




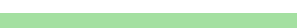




# Arrive COVID-19 guide for newcomers to Canada: Coping and adapting in uncertain times



# Table of content

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>An overview of the COVID-19 situation in Canada</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on newcomers</b>	<b>7</b>
	└─ Newcomers in pre-arrival	7
	└─ Newcomers in post-arrival	9
	└─ Permanent residents and temporary foreign workers	11
	└─ International students	15
	<b>COVID-19: How to adapt your job search strategy</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Coping during uncertain times</b>	<b>19</b>
	└─ Be well informed	19
	└─ Stay connected while remaining socially distant	19
	└─ healthy — mentally and physically	20
	└─ Support your local community	21
	<b>Key takeaways</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Additional resources</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>Sources</b>	<b>26</b>

# Introduction

At Arrive, our mission is to help newcomers achieve their life, career, and finance goals by providing relevant information, resources, and tools needed for a smooth transition to Canadian life. Arrive's commitment to newcomers is unwavering, and in times like these, we need community, connection, and support more than ever.

From the beginning, we collectively witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the world. We watched governments and medical authorities step up their efforts to contain the spread, leading to many countries observing social distancing, closing borders and even declaring a state of emergency. While most people and businesses globally have been impacted in some shape or form by these measures, the newcomer community, in particular, has been hard hit.

As a newcomer, right now, you may be feeling scared or overwhelmed in these stressful times. We want you to know that we are with you every step of your journey, and together, we'll get through this.

We have been sharing a variety of COVID-19 content on the Arrive Blog to help newcomers both in and outside Canada. With this guide, we move a step further by consolidating all essential must-know information, resources, tips and advice and making it available as a downloadable, ready-resource that you can access anytime, anywhere.

Our two-fold objective for this guide is:

**To inform:** From providing a macro overview to drilling down on the impact of various guidelines and preventive measures, the guide covers information newcomers need to know to stay up-to-date.

**To help:** The coronavirus pandemic has added more tension and anxiety to an already stressful event of moving and settling in a new country. Through this guide, we've outlined various tools and resources that newcomers can leverage to stay positive and motivated, all backed by expert advice and recommendations.

We hope you find it useful in navigating this challenging time, and that it will help you confidently prepare for your new life in Canada.

Stay healthy and hopeful,

*The Arrive Team*



# An overview of the COVID-19 situation in Canada

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is an unprecedented global event. It has changed the way we live, work, and connect with each other. Since the virus emerged a few months ago in Wuhan China, it has spread rapidly around the world, dramatically affecting populations from Iran to Italy, Spain, France, the U.K., the U.S., and Canada. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the global outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic.

Every day, we see reports of increasing numbers of cases, far-reaching measures governments are taking to curtail the spread and economic effect of the virus and potential progress in the development of vaccines.

As countries strive to contain the disease and flatten the curve, no matter where you live, social distancing (also known as physical distancing), self-isolation and good hygiene practices are now part of our everyday routine and the new normal for most. The sheer volume of information (and misinformation) can be overwhelming and add to our already elevated stress levels. We know that the negative economic effects of the pandemic can be particularly severe for newcomers. Not to mention the emotional and psychological effects of being away from home during this crisis. Below is reliable information on the impact the pandemic has had on life in Canada, and the Canadian Government's response plan.

## Social distancing: A new phrase for a new environment

As part of the Canadian approach to this challenging situation, we are working together by staying apart. By changing our habits we can all do our part to reduce close contact. It's not easy, but according to Health Canada, social distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Physical or social distancing, isolation and quarantine are measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Here's how they differ from each other:

**Social or physical distancing:** Making a conscious effort to minimize physical contact with others.

**Isolation:** Staying at home when you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19 and avoiding physical contact with other people.

**Quarantine or self-isolation:** Staying at home when you may have been exposed or if you have no symptoms of COVID-19.

To comply with the government-outlined preventive measures and guidelines, schools and restaurants have been closed, concerts and festivals postponed, and professional sports have been paused. Residents have been asked to follow suit and avoid large group gatherings. As we have learned, older people and those with compromised immune systems are at higher risk, so we should take care to limit physical contact with them. But don't forget to phone or video call.

As part of increased efforts to manage and limit the COVID-19 outbreak in Canada, in several provinces, the Provincial and Territorial governments have declared a state of emergency and implemented active measures such as school closures, travel restrictions, and asked businesses to enable their employees to work from home or have flexible work arrangements.



## Closed borders

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries have closed borders, and this has added new levels of uncertainty to everyone's travel plans. Canada has also stepped up its efforts in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and implemented certain travel restrictions that may affect those who intended to travel or move to Canada in the immediate future.

### **What does restricted travel mean?**

According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), for those travelling by air, Canada currently denies boarding to all foreign nationals unless they fit one of the exemptions outlined by the government. Canadian citizens, permanent residents, temporary foreign workers, international students and some others are exempt and may be permitted to enter the country.

### **NOTE:**

Although you may be exempt from travel restrictions to Canada, IRCC is encouraging all travellers, including permanent residents, international students, and temporary foreign workers, to delay or postpone any non-essential travel to Canada. You can find the latest information and updates regarding the implementation of these exemptions on the IRCC website.

If you do decide to travel, note that all international flight arrivals have been redirected to four airports in Canada:

Calgary International Airport  
Vancouver International Airport  
Toronto-Pearson International Airport  
Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport

Although you may be permitted to enter Canada, restrictions imposed by your home country may limit you from being able to fly out. Therefore, it's advisable to check your local government's travel advisory for all the up-to-date information.

## The government's economic response plan

The Federal and Provincial governments are taking active steps to manage the pandemic while also providing support to employees and businesses. Prime Minister Trudeau announced an economic aid package to support individual Canadians and businesses affected by COVID-19. The package includes \$27 billion for an emergency aid package that offers immediate and direct help to individual Canadians and businesses and \$55 billion in tax deferrals.



Some of the items included in the \$27 billion aid package are:

- 900 biweekly payments for 15 weeks; those who do not have employment insurance or paid sick leave may be eligible to receive money from the government.
- Small-business owners to receive a temporary wage subsidy from Ottawa that will be equal to 10 per cent of the salary paid to employees for a period of three months.
- A subsidy, titled the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), covering 75% of an employee's wages – up to \$847 per week - for employers of all sizes and across all sectors who have suffered a drop in gross revenues of at least 15% in March, and 30% in April and May.
- Individuals will have until June 1 to file taxes; payment can be deferred until August 31.
- A six-month moratorium for student loan repayments.
- The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) will be temporarily increased for the month of May, with an additional \$300 for every child.
- \$5 billion emergency support benefit through the CRA for support workers who are facing unemployment as well as an additional amount for low-income people through the GST credit.

# Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on newcomers

The pandemic has affected all segments of newcomers within and outside Canada, including some who recently moved and others who were planning their move soon.

## Newcomers in pre-arrival

The pre-arrival phase for most newcomers to Canada is bittersweet. On the one hand, there is the excitement and joy of achieving your dream of moving to a new country while, on the other hand, the sadness of leaving behind your friends and family slowly begins to creep in. Newcomers dedicate much of their efforts during this time to wrapping up their life in their home country and gathering as much information as they can on life in Canada. The COVID-19 situation has added an additional layer of stress and uncertainty as a result of deferred life and career plans.



## Measures and travel restrictions implemented by the IRCC

### For permanent residents (PRs)

If you're a PR who was visiting another country or if you were approved as a PR before March 16, 2020, but haven't travelled to Canada yet, you will be able to enter Canada by air or land. Upon arrival in Canada, like all other travellers, you will undergo necessary health checks and must isolate for 14 days.

If you have a confirmation of permanent residence (COPR) and permanent resident visa (PRV) and are unable to travel during the validity of your documents, you can inform IRCC by submitting a web form. Accordingly, you will be informed of the next steps.

## **For temporary foreign workers (TFW)**

If you're a TFW who was approved for a work permit before March 18, 2020, you will be exempt from travel restrictions and will be able to travel to Canada by air or land. Upon arrival in Canada, like all other travellers, you will undergo necessary health checks and must isolate for 14 days.

Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) process is being temporarily modified for agriculture and food-processing employers; the required 2-week recruitment period will be waived for the next six months.

Additionally, to improve flexibility and reduce the administrative burden for employers, including those in food processing, IRCC is increasing the maximum allowable employment duration for workers in the low-wage stream of the TFW Program from 1 to 2 years.

## **For international students**

If you are an international student who was in the middle of your course of study or if you had been approved to study in Canada (before March 18, 2020) but were outside Canada when the travel restrictions took effect, you may be able to travel to Canada by air or land. Upon arrival in Canada, like all other travellers, you will undergo necessary health checks and must isolate for 14 days.

## **For refugees and asylum claimants**

As per guidelines from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), resettlement travel for refugees is temporarily suspended, which means you will not be able to enter Canada as a refugee. According to the IRCC, the IOM and the UNHCR will make alternative arrangements for those refugees currently in transit and who are no longer able to continue their journey to Canada at this time.

Maintaining consistency with human rights obligations, Canada will continue to accept asylum claimants. However, note that Canada and the US have announced collaborative and reciprocal measures where Canada will now be returning irregular migrants who attempt to cross anywhere at the Canada–US border, including those who attempt to make an asylum claim at a land port of entry (POE).





# Newcomers in post-arrival

If you're a newcomer who has recently landed in Canada, as you try to settle-in in this uncertain time, having access to authentic and reliable resources to guide you becomes increasingly important. Spending all of your time indoors and staying away from social interactions may feel very annoying, frustrating, or boring, but there are things you can do while we all collectively wait to get back to life as we knew it.



## Take your time with completing landing formalities

As a newcomer, you may be concerned about certain landing formalities like getting your Social Insurance Number (SIN), applying for provincial or territorial photo ID and health insurance, or even getting your driving license.

To ensure the health and safety of the staff and the public at large many Service Canada Centers and provincial government offices like ServiceOntario are closed and no longer accepting in-person applications. So it might be a good idea to wait it out until there's a formal announcement mentioning that it's business as usual. You can keep checking the official federal and provincial websites to see when it's safe to visit.

Many of you may be concerned about visiting a bank to open an account or to get access to the funds that you may have transferred prior to your arrival. If you have just arrived in Canada, we recommend that you follow government guidelines and self-isolate yourself for the first 14 days after your arrival, and do not visit a bank branch during this time. We will share more information on the next steps you can take as it becomes available. Be sure to follow Arrive's social media accounts (Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook) for the most up-to-date information.

## Get insured, know your options

Depending on the province or territory you reside in, there may be a waiting period before you are eligible for public health insurance in Canada. Most newcomers choose British Columbia (B.C), Ontario, Alberta or Quebec as their landing destination. B.C., Ontario and Quebec, for instance, have a waiting period of up to three months, but in Alberta, you're covered from the day you land. So be sure to check the eligibility requirements in the province or territory where you reside.

Given the developing situation around COVID-19 and the need for medical assistance, it's important to have health insurance for yourself and your family. While it is ideal to have some form of private or public health coverage, there's no reason to worry if you're currently in the waiting period for provincial insurance and don't have any other health coverage. Exceptions are being added, existing regulations are being modified every day, and the government has assured that anyone needing healthcare would get it. Ontario, for instance, has waived the 3-month waiting period for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage. If you need to seek medical treatment, you can call the ServiceOntario InfoLine at 1-866-532-3161 to have your OHIP effective date adjusted and a health card issued. Other provinces are also modifying the eligibility criteria so keep checking the Provincial and Territorial government sites for updates.

For non-emergency cases, all provinces and territories in Canada offer free health advice or information via phone. In most provinces and territories, you can dial 811 to be connected with a health-care professional; British Columbia has HealthLinkBC, and in Ontario, this system is known as TeleHealth Ontario. Note that the purpose of these health lines is not to diagnose illness or hand out prescriptions but to help you decide if you can handle the problem yourself or if you should seek medical advice from a doctor.

If you find yourself in need of care, without insurance, and a health line suggests seeing a doctor, you can seek out Community Health Centres (CHC) located across the country. While most CHCs accept provincial insurance, they are also an option for those who need it and are waiting for provincial coverage.

And lastly, if you have an emergency health situation and need urgent medical help, you can go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital or call 911. All calls made to 911 are free. However, please refrain from calling 911 for COVID-19 updates, as it is an emergency number only.



Arrive is providing one free online doctor consultation with a general practitioner from Maple to up to 500 eligible newcomers. Maple allows you to connect with a Canadian-licensed doctor in minutes through your phone, tablet, or computer from the safety of home, available 24/7.

**[Learn more about this offer on the Arrive website.](#)**

## **Stay optimistic and manage your expectations**

These are challenging times for newcomers. The prevailing uncertainty and the impact of the coronavirus on Canada's economy is likely to affect employment prospects in the immediate future for newcomers in Canada. The silver lining, however, is that you can utilize this time to hone your skills, network online, and prepare yourself for the Canadian job market so that when the time comes, you will be ready.

# Permanent residents and temporary foreign workers in Canada

For those who have recently landed, some of you may be starting off on your job search journey, while others may have just begun their first job in Canada. Finding employment is an important aspect of settling-in, but in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, this is likely to be a bigger challenge than in normal times. Some of you may feel anxious about your job prospects given that businesses in some industries (such as retail, food and hospitality industries) have temporarily closed down.

## Be prepared for when things get back to normal

While things are at a halt now, it's a really good time to tighten up your resume and update your LinkedIn. Take control of the things you can instead of worrying about the things you can't.

Being ready means having everything up to date, everything ready to go, continuing to develop your skills and just being ready for when things get back to normal.

## You can use the following Arrive resources to prepare for your job search, even before you arrive in Canada.

- Read the Arrive career guide
- Improve your resume
- Craft and practice your elevator pitch
- Practice interview questions
- Start building your Canadian network from home
- Understand the Canadian market before leaving
- Read the newcomer stories on the Arrive blog

## Evaluate your eligibility for receiving government benefits

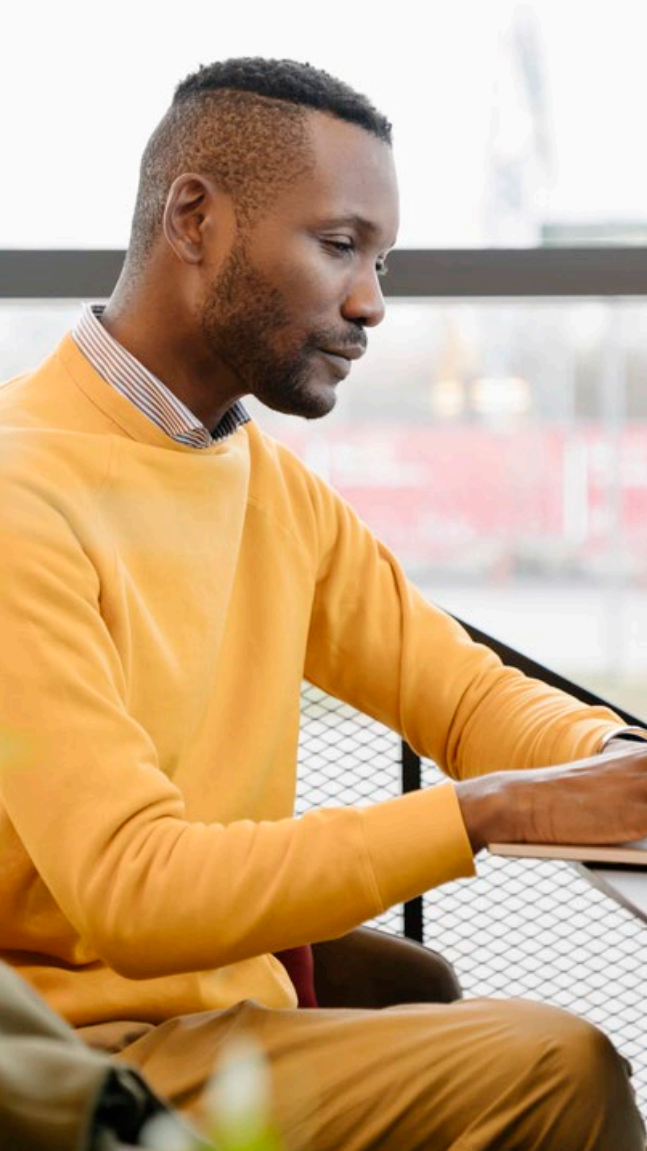
For those who are employed, depending on the nature of your job, and in accordance with the protocol for social distancing, some of you may be working from home. Others may not have an option and maybe torn between following recommendations of social distancing and the necessity of working to meet the cost of living. Some may have even lost their jobs as a result of businesses closing or laying off employees due to the crisis.

As an employee and a newcomer in Canada, you may qualify for government programs if you've been affected by the current situation. Two major programs that you may be eligible for are **Employment Insurance (EI)** and the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)**.

While **EI** has always been available as a benefit to the Canadian workforce, the government introduced **CERB** as additional support for those affected by COVID-19. Let's get to know these programs in detail and understand their application process.

## Employment Insurance (EI)

Employment Insurance (EI) provides monetary benefits to individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own (for example, due to a shortage of work, seasonal or mass lay-offs) and are available for and able to work, but can't find a job.



There are different types of EI benefits with varied eligibility criteria; some key categories are:

**Regular benefits:** For individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own (for example, due to shortage of work, seasonal or mass lay-offs) and are available for and able to work, but can't find a job. The eligibility guidelines differ by occupation and province. The government encourages individuals to apply and then determines their eligibility with help from processing agents.

**Sickness benefits:** For individuals who are unable to work due to medical conditions that prevent them from working, such as illness, injury or quarantine. Once you apply, a Service Canada agent will determine if you are eligible for benefits

**Maternity and parental benefits:** For individuals who are away from work because they're pregnant or have recently given birth as well as those who have to care for their newborn or newly adopted child. Upon applying, a Service Canada agent will determine if you are eligible.

**Caregiving benefits and leave:** For those who take time away from work to provide care or support to a critically ill or injured person or someone needing end-of-life care. As a caregiver, you don't have to be related to or live with the person you care for or support, but they must consider you to be like family. After applying, a Service Canada representative will determine if you are eligible for benefits

It is advisable to apply for EI benefits as soon as you stop working. You can apply for benefits even if you have not yet received your Record of Employment (ROE). If you delay filing your claim for benefits for more than four weeks after your last day of work, you may lose benefits

Number of hours of employment needed to qualify for EI benefit :

**Regular benefits:** It depends on your situation. However, generally speaking, you will need between 420 and 700 hours of insurable employment (based on the unemployment rate in your area).

**Sickness benefits, maternity and parental benefits, and caregiving benefits and leave:** You need to show that you've accumulated 600 insured hours of work in the 52 weeks before the start of your claim, or since the start of your last claim, whichever is shorter.

If you're confused about the type of EI you qualify for, you can use the Benefits Finder.

## EI and the COVID-19 scenario:

The coronavirus pandemic has affected businesses and employees negatively. If you're unable to go back to work due to being in quarantine, you can apply for EI sickness benefits. To support those affected by COVID-19, the government has:

- Waived the one-week waiting period for new claimants so they can be paid for the first week of their claim.
- Established a new dedicated toll-free phone number (1-833-381-2725) to support enquiries related to waiving the EI sickness benefits waiting period.
- Lifted the requirement to provide a medical certificate.
- Added the option for people to apply later and have their EI claim backdated to cover the period of delay.

Understand the Canadian market before leaving  
Read the newcomer stories on the Arrive blog

## Calculating EI benefits

Irrespective of the EI category of benefits you are applying for, you will be informed of the exact amount only once your application is processed.

To get generic estimates, if you're applying for regular or sickness benefits, for most people, the basic rate used for calculation is 55% of your average insurable weekly earnings, up to \$54,200 annually (as of January 1, 2020) or a maximum amount of \$573 per week. If you're applying for maternity and parental benefits, you can use the calculator available on the government website to estimate your benefits.



## How long do EI benefits last?

**Regular benefits:** You can receive EI for 14 weeks and up to a maximum of 45 weeks, depending on the unemployment rate in your region at the time of filing your claim and the number of insurable hours you have accumulated in the last 52 weeks or since your last claim, whichever is shorter.

**Sickness benefits and caregiving benefits and leave:** You can receive up to 15 weeks of sickness benefits. The number of weeks of benefits you get depends on how long you're unable to work for medical reasons.

**Maternity and parental benefits:** The number of weeks of benefits you get depends on your province and the benefit type you choose. You can estimate by using the online EI maternity and parental benefit calculator.

## The process of applying for EI

The documents required for applying for EI vary by the type of benefits. The complete list of documents for regular benefits, sickness benefits, maternal and parental benefits, and caregiving benefits can be found online.

### Steps in the EI application process:

1. Review the eligibility criteria (mentioned above)
2. Gather supporting documents
3. Gather your personal information
4. Complete the online application
5. Provide supporting documents
6. Receive a benefit statement and access code by mail
7. Review application status

Service Canada will mail you a benefit statement once your application is complete. This statement will include a 4-digit access code and the information you need to complete your reports. Receiving the EI benefit statement does not mean that Service Canada has made a decision about your claim.



## **CERB and the COVID-19 scenario:**

If you don't qualify for EI, you can check your eligibility for the newly introduced, Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). [Note: This replaces the previously announced Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit.]

As part of the CERB, the government has provided a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months to:

- Workers who must stop working due to COVID19 and do not have access to paid leave or other income support.
- Workers who are sick, quarantined or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- Working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children that are sick or need additional care because of school and daycare closures.
- Workers who still have their employment but are not being paid because there is currently not sufficient work and their employer has asked them not to come to work.
- Wage earners and self-employed individuals, including contract workers, who would not otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance.
- Seasonal workers and those who have recently run out of employment insurance.  
People who make less than \$1,000 a month due to reduced work hours.

The CERB is accessible through a secure web portal. Applicants will also be able to apply via an automated telephone line or via a toll-free number. Find more information on the CERB questions and answers page.

# **Impact of COVID-19: International students**

International travel restrictions are still in-effect and discourage individuals from any non-essential travel. However, there are exemptions in place for international students who must travel to Canada.

## **Here's a summary of the student exemptions:**

### **Students travelling to Canada**

Students with a Canadian study permit are exempt from travel restrictions to Canada. According to the government, if you're an international student who has a valid study permit or if you were approved for a study permit on or before March 18, 2020, you are exempt from the travel restrictions

If you're travelling by air, you need to pass a health check conducted by airlines before you're allowed to board your flight.

Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter Canada by air. Upon arrival in Canada, your health will be assessed before you leave your port of entry. And even if you do not have any COVID-19 symptoms, it is mandatory for you to self-isolate for 14 days.

## International students in Canada

As long as your study permit has not expired, you can apply to change your status to that of a Visitor if you're no longer studying OR apply for a visa extension if you want to continue studying.

If your study permit has expired, you can apply to restore your status as a temporary resident.

For those arriving in Canada, it is mandatory to self-isolate for 14 days, and beyond that, everyone is expected to follow social distancing. If found disobeying government orders, there are hefty fines imposed in various provinces.

If you're an international student, this phase can be stressful and emotionally draining as you're miles away from your family members, lacking the support network you would have back home. Many universities and colleges are offering different means of help and assistance, such as virtual yoga and meditation sessions to help students. Some colleges and universities are also deferring rent for students staying on-campus, making bursary programs available, offering mental health resources and online workout sessions so their students can continue to feel supported.

### Here are some of the areas where international students have been affected as a result of COVID-19:

- **Housing:** Many universities and colleges in Canada encouraged students living on campus to vacate their dorms and residences, if they could, as measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In some cases, international students and others who could not go home were asked to be prepared to move residence buildings to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- **Academic continuity:** Almost all courses, academic programs and assessments have moved online to a digital format and colleges, and universities are improvising to accommodate students who were supposed to start their term in Canada but couldn't travel due to borders closing. Students with disabilities or learning challenges are finding the transition to online learning more difficult.
- **Financial impact:** Most students live on a tight budget and the loss of income from part-time jobs has put many of them under pressure to meet living expenses.
- **Employment prospects:** Many students have lost their jobs. Government guidelines state that digital format of course delivery due to COVID-19 will not affect students' eligibility for receiving the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Program. Meanwhile, Colleges and Institutes Canada is advocating for additional flexibility to be offered to students.

### Hoping for the best

These are challenging times for all segments of society, and many are struggling. Overall, the job market across Canada has been greatly impacted by COVID-19. Students who were working and encountered loss of employment due to COVID-19, may be eligible for the EI and CERB benefits

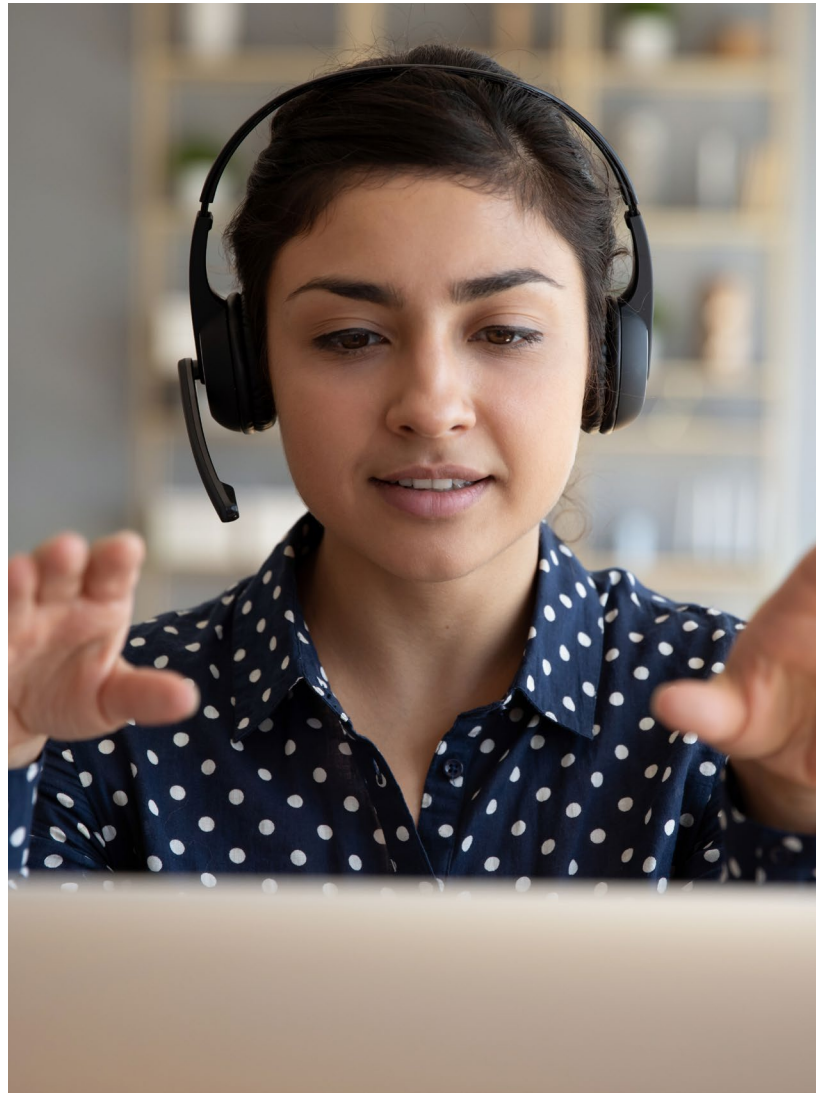


# COVID-19: How to adapt your job search strategy

Canada's job bank website has some excellent reports and trends for every occupation. You can even filter it by province or city to get a more precise overview of the job market outlook and hiring trends. This information can be very helpful in understanding the in-demand jobs and skills for each city, thereby enabling you to make informed decisions.

Laurel Falconi, manager of corporate engagement at ACCES Employment in Toronto, says:

*"The good news is that companies are still operating and still hiring. While many have slowed hiring practices as they recalibrate the way they're doing business, employers across various industries are still looking for people. Like everyone, most companies are now operating in a different way. You won't get to meet these employers in person, but you'll get to chat with them online. Presume businesses are running unless they tell you otherwise. Employers from various industries have come to us looking for people to fill a wide range of roles. Some positions are from before the crisis, while other opportunities are a result of it. There are new jobs in retail grocery, warehousing, distribution, logistics, manufacturing. Companies are seeking clerks, managers, product technicians, engineers, and IT techs, to name just a few."*



## Deeper reading:

Get more insights and prepare yourself for the post-coronavirus job market. Laurel Falconi from ACCES Employment offers tips and guidance on how to find a job and more.

Many talented newcomers are looking for meaningful opportunities so we've compiled a list of ways to continue your job search and outlined the organizations that are hiring, even amidst the current crisis.

## Refine your job skills and be prepared for the opportunity

An effective way to utilize your time while you stay home is to work on your job skills so that when the opportunity presents itself, you're well-equipped to make the most of it. You can work on your resume and cover letter and edit it as per the Canadian format, work on building your personal brand, practice your elevator pitch and improve your interview skills.

For free online modules on job skills and career preparedness, explore **Prepped**.

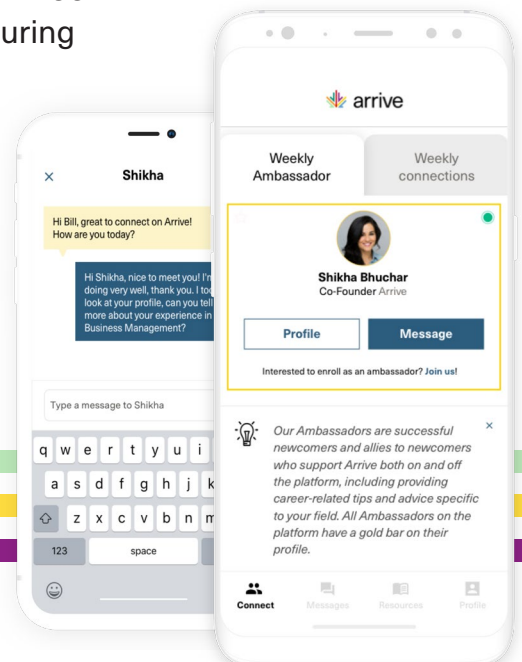
As a job seeker, there's so much you can do to stay busy. Professional networking, which involves coffee chats, is core to Canadian work culture. In light of the COVID-19 situation, most coffee shops are closed, and networking events have been cancelled. But don't let that stop you from networking. Thanks to technology, you can continue to reach out to people online, connect via video calls and even try virtual coffee!

### Continue networking (virtually)

Everyone's trying to navigate this new way of connecting and networking especially when looking for work. Arrive is a great resource for newcomers, connecting you with relevant people to help you build a more meaningful network. The Arrive community offers support in these uncertain times.

It's also important to support one another and be mindful of other people's circumstances. Understand that everyone has their own challenges; they might be dealing with kids at home, health concerns, loneliness, job insecurity or financial concerns of their own. Remember to be kind and patient.

**Download the Arrive Connections app for free**  
to build your Canadian network digitally during  
this time of social distancing



# Coping during uncertain times

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has compelled us to live our lives according to a new normal, which involves social distancing and self-isolation. As individuals and families deal with unemployment, stress, and the risk of being exposed to the virus, it is becoming increasingly important to stay up-to-date on all information, give back to the community, and focus on mental and physical well-being.

## Be well informed



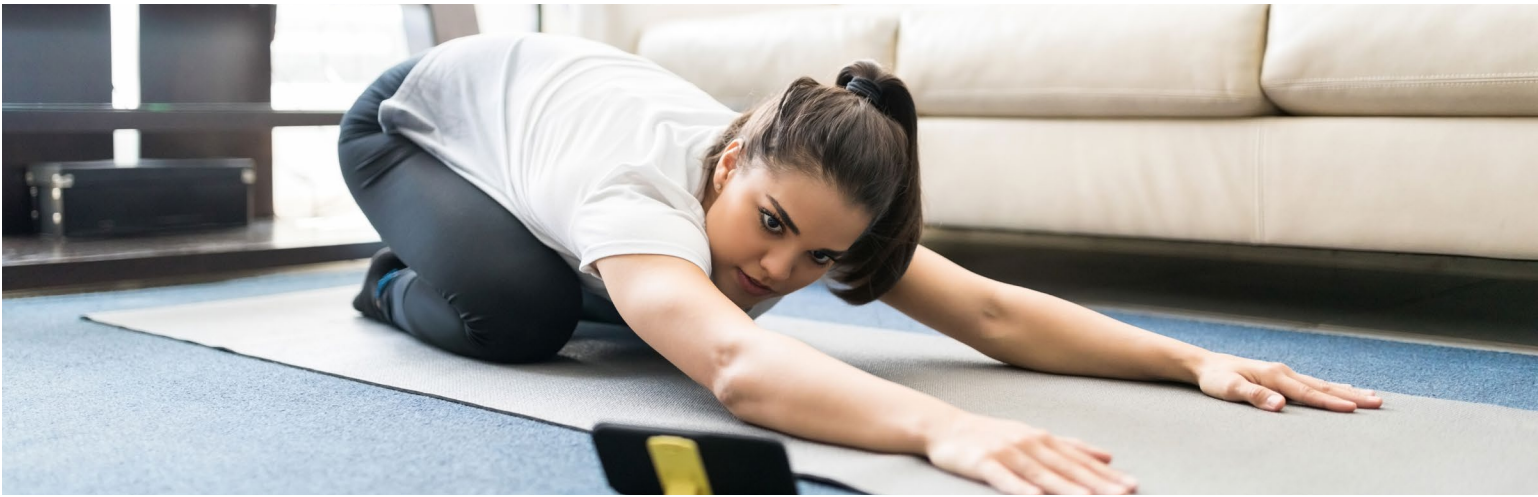
Some key sources that you can track for all COVID-19-related information are:

- The Government of Canada coronavirus website: A key site for information regarding government plans and programs.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada: It has the latest update on the outbreak, as well as advice on preparation, prevention, and more.
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC): CBC is Canada's public broadcaster, and you may find it to be a reliable source for updates during this time of flux.
- For a more global view, the World Health Organization site is the place to go.

## Stay connected while remaining socially distant

The government has asked residents to follow measures such as social distancing and self-isolation to contain the spread of the coronavirus. As nations unite in their efforts to fight COVID-19, these protocols have now been implemented in many countries. Social distancing and travel restrictions make it difficult to meet friends and family in-person, but thanks to technology, we can connect with them virtually.

- **Friends and family:** Check in through audio and video calls. During your conversations, remind them about best practices for social distancing, isolation and maintaining cleanliness and hygiene at home.
- **Kids:** Organize virtual activities. You can read a story to them over a video call to keep them occupied, engage in virtual games, play a musical instrument, or sing a song. Choose cheerful and upbeat activities to break the monotony and stress of being in isolation.
- **Professional and social connections:** Keep in touch with your network any time, anywhere with Arrive Connections and networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and others.



## Stay healthy — mentally and physically

Newcomers experience stress from a multitude of external factors, like the pressure to find work, the pressure to find an apartment, and the pressure to figure out the system. On top of these, there are many internal pressures as well. Most immigrants feel an immense pressure to succeed very quickly because money is tight. And if that doesn't happen or if it takes longer than expected, it is quite normal to feel depression, disappointment, and hopelessness, which can lead to shame and negative self-image. This becomes a vicious cycle because from then on, one can quite easily become discouraged and withdrawn.

To add to all of this, being isolated from society for days at large can start to affect your mental health and well-being. For newcomers, since you're in a foreign land, miles away from your friends and family, this situation can lead to more anxiety, irritation and stress, especially as you worry about your loved ones back home.

Know that it's okay to be worried. You can try to stay calm by keeping in touch with your friends and family through phone or video calls and by checking out some of these mental health resources. Plan out a routine to give your days some structure and try different things to see what works best for you. Focus on self-care: exercise, eat healthily, avoid spending all your time on the internet or watching television and get enough sleep.

### Deeper reading:

Read 6 tips on maintaining mental health for newcomers during COVID-19 on the Arrive blog for more information on how you can better manage your stress and stay positive. It features insights and tips on coping and staying mentally well from Toronto therapist, Mihaela Anghel.

# Support your local community

If you're healthy and able, there are many ways you can give back to the community in this challenging time. Volunteering has always been symbolic of true Canadian spirit, and as you settle in and make Canada your new home, there's no better time for you to step up and do your part in supporting the community.

## 3 ways to volunteer and help the community while staying safe during COVID-19:

### 1- Virtual check-ins

In Canada, the concept of virtual check-ins is gathering steam locally. Community members are checking-in with their neighbours and vulnerable populations including, older adults, people with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, hypertension, and those with compromised immune systems to see how they're doing and to ensure they have everything they need.

**How people are helping:** Some non-profits and communities are getting together to form "Neighbourhood Pods." A Neighbourhood Pod is a group of 5 to 30 people who volunteer to support one another and provide mutual aid, including virtual check-ins.

### What you can do to help

Find a Neighbourhood Pod and volunteer. Progress Toronto has teamed up with Disability Justice Network of Ontario's Sarah Jama and with Amara Possian, one of the creators of the Neighbourhood Pod Toolkit, to provide an online training (webinar) on neighbourhood pods.

British Columbia (B.C.) has launched a new 211 phone line and website to help connect seniors with people who want to help them during the novel coronavirus pandemic. You can register online to volunteer. 211, based out of Vancouver, is a charitable organization that specializes in providing information and referrals regarding community, government and social services in the province. It is helping seniors with virtual visits, picking up and delivering some groceries, picking up and delivering medications, and dropping off a meal or two.



## 2- Running errands

While all of us are actively practicing social distancing, some individuals and community groups have united in an effort to help and assist the vulnerable populations across Canada by running errands to pick up groceries or prescription refills

**How people are helping:** Many are joining the local Caremongering Facebook groups or volunteering with dedicated COVID-19 community response teams to help those who need assistance. Caremongering is a mutual aid group and is becoming a nationwide trend. The size of the groups ranges from a few handful to thousands and are varied in their core purpose as well. Caremongers volunteer to distribute food and supplies to those who need it the most, and run errands for those who are unable to step outside.

### What you can do to help

Join a local Caremongering group or a non-profit and volunteer. Caremongering groups can be found for all major cities across Canada including Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Niagara, Halifax, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and more. All you need is a Facebook account to read and respond to posts.

Volunteer with charities, nonprofits and other COVID-19 response teams. For instance, Volunteer Toronto and B.C.'s 211 service are accepting applications online. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association, the nation's largest men's Muslim youth organization, has launched a nationwide initiative to help those in need. Through its Neighbourhood Helper campaign, Muslim youth are offering their services to pick up groceries, fill p escriptions and provide overall moral support. Canadians who require assistance are encouraged to call 1-855-HELP-811 or sign up on their website - Helping Neighbours.

Practice social distancing and maintain hygiene while making drop-offs: Visit grocery stores and pharmacies at non-peak hours and coordinate drop-offs via text or phone and leave items outside the door. Always wash your hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds before/after each delivery and carry hand sanitizer while you're out.

If possible, wear protective gloves while shopping and handling a delivery for someone. Whether or not you choose to wear gloves, wash your hands before and after, and use hand sanitizer as you go. As an additional measure to try to protect those around you, you can also choose to wear a non-medical mask.

Use digital payments instead of cash where possible.



### 3- Donating

One of the simplest ways through which you can help those who need it the most in this uncertain time is by donating money or essential items if you can afford to. It's a challenging time for many individuals and families as organizations have downsized. Many charities, nonprofits and government organizations are working with local governments, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other agencies to support communities and contain the spread of COVID-19.

What people are doing to help: CanadaHelps.org has a list of charities and local organizations that are raising money in response to the coronavirus situation.



#### What you can do to help

Food and medical supplies such as masks, gloves, sanitizers and disinfectant wipes are in high demand in most places. Donate to a charity of your choice or look up local organizations in your neighbourhood that are either trying to raise money or are looking for item donations.

Don't panic buy and overstock essential items for yourself as this impacts the vulnerable population and limits their access to food and supplies when they need it. The Canadian government has assured that there is enough supply for everyone, so there's no need to hoard.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many blood donors have cancelled or are unable to make it to their appointments. There is a constant need for blood, stem cells, plasma and organ and tissue donors. Consider donating blood, if you're eligible, to help prevent shortage.

# Key takeaways

These are uncertain times — there's new information emerging every day and in accordance with those, authorities are constantly trying to implement guidelines, processes and measures for the benefit and welfare of all individuals.

## Here are six key takeaways from this guide:

1. Practice social distancing.
2. Travel restrictions are still in effect and for those who are exempted and will be travelling, upon arrival in Canada, you will have to mandatorily self-isolate for 14 days, even if you don't have any COVID-19 symptoms.
3. The Canadian government has introduced an economic response plan to help residents cope with financial strain and losses.
4. For those who have recently moved to Canada, take your time with completing all landing formalities, but make sure you have private or provincial health coverage.
5. Various activities can help you cope with this uncertain time and also prepare for a post-coronavirus world. Stay up-to-date on the latest news from reliable sources, keep in touch with friends and family virtually, and volunteer and support your local communities
6. As a job seeker, you can effectively utilize this time to track the job market, build your skills, and continue networking virtually.

Newcomers are, by definition, more brave and resilient than many because they uproot their lives in their home country, leave their comfort zone, and start over in a new country. We at Arrive are confident that you will weather this storm and hope that the information and tips you've just read will help you navigate this challenging period with confidence.

While we're all trying to cope with the current circumstances in ways that work best for us and our families, we must remember to take precautionary measures and adhere to the guidelines by local health authorities and the government. We can get through this by working together, as one community, by helping one another and being kind — just the way Canadians are known to be.





# Additional resources

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## Provincial and Territorial information on COVID-19

[Alberta](#)

[Northwest Territories](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

[British Columbia](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[Quebec](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[Nunavut](#)

[Saskatchewan](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Ontario](#)

[Yukon](#)

[Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

**NOTE:** All information and resources provided in this guide have been updated as of April 14, 2020.

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