



GUIDE TO WELCOMING AND INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS

JULY 2023



**RÉSEAU
du NORD**

Soutien à l'immigration
FRANCOPHONE



RÉSEAU
du **NORD** | Soutien à l'immigration
FRANCOPHONE

ABOUT

The Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone du Nord de l'Ontario creates links between organizations in all regions of Northern Ontario, such as Sudbury, Timmins, North Bay, Sault Sainte-Marie and Thunder Bay, in order to set up a system to facilitate the reception and integration of newcomers.

RÉSEAU DU NORD'S MANDATE

The Réseau du Nord's mandate focuses on 5 areas of intervention: identifying the needs of French-speaking newcomers to complete the continuum of Francophone immigration; the economic integration of French-speaking immigrants into society; social, cultural and community inclusion; promoting Francophone communities; and finally, the consultation, coordination and mobilization of partners.



WHAT IS THIS GUIDE ABOUT?*

This guide shares some best practices that employers can use in order to help their new immigrant employees settle in their new community and new environment. It is a living document that can be updated as needed for the benefit of all employers.

WHO ARE THESE IMMIGRANTS ?

Most of the immigrants are temporary residents holding a Francophone mobility work permit, a Working holiday work permit, a Post-graduation work permit, or permanent residents. Employers can play a critical role in helping their new employees integrate into their new workplaces as well as their new communities. Successful settlement and integration will lead to a better long-term retention of newcomers in their communities and with their employers.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

www.afnoo.org

Settlement services : etablissement@afnoo.org

Employment services : emploi@afnoo.org

Community connexion : liaison@afnoo.org

Promotion and integration : promotion@afnoo.org



www.accueilfrancophone.com

info@accueilfrancophone.com



www.novocentre.com

info@novocentre.com



RESOURCES

Welcoming kit



www.afnoo.org

[Welcoming kit](#)

Newcomer legal clinic

newcomerlegal@lakeheadu.ca

BEFORE ARRIVAL



These are some ideas on how, as an employer, you can prepare yourself to welcome your new employee and their family, as well as how to prepare them for their new work environment.

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

It is important to have meetings with your new employee before their arrival through Zoom, Google Meet or other platform so that you get to know each other, answer their questions and answer yours as well.

BE A RESOURCE

As mentioned before, the new employee might ask you questions related to their work, life in Canada and more. As an employer, try to be informed and familiar with the community and the support it can provide, the different organizations that can help you and your new employee in their integration.



CONTACT PERSON WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

This can be a person with whom the new immigrant will work or in the same department. It can also be another immigrant who is well integrated within your organization. This contact will answer more specific questions in relation to their position or any other questions that may be related, for example, with whom else this immigrant will work.

COORDINATION WITH SETTLEMENT SERVICES

It is important to coordinate with settlement services in your area.. Indeed, you will have to exchange information on various subjects, such as the assessment of their needs which will be used to develop a personalized settlement plan (housing, transport, language training) and many others.

AIRPORT PICK-UP AND TRANSPORTATION

Coordinate with your new employee as well as settlement services when it would be best for them to arrive. Please, make arrangements to pick up your new employee and their family from the airport. Once you have picked them up from the airport, drive them to their transitional accommodation in which they will spend their first few weeks finding a permanent accommodation or to their permanent housing. Make sure you know the needs of the family. For instance, what luggage are they bringing? How much luggages are they bringing? Are there any children or infants to transport?



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Once travel planning begins, it is advisable to find or recommend places where the new employee can find transitional housing, if possible, close to the workplace. It can be an Airbnb, a furnished apartment or a hotel room if there is no other choice. Once the new employee is settled in his temporary accommodation, he can stay there until he finds a permanent one. You can help find permanent housing even before they arrive. However, most newcomers prefer to visit and choose their permanent accommodation according to their needs and preferences.

AGREE ON A START DATE

When you meet your new employee, and once you have decided on an arrival date, it is important to choose a start date. It is recommended that your new employee starts working a week after their arrival because it allows them to acclimatize to their new environment and community, and to recover from jet lag.

BUY SOME FOOD

Buying or having groceries before the new employee arrives can be a small action that can have positive consequences for them. Indeed, after arriving from a long trip, the new employee may be exhausted from a very long trip and want to rest. Moreover, it can be difficult for the new employee to locate grocery stores without having a Canadian phone number because they cannot search online for one because they do not have access to the Internet.



ORGANIZE AN INFORMATION SESSION FOR YOUR STAFF

It is important to organize an information session with your staff in order to give them information about your new employee. Indeed, if this is the first time that you hire an immigrant, it is also possible to have the new employee present at this meeting, so that they meet the staff and start to get to know each other.

AFTER ARRIVAL



Here are some ideas for you when your new employee and their family have arrived in their new community and new workplace.

WELCOME AND ORIENTATION

A day or two after the new employee arrives, letting them recover from their trip, you can officially welcome them to their new community. To do so, it would be beneficial for them to visit the city or town, show them where they will be working, where the grocery stores are in their area and other important places such as banks, shopping centers and more. If your community has a public transportation system, it would be a good idea to explain how it works and give the necessary documentation.



ACCOMPANY YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE TO IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS

A few days after the arrival of the new employee, it is important to drive them to key appointments. These are :

1. Service Canada to obtain their Social Insurance Number (SIN).
2. Service Ontario to apply for the Ontario Health Insurance Plan and get a health card.
3. A bank to open a Canadian bank account in order to have a debit and/or credit card.
It is advisable to verify what documents are needed and make certain that the new employee brings them when necessary.
4. Drive Test Centre to exchange a driver's licence if necessary.
5. A phone store to obtain a Canadian phone number

INFORMAL VISIT TO THE WORKPLACE

During the visit to the city or town, it would be a good idea to go to the workplace for a short informal visit before the starting date. This would allow the new employee to see the environment in which they will be working and to meet their new coworkers as well. It would also be a good opportunity, if necessary, to collect any documents as well as equipment such as a computer.



HOST A WELCOME MEAL OR HAVE A DRINK

Hosting a meal or having a drink with your new employee will give you the opportunity to get to know each other in an informal setting and in a relaxed atmosphere before you start working together. You can also invite other coworkers with whom they will work.

SUPPORT THE HOUSING SEARCH

Once your new employee has arrived, and if they are living in temporary housing, it would be a good idea for them to seek a permanent one within a few days of their arrival. You can help them by suggesting areas where they should be looking at and connecting them with real estate agencies. A common requirement for signing a lease is having a credit check. However, your new employee will not be able to provide one. Try to encourage the landlord to be flexible by explaining your employee's unique circumstances.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS INFORMATION AND BENEFITS PLAN

It is important to inform your new employee of any services that are not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, and that they may have to pay for directly such as, going to the dentist, getting glasses, taking an ambulance or medicine that is prescribed. This would also be an opportunity for you to discuss the employer benefits plan, what are the advantages and explain to them how to use these benefits.



DAY CARE

If your new employee has children, it would be beneficial to mention the different childcare options if the family needs it. Indicate that in Canada, child care options are varied and range from nannies, daycare centres, home daycares, and preschool programs, to before and after school services. Make sure to direct the newcomer to have these discussions with their community settlement services.

SCHOOL

It is the same for school. It would be beneficial to mention the different school options such as French schools present in the community. If there are no French schools, refer them to schools with a French immersion program. Again, you can refer your new employee to settlement services if necessary.

AT WORK



Here are some ideas for when your new employee will start working.

ESTABLISH A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS

Even if it is always recommended for the new employee to come at least a week before or earlier if possible. It may happen that your new employee arrives only a few days before starting work. If it is the case, they will have to adjust to their new life and new job at the same time. Moreover, they may have appointments during their working hours or have to go to the bank, Service Canada, Service Ontario or school if they have children they need to register because the opening hours are during their working hours.



It should also be remembered that the new employee is coming from another country with a different time zone. Therefore, it will take them some time to adjust to their new time zone. It is difficult to determine how long it will take for your new employee to adjust to the time change. However, after two weeks, they should be used to their new time zone. As a result, it would be wise, if possible, for you to try to adapt their schedule until they adjust.

ORGANIZE REGULAR MEETING

You can organize regular meetings with your new employee to discuss work-related tasks, expectations, challenges they face and ways to overcome them, and answer their questions. Language is one challenge experienced by many newcomers with English as a second language. Consider strategies to overcome this challenge in the short term, such as recapping group or team meetings together one-on-one to ensure essentials are understood. You can also use this time to check in on how they are doing with settlement.

FIRST PAYCHECK

It is important to go through a pay stub with your new employee and explain what each category corresponds to and what is deducted from their salary. This will allow them to better understand how the salary system works in Canada and Ontario.



BE INFORMED ABOUT THE CULTURAL NEEDS OF YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE

Your new employee might be coming from a very different cultural background. Take the time to learn if there are any practices that might be impacting their work. For example, the new employee you have hired is a Muslim and may be fasting during Ramadan. You can also ask if they have any dietary restrictions if you are planning a meal, snack or any other events with food. They also might want to pray during working hours if they are religious. If so, you can arrange a space for them.

MENTORSHIP

Whether formal or informal, having a mentorship program will facilitate the integration of the new employee and promote cross-cultural understanding among employees. For the immigrant employee, a mentor in the workplace is an employee who has experience and seniority within the organization who agrees to support them. Mentoring will allow the new employee to learn more information about the organization as well as Canadian workplace standards. For the mentor, mentoring is an opportunity to develop intercultural understanding. This benefits both the mentee and the mentor because it promotes newcomer's integration and develops workplace's capacity to integrate.

If you want to create a mentorship program, it is important to explain its purpose to your team. Some of your employees might be worried about devoting time during their workday to mentoring. It is important to remind them that your organization is committed to welcoming and integrating immigrant employees and that you support them in investing their time and resources in the program.



MENTORSHIP

The chosen mentors should represent the objectives of your mentorship program. For instance, they should be employees who know the organization/company and its culture, who are friendly yet professional, and who possess the interpersonal skills to effectively establish a relationship of trust.

It is important not to pair the mentee with a direct supervisor. Indeed, this can make the new employee feel uncomfortable asking questions or raising concerns which can hinder their integration and inclusion. Be sure to allow the mentee to provide feedback about their mentor as the match may not always be adequate.

You are responsible for providing clear instructions to your mentor and mentee on the relationship structure within your organization's mentorship program. It is essential to define standard expectations for meetings, such as their frequency as well as their subject of discussion between the mentor and the mentee.

Two or three months after the start of your mentorship program, you can send a satisfaction survey to the mentee and the mentor. You can also arrange a meeting with these two persons in order to have more detailed information. Review them with your team as they will help you make adjustments.



MENTORSHIP

Il est important de ne pas jumeler le mentoré avec un superviseur direct. En effet, celui-ci peut faire que le nouvel employé ne se sente pas à l'aise pour poser des questions ou faire part de ses préoccupations ce qui peut faire obstacle à son intégration et inclusion. Assurez-vous de permettre au mentoré de communiquer une rétroaction au sujet de leur mentor car il se peut que le jumelage ne soit pas toujours adéquat.

Vous êtes responsable de donner des instructions claires à votre mentor et mentoré sur la structure des relations dans le cadre du programme de mentorat de votre organisation. Il est essentiel de définir des attentes standards pour les rencontres, comme leur fréquence ainsi que leur sujet de discussion entre le mentor et le mentoré.

Deux ou trois mois après le début de votre programme de mentorat, vous pouvez envoyer un sondage à la personne mentoré sur sa satisfaction ainsi qu'au mentor. Vous pouvez également organiser une rencontre avec ces deux personnes pour avoir des informations plus détaillées. Passez-les en revue avec votre équipe car elles vous aideront à effectuer des ajustements.