a special department where you can apply for different kinds of childcare help.

1. You can ask the office to arrange and pay for your child to be cared for in someone's home or in a childcare centre. You must ask if you are eligible and for how many hours a week

2. You can ask for a *childcare subsidy* – Social Assistance may pay for part of the cost of your childcare but you must use places approved by this office. Your child must be 10 years or younger (or up to 12 years in special circumstances). Make an appointment by phoning:

Waterloo Region Social Services Department, Child Care Program – 883-2200

3. If you are on social assistance and on a placement through the Ontario Works program, you can ask your caseworker about getting help with childcare.

Where else can I go for help finding childcare?

Childcare can be formal or informal. *Formal childcare* means that a centre or home is registered with the government. *Informal childcare* places are people's homes and they are not registered with the government. If you are paying for your own childcare you can decide if you want to use a formal or informal place. You can get information about these different choices from:

Child Care Connection

Can I become a childcare provider for other parents?

To find out about providing childcare in your home, contact:

Child Care Connection

K-W Multicultural Centre

Are there private places where I can speak about problems in my family?

There may be times when you find that you are having difficulties in your family that you

cannot solve on your own or with the help of friends or family. Maybe you are concerned that your children do not respect you. You and your spouse may find that you are arguing often. Perhaps you are concerned about the behaviour of a teenage child. These are very personal issues but they can be the normal problems of any family.

You may have tried different ways to make the situation better but feel this has not worked. You may be interested in speaking privately to a trained person who may be able to help you understand why these things are happening and what action you might take. The offices that provide this help may charge some money for their services. You can ask for help with interpretation into your first language.

Catholic Family Counselling Centre

Interfaith Counselling Centre

K-W Counselling Services

I cannot find parenting program or support I want. Can I start a new program or support?

You can initiate and start your own group. If you need advice on how to do this contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre or Community Information Centre

My child has special needs. Are there places where I can find support for my child and for myself as a parent?

Some children (as well as adults) have physical or mental situations that require specialized support. These may involve problems with hearing, vision, physical mobility, learning disabilities, and so on. Families who are providing support to children, teenagers, or young adults with special needs also need support in doing this.

There are many different community groups and agencies that offer various types of support and services to children and families depending on their circumstances. To learn what support is available for you and your child talk to a settlement agency or contact:

Community Information Centre

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (ONTARIO WORKS)

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St., Market Square (lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support 571-1912	58 Queen St. South, Kitchener (in The Working Centre building)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Waterloo Region Community Legal Services 743-0254	170 Victoria St. South, Kitchener	11 (Victoria Hills)
Waterloo Region Social Service Department, Income Maintenance Division 883-2100 (new applicants) 740-5700 (about eligibility and procedures)	99 Regina St. South, Waterloo	7C or 7D

What is Social Assistance (also called “Welfare” or “Ontario Works”)?

Social assistance is given to individuals or families who are physically able to work but who cannot find work, working people who do not earn enough, and people making refugee claims, who are not allowed to work immediately. This program is called Ontario Works (also called welfare).

How do I apply for Ontario Works?

Contact *the Waterloo Region Social Service Department, Income Maintenance Division* and ask to apply. You must apply by phone. If you do not have a phone, ask a settlement agency for help. They will tell you what information you will need to provide them. You are supposed to get an interview within 4 working days. The interview will take place at the *Waterloo Region Social Service Department* office, at your home, or at another location.

If you need help to apply for Ontario Works (including interpretation), contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (for refugee claimant)

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

What questions will I be asked?

You will be asked information about yourself, your family, and anyone else who lives with

you. This information includes:

- family size and ages of family members
- income (including pensions and allowances)
- assets (money in bank accounts, investments, car ownership, house ownership)
- debts (including money you owe on credit cards, to the bank, and to other people)
- housing arrangements
- education and employment status

You and your family will also be asked to show documents such as:

- Identification (birth certificate, Social Insurance Number, health insurance form, passport or immigration papers)
- divorce papers, separation agreements, or child support orders
- rent receipts, hydro, and heating bills
- bank books
- deeds and mortgages for real estate
- credit card statements
- proof of school attendance
- proof of employment, if you are employed

What if I have difficulty speaking English?

The *Waterloo Region Social Service Department* has an arrangement with the *K-W Multicultural Centre* to provide interpreters to help. There is no cost to you for this service.

Keep in mind that you will be asked to sign documents and to provide information that will determine your eligibility for benefits. It is important that you understand clearly what you are signing and what the worker tells you. Always ask questions if you are not sure about something.

What support does Ontario Works provide?

The focus of Ontario Works is to get you working or back to work as quickly as possible. There are a number of employment programs that you are eligible for, including education subsidies and self-employment programs. Ask your caseworker for more information.

Benefits you will receive while on Ontario Works include:

- money to cover rent and food
- an amount of money called *community start-up*. You must ask your caseworker if you are eligible for community start-up. You can only receive this when you first arrive in Canada. It is money to help you rent an apartment (for example, it can be used for your rent deposit) and maybe purchase a little furniture.
- health coverage, including emergency dental care
- some child care services, or child care subsidy (see the Parenting section of the guide)

What can I do if I am refused Ontario Works benefits?

You can appeal this decision by asking for an *internal review*. Ask your worker to give you, in writing, the reasons why you are being refused Ontario Works benefits. You must ask for an internal review within 10 days of receiving the decision to refuse or cut off your benefits. If the decision is mailed to you, you have 13 days from the day it was mailed to ask for an internal review. Your request for an internal review must be made in writing. For help writing this request contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (for refugee claimants)

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services.

You should get a decision on your internal review within 10 days of requesting it. If you are still refused benefits, you have 30 days to appeal the original decision. You will make your appeal to the *Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT)*.

Can I get benefits if I quit a job or get fired?

If you quit your job or get fired, you could be denied benefits for 3 months. If you are already receiving benefits and refuse a job or quit your part-time or casual employment, you could be cut off benefits for 3 months.

If you have reasonable cause for quitting, you should not be penalized by having to wait to get benefits. Examples of quitting with reasonable cause include:

- a workplace that is unsafe or dangerous to your health

- a health problem that prevents you from doing your job
- discrimination based on your race, religion, sexual orientation or disability
- sexual harassment

If you quit for medical reasons, you will need a letter from your doctor.

What if I earn money while I'm receiving Social Assistance?

If you get a part-time job or earn money from work that you do, it is important to let your caseworker know how much you are earning. It is possible that some of this money will be deducted from your Social Assistance cheque. This will depend on your particular circumstances. Ask your caseworker for an explanation. It is important that you report this income to your caseworker. If you do not, you can be penalized later and ordered pay this amount to social services.

SOCIALIZATION & INTEGRATION

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Community Centres/ Neighbourhood Associations	Contact Community Information Centre (see address & phone below)	
Community Information Centre 579-3800	68 Queen St. N., Kitchener (near Kitchener Public Library)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Ethnocultural Groups	Contact K-W Multicultural Centre	
K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St, (Market square, lower level), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal
City of Kitchener 741-2382 City of Waterloo 747-8739 Parks and Recreation	200 King St. West (Kitchener City Hall) 100 Regina St. S., Waterloo City Hall	Near the bus terminal 7C or 7D
Religious Communities/ Churches	Look under "churches" in the Yellow Pages of the phone book	
Volunteer Action Centre 742-8610	68 Queen St. North, Kitchener (near Kitchener Public Library)	Walking distance from the bus terminal
YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services, Host Program 579-9622	25 Frederick St, (Market Square, third lower), Kitchener	Walking distance from the bus terminal

What do "socialization" and "integration" mean?

Socialization happens when you learn about a society by participating in the community around you. When you participate, you meet people, you learn about community organizations, and you see how other people behave, talk, and act. Integration is keeping the cultural traditions and values that are important to you at the same time that you participate in the broader society. Socialization and integration allow you to become aware of the traditions and values of Canadians, and for Canadians to become familiar with your traditions and values. It means sharing with and learning from each other.

Participating in activities in the community is an important way to learn about and become more comfortable in K-W. This may be harder or easier for you depending on your personality, your level of English, or the friendliness of people you meet. There are many different ways you can become involved. You will have to decide what ways feel comfortable, possible, and helpful for you.

How can I meet people from my country of origin?

Many ethnocultural communities in K-W have organized formal or informal groups for different purposes. These purposes may be one or more of the following:

- to maintain and promote culture, language, and religion
- for education, information-sharing, recreation or social activities
- for settlement support and orientation to Canada and K-W
- for mutual support and help during crisis

If you want information about the activities or organizations of your ethnic community and how to call the organization, contact:

K-W Multicultural Centre

If your ethnic community does not have its own group you may want to work with other people to organize one. You can contact the ***K-W Multicultural Centre*** to ask for some advice on how to do this.

CKWR 98.5FM (phone number, 886-9870) is a community radio station that has some programs in languages other than English or French.

How can I meet people in my neighbourhood or the larger community?

The first places where you meet people may be at a local store, in the building where you live, or in your English as a Second Language class. There are many other ways, however, to meet other people and to become involved in the community. Some examples are:

1. Neighbourhood associations and community centres

Neighbourhood associations are committees of people living in the same part of the city who want to work together to help their neighbourhood. These associations may help take care of the local park, organize activities for children, or talk to the city government about a particular neighbourhood issue.

Community centres are buildings where different programs are offered for people living in the neighbourhood. The programs in your community centre may be for:

- meeting new people and learning more about the community using your skills and experiences or learning new skills (the centres need volunteers to help run the programs)
- exercise or recreation (for different ages)
- support to parents, youth, seniors, and children
- cultural exchange
- English as a Second Language classes
- childcare programs

The programs at your community centre may benefit and interest you whatever your age or your family situation. If you need help finding the community centre in your area you can ask for information at:

Community Information Centre

City of Kitchener, Parks and Recreation Department

City of Waterloo, Parks and Recreation Department

K-W Multicultural Centre

2. YMCA Host Program

The YMCA Host program matches newcomers to Canada with volunteer "hosts" from the K-W community. The volunteer hosts can help newcomers by offering friendship and helping newcomers become more familiar with K-W. There is also a School Host Program that may benefit your children. You can get more information from your child's ESL teacher or from the YMCA.

If you would like to have a volunteer "host" (this may be a single person or a family) you can get more information by contacting:

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

3. Volunteering to help a community organization or institution

Volunteering is donating your time to help a community group deliver services to the community. Many *non-profit* agencies offer services to help different people in the community. A non-profit group is not a private business and any money that it makes must be used to deliver services to the community. Non-profit organizations can be very large (e.g. public libraries, hospitals) or much smaller. They provide services in health, education, recreation, emergency food and shelter, employment, settlement for newcomers, programs for children, youth, seniors, and parents and many other things. (An example of some of these groups can be found in the yellow pages of the phone book under "Social and Human Service Organizations"). All non-profit groups need volunteers to help deliver their programs.

Many people in K-W volunteer for one or more group. People volunteer for different reasons: to help the community and other people; to meet other people; to be busy outside the home; to practice old skills and to learn new ones, to gain experience that can help in finding work, or to practice English.

Volunteering can be a very helpful way of learning about the community and meeting people. If you want to volunteer you should think about what work you enjoy, what you want to learn, and what time and skills you can share. You can ask about volunteering at your community centre, at a local school, at a settlement agency, or at other places you know.

If you are not sure where you would like to volunteer, there is also a community agency that tries to help non-profit groups find volunteers. For more information about volunteering in the community you can contact:

Volunteer Action Centre

Where can I go for sports or recreation?

1. Public parks and playgrounds

There are public parks and playgrounds throughout K-W. Victoria Park and Waterloo Park are the largest parks in K-W and are especially nice for picnics, walking and playing. Many parks and schools have baseball fields, soccer (football) fields, or basketball and tennis courts that can be

used without reservation or cost. Sports teams can pay to reserve and use a field for their games. Other people cannot use the field at these times.

There are several public outdoor swimming pools that are open during the summer. These pools are run by the city and they have lifeguards to supervise the swimmers. You must pay some money to use these pools. There are also some public indoor swimming pools that are open through the year. These also cost money to use. All of the pools have specific hours when they are open. For more information about sports facilities you can call:

City of Kitchener or City of Waterloo, Parks and Recreation Departments

2. Sports teams

There are many sports leagues in the city for many different sports. There are teams for children, youth, or adults and for males or females (at a younger age girls and boys often play together on teams). It usually costs some thing to play on these teams, although you may be able to get help paying fees for your children. You may be able to get information about sports teams from friends, community members, ESL students, or a settlement agency. You can also call the ***Parks and Recreation Department*** in either Kitchener or Waterloo City Hall. Do not forget to ask about help with your children's sports fees if you need to.

3. Theatre, arts, and music

There are different art galleries, museums, community music groups, and public libraries throughout K-W. For information you can look in the yellow pages of the phone book under *Arts and Cultural Organizations, Theatres, Museums, or Associations*. You can also contact:

Community Information Centre

Parks and Recreation Department of City of Kitchener or City of Waterloo

4. Community celebrations or festivals

There are special community celebrations that happen throughout the year. There are music, theatre, cultural and other celebrations that are free and open to the public. These include:

- the Multicultural Festival - Victoria Park, end of June, contact the ***K-W Multicultural Centre***

- Canada Day - July 1st, there are fireworks and other events at different parks in Kitchener and Waterloo
- parades down King St. – Oktoberfest Parade, Santa Claus Parade

You can contact the Parks and Recreation Departments at Kitchener and Waterloo City Halls for magazines that explain which celebrations, festivals, and other activities are planned through the year.

Where can I find a group with whom I can worship?

There is freedom of religion in Canada. The dominant religion in Canada is Christian but many other faith groups are present in the country and in K-W. You may find a place of worship by speaking to members of your ethnic community but you can also find a list of faith groups by looking in the *Yellow Pages of the phone book* under "*Churches*" (or "*Synagogues*" for Jewish groups). This section includes many different Christian groups but it also includes Buddhist, Muslim, and Sikh groups. A Bahai Information Centre is listed in the White Pages. There may be other religious groups that meet in the area, such as Hindu, that are not listed in the phone book.

TRANSPORTATION

Organizations Listed in this Section

ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS	BUS ROUTE NUMBER
Grand River Transit City Transit 555-7555 Out of Town Transit 741-458	Bus terminal	
K-W Multicultural Centre 745-2531	25 Frederick St., Market Square (lower level), Kit	Walking distance from the bus terminal
Drivers Centre 744-6348	524 Belmont Ave., Kitchener	8B (University Via Westmount)

How do I use the bus?

The K-W population is served by the Kitchener /Grand River Transit. The bus works from 6:00 in the morning to midnight. Bus fare can be paid in different ways. Decide which one is the best for you.

- Cash (this is the most expensive. You can ask for a transfer that allows you to use other buses for approximately one hour.)
- Tickets (cheaper than paying in cash). You can buy them at the bus terminal and at some convenience stores around the city. There are different prices for children, adults, and seniors.
- Monthly pass (if you use the bus frequently, it is cheaper to buy a monthly pass)
- Day pass
- Sunday/holiday family pass

Who is eligible for discount?

Discounts are available for the following groups:

- Children under five ride for free.
- Seniors (65 and above)
- All levels of students
- English as a Second Language (ESL) students

Where can I get information about public transportation?

You can get information on the phone. You can also get information about each bus schedule at the bus terminal on Charles Street, or in each bus. A map of Kitchener-Waterloo showing bus routes is available at the bus terminal. This costs a few dollars.

How do I find out the bus schedule?

Bus schedules show the time buses arrive at or leave from different locations. Each bus stop has a number (e.g. 1412). You need to know the bus stop number near your home or where you are. Then dial **888-and the bus stop number** (e.g. if the bus stop number is 1412, dial 888-1412) The Tele-voice will tell you the time the bus will arrive at that point.

What are the requirements to drive in Ontario?

The current rules are:

- If you are a new driver, you must get an Ontario driver's licence
- If you are a new resident of Ontario and have a valid driver's licence from another province or country, you can use that licence for 60 days in Ontario. If you want to continue to drive after 60 days, you must get an Ontario driver's licence.
- If you are a licensed driver from a country other than Canada, USA, or Japan, you must meet the Ontario driver medical requirements, have knowledge of the rules and pass the road test.
- The Ministry of Transportation will require that your license be translated into English. *The K-W Multicultural Centre* can refer you to translators.
- You must be at least 16 years old.
- You need a general driver's license (class "G") to drive most vehicles. You need special licenses to drive a motorcycle, large truck or a bus.
- If you drive a car without a license you can be charged by the police. This is a serious offence.

Who issues the driver's licence?

The *Ministry of Transportation* is responsible for driver's licences in Ontario. To apply for an Ontario driver's license, you must write a written test and take a road (driving) test. If you

need language assistance, the *K-W Multicultural Centre* can provide you with an interpreter to translate your written test. This costs \$35 and must be paid by certified cheque or money order. Interpreters cannot help you with the test; they are only there to translate the questions for you.

To request an interpreter, you must go to the office of the K-W Multicultural Centre and fill out an interpreter request form.

You have to pay the Ministry of Transportation \$100 for the written test and the first road test. If you fail and have another road test, you must pay an additional fee for each road test. The *Drivers Examination Centre* will tell you what to do to get your licence. If you have a driver's licence outside Canada, take it with you.

Where do I get training for a driver's license?

Friends or family members can help you learn to drive, if they already have a driver's licence. The Official Driver's Handbook from the Drivers Examination Centre will also provide valuable written information. Driving lessons are available from private driving schools for a fee. Look in the telephone book and check for the best rates as the rates vary from one school to another. Ask other people you know who have attended these driving schools which schools offer the best value for the cost.

I am wondering about a car. What information do I need?

Before you buy a car, you have to gather information from friends, libraries, or car sellers, regarding:

- the type of car
- the advantage and disadvantage of leasing or buying
- the advantage of buying new or used vehicles
- insurance - in Canada insurance for vehicles is required by law. You buy insurance through private insurance companies. Therefore, carefully examine before signing and check for the best rate as the rate varies from one company to another.
- other financial obligations that you have in the long run that may affect your ability to pay for or lease a vehicle

Make sure that you understand whatever options you choose.

APPENDIX

Other Directories for Kitchener-Waterloo

1. The Blue Book

This is a directory of community services in Waterloo Region published by the Community Information Centre of K-W. The latest edition, dated 1998, is being updated. The Centre also maintains a large database on area community services. For more information contact:

Community Information Centre

68 Queen St. North, Kitchener

579-3900

2. First Steps: An Orientation Package for Newcomers

The Catholic Immigration Centre produces this package of orientation information for refugees arriving in Ontario. If you want more information contact:

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services

25 Frederick St., Market Square (third floor), Kitchener

579-9622

3. Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre Handbook for Newcomers

This is the Centre's handbook for newcomers to the community. The most recent edition is dated July 1999. For more information contact:

Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre

25 Frederick St., Kitchener, Market Square (lower level)

745-2531

4. Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA Host Program Resource Guide (1999-2000)

This guide provides a list of community organizations that help newcomers during their adaptation to Waterloo Region. For more information contact:

YMCA Cross-Cultural and Community Services, Host Program

25 Frederick St., Market Square (third floor), Kitchener

579-9622

5. The Little Black Book

The Kitchener Safe City Committee prepares this annual handbook. The handbook asks some important community safety questions and lists organizations that can help to answer the questions. Contact:

Kitchener City-Hall, Business & Planning Services

200 King St. West, 6th Floor

741-2775

6. Region of Waterloo Resource Guide for Children and Their Families (Pre-birth to Six Years)

Published by the Waterloo Regional Health Department for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program. It lists area agencies and programs that help children and their families. The most recent edition was published in 1998. For more information contact:

Waterloo Region Community Health Department, Health Babies, Healthy Children Program

99 Regina St., Waterloo

883-2245

7. Resource Guide for Older Adults and Their Caregivers in Waterloo Region

Available from:

Waterloo Region Community Health Department

99 Regina St. South, Waterloo

883-2256

8. A Settlement Guide for Refugee Claimants

Prepared by the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support for refugee claimants residing in Waterloo Region. Available from:

The Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support

58 Queen St. South, Kitchener

571-1912

