Edmonton Local IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE GUIDE Part 2 of 4

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKPLACE CULTURE

2025 - EMPLOYMENT ACTION TABLE



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Land ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We **respectfully** acknowledge that the City of Edmonton is located on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional lands of diverse Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux. **These Nations are the original caretakers of this land. Their histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence the vibrancy of our community today.**

As we work toward a more inclusive and equitable Edmonton, we recognize our shared responsibility to honour the land, its original peoples, and the ongoing contributions of Indigenous communities.

This guide is created in the spirit of reconciliation, understanding, and collaboration with all who call these lands home.

Message from the Chair

When we first began talking about this guide, we did not just envision a document, we imagined a **shared journey**. One where stories, ideas, and experiences would shape something truly meaningful. Today, as I reflect on everything that's brought us to this point, I am filled with **deep gratitude**.

To my fellow members of the **Employment Action Table**, thank you. Month after month, you've shown up with open hearts and thoughtful contributions. You've **listened**, **challenged**, **encouraged**, and **created**. Every section of this guide holds a little bit of you—your care, your insight, your belief in the **power of equity** and **inclusion**.

But perhaps most importantly, I want to thank the **volunteers** who shared their stories with us. Your voices made this guide real. The interviews were more than just information gathering—they were moments of **connection**, **vulnerability**, and **hope**. Your honesty and passion reminded us all why this work matters.

Some of you spoke of barriers you've overcome. Others painted a picture of the kind of workplace you dream of. Many of you simply wanted to help others feel less alone in their journey. Thank you. You didn't have to say yes, but you did and we are better for it.

This guide is for you. It's not just a resource, it's a **reflection of community.**

So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for believing in this work. For showing up. For caring deeply, even when it was hard. This is what **community leadership** looks like. And it's an honour to walk alongside you.

With sincere appreciation,

Thabani Conrad Bhala
Chair, Employment Action Table


Thank you!
Mirande Alexandre
Nana Ayisha
Nicole Wong
Mini Obiaga
Shilpa Raut
Sahana Parameswara
Esuvat Mollel
Segen Berhane
Oge Ilure
Onibonile Mathe
Vargas
Thamsanqa Bhebhe
Sascha Thompson
Rebecca Rajakone
Fathia Adam
Ailyn Peria
Alejandra Forero-Caceres
Bedri K. Mohammed
Anuj Batra
Brad Bartko
Cashmir Jighere
Carol Sun
Doug Piquette
Dr Chris Chukwuma
Emelie Bassi
Eric VanSpronsen
Ezra Banoba
Fredo Ali Kamara
Fatimah Dini
Jason Courtepatte
Joanne Swensrude
Hildy Perez-Robie
Julie Nurmi
Harnoor Dhaliwal
Linda Guenther
Judy Sillito
Kendall Zielke
MarieMark Chaney
Michael Farr
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Edmonton
Alberta
EMPLOY Abilities
CPHR Alberta
CANADA CAREER TRAINING
MFRS Multicultural Family Resource Society
FOCAS CANADA
Thank You
211
CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
BREDIN CENTRE FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT
MCHB
IslamicFamily created to serve
FRAP FRANCOPHONIE CANADIENNE PLURIELLE
PolicyWise for Children & Families
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
ACTION FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IN ACTION
Gateway Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sometimes the most meaningful opportunities come from **unexpected places**. For many newcomers, volunteers, and career explorers in Edmonton, volunteering becomes a powerful first step—not just to gain experience, but to **build relationships, confidence, and a deep sense of belonging.**

In this section, we explore how volunteering can open doors to employment, personal growth, and community integration. From mentoring youth to assisting at community events or supporting non-profit organizations, **volunteering in Edmonton is about more than giving your time—it is about building your future.**

We also pair this with something just as important—**understanding Canadian workplace culture.** For those new to Edmonton or to the Canadian job market, workplace norms can feel unfamiliar. What does collaboration look like? How do teams communicate? What does equity and inclusion feel like in action?

This section brings these questions to life. Through real stories, practical insights, and tips gathered from employers, mentors, and professionals, we break down what to expect and how to thrive in the workplace. Whether you are a newcomer navigating your first job in Canada or a service provider supporting someone who is, this section aims to **bridge knowledge with confidence.**

HOW TO USE THIS PART OF THE GUIDE

This section is organized into two connected parts that support each other:

Volunteering as a Career Launchpad

We begin with stories from real Edmontonians whose first step toward employment was through volunteerism. This includes:

- Personal narratives from job seekers who used volunteering to build networks and gain skills
- The benefits of volunteering for mental wellness, career exploration, and confidence-building
- Resources and programs that connect newcomers with volunteer roles in the city
- Tips on how to speak about your volunteer work in interviews and resumes

Explore Common Job Sector

The second half of this section helps you prepare for what to expect in a Canadian work environment. You will find:

- Key cultural norms and values in the workplace (e.g., punctuality, collaboration, inclusivity)
- Insights into unwritten rules—how teams communicate, resolve conflict, and offer feedback
- An overview of workplace rights and responsibilities, including health and safety, mental health support, and employee protections
- Employer highlights: see how local companies are building inclusive, supportive work environments



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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

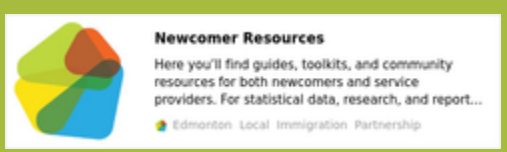


Volunteering is one of the most effective ways for newcomers to gain Canadian experience, develop critical skills, and expand their professional networks. This section introduces the importance of volunteering as a **stepping stone to employment,** showcasing how it can help individuals gain industry-specific experience, build confidence, and establish meaningful professional connections. Through volunteering, job seekers can demonstrate their commitment to continuous learning and prove their abilities to potential employers, making it easier to transition into paid employment. It's a chance to build skills, expand networks, and rediscover purpose.



This portion of the guide shares real-life success stories of individuals who have used volunteering to advance their careers or obtain employment as well as enhance their interpersonal skills. These individuals' stories also align with broader initiatives such as the Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership **(ELIP)** and its **Employment Action Table**, which champions volunteerism as a tool for integration. As ELIP's Employment Action Table chairperson, notes, "Volunteering isn't just 'waiting' for a job. It's actively building your future while contributing to your local communities, you'll never regret showing up, the rewards, both personal and professional, are worth it."

Visit ELIP DIRECTORY OF VOLUNTEER ORGS to find opportunities near you. **Your future and your community will thank you!**



VOLUNTEER NARRATIVES

Teagan's Story:

From Volunteer to Future Social Worker

When Teagan first started volunteering, it was to fulfill a school requirement. But what began as a checkbox quickly turned into a life-changing journey. Today, Teagan's story inspires others to see volunteering as more than just giving time. It's an opportunity to grow, connect, and create meaningful change.

Teagan's path started with **Big Brothers Big Sisters,** where she mentored a sixth-grade girl facing personal challenges. "Her mom told me that our weekly meetings made a big difference," Teagan shared. "When she moved to junior high, she asked to keep the program going. That's when I realized how powerful these connections can be."



Teagan also volunteers at a youth club, helping children from immigrant families adjust to life in Edmonton. Teagan recalls moments that opened her eyes to the struggles many face, like a young girl who often arrived hungry because her family's fridge was broken. "It made me appreciate the things I've always had and showed me how even small acts can help."

Volunteering hasn't just shaped Teagan's perspective; **it's cemented her career path in social work.** "It's confirmed that this is what I want to do with my life," she said. Along the way, it's also opened professional doors, with opportunities arising through the networks she's built while volunteering.

Teagan's advice for anyone on the fence about volunteering? "Even an hour a week can make a difference. It changes how you see the world and gives you something to feel proud of. Plus, you never know who you'll meet or what opportunities might come from it."

For newcomers and job seekers, Teagan's story is a reminder that **volunteering is not just about giving back—it's a way to grow, build skills, and connect** with a community that values your contributions.

VOLUNTEER NARRATIVES

Nad's Story: Empowering Others, Empowering Myself



When Nad arrived in Edmonton, he didn't know a single person. "I just took the plane, landed here, and started walking out on the street," he recalls. Like many newcomers, he faced the daunting task of building a new life from scratch. But instead of waiting for opportunities to come to him, **Nad through a simple Google search, found PALS (Project Adult Literacy Society),** an organization that offers adult literacy classes. Nad has a background in IT infrastructure and cybersecurity and saw this as a chance to share his expertise while connecting with others. "I contacted them, went there, and met the Program Manager. "It just worked, he enrolled me" he says.

Nad taught digital literacy classes to individuals who had never touched a computer before. "By the end of the program, they were sending emails, typing documents, and browsing the web. **Seeing their progress made me proud and happy**," Nad shared. These moments reaffirmed his commitment to giving back to his community.

Nad also volunteered at the local food bank, helping to organize and distribute food. "**Volunteering makes me feel part of a community. It's a way to invest my time meaningfully** instead of sitting around. It brings me joy to know I'm helping others," he said.

Volunteering isn't just about helping others; it's about **personal growth**.

Teaching digital skills allowed him to revisit tools like Microsoft Excel and Word, which he now uses in his job as an IT infrastructure analyst. "It was rewarding both ways. I improved my own skills while helping others."

Nad encourages newcomers to take the leap into volunteering, even if it feels like a risk. "Volunteering humbles you and gives you a sense of belonging. It's a **small way to give back while building a life in a new place.**"

For those looking for a fresh start, Nad's story is a testament to the power of connection and contribution. Through volunteering, he found not only a community but also a **sense of purpose and fulfillment.**

VOLUNTEER NARRATIVES

A.J.'s Story:

Building Community, One Connection at a Time

For A.J., volunteering has been a lifelong journey. Introduced to it by his parents at a young age, A.J. started by helping at a retirement home and later found his calling mentoring youth. His story is a testament to how giving back can create ripples of positivity for individuals and the wider community.



Today, A.J. volunteers as a mentor. "Volunteering with youth is incredibly rewarding. I've had mentees tell me I feel more like a biological brother than a volunteer. Those moments remind me of the **lasting connections** we create," A.J. shared.

Spending time with his mentee often involves simple activities like building a snowman or tobogganing. For A.J., these experiences bring joy and perspective. "**Even on tough days, volunteering with kids helps me leave work stress behind**. Their enthusiasm and fresh outlook on life are infectious."

A.J. also uses his role at a radio station to support community events, emceeing banquets and participating in charity hockey games. He believes that volunteering enriches not only the lives of those served but also the volunteers themselves.

"It's a positive way to spend your time, especially if you're facing challenges. Volunteering can help shift your mindset and create opportunities."

For those unsure about volunteering, A.J. offers this advice: "**If you're stuck in a rut, giving back can change your outlook**. It's flexible, rewarding, and opens doors professionally and personally. Plus, the connections you make are invaluable."

A.J.'s story highlights the transformative power of volunteering, showing how giving just a little time can lead to profound impact and a deeper sense of community.

VOLUNTEER NARRATIVES

Shelly's Story: A Lifelong Impact Through Mentorship



When Shelly first became involved with a local Edmonton Not-for-Profit organization, it wasn't just a commitment. It was the beginning of a journey that would change lives, including her own.

What started as a simple invitation to "get involved" turned into decades of meaningful connections and profound impact.

Shelly's path began with a local fundraiser called **Bowl-a-rama**, which she covered for a cable station. Intrigued by the program's need for mentors, she decided to take a leap. "I thought, why not me? I have the energy, the time, and the passion to make a difference," Shelly recalled. Soon, she was matched with her first "Mentee," a young girl navigating life after losing her father and growing up in a cycle of generational poverty. "My goal was to break that cycle," Shelly shared. That little girl grew up, got married, and built a stable, loving family.

Shelly's story is a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of mentorship. "Volunteering isn't just about helping someone else. It's about growing together," she reflected. Her journey has been one of breaking barriers, building relationships, and proving that one person can make a lifetime of difference. **"My role is to bring joy and offer a safe, fun space for my mentees."** From birthdays to family dinners, Shelly became an integral part of her mentees' lives, forming a bond with all of them that remained strong to this day.

Her advice for anyone considering mentorship? "Take the leap. Even if it's just a few hours a month, the connections you build can change lives—yours included."

For Shelly, volunteering wasn't just about giving back. It was about creating a legacy of hope, resilience, and empowerment. Her story stands as an inspiration to anyone looking to make their time matter.

DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

“Volunteering is a waste of time, we do not get paid”

While unpaid, volunteering opens doors to individuals that they never expected. Your role as a volunteer often leads to discussions about paid staff positions. Volunteering is belonging! It humbles you and makes you feel part of a community. It is a stepping stone to employment.

“You’re not investing in yourself.”

Volunteering is an investment in yourself and others, “It improves your skills, makes you grow and gives you a sense of purpose.” You realize you don’t exist alone. You exist because of your brother, your sister, your community.

“Volunteering doesn’t help my career.”

Volunteering is one of the best things you can do for your career,” It helps you build skills, expand your network, and stand out to employers.

“I don’t have time to volunteer.”

You don’t need to commit hours every week,” Even a few hours a month can make a difference—for others and for yourself.”

“Volunteering is only for certain people.”

There’s a role for everyone. Whether you’re skilled in tech, teaching, or just have a willingness to help, there’s an organization that needs you.

THE POWER OF GIVING BACK



When these individuals first began volunteering, they thought it was just a resume booster to have a chance at getting a job, or they wanted to do something meaningful and make an impact in their communities. However, what started as a practical step, **transformed** into a **life-changing journey**! One that not only shaped their career, but also **reshaped** their perspective on community, strength, and opportunities. For newcomers and job seekers in Edmonton, these stories dismantle myths about volunteering and prove that **giving back can be the bridge to belonging, growth, and employment.**

Mentoring and community involvement is a **testament** to the power of connection, growth, and the ripple effect of giving back. What began as an effort to support young people through structured mentoring programs evolved into a **transformative experience** that enriched their professional and personal lives. For those considering mentorship or volunteerism, these stories highlight how **giving time can lead to profound relationships, career development, and a deeper sense of belonging.**

Volunteering provides opportunities to develop skills that may complement your career. For instance, leadership roles, organizing events and managing teams **refines** your communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and capacity to navigate different viewpoints. It **teaches** you how to coordinate people and work with diverse perspectives. These are skills you could use every day in your job.

"**It's not just about transferring skills.** You're transferring love, care, and a sense of peace."

WHEN PURPOSE MEETS OPPORTUNITY

Even 1–2 hours a week can lead to connections and clarity

Look for roles aligned with your passion. It doesn't feel like 'work' when you care

Volunteering is about growing as a person and that's what employers value

Volunteering can lead to professional connections which will lead you to exposure and potential job opportunities

Volunteering can provide a sense of purpose and alleviate the stress of job searching, feeling isolated, and overwhelmed

See the bigger picture. It is a commitment equal to any professional or personal obligation



WORKPLACE CULTURE

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Introduction

Canada is widely recognized for its foundational values of respect for **diversity**, **equity**, and **inclusion**. These values are not merely aspirational ideals but actively shape the country's policies, social interactions, and cultural dynamics. They provide a framework for fostering **harmony** in one of the world's most diverse populations, where people of different backgrounds live, work, and thrive together.

Multiculturalism in Canada transcends policy to manifest as an everyday reality. As of 2024, **more than 22% of Canadians identify as immigrants**, illustrating the nation's openness to welcoming individuals from across the globe. This demographic diversity contributes to the richness of Canadian society, with cultural festivals, cuisines, languages, and traditions from around the globe enriching communities. In other words, immigrants and diverse communities contribute significantly to Canada's economy, bringing innovation, talent, and international connections. By valuing multiculturalism, Canada encourages **mutual understanding and respect**, laying a strong foundation for **unity in diversity.**



A commitment to **fairness and individual rights** is at the heart of Canadian values. These principles ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from Canadian society. Rooted in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, these rights include, among others, protections against discrimination based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. This legal framework safeguards personal freedoms and equal opportunities, ensuring **everyone is treated with dignity.**

Canadian values also emphasize **equity and social responsibility**, reflecting the collective belief in creating an inclusive society where everyone can access resources, education, and opportunities. Canada’s values minimize societal divisions and creates a **cohesive, peaceful environment for all.**

Social programs, such as universal healthcare, are a testament to this commitment, ensuring that citizens and residents can access essential services regardless of socioeconomic status. This approach fosters a **culture of care and community**, where individuals feel supported and valued and enhances Canada’s reputation as a leader in human rights and social justice on the global stage.

In a country as diverse as Canada, shared values like **respect and inclusion** help bridge differences, fostering a sense of belonging. Therefore, Canadian values of respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, coupled with a steadfast commitment to fairness and social responsibility, define the essence of the nation. These principles ensure that Canada not only thrives as a multicultural society but also sets an example for other nations to emulate. By embracing these values, Canada continues to build a future that is inclusive, equitable, and justice for all.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the cornerstone of Canada's value system, enshrining equality and justice as non-negotiable principles. It not only protects individuals from discrimination but also mandates the government to actively promote equity and inclusion. This ensures that Canada remains a place where **diverse perspectives** and voices are celebrated and included in decision-making processes. In addition, the recognition of individual rights and freedoms empowers people to express their identities, pursue opportunities, and contribute to society fully.





This section explores the key aspects of Canadian workplace culture, including communication styles, professional etiquette, employer expectations, and workplace rights. It provides newcomers with the foundational knowledge needed to navigate their work environment confidently while fostering respectful and productive relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Canada's vast geography and diverse population have led to the **development of distinct regional identities** across its provinces and territories. Each region boasts unique cultural, historical, linguistic, and economic traits that contribute to the rich mosaic of Canadian society. Understanding these regional differences is essential for immigrants to integrate effectively and appreciate the country's diversity. Every province and territory have its own workplace norms and understanding. Therefore, the **unwritten rules of professional environments** in Canada, is essential for career success.

Understanding Cultural, Historical, and Economic Workplace Values



Canada's **"cultural mosaic"** celebrates preserving diverse cultural identities while fostering societal integration, contrasting with the American "melting pot." This approach highlights the contributions of all communities, past and present. To understand Canada's values, we have to comprehend that Canada's "forefathers" include not only European settlers and nation-builders but also Indigenous peoples, who have lived on this land for millennia. Recognizing their contributions means honoring traditional territories and supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, engaging Indigenous leaders to share their wisdom and traditions, and **integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge for holistic solutions.**

With 78% of major companies implementing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) programs, Canadian workplaces are increasingly reflective of this cultural mosaic. **Education and intercultural dialogue are key** to fostering inclusion. By embracing these practices, Canada honors the legacy of all its "forefathers" while building an inclusive and equitable future. Employers and community leaders can promote understanding through workshops on Canadian history, including Indigenous and newcomer contributions, and initiatives to debunk myths about marginalized groups and celebrate cultural diversity.

Why Regional Canadian Awareness Matters for Immigrants

According to the reality of each of the provinces and territories' geographical location, land richness, economy and trades, **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging** initiatives shape modern workplaces and how employees can contribute to an inclusive work culture. Therefore, understanding local traditions and values helps build meaningful relationships and navigate cultural norms. Appreciating the unique identity of each region fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens connections within the community, while awareness of regional economic strengths can guide career choices and highlight areas of opportunity.

By embracing Canada's regional diversity and workplace culture, immigrants can enrich their integration experience and contribute to the vibrant tapestry of Canadian society. Ultimately, appreciating and adapting to Canada's diverse regions fosters a **deeper sense of belonging** and allows immigrants to contribute fully to the country's inclusive and dynamic society. Gaining knowledge about the provinces and territories plays a key role in achieving full integration. For instance:

The Prairies (Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan)

1. **Cultural Traits**: Known for their agricultural heritage and tight-knit communities, these provinces celebrate diverse immigrant populations through festivals and cultural initiatives.
2. **Economic Focus**: Agriculture dominates Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while Alberta is recognized for its energy sector, particularly oil and gas.
3. **Integration Tip**: In Alberta, understanding the role of the energy industry can help newcomers relate to local communities and employment opportunities.

Atlantic Canada (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick)

1. **Cultural Traits:** Known for their warm hospitality, the Atlantic provinces have a strong maritime culture shaped by their proximity to the ocean. Folk music, storytelling, and traditional foods like seafood chowder are integral to the region's identity.
2. **Economic Focus:** Fishing, forestry, and tourism play a significant role in the local economy, alongside growing industries like renewable energy.
3. **Linguistic Note:** New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province, reflecting its mix of Anglophone and Francophone populations.

Quebec

1. **Cultural Traits**: Quebec is defined by its French heritage, which permeates its language, cuisine, arts, and architecture. French is the province's official language, and preserving its distinct culture is a central focus.
2. **Economic Focus**: Industries such as aerospace, technology, and hydroelectric power drive Quebec's economy.
3. **Integration Tip**: Learning French is critical for successful integration and employment opportunities in Quebec.

Ontario

1. **Cultural Traits**: As Canada's most populous province, Ontario is home to a diverse cultural mix, particularly in cities like Toronto and Ottawa. It serves as a hub for arts, finance, and multicultural events.
2. **Economic Focus**: Ontario is Canada's economic powerhouse, with a focus on manufacturing, finance, technology, and education.
3. **Integration Tip**: Networking and understanding urban cultural norms are essential for adapting to Ontario's fast-paced environment.

Northern Territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut)

1. **Cultural Traits**: The territories highlight Indigenous cultures, with a deep connection to the land and traditional ways of life. Community gatherings, art, and storytelling are essential aspects of life.
2. **Economic Focus**: Mining, resource extraction, and tourism are critical to the economy, but climate change is increasingly shaping the region's future.
3. **Integration Tip**: Respecting Indigenous traditions and learning about the challenges of living in remote areas are important for adapting to life in the North.

British Columbia

1. **Cultural Traits**: BC is known for its emphasis on environmental sustainability and outdoor activities. Its multicultural population is reflected in its cuisine, festivals, and arts scene.
2. **Economic Focus**: Forestry, tourism, film production, and technology are significant contributors to the economy.
3. **Integration Tip**: Embracing BC's eco-friendly lifestyle and exploring its natural beauty can help newcomers connect with locals.



Understanding Canada's regional diversity is essential for successful integration and meaningful participation in society. Each province and territory has its own unique cultural traits, economic strengths, and workplace norms that shape both social and professional interactions. By embracing local traditions, values, and industries, newcomers can build strong connections, navigate cultural expectations, and find opportunities for personal and professional growth.



Key Aspects of

Canadian Workplace Culture

Canada's workplace culture reflects its values of **respect, inclusivity, and balance**. Below are some key facets of professional etiquette in the country, mental health and work-life balance, workplace norms and Canadian Rights and laws illustrated with practical examples of companies who showcase their commitments to these values.

Professional Etiquette

Canadian workplace etiquette emphasizes:

1. **Respect and Communication**: Conversations are typically polite and non-confrontational, even when addressing sensitive issues. Direct communication is valued, but it is tempered with tact.
2. **Punctuality**: Being on time is critical. Whether for meetings, deadlines, or work start times, punctuality shows professionalism and respect for others' time.
3. **Flat Hierarchies**: While managers provide direction, collaboration and team input are often encouraged, enabling employees at all levels to contribute.
4. **Networking and Relationship Building**: Networking is key to professional growth. Canadians value personal connections and often build trust over time through consistent, positive interactions.

Example: Alberta Health Services (AHS) is committed to building a diverse and inclusive work environment that reflects the population it serves. AHS strives to create a workplace that is physically and psychologically safe for both staff and patients.

Mental Health and Work–Life Balance

Canadian workplaces increasingly prioritize mental well-being and work-life balance. Employers recognize the link between a supportive work environment and productivity.

1. **Flexible Work Policies**: Many companies offer hybrid (online and in person) work models, compressed workweeks, or job-sharing arrangements.
2. **Generous Leave Entitlements**: From paid parental leave to mental health days, employees have options to address personal needs without fear of stigma.
3. **Inclusive Wellness Initiatives**: Organizations frequently provide access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), workshops on stress management, and workplace wellness programs.

Example: **Bell Canada**: Through its "Bell Let's Talk" initiative, the company has invested millions in workplace mental health programs, including employee training on recognizing mental health challenges and fostering supportive dialogues.

Workplace Norms in **CANADA**



Dress Codes

Dress codes in Canadian workplaces **vary significantly** by industry. In Alberta, formal sectors such as finance, law, and government generally require **business professional attire**, including suits and polished shoes. In contrast, industries like technology, agriculture, and oil and gas tend to adopt more **casual or functional attire** suited to their environments. Observing and adapting to specific workplace culture is key, as organizations may allow flexibility for casual dress days such as "Jeans Friday" or location-specific requirements.

Time Management and Communication



In Alberta, punctuality is very important and is a valued professional trait, reflecting respect for others' time. Meetings are **collaborative and results-focused**, with opportunities for open dialogue and constructive feedback. Written communication such as emails or reports should be **concise and professional**, aligning with Canadian norms of politeness and clarity. These practices foster effective collaboration, especially in Alberta's diverse industries such as energy, technology, and agriculture.

Onboarding Norms

1. Probation Periods	2. Orientation and Training	3. Performance Evaluations
Many employers implement a probationary period, usually lasting **3 to 6 months.** This period allows employers to evaluate the new employee's performance and ensure a good fit while providing the employee with an opportunity to adapt to the role.	Onboarding programs in Alberta often include structured orientation sessions, safety training (especially in industries like oil and gas), and introductions to workplace policies and tools.	Formal and informal check-ins during the probation period and beyond are standard. Employers often provide clear expectations and ongoing feedback to support employee growth.

Soft Skills in Canadian Workplaces

Soft skills are **critical** in workplaces across Alberta and Canada, where collaboration, adaptability, and strong interpersonal skills often make a significant impact on career success. Key soft skills include:

Communication

Clear and respectful communication is foundational. This includes active listening (looking at people's eyes when speaking with them, listening intently, etc.), the ability to articulate ideas effectively, and the willingness to provide or accept feedback. In Alberta's diverse workplaces, communication often bridges cultural and professional gaps, making it a vital skill.

Adaptability

Economic changes in Alberta, such as fluctuations in the energy sector, demand employees who can adjust quickly to new roles, responsibilities, and challenges. Adaptable employees can shift effectively, learn new technologies, or embrace evolving workplace norms.

Collaboration

Teamwork is essential in industries such as energy, agriculture, and technology. Alberta workplaces value individuals who contribute meaningfully to team goals, resolve conflicts constructively, and foster positive dynamics among colleagues.

Emotional Intelligence

Empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills are increasingly valued as workplaces prioritize inclusion and respect. Employees with strong emotional intelligence can navigate complex workplace relationships and contribute to a supportive environment.

Canadian Laws and Rights:

Employment Rights in Alberta

Protection Against Discrimination: Anti-Discrimination Laws in Alberta

In Alberta, workers are safeguarded from discrimination in the workplace under the **Alberta Human Rights Act**. This legislation prohibits employers, unions, and employment agencies from discriminating against employees or job applicants based on certain protected grounds.

Protected Grounds of Discrimination

The Alberta Human Rights Act identifies 15 protected grounds:

1. Race	2. Religious beliefs	3. Color
4. Gender (including pregnancy and sexual harassment)	5. Gender identity and gender expression	6. Physical disability
7. Mental disability	8. Age (18 and older)	9. Ancestry
10. Place of origin	11. Marital status	12. Family status
13. Source of income	14. Sexual orientation	15. Criminal convictions (if unrelated to employment and considered a protected ground under specific circumstances)

Examples of Discrimination

1. **Gender Discrimination**: Refusing to promote a qualified employee because they are pregnant.
2. **Disability Discrimination**: Failing to accommodate an employee with a disability, such as not providing necessary ergonomic equipment or accessible facilities.
3. **Age Discrimination**: Terminating an older employee based on their age rather than their job performance.
4. **Religious Discrimination**: Denying an employee reasonable accommodations for religious practices, such as flexible scheduling for prayer times.
5. **Sexual Harassment**: Creating a hostile work environment through inappropriate jokes, comments, or behavior of a sexual nature.

Obligations for Employers

Employers must take proactive steps to ensure an inclusive and respectful workplace, such as:

1. Implementing anti-discrimination policies.	2. Providing diversity and inclusion training.	3. Accommodating employees to the point of undue hardship, meaning adjusting working conditions or expectations to address the specific needs of an individual.

Examples of Alberta Human Rights Case Law

Case: Disability and Termination
An employee who was terminated after disclosing a mental health condition successfully argued that the employer failed to accommodate their disability. The tribunal awarded compensation and required the employer to undergo anti-discrimination training.



Celebrating Holidays and **Cultures**

Canada's rich cultural diversity is reflected in its **variety of holidays** and observances, making it a welcoming environment for people from all over the world. **National holidays** like Canada Day, Thanksgiving, and Remembrance Day are celebrated nationwide. However, there are also **region-specific holidays**, such as Natal Day in Nova Scotia or Family Day in parts of Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. These holidays offer opportunities for workers to celebrate both their Canadian identity and regional traditions.

In addition to public holidays, Canadian workplaces are increasingly recognizing cultural and religious holidays from around the world. This reflects the country's inclusivity and respect for its multicultural makeup. Many employers provide **flexible holiday policies**, allowing employees to take time off for religious or cultural celebrations like Diwali, Lunar New Year, Ramadan, Eid El Adha, or Hanukkah. Furthermore, workplaces encourage employees, especially those new to Canada, to share their traditions with coworkers, promoting a **richer cultural exchange** and helping to foster a sense of belonging.

Examples of Alberta's Statutory Holidays are

January 1
– New Year's Day

Third Monday in February
– Alberta Family Day

Friday before Easter Sunday
– Good Friday

Last Monday before May 25
– Victoria Day

July 1
– Canada Day

First Monday in September
– Labour Day

Second Monday in October
– Thanksgiving Day

November 11
– Remembrance Day

December 25
– Christmas Day

Optional Holidays

Monday after Easter Sunday
– Easter Monday

First Monday in August
– Heritage Day

September 30
– National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

December 26
– Boxing Day

Mindfulness of **Other Cultures**

One of the pillars of Canadian workplaces is **respect for cultural differences**. Understanding that employees' communication styles, dietary preferences, religious practices, and social norms may vary greatly is key to building an inclusive and harmonious work environment. For instance, some cultures may prefer indirect communication, while others may value directness, and this should be acknowledged and respected in workplace interactions.

Dietary preferences or restrictions based on religion or culture are also an important consideration in many workplaces, especially during team events or meals. Employers can provide **culturally inclusive options**, such as vegetarian, halal, or kosher food, ensuring that everyone feels respected and valued.

Religious observances, such as fasting during Ramadan or observing the Sabbath, should also be taken into account, with flexible work hours or schedules where possible. Recognizing these differences and **fostering a culture of understanding** can contribute to stronger collaboration and trust among a diverse workforce.

Promoting Cultural Sensitivity Training

Cultural sensitivity training is an essential tool for fostering inclusive workplaces. It equips employees with the knowledge and skills to navigate diverse interactions, prevent misunderstandings, and build stronger working relationships.
By incorporating structured programs, organizations can create a more respectful and collaborative work culture, improve cross-cultural communication and reduce biases, increase awareness of unconscious biases that may affect workplace interactions, and encourage **empathy and understanding** among employees.

Examples of Training Topics

1. ***Recognizing and addressing microaggressions.***
2. ***Understanding different cultural work ethics and expectations.***
3. ***Improving intercultural conflict resolution skills.***

In conclusion, this guide has explored the essential aspects of Canadian workplace culture, emphasizing the country's deep-rooted values of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. From understanding regional differences to navigating professional etiquette, mental health support, and anti-discrimination laws, the resource highlights how Canada's workplaces reflect its **commitment to fairness and respect**. By recognizing the unique cultural, historical, and economic traits of each province and territory, newcomers can better integrate, build meaningful connections, and thrive in their careers.

Key takeaways include the **importance of soft skills** like communication and adaptability, the **role of employers in fostering inclusive environments**, and the legal protections that safeguard workers' rights. Real-world examples, such as Bell Canada's mental health initiatives and Alberta Health Services' diversity efforts, demonstrate how Canadian workplaces actively uphold these values. Additionally, **celebrating cultural holidays and promoting sensitivity training** further enrich professional environments, ensuring everyone feels valued and respected.

Ultimately, Canada's strength lies in its **ability to unite people** from all backgrounds under shared principles of respect and collaboration. By embracing these values, along with regional nuances and workplace norms, newcomers can successfully navigate their professional journeys while contributing to the vibrant, inclusive society that defines Canada. Whether through networking, continuous learning, or cultural exchange, every step taken toward understanding and adaptation helps build **a more connected and equitable future for all.**



Resource List

1. Alberta Human Rights Commission: Provides resources on anti-discrimination laws, filing complaints, and workplace accommodations.

- Alberta Human Rights Commission
- Filing a Complaint

2. Canadian Human Rights Commission: Offers information on discrimination at the federal level and provides additional resources for filing complaints.

- Canadian Human Rights Commission

3. Employment Standards Resources: Covers Alberta's employment laws, including discrimination and workplace rights.

- Employment Standards in Alberta

4. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS): Ensures safe and harassment-free workplaces.

- OHS Resources

5. Pro Bono Legal Services: For immigrants or workers requiring legal assistance.

- Calgary Legal Guidance
- Edmonton Community Legal Centre
- Alberta General Holidays (alberta.ca)

6. Cultural Awareness: Recognizing and respecting cultural differences is key to Canadian workplaces.

- **Diverse Practices**: Acknowledge diverse communication styles, dietary needs, and religious practices. Diversity and Inclusion in Canadian Workplaces | Canadian Immigrant

7. Sensitivity Training: Employers should promote cultural sensitivity training to support diverse teams.

- **Workplace Culture Trends**: For insights into current workplace culture trends, refer to the article "5 Workplace Culture Trends for Companies to Watch in 2024" by Great Place To Work® Canada.

Additional Resources

- Newcomers' Guide to Working in Alberta - alis
- Your First 2 Weeks at Work - alis
- Employment Standards Alberta: Probation Period Information
- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety: Onboarding Guidelines
- Government of Alberta: Workplace Training Programs
- Achieve Balance in Your Remote Workplace - alis
- Manage Change and Transitions - alis
- Government of Alberta: Effective Workplace Communication
- Government of Alberta: Workplace Training Programs
- Use Microaffirmations to Improve Workplace Relationships - alis
- Government of Canada – Building Inclusive Workplaces
- CCDI (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion) Training Programs
- Diversity and Inclusion Training by Great Place to Work Canada

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety – Workplace Diversity and Inclusion

- HRPA – Best Practices for an Inclusive Workplace
- Diversity Works – Guide to Inclusive Workplaces
- The Canadian Workplace Culture Index – Inclusion Strategies
- Deloitte – The Inclusion Imperative

Edmonton Local
IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP

Keep building connections and giving back—it opens doors you never saw coming

