The background features a stylized illustration of a city skyline with various buildings in shades of green and blue. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of people walking, some pushing a stroller, and a person on a bicycle. A blue speech bubble with a white border is positioned in the upper right quadrant, containing the title and subtitle. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, blues, and greys.

Learning About QUÉBEC

YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

3rd edition

This guide was published by the Direction des politiques et programmes d'intégration sociale et économique of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC), with the participation of government departments and agencies.

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They do not supersede the wording of laws, policy statements or official programs.

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Existe una versión en español au: www.aprendersobrequebec.gouv.qc.ca



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Welcome
to Québec!

Your immigration to Québec will be one of the most important endeavours of your life. There are many challenges to adapting to a new society and carving out your place in it. As soon as you arrive in Québec, you will experience many changes and seek new and creative ways of doing things.

A guide to help you each step of the way

For most immigrants, there is usually a gap of several months between the time they receive their Certificat de sélection du Québec and their federal immigration visa.

Why not take advantage of this waiting period to start preparing for your new life in Québec? This will help you save a lot of time and energy when you arrive.

Learning About Québec is a guide developed by the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) to help you integrate and transition into your new life in Québec.

The Guide is divided into two sections. The first section, *What you need to know*, provides practical information on a variety of topics you need to know about in order to prepare for your arrival in Québec.

The second section, *What you need to do*, provides a **personalized action plan** to record the steps you need to take, both in your country of origin and once you arrive in Québec. This plan will help you determine your needs, define your objectives and develop effective strategies to attain them.

You may be asked to present your plan at one of the meetings you will have in Québec with resource persons who can help you in your steps towards social and professional integration.

These resource persons work for:

- Emploi-Québec;
- community organizations that provide services to newcomers.

Your **personalized action plan** will allow them to check your progress, help identify your needs and guide you accordingly.

Knowing how to use the Internet will be an asset to your success in Québec

Throughout this Guide, we will encourage you to consult various websites that will provide you with very useful information and practical interactive tools.

If you do not know how to use the Internet, we strongly recommend that you learn to do so in your country of origin.

We encourage you to use the detailed version of the **personalized action plan** available in French on the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles's website.

Aim for success and prepare for your arrival in Québec!

What you need to KNOW

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Government commitment

Québec is a society enriched by diversity that welcomes immigrants from the four corners of the earth with their knowhow, skills, language, culture and religion. All Quebecers enjoy the rights and freedoms recognized under the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

In conjunction with public, private and community partners, the Québec government provides welcoming and support services for social, economic and cultural integration as well as French classes adapted to the needs of the people it welcomes.

The MICC and immigrant support organizations

In Québec, the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) is one of your prime sources of information. Moreover, community organizations that receive financial support from the MICC also help to welcome and integrate immigrants. Since they are keenly aware of the needs of newcomers, they can help you in very concrete ways.

Free services

The services offered by the MICC and community organizations are free. Only the comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec carries costs.

Your commitment

All Quebecers, including newcomers, enjoy the rights and freedoms recognized under the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and are obligated to respect the values it enshrines.

As an immigrant, you are committed to taking charge of your integration process and starting it as soon as possible, with the means at your disposal.

You are also committed to understanding and respecting the common values of Québec society as well as all of its laws, regardless of your personal convictions.

The success of your integration depends, to a large extent, on your efforts and your ability to adapt to Québec society.

You have an active role to play at each step of your integration process. Public and community services are available to help you through each step of this process.

Overcoming adaptation problems

When you first come into contact with your new society and its different ways, you may experience some adaptation problems: for instance, difficulty finding a job, financial uncertainty, culture shock, the burden of family responsibilities in a new environment.

Your children may also have difficulty adapting, particularly at school. These problems can translate into learning difficulties or isolation.

To remedy the situation, you need to be persevering and seek the support you need.

Do not hesitate to consult the resources of your host society

Various resources can help you overcome your difficulties. In Québec, it is common to seek help outside your circle of family and friends.

If you need help, do not hesitate to contact a community organization for immigrants or a Centre de santé et de services sociaux. You can also talk to someone who works at your child's school.



The common values of Québec society

Québec is a French-speaking, democratic and pluralist society based on the rule of law, which means that everyone has the same value and dignity as well as the same right to protection under the law.

Knowledge and respect for the values of Québec society are necessary for adapting to your new environment and fully participating in it.

By signing the *Declaration on the common values of Québec society*, you agree to respect the common values of Québec society and to live in Québec within the framework of these values and to abide by them. You have also declared that you want to learn French if you do not speak it already.

Speaking French is a necessity

Québec society is governed by the *Charter of the French Language* which makes French the official language of Québec. French is the language of public institutions and the standard common language of work, instruction, communications, trade and business.

Québec cares about preserving and promoting its official language. French is not only an essential communication tool, but also a common symbol of belonging to Québec society.

To integrate into their new living environment, immigrants who are not fluent in French must make an effort to learn it. To help them do so, the Québec government offers French courses.

The children of immigrants who settle permanently in Québec normally attend French school.

Candidates wishing to practise a profession regulated by a professional order must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the French language in order to obtain a regular permit.

A free and democratic society

Québec's political system is based on freedom of speech and the right to equality of individuals, as well as their participation in associations, political parties and administrative bodies such as boards of directors.

Citizens can stand as candidates for elections and have the right to vote. They elect their representatives at all levels of government.

When the State plans to pass legislation, the public is generally invited to take part in consultations to express its viewpoints on matters of public interest.

Hateful behaviour, whether political, religious or ethnic, is not tolerated. Québec society favours conflict-resolution through negotiation.

Political and religious powers are separate

The Québec State and its institutions are secular. Their decisions and actions are independent of religious powers.

The Québec State has de-confessionalized its school system. Religious confessional instruction is not part of the public school curriculum.

A society enriched by its diversity

Québec is becoming increasingly diverse. The francophone majority, anglophones and Aboriginal peoples live together with people of diverse cultures and origins from all over the world.

Québec encourages exchanges between cultures and closer relations between communities, and recognizes the enriching value of diversity.

Moreover, everyone can freely choose their lifestyle, opinions and religion, while respecting the rights of others. Relationships between people are based on respect and tolerance in a climate of harmony.

A society based on the rule of law

Québec is a democratic society based on the rule of law. All persons are equal in value and dignity and have the right to the equal protection of the law. They must obey all laws regardless of their beliefs.

The Québec *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of:

- race
- colour
- sex
- pregnancy
- sexual orientation
- civil status
- age, unless stipulated by law
- religion
- political convictions
- language
- ethnic or national origin

- social status
- disability or the use of means to palliate this disability

For example, a person cannot be refused housing due to ethnic origin, social status or disability.

Discrimination is prohibited in the workplace, specifically with respect to job offers, the hiring process and working conditions. The law also prohibits all forms of harassment. In this same spirit, homosexuals are recognized as having the same rights and responsibilities as all other citizens of Québec.

Women and men have the same rights

Women and men are equal. They have the same rights and the same obligations.

Women can practise the trade or profession of their choice, including those traditionally reserved for men. They are present in decision-making positions as members of the National Assembly, mayors, councillors, directors and managers of large companies.

Female workers must receive the same salary as male workers when their jobs, although different, have the same or equivalent value in the company.

This value of equality also permeates the types of unions recognized in Québec. Whether they are de facto spouses, married or joined in a civil union, spouses of the same or opposite sex are

equal before the law. Parental responsibilities towards their children are the same regardless of the type of union (marriage, civil union or de facto union).

In the event of divorce or dissolution of a civil union, assets acquired during the union and constituting the family patrimony are shared equally between the spouses.

The law requires parents or guardians to give children the security and attention necessary for their development.

 **Consult...**

The information guide
Equal in every way!
Gender equality
in Québec

Available in French,
English, Spanish, Creole,
Arabic, Romanian,
Portuguese, Chinese
and Farsi

Secrétariat à la
condition féminine

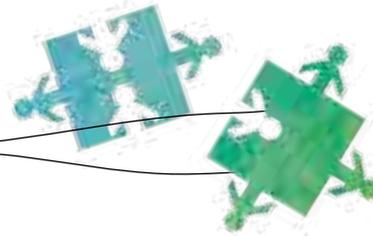
 www.scf.gouv.qc.ca

► Publications

The exercise of human rights and freedoms

Fundamental rights and freedoms are exercised while respecting the rights and freedoms of others, public order, the general well-being of citizens and the democratic values of Québec. The use of violence is prohibited.

In summary, Quebecers attach a great deal of importance to maintaining a climate that fosters freedom of speech, the right to equality between individuals and respect for differences. These values and the laws of Québec society enjoy a consensus and ensure everyone the right, among others, to free speech and the free choice of lifestyle, opinions and religion.





Consult...

The *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and everything that pertains to discrimination, harassment and the exploitation of the elderly or people with disabilities

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse

www.cdpdj.qc.ca

Common values of Québec society

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/common-values

The *Déclaration du gouvernement du Québec sur les relations interethniques et interraciales* (Québec government declaration on intercultural and interracial relations)

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.quebecinterculturel.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ *Fight against racism and discrimination*
- ▶ *Déclaration du gouvernement du Québec sur les relations interethniques et interraciales* (Québec government declaration on intercultural and interracial relations)

Daily life

Climate

Because of its geographic location, Québec has a continental climate characterized by harsh winters and relatively hot summers.

Although seasonal temperatures vary by region, they reach an average of 23°C in summer and -5°C in winter.

Most immigrants underestimate the severity of Québec winters. In fact, temperatures often dip below -15°C and snow is generally abundant. You must dress warmly: sweater, warm coat, scarf, gloves or mittens, and warm waterproof boots. Keep your head well covered with a hat, tuque or hood.

Houses have heating systems that provide all the necessary comfort during the cold season. It is generally recommended that you keep the temperature of your dwelling at a minimum of 20°C during the day and 17°C at night.

Canadian currency

The currency used in Québec is the Canadian dollar (\$). If you have no Canadian currency on you when you arrive, you can buy some at the foreign exchange bureau at the airport. Elsewhere, the service is available from foreign exchange dealers and some credit unions (*caisses populaires*) and bank branches.

Sales taxes and tips

Sales taxes

Almost all goods and services are subject to two sales taxes:

- the federal goods and services tax known as the "GST" (5% in 2012);
- the Québec sales tax known as the "QST" (9.5% in 2012).

These taxes are not usually included in the price and are charged each time you purchase a good or service.

Tips

Tips are given on a voluntary basis. It is customary to give tips of 12 to 15% of a bill before taxes, mainly in bars, restaurants with table service, home deliveries and taxis.

It is also customary to leave a smaller tip for gas-pump attendants, grocery packers, hairdressers, etc.

The wages of employees who work for tips are usually low; tips allow them to earn a reasonable income.

Banking services

You will definitely need a bank account for your day-to-day transactions.

Take precautions! – Do not close your bank account in your country of origin before opening one in Québec.

Find out about the different services provided by banks, credit unions and trust companies. Then decide which one offers an account that best suits your needs, pays the highest interest rates and charges the lowest service fees.

All financial institutions offer a range of useful services: foreign currency exchange, money transfers, safety deposit boxes, etc.

Bank debit card

Banking services are becoming increasingly automated. Automated banking machines can be found in most banks, credit unions and other public places such as convenience stores (known as *dépanneurs*), and shopping centres.

These automated services allow you to perform most of your routine bank transactions (deposits, withdrawals, transfers, utility bill payments) at any time using a

For your safety – Keep your credit cards and bank debit cards in a safe place and never reveal your Personal Identification Number (PIN).

magnetic card called a "bank debit card." You can also use it to pay for purchases at most supermarkets, gas stations, pharmacies and other stores. The amount of your purchase is deducted directly from your account. Service fees may be added to each transaction.

Credit cards

Financial institutions and major stores offer a wide variety of credit cards. They often use very persuasive advertising and throw in gifts, bonus points and other incentives to recruit customers and keep them loyal.

With credit so easily available, you must be extremely careful. Credit makes it possible to buy all sorts of things, but very high interest rates make credit expensive, particularly on credit cards offered by large chain stores.

Before buying a major item on credit, make sure you can make the total payment without difficulty. Keep in mind that this amount is added to your other financial obligations.

Consumer associations can inform you about your rights when you open an account in a financial institution. They can also help you balance your personal or family budget.

Consumer issues: recourse, contracts, warranties and credit collection

Once you are living in Québec, you will definitely need to purchase goods and call on service providers. You will often have to sign a contract to carry out your transactions.

Recourse

Québec's *Office de la protection du consommateur* is the government organization responsible for applying and enforcing certain consumer protection laws.



Contracts

The *Consumer Protection Act* governs credit contracts, sales contracts, contracts for long-term leasing of new or used cars, contracts with door-to-door salespeople as well as service contracts involving sequential performance (language courses, membership at a fitness centre, driving courses, etc.).

Before signing a contract, carefully read all clauses and pay close attention to the ones written in small print.

A contract can be concluded without signing a single piece of paper. This is often the case, for example, when you subscribe for electricity, telephone or Internet services.

Warranties

The *Consumer Protection Act* stipulates that all goods purchased in a place of business must be covered by a legal quality guarantee. This guarantee covers the product for normal use and reasonable duration based on the purchase price, contract and conditions of use. Make sure you understand the coverage of the guarantee for your goods.

Credit collection

If you are having trouble making your payments and a collection agency contacts you, keep in mind that it does not have the right to threaten, harass or intimidate you. You must always receive a written notice before being contacted verbally.

Find out more about...

Credit, contracts
and warranties

Office de la protection
du consommateur

www.opc.gouv.qc.ca

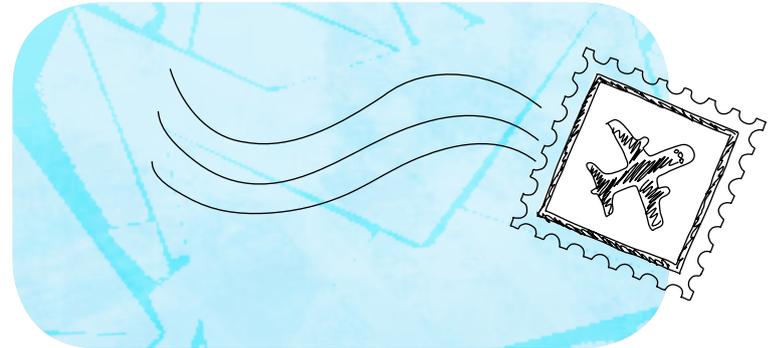
Option consommateurs

www.option-consommateurs.org

Postal services

Canada Post offices offer daily postal services (letter and package delivery, etc.) as well as other services (holding mail during address changes, *poste restante*, postal money orders, etc.).

You can also find postal outlets in some stores, convenience stores (known as *dépanneurs*) and pharmacies.



During the week, the mail is delivered to your home or to the post office box assigned to you.

To send a letter or package, you must clearly indicate the address and postal code (6 characters) of the recipient, and affix sufficient postage. You can drop your letters off in mailboxes that are usually located along streets. For packages, you must go to a post office or outlet. You may also use the services of a private express courier.

You can also receive and pay your bills online using Canada Post's epost service.

? Find out more about...

Postal services, products and rates	Canada Post	www.canadapost.ca
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Municipal services

Throughout Québec, municipalities are at the heart of community life. They provide residents with various infrastructures and facilities (sports centres, playgrounds, libraries, cultural venues known as *maisons de la culture*, skating rinks, etc.), and organize activities according to the seasons.

In libraries, you can borrow books, CDs and sometimes toys. You can read newspapers or use a computer to surf the Net. You may have to pay a membership fee to use some of these services.

Municipalities also offer various other services, such as:

- public transit;
- public security (police services);
- fire safety;
- garbage and recycling collection.

? Find out more about...

Services offered by municipalities	Regional portals	www.gouv.qc.ca
	Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire	www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca

Public transit

Most cities offer a public bus transit service.

Montréal is the only city that has an underground subway system called the "metro." It spans four lines, serves the core of the metropolitan region and links the north and south shores of the St. Lawrence River to downtown.

Montréal also operates five commuter trains.

If you take public transit regularly, you will save money by purchasing a weekly or monthly pass.

Keep the receipts for your monthly passes. These receipts are your proof of purchase and are required for any tax credit to which you may be entitled.

Children, students and people aged 65 and over are entitled to reduced fares, if they present the necessary documents.

To find out about fares, schedules, routes and itineraries, contact the information service of the public transit corporation of your municipality or consult its website. This is a good way for you to learn more about where you live.

Driving in Québec

To drive a car, motorcycle or scooter on Québec roads, you must hold a driver's licence.

Road safety

Road safety is crucial in terms of saving lives and reducing the number of road accidents.

In Québec, several measures have been instituted by the government to reach this goal.

All vehicles must be registered with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ).

All passengers must wear a seatbelt, whether they are seated in the front or back seats of the vehicle.

Babies and young children must be in a child's seat adapted to their size.



Exact change! – If you are paying cash for your transit fare, make sure you have the exact change.

For security reasons, the bus driver cannot give change and retrieve money deposited in the farebox.



Speed limits are set at:

- 100 km/h on highways;
- 50 km/h or less in the city (you must absolutely respect the speed limits indicated on road signs!);
- 30 km/h in school zones.

If you see a school bus (always yellow in colour) with red lights flashing, it is strictly forbidden to overtake or advance beside it. In other words, all vehicles in the same lane as the bus or in the opposite lane must come to a stop.

It is forbidden to drive under the influence (alcohol, drugs, etc.). Violations of the *Highway Safety Code* result in demerit points and fines.

In Québec, driving under the influence of alcohol (blood-alcohol level above 80 mg of alcohol per 100 mL of blood), drugs or certain medications constitutes a criminal act.

Drivers who are 21 years of age or under are subject to the zero tolerance rule.

In addition to fines, an accumulation of demerit points can result in the temporary loss of your driver's licence or higher insurance premiums.

Leasing or buying a second-hand car

Before you sign a long-term car lease or buy a used car, find out about the precautions you should take.

For example, a salesperson is required to provide the information written on the label affixed to the car. He or she must also give you a warranty on the proper functioning of the vehicle, subject to certain restrictions. Carefully read the warranty.

Car insurance

If you have a car accident and are a Québec resident under Québec's public automobile insurance plan, you are covered for bodily injury. This plan, regardless of who is at fault, is administered by the SAAQ and is financed by insurance premiums included in the cost of every driver's licence and car registration.

Be careful! As soon as you become the owner of a vehicle, in addition to holding a driver's licence and registration certificate, you are obligated to take out liability insurance with a private insurer to cover material damages.

Find out more about...

The driver's licence, registration and Québec's public automobile insurance plan

Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec

 www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca

Cities and towns in Québec

The province of Québec covers a vast territory. In addition to Québec City, its capital, and Montréal, its metropolis, there are eight other cities with a population of more than 100 000.

Half of Québec's population is concentrated in large cities, while the other half living in smaller cities or towns spread out across its 17 administrative regions.

Major cities in Québec	Administrative regions	Population (in 2011)
Montréal	Montréal	1,677,012
Québec City	Capitale-Nationale	511,919
Laval	Laval	399,400
Gatineau	Outaouais	260,920
Longueuil	Montréal	235,310
Sherbrooke	Estrie	154,793
Saguenay	Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	144,142
Lévis	Chaudière-Appalaches	137,394
Trois-Rivières	Mauricie	130,407
Terrebonne	Lanaudière	105,021



? Find out more about...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Québec's territory • Administrative regions and cities 	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca <i>Where to settle</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The economy, job opportunities and immigrant services 	Regional portals www.gouv.qc.ca <i>In your Region</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of housing, transportation, schools, etc. 	Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca <i>Directory of municipalities</i>

Cost of living

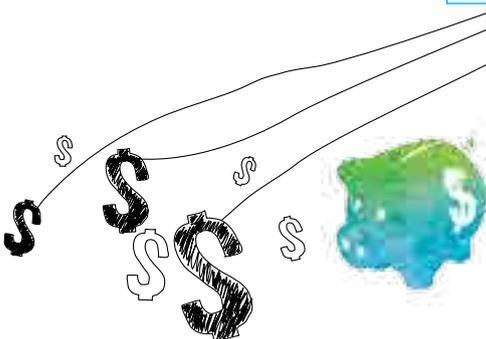
Average household expenditure

In Québec, the average income per inhabitant is comparable to that of most industrialized countries.

However, the cost of living is lower in Québec because, among other things, rents and the cost of buying a home are more affordable, particularly as you move away from large urban centres.

Of course, your perception of the cost of living will vary according to your country of origin, your savings and your spending habits.

Cost of living - This concept refers to expenditures per Québec household. It also includes income tax and other taxes.



Find out more about...

- The cost of living in Québec, employment and unemployment rates, wages, demographics, etc.
- Income and expenditures of Québec households

Institut de la statistique du Québec

www.stat.gouv.qc.ca

► Québec Main
Economic Indicators

Discount shopping

Every society develops its own networks to help low-income households better meet their needs. In Québec, assistance is provided by:

- community groups that offer advantageous services, such as food assistance, community purchasing groups, community kitchens, etc.;
- social economy enterprises that provide clothes, furniture and other articles at low prices, while promoting job integration for the unemployed;
- businesses specialized in the sale of second-hand goods, such as second-hand clothing stores (known as *friperies*);
- resource centres and other organizations specialized in the recovery, recycling and resale of household products with a commitment to sustainable development.

Church basements – With its Catholic tradition, Québec society has long used church basements to assist people in need.

This custom still exists today in many of Québec's parishes. You can find some real gems there, at discount prices, since people from all walks of life bring in a wide range of articles for resale.

Take the time to discover what's around you!

Read the newspapers, local weeklies and the Internet to find the resources you need. Talk to people who have lived in Québec for a long time. This may not only help you save a great deal of money, but it may also be a chance to meet the people in your neighbourhood or municipality.

Find out more about...

Recycled products

Recyc-Québec

www.recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

► Répertoire sur les produits à contenu recyclé fabriqués au Québec (Directory of recycled products made in Québec)

Social economy enterprises

Chantier de l'économie sociale

www.chantier.qc.ca

► Pôles régionaux (regional poles)

Housing

General context

Like the majority of Quebecers who live in cities, most immigrants are tenants.

Recently, some cities in Québec have been experiencing a rental housing shortage. You must be patient and persevering to find the right place to live. In the meantime, you may have to live in a temporary dwelling.

Rents vary according to the following factors, among others:

- number of rooms;
- location;
- proximity to services (transportation, schools, etc.);
- whether or not the dwelling is furnished, semi-furnished or unfurnished, and whether or not heating and electricity are included in the rent.

Since rental apartments are usually cheaper outside major cities, you may want to consider the advantages of living in various regions of Québec before deciding where to settle.

Find out more about...

Housing in Québec

Services Québec

www.gouv.qc.ca

► Citizens

► Renting a Home

A few useful terms



In Québec if someone says to you...	It means...
"and a half," as in 2½, 3½, 4½, etc.	the number of rooms that make up the apartment (the bathroom counts as half a room)
Semi-furnished	basic appliances (fridge and stove) are provided and included in the rent
Heated or unheated	the cost of heating is included or not included in the rent
Hot water	The cost of energy for hot water consumption is included in the rent

Québec rental board

The Régie du logement du Québec is a tribunal mandated to enforce legislation pertaining to residential leases.

The Régie's mission is to:

- promote reconciliation between landlords and tenants;
- render decisions on cases in dispute;
- inform citizens of the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants as well as the rights and obligations set out in rental leases;
- render decisions on conflicts regarding rental leases.

? Find out more about...

The rights and obligations of landlords and tenants	Régie du logement du Québec
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www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca

Lease and offer to lease

The lease

The leasing agreement for housing is called the "lease." Although there are no set periods for the duration of a lease, the vast majority of leases are for one year, from July 1 to June 30. The most opportune time to look for housing is therefore between April and June, but you can also find something year round.

Once you have made your choice, you must sign a lease. It will contain the following information:

- the landlord's name and address;
- your name;
- the rental amount;
- the exact address of the apartment you are renting and other details stipulated by law.

Be careful! If the apartment you are renting is in a new building or in a building recently converted for residential use, this must also be indicated in the lease, since the Régie du logement will not be allowed to fix the rent for the first five years.

The landlord must give you a copy of the lease within 10 days of its signature.

At the time of signing the lease, the owner may demand advance payment only for the first rental period, which is usually one month. He or she cannot require a deposit for returning the keys or to cover the cost of possible damages. The landlord must then deliver your apartment on the date stipulated in the lease.

Read the lease carefully before signing it

Before signing the lease, read it very carefully, in full. Make sure all of the conditions discussed with the landlord have been clearly indicated, particularly repairs and the date on which they will be completed. Also, make sure that the apartment indicated on the lease is the one that you visited and agreed to rent.

The lease form – The lease used in Québec is an official form provided by the Régie du logement du Québec. This form is obligatory. It must be written in French, unless another mutual agreement has been reached.

The owner must give you a copy of the lease within 10 days following the date on which it was signed.



Only sign one offer to lease at a time

After you visit an apartment and express interest in renting it, the landlord may sometimes ask you to fill out a form in which you give information and references enabling him or her to check your tenant record (your behaviour in a previous apartment and your ability to pay the rent).

This form, called an "Offer to Lease," often contains a clause giving the landlord a few days to check your record before telling you whether he or she accepts you as a tenant.

Since acceptance by the landlord leads to the signing of the lease, it is very important to not sign several offers to lease at a time and instead wait for the answer to one offer before making another. You will thus avoid being bound by more than one lease.

What information can be asked of you?

You may be asked to provide certain private information, such as your social insurance number (SIN), driver's licence or health insurance card. You are not obligated to provide this information and you cannot be denied an apartment if you do not provide it.

To prove your financial solvency, you can present proof that you have the income necessary to pay the rent. For example, receipts from a previous lease, paid public utility bills, etc. If you

cannot provide these documents, you can present a letter of recommendation from a community organization for immigrants, for example.

Conditions for leaving your apartment

The lease can be terminated only with the agreement of both parties or in certain exceptional cases prescribed by law.

For example, a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault may obtain the cancellation of her lease when her security or that of her child who lives with her is threatened.

However, contrary to current practices in some countries, finding a job far from your home does not permit you to terminate your lease.

If you plan to leave your apartment at the end of the lease, you must give your landlord notice

For a one-year lease, notice must be given between three and six months before the end of the lease or else it will be automatically renewed under the same conditions. For a lease of less than one year, one-month notice is required.

If you have received notice of a rent increase or a change in the lease on the part of your landlord, you have one month to respond. If you do not respond, the lease is automatically extended and the assumption is that you accept these changes.

You may also sublet your apartment or transfer the lease to another person, according to certain terms and conditions. Consult the Régie du logement or a community organization to find out how to proceed.

Rent

To avoid financial difficulties, it is recommended that you spend no more than 30% of your gross income on housing, including energy costs.

As a tenant, you must pay your full rent on the date indicated on the lease, which is usually the first day of the month.

If your rent is more than three weeks late, the landlord may obtain a termination of your lease to evict you from the apartment at any time of the year. If your rent is often late, causing the landlord serious prejudice, he or she may also apply to the Régie du logement to terminate your lease.

If you do not receive a notice for a rent increase and you intend to leave your apartment at the end of the lease, you must notify the landlord, otherwise your lease will be automatically renewed.

Furniture

When you immigrate to Québec, you can bring your personal and household effects without paying any customs duties. However, certain conditions apply and transportation can be expensive. It is best for you to buy certain items when you arrive, such as household appliances, to ensure that they meet Canadian standards.

Home insurance

You are not obligated to purchase home insurance, but it is highly recommended in order to protect yourself in the case of an unforeseen event, such as fire or theft.

If you are a tenant

Home insurance protects you from lawsuits that could be taken against you if damages are caused by your negligence or your property.

If you own a house or an apartment (condominium)

Home insurance allows you to protect the most important investment you will probably ever make.



? Find out more about...

Home insurance

Insurance Bureau of Canada

www.ibc.ca

Electricity, gas and oil expenses

The tenant usually pays for these expenses, unless otherwise indicated in the lease. In each region, electricity and gas services are offered by a single supplier.

The installation of electric or gas heating equipment is subject to certain provincial laws and municipal regulations.

Do not try to save money by doing this work yourself. If your installation causes damage, your insurance company may refuse to compensate you. Call on a specialist!

You can spread your payments over the year

Since energy bills vary significantly from one season to the next, most suppliers offer the possibility of spreading payments over the year. These measures allow consumers to avoid paying large sums during the winter months.

Even though Québec laws prohibit electricity, gas and oil suppliers from interrupting service during the winter, if you do not pay your bills on time, you will have to deal with certain difficulties.

Find out more about...

Electricity	Hydro-Québec	www.hydro-quebec.com
Gas	Gaz Métro	www.gazmetro.com
Oil	Many suppliers offer this service. Find out more from friends, neighbours or on the Internet.	

Residential phones and cell phones

Residential phones (landlines)

In Québec, many companies offer residential phone services.

To obtain a residential phone line, you must contact the customer service department of a provider that serves your municipality. You can obtain a phone as well as a directory.

You will probably have to pay a deposit in order for your phone line to be installed, which usually takes a few days.

Telecommunications companies usually offer a monthly subscription fee that gives you unlimited local calls, regardless of the duration of each call.

Usually concluded by phone, telephone service agreements and Internet subscriptions do not require signature.

Under the *Consumer Protection Act*, these service providers must respect all contract clauses, particularly with respect to renewal and cancellation.

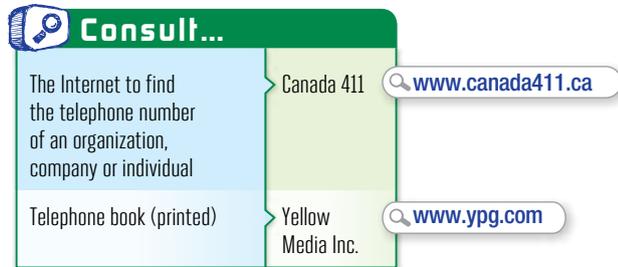
Long-distance calls

Telecommunications companies can offer monthly packages at a flat rate, for an unlimited number of calls at certain times of the day.

Numbers that start with 1-800, 1-888, 1-877 and 1-866 allow you to make free long-distance calls.

Calling cards, which can be purchased in some stores, can also save you money when calling anywhere in Canada or around the world.

Contact several service providers and choose the one that offers the best options.



Consult...

The Internet to find the telephone number of an organization, company or individual	Canada 411	www.canada411.ca
Telephone book (printed)	Yellow Media Inc.	www.ypg.com

Cell phones

Several telecommunications companies sell or rent cell phones and offer a wide range of packages (number of minutes during the day, at night, long-distance calls, etc.).

Immigrants are often surprised at the high cost of cell phones in Québec and are shocked when they receive their first bill.

We recommend that you proceed with caution and get all the information you need before committing to a telephone service provider. Do not hesitate to ask questions and take notes about the packages you are being offered, the number of incoming and outgoing calls and text messages that you can send or receive, the cost of long-distance calls and text messages, and Internet costs.

Fire prevention

In Québec, fire-fighting services are free and are provided by each municipality.

You are responsible for taking basic precautions to prevent fire, particularly in the winter when heating systems function at full capacity. Avoid placing clothes, furniture and objects too close to baseboard heaters, electric heaters or woodstoves.

Fires are often caused by unsafe use of stoves or careless smokers. Exercise caution at all times!

Smoke detectors

Most municipalities require rental building owners and home owners to install smoke detectors.

These inexpensive devices emit an audible warning signal when smoke is detected. They can save your life or the lives of loved ones, especially if a fire breaks out while you are asleep.

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are strongly recommended and are required in some cities.

Contact your municipal fire station to find out more about prevention and what to do in case of fire.



? Find out more about...

Fire prevention, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, etc.	Ministère de la Sécurité publique
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www.msp.gouv.qc.ca

Fire safety

Use and maintenance of your rental unit

In signing the lease, the landlord commits to handing over a dwelling that is clean and in good condition. As a tenant, you commit to maintaining it in good condition. You are not responsible, however, for changes due to normal use or ageing. During the rental period, no changes can be made to the unit.

Tenants must respect municipal regulations, such as taking out the garbage and recycling bins and putting them in the appropriate place indicated by the city, as well as certain rules specific to the building or lease. For example, the unit may not be used for any other purpose than as a residence.

Recycling of domestic waste

Québec's municipalities encourage you to participate in the recycling of domestic waste through the selective collection of recyclables.

They provide recycling bins for paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal.

Certain municipalities forbid residents from throwing these products in the garbage. This restriction will gradually be extended throughout Québec. Some municipalities also offer the collection of compostable materials (table scraps, for instance).

To find out more about reusing and recycling residual materials and to obtain a recycling bin, contact your municipality.



? Find out more about...

Recyclables	Recyc-Québec
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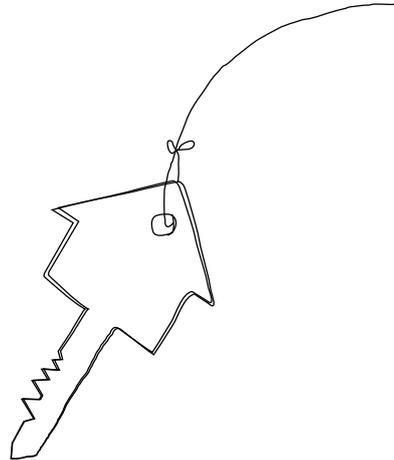
www.recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

Housing programs and support services

The *Société d'habitation du Québec* (SHQ) oversees housing in Québec.

The SHQ has set up various programs primarily designed for low-or modest-income individuals who have particular needs, such as families or seniors with limited autonomy. A residential adaptation assistance program for people with disabilities is also available.

If you have difficulty finding affordable housing, you may be eligible for financial support to help you pay your rent. You may also obtain financial assistance for work necessary to adapt your housing unit.



Find out more about...

Various forms of housing assistance and resources	Société d'habitation du Québec	www.habitation.gouv.qc.ca ▶ <i>Me loger à peu de frais</i> (affordable housing) ▶ <i>Répertoire des organismes</i> (Directory of organizations) ▶ 1-800-463-4315 (toll-free)
To find out if you are eligible for...	Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire	www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca ▶ <i>Répertoire des municipalités</i> (Directory of municipalities)
• A program offered by the Société d'habitation du Québec • Low-cost housing	Société d'habitation du Québec	www.habitation.gouv.qc.ca ▶ <i>Me loger à peu de frais</i> (affordable housing) ▶ <i>Répertoire des organismes</i> (Directory of organizations) ▶ 1-800-463-4315 (toll-free)

Housing cooperatives and non-profit housing organizations

A housing cooperative is a private collectively owned property that is democratically administered by its members, by way of a general assembly or board of directors. Each member of the collective is a tenant.

By becoming a member of a housing cooperative, you are committed to running and managing the cooperative.

Given that this is a form of collective ownership, your rent will be lower than the market value. However, while you are a member of a cooperative, the *Régie du logement du Québec* cannot regulate the rental amount of your dwelling.

Each cooperative usually has its own waiting list and selects its members independently.

A housing non-profit organization (NPO) is a corporation composed of community players who are responsible for managing this form of collective property, in partnership with the tenants. A housing NPO operates under the governance of a board of directors.

Housing managed by an NPO is usually intended for seniors or for people who have difficulty finding adequate housing or who have particular needs. Most of this housing is subsidized or available at rents that are below market value.

Like housing cooperatives, each non-profit organization manages its own eligibility list.

Find out more about...

Housing cooperatives and housing non-profit organizations

Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation

 www.cooperativehabitation.coop

Réseau québécois des OSBL d'habitation

 www.rqoh.com

Société d'habitation du Québec

 www.habitation.gouv.qc.ca

 *Répertoire des organismes*
(directory of organizations)

Buying a house or a condominium

Exercise caution when buying a house or apartment (condominium).

Buying a house

Even though you can sell your own house, most sales are done through a real estate agent.

Conditional offer to purchase – Be prudent: make an offer conditional on obtaining a mortgage and on having the building inspected by an expert.

Once you have chosen the house you wish to buy, you must make an offer to purchase. If the seller accepts your conditions, you will have to go ahead with your offer to purchase. The transaction will be completed by a deed of sale signed before a notary.

If you buy a property directly from a building contractor or a developer, the seller must provide you with a preliminary contract containing information on the building and a clause allowing you to change your mind within the 10 days following the signing of your purchase offer. This cancellation may involve a penalty, which must be stipulated in the contract, and cannot exceed 0.5% of the selling price.

Apartment (condominium)

You might prefer to buy an apartment rather than a house. Divided co-properties, called "condominiums," are becoming increasingly popular in Québec.

This arrangement divides the building into exclusively owned areas (the apartments themselves) and shared areas (yard, entrance, elevators, stairs, parking, etc.) shared among all of the co-owners.

The condominium corporation (called a "syndicate") administers the building and maintains the common areas.

Find out more about...

What to do before you buy a house or condominium

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

 www.cmhc.ca

Public health and social services



Health insurance

Medical care and hospitalization are covered by Québec's universal health insurance plan administered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) and the Québec Hospitalization Insurance Plan. All Québec residents are eligible for the plan. They must obtain a health insurance card by registering with the RAMQ.

This plan covers all essential medical care. Before consulting a physician or other health specialist, make sure this person is covered under Québec's health insurance plan. If this is not the case, you will have to pay for the consultation.

Private insurance for the first three months: to avoid very high costs

Generally, health insurance does not cover the medical expenses of immigrants during their first three months in Québec.

If you are still not eligible for Québec's Health Insurance Plan and do not have private insurance, keep in mind that the cost of medical care is extremely high.

For example:

- a one-day hospital stay costs \$3,360;
- one day in intensive care costs \$5,772;
- one day of emergency hospital care costs \$524.

These rates do not include the professional fees of treating physicians.

A few exceptions to the three-month waiting period

Depending on a person's situation, certain health services may be provided free during the waiting period. This includes:

- essential services to victims of conjugal, family or sexual violence;

- care and follow-up related to pregnancy, delivery and termination of pregnancy;
- essential services for persons with infectious health problems that affect public health and certain services offered in local community services centres, known as CLSCs, such as vaccinations.

Does your country have a reciprocity agreement with Québec?

If you are from a country that has a reciprocity agreement on social security with Québec, there is no three-month waiting period and proof of your country's social security insurance plan will be required when you register with the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ).

Countries that have signed this type of agreement with Québec are: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Sweden, Norway, Portugal and Luxembourg.

Prescription drug insurance

The public prescription drug insurance plan is administered by the RAMQ. It covers anyone residing in Québec who is not covered by a group insurance plan, in exchange for a financial contribution based on the income of each individual. This contribution is made in the form of a premium and a sum paid each time a prescription drug is purchased.

The vast majority of immigrants have access to the public prescription drug insurance plan three months after they arrive in Québec, under the same terms and conditions as the health insurance plan.

If you do not have group insurance, you must register with the public prescription drug insurance plan. Contact the RAMQ to register.

People 65 years of age and older

People who are 65 years of age and older are automatically registered with the public prescription drug insurance plan. However, if they are already eligible for a group insurance plan and have chosen to maintain this insurance they must absolutely notify the RAMQ so that their prescription drug purchases are covered by this insurance.

? Find out more about...

- Québec's health insurance plan
- Québec's prescription drug insurance plan

Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec

www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca

Services not covered by the public health insurance plan

Dental care and oral surgery

In Québec, dental care is not covered except for:

- children under the age of 10;
- in some cases, people receiving employment assistance (social assistance)
- some types of oral surgery performed in hospitals or universities.

Dental care at reduced cost – You may go to a university clinic. Since these clinics must first respond to the needs of its student clientele, they are in high demand and waiting periods can be several months.

If none of these exemptions apply to you, you must pay full dental fees. If you make an appointment for a child under 10 years of age, bring along his or her health insurance card.

Transportation by ambulance

Unless you have private insurance covering ambulance service, you must usually pay for it. You will receive a bill in the days following the use of an ambulance.

However, the service is free for people who are:

- injured in road and workplace accidents;
- already hospitalized and must move to another institution;

- employment assistance recipients (social assistance);
- 65 years of age and over.

Vision and other care

Aside from certain exceptions for minors (18 years of age and under) and people aged 65 and older, consultations with eye specialists (opticians, optometrists) and the purchase of eyeglasses or contact lenses are not covered by health insurance.

Cosmetic surgery or so-called natural or alternative medical treatments are not covered.

Access to healthcare

Emergency medical care

If you or someone close to you is in need of immediate medical attention, go to the closest hospital emergency.

If your state of health (or that of someone in need of care) prevents you from leaving your location, you must call for emergency medical services by dialing **911**.

Other specialized emergency services

Annex 5 of the Guide, the Internet and the first few pages of your city telephone directory provide the phone numbers of various other specialized emergency services for victims of conjugal or sexual violence, youth, individuals who are suicidal or suffering from depression, detection of gas odours, poison control centre, etc.

Info-Santé medical advice available by phone – If you are concerned about your health or the health of a loved one, contact the Info-Santé line by dialing 811.

A health professional will give you advice and direct you to the proper resource.

This free service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Medical and social services

You can receive medical services at:

- a doctor's office;
- clinics or polyclinics;
- health and social services centres (CSSSs), which are local community services centres (CLSCs) and hospitals.

Always have your health insurance card on you as well as your child's card. During the three-month waiting period, keep with you proof of pre-registration with the RAMQ and proof of your private insurance as well as that of your child.

The CSSSs offer the entire population a full range of health and psychosocial services, with or without an appointment. These services are usually available free of charge for people who have a health insurance card.

Take the time to go to your local CLSC to find out more about the services available and opening hours. If it cannot provide the assistance you need, the staff will direct you to the appropriate organization.

Some CSSSs also offer services in several languages.

It is possible to obtain vaccination and sample collection services in most CLSCs.

Find out more about...

Health and social services	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux	www.msss.gouv.qc.ca
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Financial assistance

The governments of Québec and Canada have set up financial assistance programs for families.

Eligibility to these programs is based on various criteria, such as household income, number of children and their ages, or particular personal or family situations.

Who does what in the Québec government?

Find out more about...

Financial assistance to families: allowances and tax assistance	Ministère de la Famille	www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca ▶ <i>Famille (family)</i>
• Assistance for children (under the age of 18) • Supplements for disabled children	Régie des rentes du Québec	www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca ▶ <i>Children</i> ▶ <i>New resident of Québec</i>

Who does what in the Canadian government?

Find out more about...

• The Canada Child Tax Benefit • The Child Disability Benefit • The Universal Child Care Benefit	Canada Revenue Agency	www.cra-arc.gc.ca
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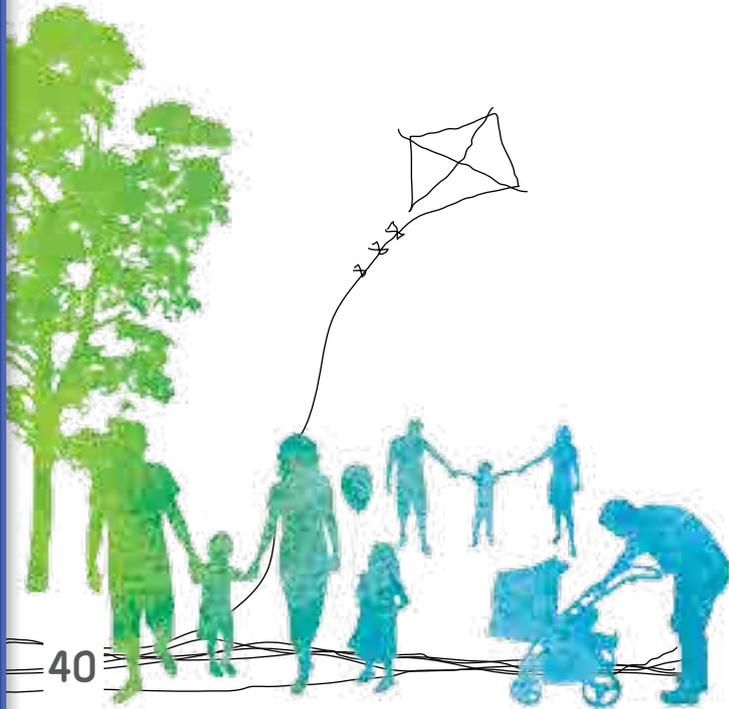
Childcare services

To help you balance your family and professional responsibilities, the Government of Québec set up a low-cost daycare program (\$7 a day in 2012). Other measures have been added to this program, such as tax credits and childcare fee refunds.

Did you know? In Québec, parents must ensure the safety and care necessary for the development of their children. It is forbidden to leave young children unattended.

Who does what?

In Québec, children under five years old are given priority for childcare services.



Childcare services are also offered to children who attend elementary school, at the end of the school day (which usually ends at 3:00 p.m.)

Childcare centres

The Centres de la petite enfance (CPEs) are non-profit organizations that hold a permit. Depending on their facilities, they can receive up to 80 children.

In 2012, the rate was \$7 a day per child.

Daycares

Daycares are organizations that hold a permit and may or may not be subsidized by the State. Depending on their facilities, they can receive up to 80 children.

Rates are as follows:

- Subsidized daycares: \$7 a day per child (in 2012);
- Non-subsidized daycares: they set their own rates.

Home childcare providers

These services are offered in a private home by a home-based day-care provider. Most home childcare providers recognized by a coordinating office offer reduced-contribution spaces.

Rates are as follows:

- Subsidized home childcare services: \$7 day (in 2012);
- Non-subsidized home childcare services: they set their own rates.

Non-regulated childcare services

A person can offer childcare services to a maximum of six children without holding a permit or being recognized as a home childcare provider. Since these services are not governed by the Ministère de la Famille, you must verify that they ensure the health, safety and well-being of your child.

How to find a childcare centre

You must register with the childcare access outlet in your area.

For a good choice of educational childcare services, it is advisable to start your search early.

You can search by phone or on the Internet. You can register at several childcare centres in your region.

? Find out more about...

How to register at the access outlet in your area	Ministère de la Famille
How to use the childcare service locator	Ministère de la Famille

www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca

► *Services de garde*
(childcare services)

www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca

► *Localisateur de services de garde*
(Childcare services locator)

Childcare service contracts

If you have to sign a contract with a home-based daycare or a childcare centre, this document must be signed by both parties. It is not permitted to ask for a single payment. If the contract is terminated, rules apply and penalties may be imposed.

Additional financial assistance

You may be eligible for additional financial assistance, even if you are benefitting from the childcare program for reduced-contribution spaces.

Childcare fee refund

If you are benefitting from certain financial assistance measures, your childcare fees may be refunded, provided that these fees result from your participation in this measure.

Refundable tax credit

If you have not obtained a reduced-contribution space for your children, find out about the tax credit you may be eligible for: it could allow you to recoup up to 75% of the amount you paid. You may also receive a tax credit in the form of advanced payments.

Find out more about...

Childcare tax credits	Revenu Québec
 www.revenuquebec.ca	
▶ <i>Citizens</i>	
▶ <i>Tax Credit for Childcare Expenses</i>	

Federal deduction for childcare expenses

The childcare expenses you paid, including reduced-contribution fees, make you eligible for the federal deduction for childcare expenses.

Find out more about...

The federal deduction for childcare expenses	Canada Revenue Agency
 www.cra-arc.gc.ca	
▶ <i>Child care expenses</i>	

Family obligations and work

Whether you work full time or part time, *An Act Respecting Labour Standards* gives you a certain number of paid or unpaid leaves and absences for family or parental reasons.

Find out more about...

Leaves for parental or family obligations	Commission des normes du travail
 www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca	
▶ <i>Leaves and absences</i>	
The steps to obtaining a parental or family leave	Contact your employer or union

Note: Some absences are paid, while others are not. Certain measures can be combined or shared between both parents.

We recommend that you consult the reference websites provided to make sure that you fully understand all the rules.

These absences can be granted for one or more days, depending on the nature of the event. Here are some examples of situations that entitle you to a leave of absence:

- your wedding (or civil union) or the wedding of a family member;
- the death or funeral of a family member;
- family events that require your presence and are related to the care, health or education of your child (or the child of your spouse), to an accident, criminal act or a serious illness that affects a family member.

Maternity or paternity leave and parental leave

In Québec, the government has adopted measures to allow parents to take a leave of absence when a child is born, while receiving income through the Régime québécois d'assurance parentale.

Maternity leave

A pregnant woman can go on maternity leave with the guarantee of returning to her job without losing any of the advantages she has earned.

This leave, during which the employer does not pay out a salary, is 18 consecutive weeks.

In addition, absences for medical follow-up during pregnancy, to terminate a pregnancy or for a special maternity leave, may also be granted by the employer.

Did you know? If you are pregnant and your work poses a danger to your health or that of your unborn child, you may ask your employer to be assigned to another duty or obtain a precautionary cessation of work. For more information, contact the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail.

Paternity leave

An employee can go on paternity leave when his child is born. This leave, during which the employer does not pay out a salary, lasts for five consecutive weeks.

The paternity leave cannot be transferred to the mother and cannot be shared with her.

Parental leave

This unpaid leave of up to 52 consecutive weeks is granted to each parent of a newborn child or to a person who adopts a minor child.

Parental leave is added to the maternity leave and paternity leave.

At the end of a leave of absence for parental or family reasons, the employer must allow you to resume your usual position at work. The employer must also provide the same wages and benefits that you received before your leave of absence.

Québec's parental insurance plan

The Régime québécois d'assurance parentale pays financial allowances to eligible workers, either wage-earning or self-employed, who take advantage of one of the following leaves of absence:

- maternity leave,
- paternity leave,
- adoption leave,
- parental leave.

Under certain conditions, namely, having worked a certain number of hours over the last year, both parents may be entitled to income corresponding to a percentage of their wages for a maximum of 52 weeks. This maximum is shared between both parents at a proportion that they determine together.

Find out more about...

Québec's parent insurance plan	Régime québécois d'assurance parentale	 www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca
The steps to take when a child is born	Services Québec	 www.gouv.qc.ca/portail/quebec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Citizens</i> ▶ <i>Life Events</i> ▶ <i>Becoming a Parent</i>
Precautionary cessation of work	Commission de la santé et de la sécurité au travail	 www.csst.qc.ca
Support and social services available before and after the birth of a child, and family planning	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux	 www.msss.gouv.qc.ca

Registering a birth in Québec

Any child born or adopted in Québec must be declared with the Directeur de l'état civil who registers the birth in Québec's registry of civil status. Once your child is registered, you will receive a confirmation letter. Once your child has been registered within the prescribed timeframe, after verification of his or her eligibility by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, you will automatically receive a health insurance card for your child. Your child will also be automatically registered for Child Assistance paid by the Régie des rentes du Québec.

▶ In Québec, parents are obligated to declare the birth of a newborn child within 30 days of the delivery.
 ▶ If the parents are not married, they must both sign the declaration of birth to establish maternity and paternity.

Find out more about...

The steps to take after the birth or adoption of a child	Services Québec	 www.gouv.qc.ca/portail/quebec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Citizens</i> ▶ <i>Life Events</i> ▶ <i>Becoming a Parent</i>
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Child social services

Under the *Civil Code of Québec* and other legislation, Québec society does not regard children as the "property" of their parents, but rather as persons in their own right.

Québec society wants them to receive a good education. It also wants them protected in many respects, particularly through vaccination against certain childhood diseases. Likewise, it wants to shelter them from physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

If you know of any children you believe are being abused, mistreated or neglected, you must contact the Directorate of Youth Protection for your region.

Seniors

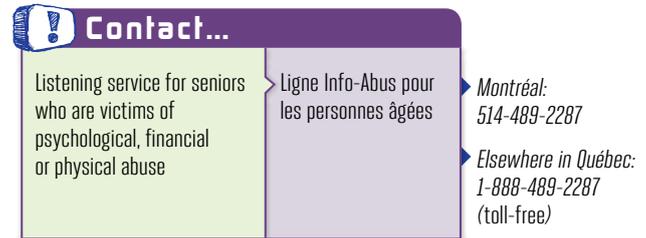
Seniors who immigrate to Québec, often to join a son or daughter, may have special health or financial needs.

Did you know? The Régie des rentes du Québec and Government of Canada income security programs guarantees a decent minimum income for seniors or retirees.

In Québec, seniors can take advantage of:

- certain public services for free or at a reduced cost, such as public transit;
- public retirement plans and certain allowances, if they are eligible.

Exploiting a senior is taking advantage of their vulnerability or dependence and denying them their rights. When the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse has reason to believe that the life, health or safety of a senior who is the victim of exploitation is threatened, it can ask a court to order emergency measures.



Contact...

Listening service for seniors who are victims of psychological, financial or physical abuse	Ligne Info-Abus pour les personnes âgées	▶ Montréal: 514-489-2287
		▶ Elsewhere in Québec: 1-888-489-2287 (toll-free)

Retirement pension and social services

If you are immigrating to Québec and you or your spouse contributed to a retirement plan in a country with which Québec has concluded a social security agreement, you could receive a retirement, disability or surviving spouse pension from this country.

The Centres de santé et de services sociaux are the access points for several services for seniors, in particular for home care services. Seniors are entitled to these services from the time they are eligible for the Régime de l'assurance maladie du Québec.

Find out more about...

Services and programs to assist seniors	Ministère de la Famille	www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca
The Québec pension plan and international social security agreements (retirement and allowances)	Régie des rentes du Québec	www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca
Québec's health insurance plan	Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec	www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca
The old age security pension and guaranteed income supplement	Service Canada	www.servicecanada.gc.ca ▶ Seniors
International social security agreements	Service Canada	www.servicecanada.gc.ca



Education

The Québec education system is secular. It is free for Québec residents, from kindergarten to college (post-secondary) inclusively.

Education is offered in French or English, depending on the language of instruction in each school. However, since French is the official language of Québec, children of immigrants, regardless of their parents' mother tongue, are usually required to attend a francophone school until the end of secondary studies.

All children from ages 6 to 16 are required to attend school. The school year starts at the end of August or early September and usually ends before June 24 (Québec's national holiday). The duration of the school year is a minimum of 180 school days. Co-education (boys and girls) is the norm at all levels of study.

School boards

School boards bring together public schools from preschool to secondary schools inclusively, as well as vocational and adult education centres. They are francophone or anglophone.

The school boards are administered by a council of commissioners elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term and by parent representatives who are elected for one year.

Their mandate is to:

- determine the educational services offered by each school and each vocational and adult education centre;
- ensure childcare services for children in kindergarten and primary school;
- organize student transportation, as needed;
- provide other services, such as food (cafeteria) and accommodation.

French learning support measures

If your children do not speak French, welcome services and French learning support services are available. The organization of these services may vary from one school to the next.



Preschool, primary and secondary school

Preschool (kindergarten)

Preschool prepares children for primary school.

It provides them with a structured environment that fosters their development and the acquisition of skills that will facilitate their entry into primary school and promote school success.

While kindergarten is not mandatory, 98% of kindergarten-age children are registered.

Kindergarten is offered:

- part-time to children four years of age, in some schools;
- full-time to children five years of age, throughout Québec's public education network and in some private schools.

Primary school

To be admitted to a primary school, your child must be six years old before October 1 of the school year for which he or she has been registered.

All children six years of age must be registered in a primary school, regardless of whether or not they attended kindergarten.

Primary school is six years. It consists of three education cycles of two years each.

Children with adaptation problems can benefit from specialized services.

Secondary school

After primary school, students must continue their education at the secondary school level, which is composed of two cycles. The first cycle of two years offers a common basic curriculum. The second cycle of three years includes three educational paths:

- a general education path;
- an applied general education path;
- a vocational path focused on employment, that offers two levels of training—preparatory training for employment and training that leads to the practice of a semi-skilled job (such as an assistant butcher, a grocery store clerk).

The first two paths provide access to vocational, collegial and university studies. The third is a work-study program and can lead directly to the job market; it can also, under certain conditions, lead to a vocational training program or continuation of general studies.

Vocational training can start after the 3rd, 4th or 5th year of secondary school, depending on the program chosen.

Vocational training diplomas

DVS

The Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) is awarded to students who have acquired the necessary skills to practise a vocation or trade.

The average duration of the studies is one-and-a-half years (600 to 1800 hours).

AVS

The Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS) is awarded to students who have successfully completed a program in a more specialized skill area than the initial training obtained under a DVS.

Depending on the specialization chosen, studies range from 6 to 12 months (330 to 900 hours).

More than 20 programs are offered to holders of a DVS in certain training sectors.

Private schools

A network of private institutions recognized by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport also offers official study programs.

To attend these institutions, you must pay tuition fees and meet specific admission criteria.

Childcare services in schools

Kindergarten or primary school schedules rarely coincide with those of working parents, with the school day usually ending at 3:00 p.m.

Most schools offer childcare services in the school (generally for \$7 a day) to look after children before classes start in the morning, at noontime and after school. Students who attend

the school's childcare service can use this time to do homework.

Childcare services in schools are also offered during pedagogical days and on other occasions, as needed.

Ped days: A break for students!

The school boards determine pedagogical days in advance. They allow teachers to participate in workshops on various subjects.

Parent participation in schools

It is important to follow your child's progress in school.

You will be invited regularly to the school to:

- meet with teachers;
- learn about school programs;
- participate in student activities (concerts, plays, exhibitions, etc.).

By participating in the school's meetings and activities, you will get to know your child's classmates and meet other parents living in your neighbourhood.

In Québec, parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child's educational development by getting involved in the school's governing board or the parent participation committee, among other things.

Find out more about...

The Québec education system

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

 www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

Parent participation, the rights and interests of parents of primary and secondary students

Fédération des comités de parents du Québec

 www.fcqq.qc.ca

College education

In Québec, college education represents the first level of higher education (the second being university).

Colleges of general and vocational education (CEGEPs) and certain private colleges offer students a choice between pre-university study programs and vocational study programs. The first is a two-year program that prepares students for university studies, while the second is a three-year program designed for the job market. However, under certain conditions, vocational studies can also lead to university. In both types of programs,

a common basic curriculum is offered to students (French, English, philosophy and physical education).

In Québec, college education comes after secondary education and before university.

DEC

The diploma of college studies (DEC) is awarded for education acquired under pre-university study programs and vocational study programs.

AEC

Colleges also offer shorter programs that lead to an attestation of college studies (AEC). These programs are intended for adults and are not generally open to youth who have just completed their secondary studies.

How to apply for admission to a CEGEP

Choose the program that best suits your needs and contact one of the three regional admission services. For a college that is not affiliated with one of these services, the application must be sent directly to the college chosen. The application must be submitted:

- before March 1 for the fall semester (beginning at the end of August);
- before November 1 for the winter semester (beginning in January).

Colleges may require the payment of an admission fee. Contact the institution you wish to attend to find out what these fees are.

? Find out more about...

CEGEPs, their location and programs

Fédération des cégeps

www.fedecegeps.qc.ca

University education

University education represents the second level of higher education in Québec. The duration of studies depends on the discipline chosen.

Québec universities enjoy a large degree of autonomy. They define their own program organization, develop their own curricula and research, determine their own admission and registration requirements and issue their own diplomas.

Québec has several universities, schools of higher learning and research institutes in Montréal, Québec City, Sherbrooke and in all regions of Québec through the Université du Québec network present in Rouyn-Noranda, Saguenay, Gatineau, Montréal, Rimouski and Trois-Rivières. Some of these universities have campuses in other municipalities including Laval, Longueuil, Saint-Jérôme and Lévis.

Three levels of university studies

Undergraduate studies

Undergraduate studies lead to:

- a certificate or diploma (for one or two years of study), or
- a bachelor's degree (three to five years of study). The bachelor's degree opens the door to the job market or to pursuing master's and doctoral studies.

Master's studies

Master's studies lead to:

- a certificate or diploma (usually one year of studies),
or
- a master's degree (usually two years of study).

Doctoral studies

Doctoral studies can take three or more years and lead to a doctoral degree.

How to apply for admission to a university

Choose the right program for you and contact the university that best suits your needs. We recommend that you do your research on the Internet.

You will have to pay fees to submit an application and pursue your studies.

Registration deadlines vary according to the university and education program.



Photo Université de Sherbrooke par Michel Caron

Continuing education and adult education

In Québec, it is common to study while continuing to work in order to update professional skills or acquire new ones.

There are several solutions in place to balance work, studies and family. For example: several organizations and businesses offer adult education and training services, including specific services for immigrants.

Adult education centres allow anyone over 16 years of age to obtain a secondary school diploma (DES) or acquire the prerequisites for vocational or post-secondary studies. Social integration and socioprofessional integration training are also offered. This training leads to a certificate in socioprofessional integration for adults or a certificate in a semi-skilled trade.

School boards, CEGEPs and universities also offer evening courses and part-time training programs.

You do not need to choose between work and studies, but can strike the right balance between both to meet your needs and objectives.

Contact...

Ligne Info Apprendre

A free and confidential telephone help and referral line to answer your questions about education and training in Québec

1-888-488-3888
(toll-free)

Online education

Thanks to its great flexibility, online education is an expanding sector at the secondary, college and university levels.

Find out more about...

- Online education
- Educational institutions, resources and courses

Télé-université

www.teluq.quebec.ca

Centre régional de formation à distance du Grand Montréal

www.cspi.qc.ca/distance

Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec

www.sofad.qc.ca

Réseau d'enseignement francophone à distance du Canada

www.refad.ca

Le-Formateur.com

www.le-formateur.com

Portail de la formation à distance au Québec

www.portailfad.qc.ca

Cégep@distance

www.cegepadistance.ca

Financial assistance for studies

The government of Québec offers financial assistance to individuals pursuing post-secondary studies.

The amount of assistance provided is generally based on your family situation, expenses related to pursuing your studies, any financial contributions you may receive and your income earned in the previous year.

This assistance is paid in the form of a loan, supplemented by a bursary when your financial needs are greater than the loan granted.

If you receive a loan, you must gradually pay it back when you have completed your studies. For the duration of your full-time studies, the government of Québec pays the interest on your loan. Payment of this interest becomes your responsibility when you finish your full-time studies.

You do not have to repay a bursary.

Find out more about...

Financial assistance for studies (loans and bursaries)

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

 www.afe.gouv.qc.ca

Free bursary search service

 www.boursetudes.com

Equivalence and recognition of competencies

Equivalence

In Québec, recognition of the competencies of a student admitted to a general education program is done through testing developed in accordance with Québec's study programs.

The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport authorizes the attribution of units of equivalence to an adult candidate who is pursuing studies with the goal of obtaining a secondary school diploma (DES) or seeking admission to a study program, after review of his or her academic record.

Comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec

The *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* is a document that establishes a general comparison between two official education systems. This evaluation could be useful for job searches, to apply for admission to a study program or to apply for membership in certain regulatory bodies. It provides a description of your diplomas, transcripts and studies completed in an education system recognized by the authorities of a country or province other than Québec.

? Find out more about...

The comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec and the application form

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec

Note: The comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec is not a diploma or recognition of competencies.

Since the application for a comparative evaluation costs more than \$100, it is strongly recommended that you find out if you really need this document before applying for it.

Work

The Québec labour market has a number of specific features. Being chosen as a function of your diplomas and competencies is not a guarantee of quick and successful professional integration. We strongly recommend that you implement a **personalized action plan** prepared for you, presented in the *What you need to do* section in this Guide.

A few characteristics of the Québec labour market

Where are the jobs?

Most jobs offered on the market are in the service sector. The manufacturing sector offers fewer jobs, but the working conditions in this sector are often attractive.

Small and medium enterprises hire the greatest number of workers.

How do employers recruit workers?

Most jobs are filled through networking, that is, through the employer's contacts and partners rather than through job offers advertised on the Internet or in newspapers.

What hiring criteria do employers use?

In Québec, recruitment and promotions are generally based on skills, accomplishments and individual performance.

Employers also take into account a person's ability to integrate into the work team.

What are the best assets for finding a job?

Minimum training is required in most job offers. This training is equivalent to 11 years of education, corresponding to a secondary school diploma (DES).

Good knowledge of written language is also highly valued in the professional job market.

Good knowledge of oral and written French, and often English, greatly increases the chances of professional advancement.

What do employers value?

In general, employers appreciate teamwork, cooperation and employee participation in the business. Although not systematically, they do not hesitate to consult employees and expect direct communication and constructive comments.

Employers often organize work meetings with a specific agenda, which promotes a structured and orderly discussion based on the objectives of the meeting.

In decision-making, they usually seek consensus (the approval of others) and resolve conflicts through negotiation and compromise.

Employers also place great importance on punctuality and meeting deadlines.

Language

French

French is Québec's official language and the mother tongue of the vast majority of the population. Therefore, it is necessary to speak French to find a job.

If you are looking for work in a field that requires very strong French proficiency, you can upgrade your language skills in educational institutions and language schools that give on-site or distance courses.

English

While French is Québec's official language, English is very present given the North American context of Québec's economy and the strong presence of an anglophone minority.

In order to practise your profession, it is possible that employers will require you to have a functional knowledge of English or be bilingual. This requirement is particularly common in the Montréal area, but also exists in other regions of Québec.

Several solutions are available for learning English. For example, you can take on-site or distance courses in educational institutions or language schools.

Other languages

If you are proficient in a language other than French and English, this will, of course, be an asset that you can promote. However, mastering a third language is rarely required by employers.

Find out more about...

Learning institutions, admission requirements, duration of courses, schedules, financial assistance measures, etc.

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ *French language*
- ▶ *Learning French in Québec*

Job search

Looking for a job requires effort and an effective strategy. For immigrants, it also requires the implementation of a structured integration approach, if possible, even before your arrival in Québec.

We recommend that you use the **personalized action plan** in the Guide, or its more detailed version, which can be downloaded from the MICC website.

This plan contains all of the information you will need to carry out your job search and make informed choices.

Your search should lead to a job that suits you. To find this job, you must, in addition to your interests, training and work experience, demonstrate your skills. By "skills," we mean your qualities and abilities. In short, your strengths!

Professional skills

To enter the labour market, you must first assess your skills.

Take the time to clearly identify your particular skills. Québec employers often hire on the basis of skills, rather than diplomas.

Here are a few elements that will allow you to assess your own skills.

Draw up a list of your knowledge

Spoken and written languages, particular knowledge (computers, landscaping, customer service, etc.).

Draw up a list of your work experience

Always start with your most recent work experience and focus on your most important experience.

For each job, indicate:

- the duration in months or years;
- the title of the position occupied (indicating the Québec equivalent, after having clearly identified it) and the name of the company;
- your tasks and responsibilities for each job in chronological order (starting with the most recent);
- your accomplishments and the personal skills you developed as a result of this experience.

Draw up a list of your training

Indicate your diplomas and their equivalence in the Québec system, the year you obtained them and the specialization, if applicable. Specify the skills you acquired through this training, as well as training you may have pursued once on the labour market, for example, on-the-job training, seminars, colloquia.

Draw up a list of your activities beyond the workplace

Be sure to mention any volunteer work you do. You can also specify your leisure activities and areas of interest (reading, gardening, sports, etc.). For instance, playing soccer proves that you like teamwork!

Personal skills

The following are examples of personal skills that are highly valued by many businesses.

Carefully read all of the statements, and identify the four or five skills that characterize you best. This exercise will help you identify your strengths, making it easier to mention them in your cover letter or during a job interview.

Autonomy

You carry out complex tasks, effectively drawing first and foremost on your own resources.

Ability to identify problems

You quickly recognize problems in a given situation. You detect situations where important information is missing.

Ability to work in a team

You work effectively with others. You maintain harmonious relationships with your colleagues and seek solutions that contribute to group cohesion.

Ability to work under pressure

Tight deadlines and urgent work do not bother you and drive you to do your best.

Clarity in communications

You are able to clearly communicate with others, both in writing and verbally.



Efficiency

You find faster ways to perform tasks. You find ways to achieve expected outcomes.



Methodical approach

You tackle tasks step by step. You establish your priorities and the steps you need to follow based on objectives.



Reliability

You get things done on time. You meet expectations.



Initiative

You take action before a situation requires it.



Leadership

You have the ability to mobilize your colleagues, to lead a group. You know how to talk to people and convince others of your ideas.



Self-control

You can control your emotions. You think before speaking or acting.



Perseverance

You try hard to overcome difficulties and obstacles. You do what is necessary to obtain the information or help you need to accomplish your tasks.



Persuasion

You use good arguments to bring others around to your way of thinking.



Precision

You pay special attention to details. You verify the accuracy of information that you need to process or transmit.



Flexibility

You alter your work schedule to adjust to a situation.

Job search techniques

Job search techniques are excellent tools for entering the labour market. They allow you to:

- increase your chances of getting a job interview by helping you use tools that present your strong points (curriculum vitae, portfolio, cover letter, job application form, electronic application, business card, etc.);
- determine where to look for jobs;
- keep abreast of current events (announcement of corporate openings or major investments in a given sector);
- learn to create a contact network and use it wisely in your job search;
- prepare for interviews and anticipate possible questions;

- plan and more effectively carry out your job search, including your contacts with employers;
- follow up on your job search.

To develop these techniques, we recommend that you use the **personalized action plan** in the Guide, and the documents and services provided by Emploi-Québec.

Public job search services

Local employment centres

In every region of Québec, Emploi-Québec operates local employment centres. These centres are equipped with a multi-service room that offers:

- information on the job market, documentation to plan and carry out your job search as well as information on events like job fairs;
- computers to consult job offers and prepare your application (curriculum vitae and cover letters);
- bulletin boards featuring job offers, practical job search advice and upgrading courses;
- personnel who can answer your questions, help you with your search and show you how to use Emploi-Québec's online services.

You can also make an appointment with an employment assistance agent for an evaluation of your situation. The agent can recommend services that will help you in your entry into the labour market.

Before making an appointment, it is strongly recommended that you start your **personalized action plan** and that you participate first in the session *Objectif Intégration*.

Community organizations specialized in employment

Community organizations also offer many services, including:

- information on the Québec labour market and preparing for a job search (attitudes and skills sought by employers, reskilling, etc.);
- information on the education system and social laws;
- familiarization with the tools and skills needed to look for a job in Québec;
- possibility of professional training to help you better understand the context for practising your profession or trade in Québec.

Emploi-Québec online services

The Emploi-Québec website offers two interactive services that provide information on the labour market: Online LMI (labour market information) and Online Placement.

These services provide information, region by region, on jobs, conditions of access to professions, and working conditions. This will allow you to identify the skills you need to highlight during your job search and selection process (for example, on your CV and during a job interview).

Online LMI (labour market information)

To find information on:

- the tasks, wages and job prospects for over 500 trades and professions;
- the training required to practise a trade or profession as well as conditions of access (certificate, membership in a professional order, etc.);
- activity sectors where these trades and professions are practised;
- the trades and professions in greatest demand in each region of Québec;
- employers' main requirements;
- lists of companies in each region (contact information, size of company, activity sector, etc.);
- investment projects in a region, which provides an overview of economic activity and its effects on employment.

Online Placement (including an international component)

- To consult job offers in your fields of interest
- To find out about employers' labour needs and requirements
- To publish your profile
- To submit a job application online
- To receive email notifications for jobs of interest to you

The international component of Online Placement allows immigration candidates who hold a Certificat de sélection du Québec and who are still abroad to also submit a job application.

Find out more about...

Employi-Québec's online services

Online Placement
placement.emploiquebec.net

Online LMI
www.imt.emploiquebec.net

Regulated professions and trades

In Québec, the practice of many professions and trades is regulated. The list of the main regulated professions and trades can be found in Annex 2.

For example, the engineering and nursing professions are governed by professional orders, while other regulatory bodies govern the trades of plumbers and elevator mechanics. This is also the case for certain professions in the finance and education sectors, including teaching. These bodies, whose mandate is to protect the public, establish admission requirements and practice standards, evaluate skills and diplomas and issue a certificate of competency or permit to qualified candidates.

If you practise a profession or trade that is regulated in Québec, you can start admission procedures with the appropriate regulatory body from your country of origin in order to accelerate your entry into the labour market.

We also recommend that you verify as soon as possible which documents are required by these regulatory bodies.

You will also save precious time by making sure that you have a detailed official description of the courses you have taken and any internship you have completed.

How to practise a regulated profession or trade

You must obtain a permit or certificate from the competent regulatory body. The conditions for obtaining this authorization vary from one body to another.

In all cases, you must meet the educational requirements. Other conditions may apply, such as completing an internship, examination or training course.

Under the *Charter of the French Language*, candidates who wish to practise a profession governed by a professional order must have a knowledge of French appropriate to the practise of the profession.



The procedures for admission to a regulatory body can be long and complex. In addition to the time required to process the application, you must take into account the availability and duration of courses and internships that you may be required to successfully complete, as well as the frequency of exams.

An application does not necessarily lead to a permit or certificate.

Admission fees for professional orders

These fees can vary from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the circumstances and regulatory body. They include the cost of processing the application, the examination, issuing a permit, etc.

In some cases, there may also be fees associated with training or internships.

Project for employment integration of foreign-trained professionals referred by a professional order (IPOP)

The IPOP project, introduced by Emploi-Québec in collaboration with the MICC and professional orders, is intended for foreign-trained professionals who have legal authorization to practise a regulated profession but are having difficulty finding a first job in their profession. To participate in the IPOP project, these individuals must first contact their professional order.

?
Find out more about...

Regulated professions and trades and regulatory bodies	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles	<div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> 🔍 www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca </div> <div style="background-color: #FFF9C4; padding: 5px; border-radius: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;"> ▶ Regulated professions and trades </div>
Regulated professional qualifications	Emploi-Québec	<div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> 🔍 www.emploi-quebec.net </div> <div style="background-color: #FFF9C4; padding: 5px; border-radius: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;"> ▶ Guide de la qualification professionnelle (professional qualification guide) </div> <div style="background-color: #FFF9C4; padding: 5px; border-radius: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;"> ▶ Qualifications réglementées et autres qualifications (regulated qualifications and other qualifications) </div>
The education sector	Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport	<div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;"> 🔍 www.mels.gouv.qc.ca </div>
The construction industry	Commission de la construction du Québec	<div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;"> 🔍 www.cccq.org </div>
The finance sector	Autorité des marchés financiers	<div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;"> 🔍 www.lautorite.qc.ca </div>

Job opportunities across Québec

Several regions offer excellent quality of life, a diversified and dynamic economy as well as multiple job opportunities. This is the case in particular in the Capitale-Nationale region.

In order to discover job opportunities in the regions of Québec, you can attend information sessions on life and employment in the regions. These sessions are offered in French.

Montréal and regional organizations can also inform and assist you in your efforts to settle in a region.

Find out more about...

Job opportunities in Québec's regions	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles  www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca	
	Emploi-Québec • Online LMI • Online Placement	 www.imt.emploiquebec.net  placement.emploiquebec.net
	Ministère des Finances et de l'Économie  www.finances.gouv.qc.ca	<i>Employment</i> <i>Where to settle?</i>

Self-employment and business start-up

If you have some capital, you may want to think about creating your own job, opening your own business or joining an existing business.

To succeed, you must have a good understanding of the Québec business community and prepare a business plan that includes an in-depth market study. Many resources are available to assist you.

Every region of Québec also offers public services for people interested in starting up a business or becoming self-employed.

Find out more about...

Business start-up and self-employment	Portal on business start-up in Québec  www.entreprises.gouv.qc.ca	
	Ministère des Finances et de l'Économie  www.finances.gouv.qc.ca	
	Revenu Québec  www.revenu.gouv.qc.ca	

Minimum working conditions

Before accepting a job offer, ask the employer for a detailed description of the conditions offered: wages, schedule, supervision, duration and status of the position (permanent or casual), leaves and annual vacation.

An Act Respecting Labour Standards defines the minimum working conditions in Québec, in particular:

- minimum hourly wage;
- 50% increase in the regular hourly wage for hours worked beyond the normal work week;
- vacations, paid and unpaid statutory holidays, as well as absences and leaves for family or parental reasons;
- rules employers must respect in the event of termination of employment, dismissal, etc.

In Québec, wages are usually paid every week or two weeks. A contract is signed for most jobs.

Minimum wage

Minimum wage rates—regular, tips, commission or piece work—are established by the government of Québec and are subject to change.

Application of these rates is supervised by the Commission des normes du travail.

Benefits that are convertible into cash (car, housing, transportation, etc.) cannot be used to justify remuneration below minimum wage.

Find out more about...

Labour standards, complaint mechanisms, forbidden practices, etc.	Commission des normes du travail
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www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca

Tax evasion and undeclared work

The Québec tax system is based on self-assessment: taxpayers are responsible for declaring their earned income by producing an income tax return.

While most taxpayers pay their taxes, some people do not declare all of their income to Revenu Québec (provincially) or the Canada Revenue Agency (federally), even though they are required to do so.

Tax evasion and undeclared work mean that the State does not receive all of the taxes that should be paid to it.

To compensate for this loss, the government must increase the contributions made by citizens or reduce services.

Therefore, everyone pays for the consequences of these illegal acts.

Tax evasion is an illegal act committed by someone who deliberately tries to avoid paying taxes or who claims deductions to which they are not entitled. This is called "undeclared work."

People who work clandestinely are excluded from the social protections that they would enjoy if they declared their income: employment insurance, which consists of income replacement benefits in the event of job loss, workplace health and safety protection in the event of an accident or illness related to work, parental leave, etc.

? Find out more about...

Measures related to clandestine work and tax evasion	Revenu Québec	www.revenu.gouv.qc.ca ▶ <i>Fight Against Tax Evasion</i>
	Canada Revenue Agency	www.cra-arc.gc.ca ▶ <i>Tax Alerts</i>

Unions

Unions bring together wage earners to defend their interests in the workplace.

By negotiating with the employer, they establish shared working conditions in a contract called a "collective agreement." In Québec, approximately 40% of workers are unionized.

Québec law recognizes the right of all wage earners to belong to a union.

If there is a union in the company you work for, you are free to become a member. However, whether or not you join the union, the Québec labour code requires your employer to deduct union dues, or an equivalent sum, from your wages and remit them to the company's accredited union.

When an association of wage earners is accredited with an employer, working conditions are usually governed by a collective agreement. Find out more from your union representative.

? Find out more about...

Labour relations in Québec, unions, collective agreements	Ministère du Travail	www.travail.gouv.qc.ca
	Commission des relations du travail	www.crt.gouv.qc.ca

Workplace health and safety

In Québec, laws require employers to take responsibility for preventing workplace accidents and occupational diseases. Workers also have rights and responsibilities in this respect. The goal is to establish methods and measures to eliminate the risk of workplace accidents and illnesses.

If, despite all of the precautions taken in your workplace, you are the victim of an accident or illness related to your work, you might be eligible, under certain conditions, for income replacement benefits, physical injury benefits as well as occupational, social and physical rehabilitation.

This public workplace health and safety plan is administered by the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail.

? Find out more about...

The workplace health and safety plan, prevention and workplace safety	Commission de la santé et de la Sécurité du travail
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www.csst.qc.ca

Employment insurance

If you lose your job, you may be eligible, under certain conditions, for the Employment Insurance Plan and have a right to receive benefits.

All employers and employees must contribute to this public insurance plan.

If you lose your job, you must go to a Service Canada Centre as soon as possible, with the appropriate documents, including the employment record that your last employer is required to give you. You can also submit your employment insurance application online.

In Québec, employment insurance benefits, which represent only a percentage of your wages, are paid over a determined period of time during which the recipient is required to actively search for a job.

? Find out more about...

The Employment Insurance Plan	Service Canada
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www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Apply for Employment Insurance Benefits

Last-resort financial assistance

If, despite your search, you cannot find a job, you have spent your savings and cannot count on another source of income, you can call on the Programme d'aide aux personnes et aux familles. If necessary, you can apply at the local employment centre nearest you.

Find...

The local employment centre nearest you	Emploi-Québec	www.emploiquebec.net
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If you are a sponsored immigrant

You must first contact the person (sponsor) who contractually agreed to meet your essential needs and those of your family (housing, food, clothing, and personal necessities).

However, know that financial assistance and support services are offered by the Centre spécialisé des demandeurs d'asile, des garants défaillants et des parrainés.

Consult...

The Sponsor's Guide and the Guide for Sponsored Persons	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles	www.micc.gouv.qc.ca Publications Parrainage (sponsorship)
Le Centre spécialisé des demandeurs d'asile, des garants défaillants et des parrainés	Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale	www.mess.gouv.qc.ca Service à la clientèle (customer service) Centre spécialisé des demandeurs d'asile, des garants défaillants et des parrainés (specialized centre for asylum seekers, defaulting guarantors and sponsored persons)

If you are an immigrant selected as a skilled worker, self-employed worker or entrepreneur

You have made a commitment to have sufficient funds to meet your needs and those of accompanying family members for the first three months following your arrival in Québec.

Consequently, you and any accompanying family members will not be eligible for last-resort financial assistance during the first three months following your arrival as a permanent resident.

Income taxes

Funds obtained from income taxes and other taxes are used to finance services for all Quebecers (health, education, social services, etc.). Consequently, all residents of Québec have a responsibility to file an income tax return.

The tax system is founded on the principle of self-assessment, which means that each taxpayer must declare his or her income earned during the year and can claim deductions and credits to which they are entitled, based on income as well as personal and family status. This is called an "Individual Income Tax Return."

In order to receive government benefits, it is mandatory to file an income tax return.

Income tax returns

Each year, you must file two income tax returns: one for the federal government (Canada Revenue Agency) and the other for the provincial government (Revenu Québec).

These returns are prepared on specially designated forms.

The tax year is from January 1 to December 31.

Tools are available to help you complete your income tax return. Obtain a copy of *New Residents and Income Tax* and the *Guide to the income tax return* in a Revenu Québec office or from its website.

In general, income tax returns must be delivered (by mail, Internet or in person) to both levels of government no later than April 30 of the following tax year. Any taxes due must also be paid by this date.

In addition to determining your income, deductions and tax owing, the income tax return allows the federal and provincial government to verify your eligibility for various social programs (family allowance, parental leave, etc.).

To help you complete your income tax return

If you have difficulty preparing your income tax return, contact Revenu Québec or the Canada Revenue Agency.

Customer service agents will give you useful information and, if necessary, refer you to free or inexpensive tax clinics.

You can also contact tax experts (specialized agencies, accountants), but you will have to pay for this service.

Respect your tax obligations

By filing an income tax return before April 30 of each year and declaring all of your income, you will avoid paying interest and penalties on any amount you may owe.

Find out more about...

The tax system	Revenu Québec	www.revenu.gouv.qc.ca
	Canada Revenue Agency	www.cra-arc.gc.ca

▶ All about your tax return

Where to find...

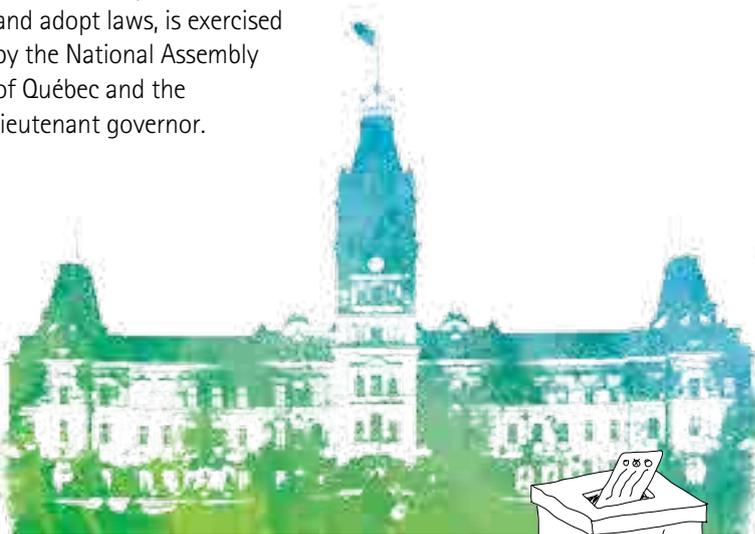
Québec government income tax return forms	Revenu Québec	www.revenu.gouv.qc.ca
		▶ Citizens
		▶ Client groups
		▶ New residents
Services Québec offices		www.gouv.qc.ca
		▶ Contact Us
Caisses populaires Desjardins		www.desjardins.com
		▶ Where to find us
Canadian government income tax return forms	Canada Revenue Agency	www.cra-arc.gc.ca
		▶ Forms and publications
		▶ Tax package
	Post offices	www.canadapost.ca
		▶ Find a Post Office

The political system

Canada and Québec's political systems are based on the rules and traditions of the British parliamentary system.

Legislative power

In Québec, legislative power, that is, the capacity to create and adopt laws, is exercised by the National Assembly of Québec and the lieutenant governor.



The National Assembly is composed of 125 members, women and men, elected by universal suffrage by Canadian citizens who have reached the age of majority (18 years of age and over), residing in Québec, according to a first-past-the-post system.

At the federal level – Like the members of the National Assembly of Québec, the members of the House of Commons, in Ottawa, are elected by universal suffrage according to a first-past-the-post system.

Each member represents a riding of approximately 40,000 voters. General elections are held every four years or so in order to elect members.

Note: You must be a Canadian citizen to vote in federal, provincial and municipal elections.

However, even if you are not a Canadian citizen, you can exercise your right to vote under some circumstances. For example, during:

- a general assembly of parents at your child's school;
- a union assembly, as long as you are a union member;
- a general assembly of a non-profit organization of which you are a member.

Executive power

The executive power, known as the government, is responsible for applying laws. It is exercised primarily by the Cabinet of Ministers.

The ministers, both men and women, are appointed by the premier, who is generally the leader of the political party that won the most seats in the National Assembly. While it is not an obligation, ministers are almost always chosen from among the elected members.

Through a series of mechanisms, the most common of which are parliamentary commissions, the ministers and members regularly consult the population and associations to hear their points of view on parliamentary bills or orientations to be adopted.

Municipal level

Canadian citizens who have reached the age of majority residing in Québec can also exercise their right to vote for a mayor and municipal councillors who administer their municipality, as well as commissioners who administer the school boards.

Find out more about...

Québec's political system

National Assembly of Québec

 www.assnat.qc.ca

The justice system

Québec is a democracy characterized by the separation of powers:

- legislative power, exercised by parliamentarians elected to adopt laws;
- executive power, exercised by the government to implement laws;
- judicial power, exercised by the courts to enforce laws while maintaining the balance between individual rights and responsibilities.

The judicial power has complete independence from the legislative and executive power.

The mission of the Ministère de la Justice du Québec is to ensure the rule of law within Québec society and to maintain a fair and reliable justice system.

The courts

The Québec justice system is composed of different courts. Their role is determined by law based on several factors, including the nature of the case, geographic location and the amount in dispute.

Courts of first instance

Cases are first heard before a court of first instance, where evidence is produced and witnesses appear. At this level, Québec has:

- municipal courts,
- the Court of Québec,
- the Superior Court,
- the Federal Court,
- the Human Rights Tribunal.

Appeal courts

These courts hear appeals of judgments made by the courts of first instance.

The appeal courts are:

- the Court of Appeal of Québec,
- the Federal Court of Appeal,
- the Supreme Court of Canada.



Mediation – There are several methods of conflict prevention and resolution at your disposal.

Mediation is more flexible and efficient than a trial, since it encourages communication between the conflicting parties and often avoids a decision being imposed by a judge.

Interpreting services – These services can be offered, sometimes free of charge, to people who do not master French or English.

Legal aid services – Most cities in Québec have a legal aid office where low-income earners can obtain the services of a lawyer or notary for free or at low cost.

Small claims division

The Court of Québec includes a small claims division. It deals with claims up to \$7,000. The procedure is simple and informal. Claimants are not represented by a lawyer.

A mediation service is offered free of charge to help citizens resolve their disputes before the case is heard by a judge. Interested parties can seek information from courthouse personnel on this subject.

Specialized organizations

Québec has several organizations that exercise judicial power over the rights of individuals, but in specific areas. For example:

- the Régie du logement du Québec deals mainly with questions related to an apartment lease;
- the Tribunal administratif du Québec allows individuals to assert their rights when they believe they have been aggrieved by a decision of a government authority including a ministry, board, commission or municipality.

Crime victims assistance centres

Crime victims assistance centres (CAVAC) help victims of criminal acts, their loved ones and witnesses overcome the physical, psychological and social consequences of a crime. The crime could be an assault, theft, harassment, threat or any other criminal act such as conjugal violence.

There is a CAVAC in each region of Québec. Assistance can take different forms including assistance during the judicial process before, during and after a trial. Services are free and confidential.

Find out more about...

Your rights, the courts and resources available to you, for example, recourse to legal aid, finding a lawyer or notary

Ministère de la Justice du Québec

 www.justice.gouv.qc.ca

Éducaloi

 www.educaloi.qc.ca

Commission des services juridiques

 www.csj.qc.ca

Barreau du Québec

 www.barreau.qc.ca

Chambre des notaires du Québec

 www.cdnq.org

Police services

Relations between the police and the Québec population are based on trust and mutual respect. In all circumstances requiring their assistance, you can call on them without fear.

Police forces ensure the safety of the population and enforce the law.

There are four types of police services in Québec:

- municipal police forces that operate under municipal authorities (there are 33 in Québec);
- the Sûreté du Québec—the provincial police force that assumes the role of municipal police in cities that are not covered by a municipal police force as well as a complementary role to municipal police forces;
- the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—a national police force under the authority of Public Safety Canada;
- Aboriginal police forces that are generally constituted on the basis of tripartite agreements between the band council, Government of Québec and Government of Canada.

You can call on the police to intervene in many different situations including:

- emergencies of any nature;
- road accidents;
- if you are the victim of sexual assault or any other type of assault;
- if you are the victim of theft or fraud;
- if you notice the disappearance of a person you are responsible for;
- if you witness a crime (theft, assault, etc.).

In case of emergency, dial 911.

For less urgent situations, you can also call the nearest police station directly.

The police are expected to act fairly and not abuse their power.

They must also:

- inform you of the reasons for their intervention, unless you have been caught in a flagrant offence;
- respect your right to receive the assistance of a lawyer.

If you disagree with a police intervention, you can contest it or file a complaint.

? Find out more about...

Civil security, crime prevention and community policing	Ministère de la sécurité publique	www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca
Québec's various police forces	Ministère de la sécurité publique	www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Police and Crime Prevention</i>▶ <i>Directory of police services</i>
Police obligations and standards of conduct, and how to file a complaint	Commissaire à la déontologie policière	www.deontologie-policiere.gouv.qc.ca
Federal laws and their application	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca



Exercising your rights

Individual rights and freedoms

In Québec, exercising individual rights and freedoms is enshrined in two charters: the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* seeks to protect rights against the actions, policies and laws of the federal government and provincial governments, and to unite Canadian citizens around a set of values embodied by these rights.

Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms

The Québec Charter is distinct from the Canadian Charter in a number of ways, including:

- the inclusion of economic and social rights;
- the application of the Charter not only in relations between the population and the State, but also in private relations;
- the existence of a special recourse mechanism in the event of discrimination on the basis of prohibited motive, through the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, followed by possible recourse before the Human Rights Tribunal.



The following grounds for discrimination are prohibited:

- race
- colour
- sex
- pregnancy
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- age, unless stipulated by law
- religion
- political convictions
- language
- ethnic or national origin
- social condition
- disability or use of means to palliate this disability.

Everyone is responsible for respecting the rights of others and to have their own rights respected, for example by filing a complaint in the event of an abuse.

Except in extreme situations, it is generally preferable to try mediation before going to court.

Find out more about...

The Québec <i>Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms</i> (including questions related to discrimination, harassment and exploitation of the elderly or disabled), and the Director of Youth Protection	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse	www.cdpcj.qc.ca
The Canadian <i>Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>	Department of Justice Canada	www.justice.gc.ca ▶ <i>The laws site</i> ▶ <i>Constitutional documents</i>
Services for the disabled	Office des personnes handicapées du Québec	www.ophq.gouv.qc.ca
Services for sexual minorities	Gai Écoute (gay listening line)	www.gaiécoute.org ▶ 1-888-505-1010 (toll-free)

Conjugal violence and sexual assault

Sexual assault is a crime, as is conjugal violence. The law encourages you to not tolerate these situations and to report them.

Conjugal violence

Conjugal violence occurs within the context of a current or past romantic relationship. This form of violence, which compromises the integrity of the victim, is manifested by daily behaviour, from verbal threats, harassment and minor blows to serious injuries, sexual assault as well as psychological and economic violence.

In case of emergency, dial 911
for immediate police assistance.

Conjugal violence is a way of controlling another person, not the result of a loss of self-control.

You will not lose any of your rights if you leave your conjugal residence to escape abuse. To the contrary, the law protects you and your children.

If this situation occurs, you must not hesitate to call the police. They will find you shelter and, in collaboration with social services, direct you to the resources you need: safe house, sexual assault assistance and prevention centre or a centre to assist crime victims.

Role of witnesses

If you witness a crime committed in a conjugal context, call **911** immediately. This is a duty. If the victim's safety is in question, the police will take your call seriously.

Sexual assault

Sexual assault is a sexual gesture—with or without physical contact—committed by an individual without the consent of the person concerned or, in some cases—particularly involving children—through emotional manipulation or blackmail.

Sexual assault seeks to subject a person to another's desires through abuse of power, the use of force and constraint, or through implicit or explicit threat.

Sexual assault is a crime that violates the fundamental rights of the person, specifically his or her physical and psychological integrity and safety.

Sexual assault is unacceptable, regardless of the form, action, situation, or ties between the people involved and the circumstances.

When children are victims

It is every person's obligation to inform the Director of Youth Protection if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child under 18 years of age is the victim of sexual abuse or violence.

Role of close family and friends

Regardless of the circumstances of sexual assault or conjugal violence, the victim is not to blame.

Often, victims will hesitate to file a complaint and may even feel guilty. Close family and friends can play an important role by listening, helping and accompanying these people in this difficult situation.

? Find out more about...

Resources to help and protect the victims of sexual assault	Government of Québec	www.agressionssexuelles.gouv.qc.ca ▶ Montréal: 514-933-9007 ▶ Elsewhere in Québec: 1-888-933-9007 (toll-free)
Shelters for victims of conjugal violence	S.O.S. violence conjugale	www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca ▶ 1-800-363-9010 (toll-free)
Health institutions	Centre de santé et de services sociaux	www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/etablisements
Assistance available to the victims of sexual assault	Regroupement québécois des Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel	www.rqcalacs.qc.ca ▶ 1-877-717-5252 (toll-free)
Assistance available to victims of crime	Réseau des Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels	www.cavac.qc.ca ▶ 1-888-933-9007 (toll-free)
Support for violent spouses	À cœur d'homme	www.aceurhomme.com ▶ 418-660-7799

Housing and discrimination

The Québec *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* prohibits the refusal to rent an apartment to someone on discriminatory grounds such as ethnic or national origin, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability or use of means to palliate this disability, having children or being on social assistance.

Under the *Civil Code of Québec*, a landlord cannot refuse to rent an apartment to anyone—or impose more costly rental conditions—on the sole grounds that she is pregnant or has several children, unless the refusal is justified by the size of the apartment.

 **Find out more about...**

Possible recourse if you have reasons to believe that you have been refused housing due to discrimination	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
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 www.cdpcj.qc.ca

► *Guide anti-discrimination pour louer un logement*
(anti-discrimination guide for renting an apartment)

Employment, discrimination and harassment

Québec's *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* prohibits the refusal to hire someone on discriminatory grounds such as ethnic or national origin, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability or use of means to palliate this disability, having children or receiving social assistance.

Potential employers cannot ask questions on these grounds unless they are trying to verify the presence of a skill or quality required for the job.

If you have reason to believe that you were refused a job due to discrimination, contact the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

Women and work

Immigrant women who settle in Québec enjoy the same rights and have the same obligations as any other woman from Québec.

In Québec, women have the same rights as men. Women practise the trade or profession of their choice and most women work for wages, even if they have a family.

Employers who refuse a woman a job for which she is qualified on the sole basis that she is a woman are breaking the law and are liable to legal action and sanctions.

Women and men are encouraged to share professional and familial responsibilities.

Despite this equality of rights, women have long been confined to jobs traditionally occupied by women and generally underpaid.

To redress past injustices, the government, parapublic agencies and several employers have implemented equal opportunity measures.

Québec has also passed the *Pay Equity Act*. This law stipulates that female workers must receive the same pay as male workers when their jobs, while different, are of the same or equivalent value.

Find out more about...

Equal opportunity programs	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse	 www.cdpcj.qc.ca
Pay equity	Commission de l'équité salariale	 www.ces.gouv.qc.ca

Workplace harassment

In Québec, psychological harassment, discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace are prohibited under *An Act Respecting Labour Standards* and the Québec *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

An Act Respecting Labour Standards defines psychological harassment as "any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures that affects an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that results in a harmful work environment for the employee."

A single serious incident can also constitute psychological harassment if it is injurious and produces long-standing harmful effects on the employee.

Find out more about...

Employment and workplace discrimination	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse	 www.cdpcj.qc.ca
Sexual or psychological harassment in the workplace	Commission des normes du travail	 www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca

Sexual orientation and discrimination

Homosexuality has always existed but this reality has only recently been recognized.

In 1969, the Government of Canada decriminalized homosexual relationships. In 1977, the National Assembly of Québec prohibited sexual orientation as grounds for discrimination.

In Canada same-sex marriage has been legal since 2005. Despite changes in mentalities and laws, gays and lesbians are sometimes still victims of homophobia and discrimination. Fortunately, several resources are available to provide personal support for these individuals or to assist in seeking legal recourse.

Find out more about...

Services offered
to gays and lesbians

Gai Écoute
(listening support line)

 www.gaiecoute.org

► *Montréal: 514-866-0103*

► *Elsewhere in Québec:
1-888-505-1010 (toll-free)*

Legal framework for couple relationships

Marriage

In Québec, you must be at least 16 years of age to marry. Individuals under 18 years of age must obtain the consent of their parents or guardians.

Marriage can be between two people of the same sex or opposite sex. Marriage procedures are simple. The future spouses can opt for a religious marriage or a civil marriage. In both cases, the person officiating the wedding must be a notary or have been authorized by the Ministère de la Justice du Québec to celebrate the marriage.

Whether religious or civil, marriage has the same legal value. The spouses have the same rights and responsibilities. In all cases, the law stipulates that both spouses must:

- be fully equal;
- live together;
- show each other mutual respect, faithfulness, support and assistance;
- jointly provide moral and material support for the family;

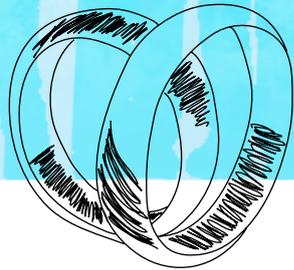
- jointly exercise parental authority and assume the related tasks, such as feeding, caring for and educating children;
- choose the family residence together;
- each contribute to household expenses;
- be jointly responsible for the debts incurred to meet daily household needs;

- keep their names and exercise their civil rights under this name. In other words, a woman who marries in Québec does not take her husband's name and keeps the maiden name she was given at birth.

Under certain conditions and the rules of public order, the law allows spouses and future spouses to choose or modify their matrimonial regime, by contract before a notary. Spouses or future spouses can choose the regime of separation of property, a partnership of acquests, community of moveables and acquests, a personalized regime or even a foreign regime. In the absence of a contract, the legal regime applicable to the spouses is the partnership of acquests.

Independent of the matrimonial regime, the law stipulates that family patrimony is composed of the family residences, household furniture, cars used for family transport as well as certain pension plans. The value of this property is equally divided upon termination of a union.

In Québec, it is illegal to have several wives (polygamy) or several husbands (polyandry).



Civil union

Two individuals, at least 18 years of age, of the same sex or opposite sex, can contract a civil union before a person authorized to celebrate marriages.

A civil union has essentially the same effects as a marriage.

The rights and obligations between spouses are the same and the dissolution of a civil union has the same consequences as a divorce.

Terminating a civil union requires a joint notarized declaration or a court ruling, if the children's interests are in question.

If the spouses do not agree on the terms of their separation, one of them can submit a request for dissolution of the civil union to the court.

De facto union

Two individuals can also decide to live together, without getting married, in a de facto union, also called a "free union."

A de facto union is composed of two individuals of the same or opposite sex who cohabit.

De facto spouses do not benefit from the same legal status as spouses who are married or in a civil union. However, if they sign a cohabitation contract, preferably before a notary, de facto spouses can obtain certain protections offered by

marriage. This legal document specifies the conditions they agree to respect in relation to property and responsibilities during and after the union.

Children born of a de facto union are protected by law and enjoy the same rights as those of a couple who are married or in a civil union.

In the case of a death, the law does not recognize the surviving de facto spouse as a legal heir. It is therefore recommended that de facto spouses who wish to be considered heirs upon the death of their de facto spouse, prepare a will before a notary. De facto spouses who meet the legal criteria can also receive a survivor's pension and other social benefits.

Similarly, a surviving de facto spouse can receive the life insurance of the deceased spouse on condition that he or she was designated as the beneficiary of this insurance.

Separation or divorce

When a couple splits up, the two people concerned must choose the type of separation adapted to the situation, that is, de facto separation or legal separation.

Divorce can generally be requested after a separation of at least one year. In addition to Québec rules, the laws and regulations of the country of origin may also govern the effects of the divorce, specifically with respect to the division of property.

Individuals sponsored by a spouse do not lose their right of permanent residence in the event of separation. The spouse will also be held to his or her commitment toward the sponsored person, even if they no longer live together.

General principles governing rights and responsibilities following a divorce

The equal division of the family patrimony (residences, furniture, vehicles, etc.) applies to couples that are married or in a civil union, but not to de facto spouses, unless they have signed an agreement to this effect.



Custody of the children can be exclusive to one of the parents or shared between them. The decision must be made in the interests of the children. In the event of sole custody, provisions are generally made for visiting rights for the other parent.

Regardless of the custody arrangement, both parents continue to be financially responsible for their children, which can involve the payment of alimony.

During the separation or divorce of a couple with dependent children, the family mediation program can help to create a friendly agreement adapted to the situation. This program offers six free meetings.

It is important to find out about the personal, legal and financial consequences of separation.

? Find out more about...

The personal, legal and financial consequences of a separation	Commission des services juridiques	www.csj.qc.ca
	Éducaloi	www.educaloi.qc.ca
	Ligne Info-juridique (telephone information line)	www.1800notaire.ca ▶ 1-800-668-2473 (toll-free)

Volunteer work and community action

Women and men from all backgrounds have always participated in the development of their community, in all sectors of life of Québec society. Many work as volunteers or activists; some advocate action or citizen involvement.

In Québec, it is estimated that some two million people are involved in volunteer work, for a total of 300 million hours per year. Whether it is to meet people, help others or create a network of contacts, volunteering can be enriching for newcomers.

The website of the Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec provides a list of organizations that welcome volunteer involvement in all sectors of activity and all regions of Québec.



Community organizations

Québec is home to over 8000 community organizations. Through their action, these organizations bring comfort to people in their community and improve their quality of life. They embody a spirit of mutual help and solidarity.

Community organizations offer a variety of services: visits to the sick, organization of activities in youth or recreation centres, advocacy for tenants' rights, etc.

The mission of these organizations is made possible as much by the action of their paid employees (tens of thousands of full-time jobs) as by the commitment of volunteers.

Find out more about...

Volunteering
in Québec

Réseau de l'action
bénévole du Québec
(Québec volunteer
action network)

 www.rabq.ca

Secrétariat à l'action
communautaire autonome
et aux initiatives sociales
(Autonomous community
action and social initiatives
secretariat)

 www.mess.gouv.qc.ca

Permanent residency and citizenship

As a permanent resident, you and your dependents are entitled to:

- most of the social benefits that Canadian citizens enjoy, including health insurance;
- live, work and study anywhere in Canada;
- apply for Canadian citizenship;
- enjoy protection under Canadian and Québec laws as well as the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the Québec *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

You must pay taxes and respect all Canadian laws, both federal and provincial.

As a permanent resident, you and your dependents are not entitled to:

- vote or run for election;
- occupy a position that requires high-level security clearance;
- remain in Canada if you are found guilty of a serious crime and have been asked to leave the country.

Maintaining your permanent resident status

Your status as a permanent resident authorizes you to live in Canada but also restricts the duration of your stays outside the country.

To maintain your permanent resident status, you must reside in Canada for at least two years within a five-year period.

Losing your permanent resident status

You can lose your permanent resident status:

- if you do not respect residency requirements;
- if you are found guilty of a serious crime.

You could be expelled from Canada.

Permanent residency card

If you plan to travel, your permanent residency card is the official proof that you are a permanent resident of Canada. This wallet-sized plasticized card is necessary for all permanent residents in Canada who wish to enter Canada aboard a commercial carrier (plane, ship, train or bus). If you leave Canada, you must present this card upon re-entry.

Canadian citizenship

Each year, some 170,000 people become Canadian citizens.

To become a Canadian citizen, you must submit a citizenship application and pass a citizenship exam.

To be eligible for Canadian citizenship, you must, in particular:

- be a permanent resident;
- have lived in Canada for at least three years prior to submitting your application;
- have adequate knowledge of French or English;
- demonstrate your knowledge of Canada and the rights, responsibilities and privileges of citizenship;
- respect certain conditions related to a criminal history.

People 55 years of age and over are exempt from the language and knowledge requirements, but are nevertheless encouraged to respect them.

When you apply for citizenship, you can also apply on behalf of your minor children (under 18 years of age).

 **Find out more about...**

Permanent residency and Canadian citizenship	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
--	------------------------------------

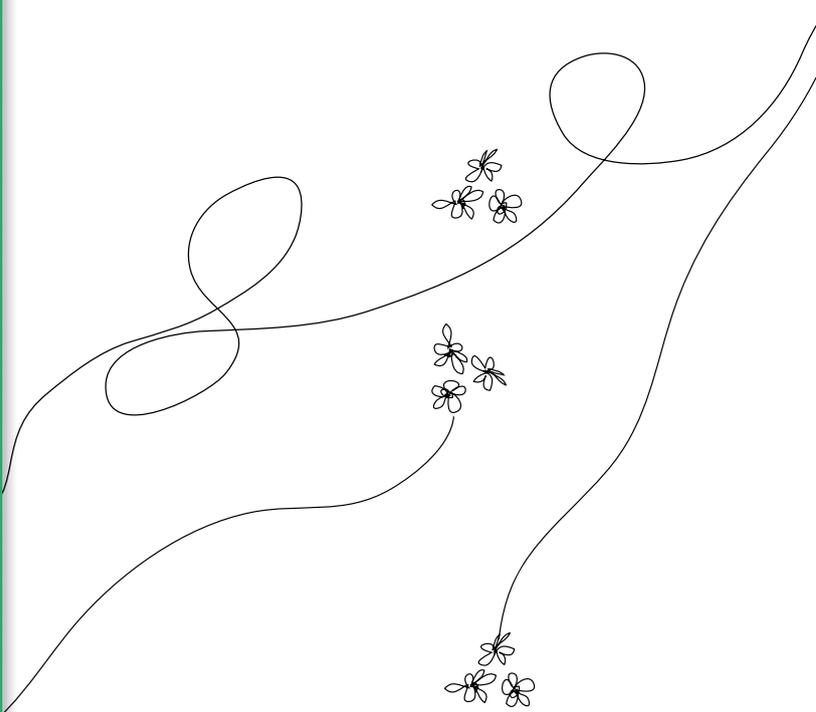
 www.cic.gc.ca

What you need TO DO

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My personalized action plan

The **personalized action plan** is designed to help you through the major steps you have to take to make your social and professional integration in Québec a success.

You can obtain a more detailed version of the plan on the website of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC). It contains more examples and specific references to help you organize your searches. By using the online version, this plan will become your primary tool to ensure a successful integration.

 **Download...**

The online version of the personalized action plan (available in French only)	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles
--	---

 www.apprendrelequebec.gouv.qc.ca

→ *Mon plan d'action personnalisé*
(My personalized action plan)



I register for the SERVICE D'INTÉGRATION EN LIGNE (SIEL)

In addition to the **personalized action plan**, the MICC also provides the SIEL, an online integration service that you may find useful.

Once you have registered, you will have 13 weeks, consisting of three hours a week at your convenience, to discover how to adapt as quickly as possible to the world of work in Québec. You can also obtain practical information about the regions, the steps to take when you arrive and the common values of Québec society.

In addition to this online learning platform, you may also be able to benefit from online support.

To participate in the online integration service, you must have a Certificat de sélection du Québec, be able to communicate in French orally and in writing, and have access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection.

Since the number of places is limited, we encourage you to contact the registrar of the online integration service as soon as possible.

 **Find out more about...**

SIEL	Service d'intégration en ligne (Online integration service)
------	--

 www.integrationenligne.gouv.qc.ca

Check mark the steps you have carried out.

Personalized action plan	
MY STEPS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA	
• I take steps with the Government of Canada	<input type="radio"/>
MY KNOWLEDGE OF FRENCH	
• I learn French before leaving	<input type="radio"/>
• I learn French in Québec	<input type="radio"/>
MY PROFESSIONAL GOALS	
• I determine my professional goals and verify the title of my trade or profession in Québec	<input type="radio"/>
• I identify my short- and medium-term professional goals, and the job titles that correspond to my choices	<input type="radio"/>
• I identify winning strategies for finding a job	<input type="radio"/>
• I check if my trade or profession is regulated in Québec	<input type="radio"/>
• I determine my entrepreneurial profile, if necessary	<input type="radio"/>
MY PROFESSIONAL SECTOR	
• I identify the sources of information on my activity sector	<input type="radio"/>
• I identify the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes of the businesses in my activity sector	<input type="radio"/>
• I identify the most interesting businesses in my activity sector	<input type="radio"/>
• I identify the professions that are the most in demand in my activity sector	<input type="radio"/>

MY SKILL SET AND TRAINING NEEDS	
• I determine the skills I have and the ones I still need to acquire	<input type="radio"/>
• I decide how to acquire the skills I am missing	<input type="radio"/>
MY NETWORK OF CONTACTS	
• I inform my personal network	<input type="radio"/>
• I build my Web network	<input type="radio"/>
• I develop my professional network	<input type="radio"/>
MY JOB SEARCH TOOLS	
• I adapt my curriculum vitae	<input type="radio"/>
• I include a personalized cover letter with my curriculum vitae	<input type="radio"/>
• I register with Online Placement, International Stream	<input type="radio"/>
• I ask for an evaluation of my studies done outside Québec, if necessary	<input type="radio"/>
MY FINAL PREPARATIONS	
• I put together a budget	<input type="radio"/>
• I bring my important documents	<input type="radio"/>
• I take out private health insurance for my first three months in Québec	<input type="radio"/>
• I identify where I want to live and work	<input type="radio"/>
• I organize my accommodation for the first few days in Québec	<input type="radio"/>

MY ARRIVAL IN QUÉBEC

- I meet with the reception service at Montréal-Trudeau Airport
- I attend the group information session on getting settled in Québec, if necessary

MY IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- I make sure I have my permanent resident card
- I apply for my health insurance card
- I apply for my social insurance card
- I apply for a driver's licence, if applicable
- I open a bank account

SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES

- I seek the assistance of an organization, if needed

MY FIRST APARTMENT

- I find a suitable apartment
- I find out about settling in another region, if necessary
- I read my lease and sign it
- I take out home insurance
- I obtain the goods and services I need for my apartment

DAYCARE SERVICES AND SCHOOLS

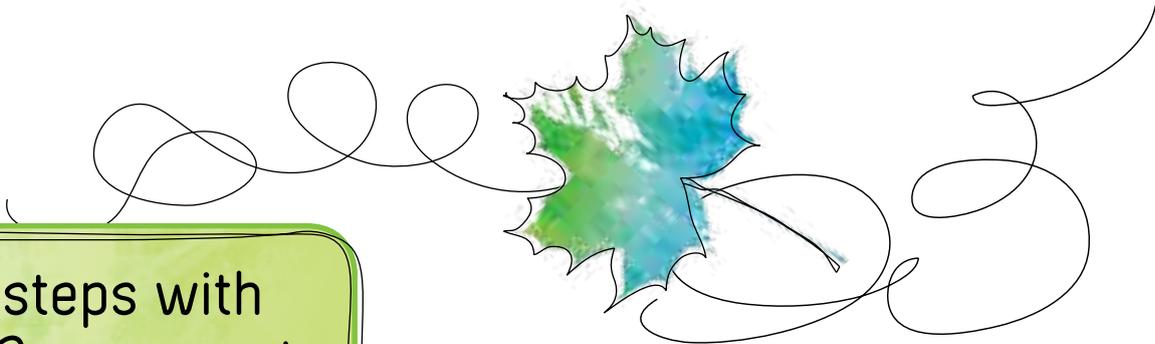
- I find a place in a daycare, if necessary
- If I have school-age children, I enrol them in school

TAX CREDITS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- I apply for the tax credits and financial assistance to which I am entitled

MY JOB SEARCH

- I attend the session *Objectif Intégration*, if necessary
- I find a temporary job
- I seek help to find a job, if necessary
- I make sure I am prepared before contacting employers
- I contact employers



My steps with the Government of Canada

Do you have your Certificat de sélection du Québec? Congratulations! You have completed a very important step.

However, there are other steps you need to take, particularly with the Government of Canada which is responsible for admitting immigrants into Canada.

I take steps with the Government of Canada

In most cases, you must submit your application for permanent residence to the Canadian visa office that serves your country of origin.



My knowledge of French

French is the official language of Québec. Take advantage of the waiting period for your entry visa to learn this language or to perfect it if you already have basic knowledge of French.

I learn French before leaving

You have several options.

By Internet

Register for a free online French course. Two conditions apply:

- You must have a Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ).
- You must have knowledge of French that is equivalent to the beginners or intermediate level.

In an establishment that is an MICC partner

The Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) has signed francization agreements with establishments in several countries, including the network of Alliances françaises where you can take French courses tailored to your needs.

By registering with an MICC partner, your school fees could be refunded when you arrive in Québec, provided that you are over 16 years of age and hold a Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ).

People who learn French before leaving their country are happy they did so when they arrive in Québec.

We encourage you to follow in their footsteps!

Find out more about...

Online French courses

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.francisationenligne.gouv.qc.ca

MICC partners that offer French courses in your country and conditions for obtaining a refund

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ *French language*
- ▶ *Learning French in your country of departure*

French exercise database

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ *French language*
- ▶ *Learning French online*
- ▶ *Other online services*

I learn French in Québec

If you were unable to take a French course before leaving your country, you can take one in Québec, full time or part time, in an educational institution or an MICC-designated organization.

You may receive financial assistance, namely to cover certain related costs such as transportation or daycare services.

Other places where you can learn or perfect your French

Most universities, colleges (CEGEPs) and vocational centres in school boards also offer French courses.

Find out more about...

Places of learning, admission criteria, duration of courses, schedules, financial assistance, etc.

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

 www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

▶ *French language*

▶ *Learning French in Québec*

How to submit an online application for full-time or part-time French courses in Québec

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

 www.francisationenligne.gouv.qc.ca



My professional goals

The Certificat de sélection du Québec does not guarantee that you will quickly find a job in your field.

It would be surprising for you to find the same job as the one you had in your country of origin. Like most newcomers to Québec, you will probably have to make some compromises before you find the perfect job. This is why it is so important for you to set professional goals and determine the steps you need to follow to attain these goals.

I determine my professional goals and verify the title of my trade or profession in Québec

Look down the road: five years after your arrival in Québec, you will have the job of your dreams and have successfully integrated professionally and socially!

What trade or profession did you choose to practise?

Why did you choose this job?

Check mark the appropriate answer(s)	
Because it allows me to practise the trade or profession I learned	<input type="radio"/>
Because it gives me a social status that is important to me	<input type="radio"/>
Because it pays well	<input type="radio"/>
Because it gives me good job security	<input type="radio"/>
Because it gives me time to enjoy life	<input type="radio"/>
Because it allows me to learn about myself and others	<input type="radio"/>
Because it stimulates me and encourages me to excel	<input type="radio"/>
Other reasons	
	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>

You may have to have a licence, become a member of a professional order or acquire additional skills to practise the trade or profession you have chosen. Find out what you need to know.

By answering these questions, you can determine your long-term professional goals. You must now make sure that your professional goals fit the Québec context.

What is my trade or profession called in Québec?

The trade or profession that you practise in your country does not necessarily have the same name in Québec. The National Occupational Classification (NOC) is a national reference—available on the Internet—of all trades and professions practised in Canada. You can find over 30,000 job titles classified under 520 professional profiles. It is a wealth of information!



Enter the title of your trade or profession in LMI Online to obtain the complete list of titles that correspond to your profession or trade in Québec. The number in parentheses is the NOC code.

LMI Online also provides you with occupational prospects by region that correspond to this code. This information will be useful when choosing a place to settle.

Record the results of your research

My long-term professional goal	Job title in Québec	NOC code
<i>Pharmaceutical salesperson</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>6221</i>

I identify my short- and medium-term professional goals, and the job titles that correspond to my choices

It may not be easy to attain your professional goals in the short or medium term.

Keep in mind your long-term goals and the reasons why you made this choice, and make a list of the related jobs you could hold that would bring you closer to your professional goals.

For example, if you are an engineer, you may have to start with a job as an engineering technician.

To practise a profession or trade, you must take into account certain special requirements. Here are two examples:

Administrative assistant (secretary)

You must master the keyboard for North American computers and know the rules of administrative writing in Québec.

Architect and engineer

Since drawings are now done with computer-assisted software, you must have full mastery of these tools.

Take note of the jobs that could bring you closer to your goals as well as their NOC codes.

Related job that I could hold in the short term	NOC code
<i>Drugstore clerk</i>	6421
Related job that I could hold in the medium term	NOC code
<i>Pharmacy aide</i>	3414
<i>Pharmaceuticals buyer</i>	6233

I identify winning strategies for finding a job

You have determined your short-, medium- and long-term professional goals. If you feel the need, you can review your goals during your integration process.

In fact, it may be useful to consult the testimonials of people who have found jobs that correspond to their goals and to use them as models. Remember that it is up to you to make things happen for you professionally.

Consult...

Testimonials

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.ongagneaparerfrancais.gouv.qc.ca

► *On gagne à parler français*
(It pays to speak French)

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/placeauquebec/en

► *You have a place in Québec*

www.toutesnosorigines.gouv.qc.ca

► *Toutes nos origines enrichissent le Québec*
(All of our origins enrich Québec)

I check if my trade or profession is regulated in Québec

You must have legal authorization (a licence or permit) in order to practise certain trades and professions in Québec.

This does not only apply to individuals who practise a liberal profession (in Québec, they are referred to as professionals), but also to individuals who work in the construction industry and in various other activity sectors.

For example, you must check if a regulation governs the trade or profession that you wish to practise. If this is the case, you will have to take steps with the regulatory body that governs your trade or profession.

We recommend that you begin these steps before leaving your country so that you can practise your true trade or profession as soon as possible after your arrival in Québec.

The admission procedure to a regulatory body can be long, complicated and costly: it can sometimes take several years and cost several thousands of dollars. Not all applications lead to the granting of a permit or licence.

Find out more about...

If your profession or trade is regulated

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles
Emploi-Québec

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

► *Regulated trades and professions*

www.emploiquebec.net

► *Guide de la qualification professionnelle*
(professional qualifications guide)

► *Qualifications réglementées et autres qualifications*
(regulated qualifications and other qualifications)

I determine my entrepreneurial profile, if necessary

If you would like to open your own business when you arrive in Québec, you must, among other things, know the rules that govern the business world in Québec and put together a business plan.

? Find out more about...

Business start-up in Québec

Service d'aide aux jeunes entrepreneurs (support services for young entrepreneurs)
No age limit for newcomers

🔍 www.sajeenaffaires.org

- ▶ *Publications*
- ▶ *Guide ImmigrAffaires*
(Available in French only, this guide provides information to immigrants who wish to start their own business.)

Centre local de développement

🔍 www.acldq.qc.ca

- ▶ *Trouvez un CLD*
(finding a local development centre)

My professional sector

Regardless of your trade or profession, you will practise it in a specific activity sector such as aerospace, retail sales, petrochemicals, health, education, construction, etc. You must be well versed in the sectors that are of interest to you in order to find the business that can offer you a job.

Since most job offers are not posted, identifying the businesses that hire people who practise your trade or profession will allow you to explore the hidden job market and contact the businesses that you have identified.

I identify the sources of information on my activity sector

Sectoral workforce committees are a good source of information. By consulting their websites, you can find studies on labour needs in Québec's economic activity sectors, testimonials, lists of useful links to expand your searches, and more.



I identify the NAICS codes of the businesses in my activity sector

If you are already thinking about big businesses, keep in mind that they generate less than 50% of all jobs. It is therefore wise to also consider small and medium businesses, especially since they often offer an excellent entry point into the labour market.

To find businesses that correspond to your activity sector, the most effective method is to carry out a search in the North America Industry Classification System (NAICS). With NAICS codes, you can consult a specialized site that will provide you with a list of all of the businesses in your sector.

Record the results of your search.

Sector or subsector	NAICS code
<i>Computer Systems Design and Related Services: 110 organizations found</i>	541510
<i>Telecommunications: 16 organizations found</i>	517



Consult...

LMI Online

Emploi-Québec

www.imt.emploiquebec.net

▶ Explore a trade or occupation

▶ Find a business

The North American Industry Classification System

Statistics Canada

www.statcan.gc.ca

▶ Search NAICS

The Répertoire d'entreprises du Québec

Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec

www.icriq.com

I identify the most interesting businesses in my activity sector

Based on your searches, record the information on the businesses that reflect your interests and where you would like to work.

Since most businesses do not recruit through classified ads in newspapers or on the Internet, it is important that you know your potential employers so that you can contact them yourself at the right time.

I identify the professions that are the most in demand in my activity sector

Based on your research, you will see which skill profiles are particularly in demand in Québec. This knowledge will help you orient your job search and adjust your professional goals.



My skill set and training needs

Do you have the skills you need to attain your long-term professional goals and your short-term goals? Are there skills you need to acquire abroad or in Québec? These are important questions for you to answer.

I determine the skills I have and the ones I still need to acquire

While carrying out your job searches, you can determine the skills you will need to hold a job in your field. Of course, you will see that you have several of these skills, but you may also notice that you are missing a few.

For example, you may have to develop your knowledge of French, or in some cases, English, or even your ability to work with software that you are not familiar with.

Write down all of your skills in your **personalized action plan**. For the ones you still need to develop or acquire, indicate how you plan to do so.

I decide how to acquire the skills I am missing

Make sure to acquire as many skills as you can before you arrive in Québec. This strategy will help you find the job you want as quickly as possible.

If you are not able to do this, look for an educational institution as soon as you arrive in Québec that offers the training you need.

Before enrolling in a private institution, find out about training offered by school boards, CEGEPs and universities. Often, newcomers pay a lot of money for training in private schools and later discover that the same training is offered within the public education network at a much lower cost.

Determine your skills.

Skill	My current level (Check mark the appropriate box)		Notes, sources and possible means for improving this skill (in my country or in Québec)
<i>Written communication in French</i>	Mastered	<input type="radio"/>	<i>Possible source: The Alliance française in my city offers written French courses.</i>
	To be perfected	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
	To be acquired	<input type="radio"/>	
	Mastered	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be perfected	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be acquired	<input type="radio"/>	
	Mastered	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be perfected	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be acquired	<input type="radio"/>	
	Mastered	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be perfected	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be acquired	<input type="radio"/>	
	Mastered	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be perfected	<input type="radio"/>	
	To be acquired	<input type="radio"/>	



My network of contacts

Since most jobs do not appear in the classified ads of newspapers or on the Internet, it is important that you develop your own network of contacts.

I inform my personal network

Inform everyone you know in Québec of your arrival. They can help you find a job or housing, or simply provide you with useful information about life in Québec.

However, make sure you remain objective about the advice you get. It may not always be up to date. Furthermore, people who experienced difficulties will sometimes be pessimistic about your future in Québec.

Do not rely only on these contacts. Even if the advice they give you is reliable, it should not replace your own research.

I build my Web network

Use social media as much as possible, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Viadeo. Recruiters and future employers could discover your profile there.

Try to develop ties with Quebecers and use your social networks to better understand the mentalities and customs of Québec society.

I develop my professional network

Through social media, volunteer work, your own research and steps, you will make contact with people who work in your professional sector. Whether they are employers, employees or people looking for work, maintain positive relationships with them.

The best way to find a job is by word of mouth through the professional network you develop. Developing and maintaining this network is vital to your professional integration.

My job search tools

You now have the information you need to start your job search. While most newcomers find work once they arrive in Québec, some people find a job when they are still in their country of origin. If you have not found a job, the research you do before you leave will prove to be very useful.

I adapt my curriculum vitae

In Québec, and in North America in general, a curriculum vitae is usually short (often two pages), and emphasizes skills rather than diplomas.

It does not contain confidential information such as marital status, age or your social insurance number.

Consult...

Your Complete Job Search Guide, including a curriculum vitae

Emploi-Québec

www.emploiuebec.net

Your Complete Job Search Guide

I include a personalized cover letter with my curriculum vitae

Your curriculum vitae should preferably be accompanied by a cover letter adapted to the nature of the business and the job for which you are applying.

The objective is to take the first steps towards finding a job, in other words, getting the attention of the person who will be reading your letter and your curriculum vitae so that he or she is interested in meeting you for a job interview.

I register with Online Placement, International Stream

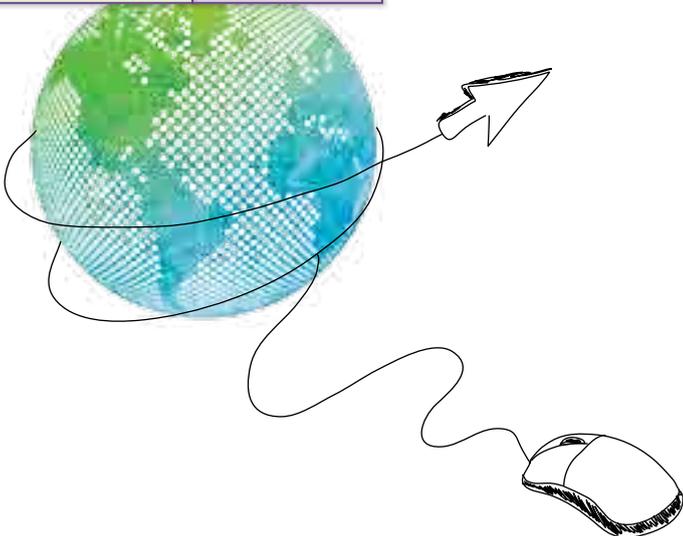
Online Placement is an interactive service that allows you to publish your professional profile and consult job offers from Québec employers. The International Stream allows you to register as soon as you obtain your Certificat de sélection du Québec.

By registering, you can post your job profile online, consult job offers and contact employers directly to offer your professional services.

If you find a job through Online Placement, your application for a permanent resident visa may be prioritized by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

! Register with...

Emploi-Québec's Online Placement	Online Placement	www.emploi-quebec.net
	Online Placement	



I ask for an evaluation of my studies done outside Québec, if necessary

The *Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec* could be useful for your job search, to apply for a study program or to apply to certain regulatory bodies.

Before requesting this document, make sure it pertains to you. Is it required for the job you are interested in? Does the regulatory organization for your professional field require it?

If this is the case, submit your application before your departure. This will prevent processing times from slowing down your job search. Keep in mind that the comparative evaluation costs over \$100.

? Find out more about...

The comparative evaluation	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles	www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
		Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec

My final preparations



I put together a budget

There are significant costs associated with immigrating.

The *Contract respecting financial self-sufficiency* that you signed indicates that in 2012 a person alone needs a minimum of \$2,889 to provide for his or her essential needs for three months. For a family of four, this sum is \$5,123.

? Find out more about...

The minimum amount that corresponds to your family situation

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

Forms

Contract respecting financial self-sufficiency

This amount covers only the essentials, so you will definitely have to limit your spending.

It is therefore important that you have enough money for your daily expenses and to ensure your minimum comfort. This will allow you to spend the time you need to embark on a structured integration process rather than accepting the first job offer you receive.

Chat groups and blogs by newcomers to Québec will allow you to compare various budget estimates. Consult them by all means, but be careful and use your judgment.

Your main expenses

Before your departure

- Application for permanent residence (as well as fees for security checks and medical examinations)
- Translation of documents (diplomas, employment-related documents)

- Application for a comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec (if this evaluation is relevant for you)
- Travel expenses
- Travel insurance
- Private health insurance to cover your first three months in Québec

To help you settle in Québec

- Accommodation for the first few days (hotel)
- Transportation by bus, taxi, etc.
- First month's rent for an apartment
- Furniture (if your apartment is not furnished)
- Warm clothes if you arrive in fall or winter
- Television, computer, etc.

Once you are in Québec (daily expenses)

- Rent or mortgage (if you buy a house or apartment)
- Electricity and heating
- Home insurance
- Food
- Clothing
- Telephone, television, Internet
- Transportation
- Daycare for children
- Healthcare (dentist, optometrist, etc.)

I bring my important documents

Make sure to bring all of the required documents that apply to your situation.

Check mark the documents you need to bring with you

Immigration documents and identity documents	
Certificat de sélection du Québec	<input type="radio"/>
Contract respecting financial self-sufficiency	<input type="radio"/>
Valid passport and other travel documents	<input type="radio"/>
Valid permanent resident visa affixed to your passport	<input type="radio"/>
Birth certificate, adoption documents	<input type="radio"/>
Marriage contract or certificate, cohabitation contract for de facto unions	<input type="radio"/>
Separation or divorce documents and documents regarding child custody arrangements	<input type="radio"/>
Family record book, medical and dental records, vaccination record	<input type="radio"/>
Proof of coverage by the social security plan of your country of origin	<input type="radio"/>
Credit history, bank statements, bank cards	<input type="radio"/>
Reference letters from previous landlords or property title certificates	<input type="radio"/>
Valid driver's licence, international driver's licence	<input type="radio"/>

Documents related to your education	
Diplomas and other educational certificates	<input type="radio"/>
Transcripts, description of courses and internships completed, including their duration	<input type="radio"/>
Continuing education or language education certificates	<input type="radio"/>
Comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec	<input type="radio"/>

Documents related to your professional experience	
Detailed attestations of your work experience	<input type="radio"/>
Attestations of internships or refresher training	<input type="radio"/>
Reference letters from former or current employers	<input type="radio"/>
Professional or trade licence, certificates of competency or professional qualification certificates, etc.	<input type="radio"/>

I take out private health insurance for my first three months in Québec

Except for very rare cases, you cannot take advantage of Québec's public health and prescription drug insurance plans before having lived in Québec for three months.

If health problems arise, the costs could be very high. For example, hospitalization costs over \$3,000 a day, to which the professional fees of doctors must be added.

We strongly recommend that you take out a private health insurance plan to cover your first three months in Québec.

Find out more about the coverage offered by insurance companies and carefully review their quotes so that you can make the best possible choice.

?
Find out more about...

<p>Private insurance</p>	<p>Ombudsman for Life & Health Insurance</p>
--------------------------	--

▶ www.oapcanada.ca
▶ *Company Listing*
(This list is for information purposes only. The OLHI does not make recommendations for member companies.)

I identify where I want to live and work

Now that you have set your professional goals and determined the steps you need to take, it is time for you to really embrace Québec and your new home.

Your research has allowed you, among other things, to identify the jobs you would like to hold, interesting businesses in your field and job opportunities in each region. Now it is time for you to identify the cities and regions that offer you the best professional opportunities.

You must also take into account other factors such as housing, leisure and quality of life to determine your destination region and organize your next steps.

?
Find out more about...

Where you want to live and work

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

🔍 www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

▶ *Where to settle?*

Regional portals

🔍 www.gouv.qc.ca

▶ *In Your Region*

Record the results of your research.

The city where businesses are of interest to me	Job opportunities in the region where this city is located	Other factors that are important for me to consider

I organize accommodation for my first few days in Québec

You do not have any family and you do not know anyone you can stay with when you arrive in Québec? You will be glad you thought of making a reservation in a hotel or organizing another type of accommodation before you arrived. Do your research on the Internet and use your social media contacts.

You want to rent an apartment from abroad? Be careful before finalizing a transaction like this (signing a lease, sending money, etc.).

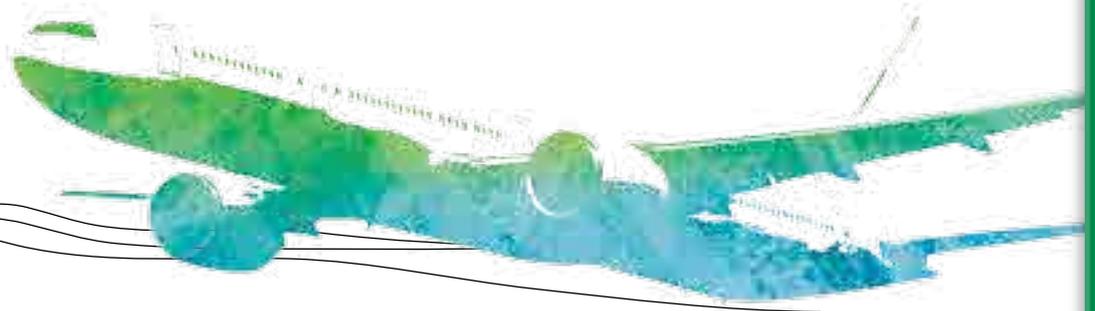
If you do not have any contacts in Québec who can check the state of an apartment, ask to see photographs and ask questions about it. Use Google Maps to see where the apartment is located and if it is close to services such as schools, daycares, public transit, grocery stores, etc.

My arrival in Québec

I meet with the reception service at Montréal-Trudeau Airport

After clearing customs, go to the office of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles.

An agent will greet you and, if necessary, will give you an appointment to attend a group information session on your first settlement steps. This session is usually offered in the days following your arrival. You will also receive a list of community organizations that can help you.



I attend the group information session on getting settled in Québec, if necessary

As soon as you arrive in Québec, you must quickly obtain various official documents (cards, permits, etc.), and take the necessary steps to facilitate your integration into Québec society.

It is important to attend the group information session on your first settlement steps. You will receive up-to-date information that will help you avoid unnecessary steps and remember the most important ones.

During the group information session on your first settlement steps (*Premières démarches d'installation*), you will be given all the information you need to:

- obtain important documents, cards and official permits, including your social insurance number (SIN) and your health insurance card;
- find housing;
- enrol your children in school or daycare;
- get to know Québec's cities and regions;
- register for a French course, if necessary;

- find out which organizations can provide you with the appropriate assistance;
- find out more about the services offered by the Government of Québec, for example, for work or recognition of your skills and diplomas you acquired abroad.

Contact...

The Centre de contacts clientèle to register for the group information session on your first settlement steps (if you did not already do this at Montréal-Trudeau Airport)

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

▶ *Montréal: 514-864-9191*

▶ *Elsewhere in Québec: 1-877-864-9191 (toll-free)*

▶ *From outside Québec: 1-514-864-9191*

My important documents

I make sure I have my permanent resident card

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) issues a permanent resident card to new immigrants as part of the immigration process.

You will receive this card by mail, usually within four weeks of your arrival in Canada, or as soon as you provide the CIC with your mailing address in Canada.

If you already know your mailing address when you arrive in Québec, give it to the CIC office when you are there to complete your permanent residency procedures.

If you cannot provide a mailing address at this time, you must do so within 180 days of your arrival in Canada.

Find out more about...

The permanent resident card

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

www.cic.gc.ca

Permanent resident card

I apply for my health insurance card

The first step to obtaining a health insurance card is to pre-register.

Call or drop by an office of the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) to register yourself and any accompanying family members. During registration, you must also register for prescription drug insurance.



The RAMQ will review your application and send a letter indicating the date on which you will be able to benefit from the health insurance plan. You will receive your health insurance card approximately two weeks after this date.

Keep the letter from the RAMQ until you have received your health insurance card. During the three-month waiting period before you are covered by Québec health insurance, this letter will be required to cover certain health services, for instance those available to pregnant women. Immediately advise the RAMQ of any change of address.

Be careful to always have your card with you. You must also present it in order to register for the public prescription drug insurance plan (if you are not covered by a group insurance plan offered by certain employers).

Find out more about...

The health insurance card

Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec

 www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca

I apply for my social insurance card

Upon your arrival, you must go to a Service Canada office to apply for your social insurance card.

We recommend that you memorize your social insurance number (SIN) and keep the card in a safe place.

Your SIN is necessary in a number of situations, including:

- when you are hired for a job;
- to receive government services or apply for financial assistance;
- to open a bank account in a financial institution.

Find out more about...

The social insurance card

Service Canada

 www.servicecanada.gc.ca

I apply for a driver's licence, if applicable

In the first six months following your arrival in Québec

If you have a valid driver's licence issued outside Québec, you can drive a passenger vehicle (car, motorcycle, etc.) during the first six months following your arrival in Québec. If your driver's licence is in a language other than French or English, it is strongly recommended that you obtain an international driver's licence issued by a competent authority in your country of origin before coming to Québec.

After six months

After the first six months, you cannot drive with this licence. Apply for a new licence as soon as possible.

To obtain a driver's licence, you must:

- call the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) to make an appointment;
- pass practical and theoretical exams, if applicable. Do not take these exams lightly: experienced drivers have failed them because each country has its own traffic regulations.

During your first 12 months in Québec

If you have a driver's licence issued outside Québec, apply for a Québec licence within 12 months following your arrival even if you still do not have a car. This way you will not have to take theoretical and practical exams or take a driving course.

? Find out more about...
The driver's licence

Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec

www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca

Non-holders of a driver's licence

If you wish to drive a vehicle in Québec and you do not hold a driver's licence, you must:

- call the SAAQ to make an appointment;
- take a driving course;
- pass the practical and theoretical exams.

I open a bank account

You will absolutely require a bank account to carry out your daily transactions.

With your new account, you will receive a cheque book (for a fee) and a debit card, which you can use to pay for your purchases and withdraw or deposit money in a banking machine (ATM).

In Québec, most stores do not accept personal cheques. You must use your debit card or credit card, or pay cash.

Compare the services and fees offered by banks and credit unions then go in person to open your account. It is sometimes possible to open an account online.

Settlement and integration support services

Many community resources can help you get settled and assist in your social and economic integration into Québec society.

I seek the assistance of an organization, if needed

Organizations specialized in providing settlement and integration support to immigrants offer a vast range of services, including:

- help to get you settled;
- information sessions to help you better understand Québec culture;
- activities to create mutual support networks.

Many of these organizations also offer job search help.

During your first visit to an organization, do not forget to bring your confirmation of permanent residence or your permanent resident card, as you will have to present one of these identity documents in order to participate in activities.

? Find out more about...

Settlement and integration support organizations for immigrants	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles	www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
		▶ Ministerial partners
		▶ Services offered by the Ministry's partners



My first apartment

Unless you have significant financial means, you will probably not want to stay in a hotel for very long. Therefore, finding a reasonably priced apartment will be a priority.

I find a suitable apartment

Before choosing an apartment, calculate the maximum amount that you can pay. In general, no more than 30% of your gross income should be spent on housing.

When calculating the rental cost of an apartment, do not forget to include the cost of essential services (electricity, heating, insurance, telephone, transportation) and other services such as pay TV and Internet hook-up.

After estimating your rent, you must choose the neighbourhoods you would like to live in. Use Google Maps to develop a better idea of where the apartment is situated and to locate nearby services.

Classified ads in local newspapers and weeklies

This is a classic search method. However, since photos rarely accompany these ads and the descriptions are often incomplete, you will have to visit apartments in person.

Specialized websites

Landlords are increasingly turning to the Internet to advertise their apartments for rent. Since these ads are accessible to everyone at the same time, you must act quickly if you wish to visit an apartment and sign a lease.

Walk around the neighbourhood

This is a good technique for finding an apartment. Sometimes, you can even visit an apartment right on the spot!

Using your network of contacts

Your contacts and the people around you can also be very helpful. Do not hesitate to ask for their help and to use social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Asking for help from a community organization

If you do not manage to find an apartment, you can call on a community organization.

Find...

A settlement and integration support organization for immigrants in your neighbourhood

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ Ministerial partners
- ▶ Services offered by the Ministry's partners

I find out about settling in another region, if necessary

Your professional goals surely guided your choice of region to live in. New elements could prompt you to rethink that choice.

Are you interested in discovering what Québec's other regions have to offer? In Montréal, you can participate in an information session on quality of life, services for immigrants, job opportunities and more.

Organizations can help you better understand a region that interests you and facilitate your efforts to settle there (moving, housing, etc.). Sometimes, these organizations also receive job offers from employers looking for skilled immigrant labour. Do not hesitate to call on them.

Find out more about...

Information sessions on Québec's regions and regionalization organizations

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ Where to settle?
- ▶ Information sessions

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

- ▶ Ministerial partners
- ▶ Services offered by the Ministry's partners

I read my lease and sign it

Before signing your lease, read the entire document carefully. Make sure that all of the conditions discussed with the landlord are included, particularly repairs that need to be done and when.

It is also important to make sure that the apartment indicated on the lease is the one you visited and agreed to rent.

I take out home insurance

Purchasing home insurance is not mandatory, but it is strongly recommended so that you are protected against fire, theft or another unexpected event.

Home insurance will protect you against any claims that could be made against you for damages to the apartment caused by your negligence or property.

? Find out more about...

Home insurance

Insurance Bureau of Canada

www.bac-quebec.qc.ca

I obtain the goods and services I need for my apartment

Some apartments are equipped with a refrigerator and stove (referred to as a "semi-furnished" apartment), others are completely furnished and others have no furniture at all.

If the apartment you rented is not furnished, you will have to obtain the furniture, appliances and other articles you need.

Furniture

New furniture is expensive so it is a good idea to acquire it gradually.

If your finances do not allow you to purchase new furniture, you can buy used furniture by consulting classified ads in newspapers or on specialized websites (Lespac.com or Kijiji.ca).

Telephone, Internet and television

Most Quebecers have a landline. It is generally less expensive than a cell phone.

Some companies offer packages that include a landline, television and the Internet.

Check the prices of the various options offered and ask questions. Do not forget to ask if "hook-up" fees are included. These fees can substantially add to your bill!

Electricity, gas and oil

If it is not clearly indicated on your lease that electricity and heating (electric) are included in the rent, you must call Hydro-Québec to subscribe. If your stove or heating system operates on gas, you will most likely have to deal with GazMétro.

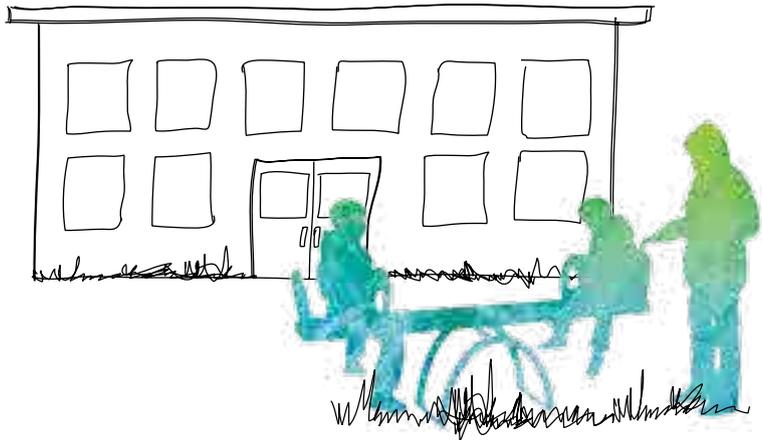
It is important to contact these suppliers as soon as your lease is signed. They will tell you how to proceed so that the billing corresponds to the start date of your lease.

If you have to fill an oil tank for your heating system, you have many oil companies and independent distributors to choose from. Choose the one that offers the best prices and good maintenance services.

? Find out more about...	
Electricity	Hydro-Québec www.hydro-quebec.com
Gas	Gaz Métro www.gazmetro.com
Oil	Many suppliers offer this service. Talk to family, friends, neighbours or use the Internet to find out more.



Daycare services and schools



I find a place in a daycare, if necessary

The Québec government has created a network of subsidized educational daycares for children under five years of age. Demand is high, so it is a good idea to register your child as soon as possible.

If you require childcare while you are waiting for a place in a subsidized daycare, consult the daycare locator service offered by the Ministère de la Famille. It provides the contact information of all non-subsidized daycares, often making it possible to find a space more quickly.

If you register your child in a non-subsidized daycare

Find out about the tax credit that you might be eligible for; it could allow you to recover up to 75% of fees paid.

Before placing your child in a daycare, make sure that it offers quality services. While the government has established monitoring measures, your good judgment is still necessary.

Find...

A daycare	Ministère de la Famille
-----------	-------------------------

www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca

- Services de garde (daycare services)
- Localisateur de services de garde (daycare locator)

If I have school-age children, I enrol them in school

In Québec, school attendance is mandatory for all children between the ages of 6 and 16. The vast majority of five year olds attend kindergarten.

In order for your child to attend a kindergarten (not mandatory), primary school or secondary school, you must first apply for admission with the school board for your territory.

The school board will provide you with the necessary documents and the contact information for the school in your area.

If you arrive in Québec during the school year, the school board will make sure that your child is quickly admitted to a school.



Find...

A school in your city or neighbourhood	Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
--	---

www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

Search for an Educational Institution and Geographics Informations

Tax credits and financial assistance

The Québec and Canadian governments offer tax credits and financial assistance to low-income individuals and families.

Once you convert into Canadian dollars your income in your country of origin the year before your arrival in Québec, you may discover that you are eligible to receive some financial support.

If you have minor children or children studying full time, you may also receive some financial support calculated according to your income.

I apply for the tax credits and financial assistance to which I am entitled

To obtain credits or assistance to which you are entitled (support for low-income adults and child support), you must apply with the Québec and Canadian governments.



? Find out more about...

- The tax credit for daycare fees
- Registering for direct deposit (mandatory to receive the solidarity tax credit)

Revenu Québec

www.revenuquebec.ca

► *Forms and publications*

The application for child support (dependent children under 18 years of age)

Régie des rentes du Québec

www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca

► *Children*

► *New resident of Québec*

The application for a credit for the goods and services tax (Once completed, the form will also be used to calculate family support paid by the Canadian government.)

Canada Revenue Agency

www.cra-arc.gc.ca

► *Forms and publications*

My job search

It is now time to start taking steps to attain your professional goals, which you have adjusted as a function of the Québec context. Even if you have financial needs that must be met immediately, try to stay the course. And make sure you master French.

I attend the session *Objectif Intégration*, if necessary

Unless you completed the Service d'intégration en ligne (SIEL) program, it is essential that you attend the session *Objectif Intégration* in order to attain your professional goals. Among other things, it will allow you to understand the mechanisms, rules and functioning of the world of work, as well as the values and main cultural orientations of Québec society.

The session is composed of eight 3-hour modules.

Find out about the times and places where this session is offered as well as related services that you can benefit from. In Montréal, for example, a drop-in daycare is sometimes provided.

Contact...	
The Centre de contacts clientèle to register for the session <i>Objectif Intégration</i>	Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles
	▶ Montréal: 514-864-9191
	▶ Elsewhere in Québec: 1-877-864-9191 (toll-free)
	▶ From outside Québec: 1-514-864-9191



I find a temporary job

A first job, even a part-time one, will allow you to familiarize yourself with the Québec labour market, acquire Québec work experience and highlight it in your curriculum vitae.

Even if you are over-qualified for this first job, it could help you build your network of contacts and even lead to a promotion.

Where possible, try to find a job in the activity sector where you hope to build your career.

Maintain your professional goals in the short, medium and long term and set aside time to continue to take steps toward finding the job you want.

Use your first job as a starting point

Even if this job is only to earn a living, it is important to make a good impression on your employer.

In fact, you may need to give this employer's name as a reference during an interview for a job that better meets your aspirations. A prospective employer may wish to find out if you are punctual, reliable, and appreciated by your co-workers and clientele.

And why not call on your co-workers or supervisor to try to find a more interesting job.

In Québec, it is normal to leave a job to find a better one. However, it is important to do so responsibly by giving, for example, reasonable notice and training the person who will replace you.

I seek help to find a job, if necessary

Emploi-Québec

Local employment centres

Local employment centres offer services and employment measures across Québec.

In addition to qualified staff who can assess your needs, these centres offer multiservice rooms where you can consult job offers, and access computers, the Internet and documents to help you plan and look for a job.

Update your file on Online Placement

Regularly update your file on Emploi-Québec's Online Placement site or register for this free service where you can post your job profile and look for and consult job offers.

The Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities

Emploi-Québec also offers the Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities. This program provides employers with a subsidy to pay a part of your wages, allowing you to acquire a first work experience in your area of training.

Find out more about...

Emploi-Québec's online services and local employment centres

Emploi-Québec

 www.emploiquebec.net

Employability organizations

Emploi-Québec also funds several organizations specialized in employability that will be able to help you in your job search. Their mission is to support the social and occupational insertion of people who wish to enter or re-enter the labour market.

A network of these organizations across Québec serves as a complement to the services offered by local employment centres.

Find...

Organizations specialized in employability

Emploi-Québec

 www.emploiquebec.net

- ▶ *Services for Individuals*
- ▶ *Employment Assistance*

Directory of resources and initiatives in Montréal

 www.travailimmigrants.com

Find out more about...

Job search assistance services

Job search centres

 www.cre.qc.ca

Youth employment centres

 www.cjereseau.org

Integration enterprises

 www.collectif.qc.ca

Training enterprises

 www.rcee-cpfn.ca

Specialized services for the disabled

 www.roseph.ca

During your first visit to an organization, do not forget to bring along your confirmation of permanent residence or your permanent resident card, as you will have to present one of these documents in order to participate in the activities. You may also be asked to provide your social insurance number.

I make sure I am prepared before contacting employers

Finding a job is an individual responsibility that requires personal effort. For a successful outcome, you must show perseverance and, above all, be highly organized.

Before sending your CV

It is very important to find out about the company you are interested in. If it has a website, take the time to look at the various sections (mission, history, values, products, services, etc.). This will allow you to write your CV and cover letter according to the company's needs.

Prepare for a job interview

What questions will you be asked during your job interview? What are the rules of conduct? For example, should you shake the hands of the members of the hiring committee? Should you look the person in the eye when answering a question?

To ensure a successful job interview, it is helpful to know the answers to these questions. The session *Objectif Intégration*, your Internet research and advice from your professional network will help you be prepared.

I contact employers

You can contact employers who have posted interesting jobs or who you have been put into contact with through your network. You can even offer them your services directly.

You can also contact employers who have not advertised a job, simply to ask them about their business and activity sector. This could be useful and will make a good impression.

A fruitful day of looking for a job does not involve sending out a hundred CVs! There are much more effective strategies, such as:

- identifying three or four really interesting job offers that correspond to your professional goals;
- adapting your CV and cover letter to each of these offers;
- sending your CV and cover letter to targeted businesses and following up with a phone call a week later;
- building up your network of contacts;
- planning your next day.

Activate...

Your job search → Emploi-Québec → www.emploi.quebec.net

Your Complete Job Search Guide



You can count
on us!

If your job search has not brought the expected results, review your **personalized action plan** and make the necessary changes. Remember that staff at your local employment centre and in community organizations can help you.

Looking for a job can be difficult. If you are feeling discouraged, take the time for a little positive distraction, see your friends, spend some time outdoors... It will put the bounce back in your step!

When you have reached your professional goals, you will no longer need your **personalized action plan**. However, you can still call on public services if you are having certain difficulties.

**On behalf of all Quebecers, we welcome you to Québec,
your new home!**

ANNEXES

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Annex 1

To reach us

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

Centre de contacts clientèle (client contact centre)

Montréal area: 514-864-9191

Elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1-877-864-9191

From abroad: + 1-514-864-9191

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/reachus

Opening hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(UTC-5)

Wednesday: 10:30 a.m. to 16:30 p.m. (UTC-5)

Access by telewriter (telecommunications device for the deaf and hearing impaired)

Montréal: 514-864-8158

Elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1-866-227-5968

INFORMATION CAPSULES

7 days a week, 24 hours a day

French, English, Spanish

Montréal: 514-864-9292

Elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1-866-864-9292

From abroad: + 1-514-864-9292

Government of Québec

If you are unable to find the government agency you are looking for or you wish to obtain information on Québec government laws, programs and services (eligibility conditions, opening hours, etc.), contact Services Québec. This free central telephone service is offered in every region of Québec.

Services Québec

Montréal: 514-644-4545

Québec City: 418-644-4545

Elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1-877-644-4545

www.gouv.qc.ca

Access by telewriter (telecommunications device for the deaf and hearing impaired)

Montréal: 514-873-4626

Elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1-800-361-9596

Annex 2

List of the main regulated professions and trades in Québec¹

Professions regulated by professional orders

- Acupuncturist
- Agronomist
- Architect
- Audiologist
- Bailiff
- Certified human resources and industrial relations counsellor
- Certified interpreter
- Certified terminologist
- Certified translator
- Chartered accountant
- Chartered administrator
- Chartered appraiser
- Chemist
- Chiropractor
- Dental hygienist
- Dental technician
- Dentist
- Denturologist
- Dietician
- Dispensing optician
- Engineer
- Forest engineer
- Geologist
- Guidance counsellor
- Hearing aid acoustician
- Land surveyor
- Lawyer (advocate)
- Marital and family therapist
- Medical electrophysiology technologist
- Medical imaging technologist–nuclear medicine
- Medical imaging technologist–radiodiagnosis
- Medical technologist
- Midwife
- Notary
- Nurse
- Nursing assistant
- Occupational therapist
- Optometrist
- Pharmacist
- Physical rehabilitation therapist
- Physician
- Physiotherapist
- Podiatrist
- Professional technologist
- Psychoeducator
- Psychologist
- Radiation oncology technologist
- Respiratory therapist
- Social worker
- Speech therapist
- Urban planner
- Veterinary surgeon

1. List current as of June 2012.

The teaching profession (at the preschool, primary and secondary school levels)

- Teacher, general education
- Teacher, vocational education

Regulated trades in the construction industry

- Blaster
- Boiler maker
- Bricklayer-mason
- Building locksmith
- Carpenter-joiner
- Cement finisher
- Crane operator
- Electrician
- Electrician specialized in security systems installation
- Elevator mechanic
- Erector mechanic (glazier)
- Fire protection mechanic
- Heavy equipment mechanic
- Heavy equipment operator
- Insulator

- Interior systems installer
- Land surveyor
- Lineman
- Painter
- Pipe fitter
- Pipe welder (high pressure)
- Plasterer
- Refrigeration mechanic
- Reinforcing iron worker
- Reinforcing steel erector
- Resilient flooring layer
- Roofer
- Shovel operator
- Tile setter
- Tinsmith
- Underwater worker
- Welder
- Worksite mechanic

Regulated vocational qualifications

Certificates of qualification are required for the following fields (for work performed **outside the construction industry**)

- Blaster
- Drinking water

- Electrician
- Elevator mechanic
- Elevator platform mechanic
- Halocarbons
- Lift mechanic
- Natural gas and propane attendant
- Oil heating
- Plumber
- Pressure vessel inspector
- Pressure vessel welder
- Refrigeration unit mechanic
- Refrigerationist
- Stationary machine mechanic
- Technical process piping

Regulated financial functions, in the following fields:

- Insurance
- Financial planning
- Securities

Annex 3

Regions of Québec

- 01 Bas-Saint-Laurent
- 02 Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean
- 03 Capitale-Nationale
- 04 Mauricie
- 05 Estrie
- 06 Montréal
- 07 Outaouais
- 08 Abitibi-Témiscamingue
- 09 Côte-Nord
- 10 Nord-du-Québec
- 11 Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine
- 12 Chaudière-Appalaches
- 13 Laval
- 14 Lanaudière
- 15 Laurentides
- 16 Montérégie
- 17 Centre-du-Québec



Annex 4

The Declaration of client services (*Déclaration de services à la clientèle*)

The *Déclaration de services à la clientèle* contains a list of the MICC's main services as well as hyperlinks that will take you directly to the information you are looking for on the MICC's site.

Our commitments:

- Courteous personnel who listen to you
- Accessible services
- Quality information
- Protection of personal information
- Ever-improving services

The Commissaire aux plaintes et à la qualité des services (complaints and service quality commissioner)

The Commissioner receives and processes complaints and comments regarding the MICC's services. Do you have a complaint about one of our services? Start by contacting the person in charge. If you are not satisfied, you can contact:

Commissaire aux plaintes et à la qualité des services

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

Édifice Gérald-Godin

360, rue McGill, rez-de-chaussée

Montréal (Québec) H2Y 2E9

Montréal area: 514-873-3533

Elsewhere in Québec (toll-free): 1-800-771-0464

www.micc.gouv.qc.ca/plainte

Find out more about...

The *Déclaration de services à la clientèle*

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

 www.micc.gouv.qc.ca

► *Déclaration de services à la clientèle*

Information on the steps to take to submit a complaint

Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

 www.micc.gouv.qc.ca

► *Commissaire aux plaintes*

Annex 5

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- **Ambulance–Fire–Police:** 911
Only use 911 for extreme emergencies.
- **Gas–Odour detection:** 911
- **Info–Santé (health information line):** 811
- **Sûreté du Québec (provincial police):** 310-4141 or *4141
- **Centre antipoison du Québec (poison control):** 1-800-463-5060
- **Centre de prévention du suicide (suicide prevention centre):** 1-866-277-3553
- **S.O.S. Violence conjugale (conjugal violence helpline):** 1-800-363-9010
- **Gai–Écoute (gay listening line):** 1-888-505-1010
- **Info–Abus aux aînés (elder abuse information line):** 1-888-489-2287
- **Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-668-6868
- **Directory assistance:** 411 (fees apply)

Your opinion is important!

The *Learning about Québec* guide was designed to help you start taking steps towards your integration from your country of departure and to continue them once you arrive in Québec and during your integration process.

Please share your comments and suggestions with us so that we can continue to improve this guide.

Visit our site and click on

Your opinion is important!

[www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/
learningaboutquebec-opinion](http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/learningaboutquebec-opinion)

Thank you for giving us a few minutes of your time.

