

ADVENTURE. ALBERTA.



Alberta Awaits

Spring 2008

A newsletter for people interested in moving to Alberta, Canada
Produced by the Government of Alberta - Employment and Immigration

H-1B Visa Holders

Are you an H-1B visa holder in the United States? Consider coming to Alberta, Canada to live and work through a pilot program recently introduced by the Alberta Provincial Nominee Program (PNP).

Many H-1B visa holders have the specialized skills and experience that Alberta employers are looking for. The Alberta PNP H-1B pilot project can help you start working in Alberta faster by allowing you to quickly obtain residency.



The Alberta PNP H-1B pilot project may allow individuals holding an H-1B visa to apply directly to the Alberta PNP providing they meet the criteria for the program. On average, those nominated for permanent residency by the Alberta PNP obtain it in 6 – 18 months.

To be eligible to apply to the Alberta PNP under this pilot project, you must be a valid H-1B visa holder. H1-B1, H-1C, or E-3 visa holders may also be eligible under this pilot. For any of the above visa holders, you must be working in an occupation where there are skill shortages in Alberta, and you must have a minimum one year of work experience in the United States.

To determine if you are employed in an occupation where skill shortages exist, visit the following link:
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/oup/aboutlist.shtml.

If you meet the criteria for this pilot program, consider moving to Alberta. Our vibrant economy and excellent quality of life make it the ideal place for immigrants to find employment and advance their careers. For more information about the H-1B pilot project, please contact the Alberta Foreign Worker Information Hotline at 1 (780) 427-6419.



Getting Started in Alberta

Healthcare



In accordance with the Canada Health Act, Alberta has a publicly administered and funded health care system that guarantees Albertans receive universal access to medically necessary hospital and health care services. There are monthly premiums to be paid by all those enrolled in the Alberta Healthcare Insurance Plan. It is common for employers to cover the entire monthly premium amount, or a portion of it. For more information, see the useful links on page three.

Within the first three months of your arrival, you must register with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan by contacting Alberta Health and Wellness at 780-427-1432 or via e-mail at health.ahcipmail@gov.ab.ca.

Once registered with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan, you will receive your Alberta Health Care Card along with your personal Health Care Number. Keep this card/number in a safe place as it is for your use only and may be requested in order to obtain health services. For more information on what health services are covered under this plan, go to www.health.gov.ab.ca/ahcip/AHCIP_brochure-NCN0009.pdf.

Banking

Start by setting up an account (chequing, savings or combination of both) with a financial institution of your choice. Each financial institution offers different interest rates, services charges, and additional bonuses so do some research to determine which one is best for you. Once your account is opened, you can transfer your current account balance into your new account.





Social Insurance Number

The Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a nine-digit number that you need to work in Canada and to have access to government programs and benefits. It is issued in a credit card style format and can be used as an official form of identification. Your SIN card and number should be kept confidential and in a safe place. For the fastest and most secure method, apply for your SIN by visiting a Service Canada Centre near you. For locations and more information visit: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/sc/sin.

Useful Links:

Financial Institutions- www.cfeedayplanner.com/en/keylists.php, click on the link 'List of Financial Institutions'

Alberta Health and Wellness- www.health.gov.ab.ca/ahcip/AHCIP.html

Driver's Licence Information-www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/Drivers_MotorVehicles.cfm

Alberta Ministry of Transportation/Ministry of Infrastructure - www.infratrans.gov.ab.ca/Drivers-Vehicles.htm

Canada Health Act- http://hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/2002/2002_care-soinsbk4_e.html

Before and After Immigration Checklist - www.alberta-canada.com/immigration/immigrate/checklists.html

Driver's License/ID

If you come to Alberta with a valid driver's licence, you can easily exchange it if the country you originated from has a reciprocal agreement with Alberta. A valid licence from the United States can be exchanged for a Class 5, 6, or 7 when the applicant is presenting a valid licence of equivalent class. Except in a few cases, all other classes

requested would require testing and must provide applicable medical and vision screening. Applicants must present immigration and residency documentation and acceptable identification.



A photo identification card is also available to an Alberta Resident who does not or cannot hold a valid Alberta operator's licence. The minimum age required for a resident of Alberta to apply for photo identification is 12 years of age.

In order to obtain an operator's licence or photo identification, proof of legal Canadian (i.e.: visa, permanent resident card, etc.) and Alberta (i.e.: third party residential lease agreement, letter from Alberta based employer, etc.) residency must be provided.



Northwest Alberta: Welcome to the Real West!



From sprawling plains and fertile farmland to mixed wood and boreal forests, northwest Alberta is a truly unique region which has grown to become one of Alberta's best kept secrets. Oil and gas, forestry, and agriculture have contributed to the strong economy along with the spirit and ingenuity of the over 150,000 northwestern Albertans who call this unspoiled landscape home. Grande Prairie and Peace River offer great opportunities for newcomers but don't discount smaller towns, villages, and hamlets who also boast a variety of industries and opportunities.

One of the area's highlights is the Northern Alberta Heritage Trail. Experience the spectacular scenery first hand and learn about the storied history of northwest Alberta. Dotted the Heritage Trail is a historical railway museum, an interpretive center focusing on wildlife and bird species, and the town of Falher where more than 48,000 hives produce 10 million pounds of honey a year. In fact, the northwest Alberta region produces 40 per cent of the honey in Canada. Visit www.heritagetrail.ca for more information. To learn more about the beautiful area of northwestern Alberta, visit: www.rediregion.ca, www.peacecountrycanada.com, www.opportunitynorth.ca.

Grande Prairie Stompede Rodeo and Fair

For over 30 years, Grande Prairie has hosted the annual Stompede Rodeo and Fair. Every May, the Stompede showcases professional riders from across Canada and around the globe in chuck wagon and rodeo competitions. Bull and bronco riding, barrel racing, and steer roping highlight some of the events that kick off rodeo season in western Canada.

The Stompede offers something for everyone. In addition to the rodeo and races, Grande Prairie comes alive with the Stompede parade and fair ground including amusement park rides and evening musical entertainment featuring some of the biggest names in country music today. The Stompede creates a vibrant festive atmosphere the entire family can enjoy. Visit www.gpstompede.com for more information.

