

# Housing

## Resources for Newcomers

Welcome to British Columbia! Finding suitable housing can be a daunting task, but with the right approach and resources, you can secure a home that meets your needs. This guide provides essential steps and tools to help you navigate your housing journey.

### Table of Content- Hosing Resources

- **Step 1: Define Your Housing Needs and Priorities**
- **Step 2: Search for Housing**
  - Explore Housing Market Through Different Platforms
  - Be aware of housing scams
  - Explore Temporary Housing Options
- **Step 3: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities**
- **Step 4: Prepare Your Application**
- **Step 5: After Signing: Settle Into Your New Home**
  - Set Up Utilities and Services
  - Conduct a Walkthrough
  - Obtain Tenant Insurance
  - Familiarize Yourself: Neighbors, Building Rules, and Community
  - Furnish Your Home Affordably
- **Access Housing Aid**

## **Step 1: Define Your Housing Needs and Priorities**

### **• Understand Your Needs and Priorities**

Before you begin your search, take some time to list your specific housing needs and priorities. Consider the following factors:

- **Budget:** What is your monthly rent budgeting ability? Be sure to account for utilities, internet, and other recurring costs.
- **Location Preference:** Do you need to be close to work, school, public amenities, or recreational spaces? Consider the neighborhood's safety and community environment.
- **Type of Housing:** Are you looking for an apartment, house, or shared accommodation?
- **Accessibility:** How important is proximity to public transportation, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, or other essential services? Are you planning to go by car or to rely on public transportation?
- **Family Requirements:** Determine the number of bedrooms and bathrooms you need and consider proximity to schools, daycare, or parks for children.
- **Additional Needs:**
  - Pet-friendly accommodations.
  - Wheelchair or mobility aid accessibility.
  - Storage space for bikes, vehicles, or other items.
  - Availability of parking (if needed).
  - Laundry facilities (in-unit or nearby).
  - Energy efficiency or environmental considerations.

### Step 2: Search for Housing

- **Explore Housing Market Through Different Platforms**

Use these platforms to explore available housing options. Some platforms are reputable, while others require extra caution. These websites can also help you understand the current housing market and what your budget can afford in different areas.

- [Welcome BC finding a place to live](#)- Provides comprehensive information on renting and buying homes in BC.
- [Rew.ca](#) (reputable)
- [Realtor.ca](#) (reputable)
- [liv.rent](#) (reputable)
- [Craigslist](#) (use caution)
- [Kijiji](#) (use caution)
- Facebook marketplace and rental groups (use caution)

- **Explore Temporary Housing Options**

If you're still deciding where you want to settle, starting with short-term accommodations can provide flexibility and help you explore different areas. Consider these options:

- Short-Term Rentals: Platforms like [Airbnb.ca](#) or [Vrbo.ca](#) offer furnished accommodations for a few days to several months.
- Community Groups: Check Facebook groups or local forums dedicated to short-term rentals and community support. Exercise caution when engaging with unfamiliar contacts and verify legitimacy.

- **Be Aware of Housing Scams**

When searching for housing, remain vigilant to avoid falling victim to scams. Here are some tips to protect yourself:

- Never Send Money in Advance: Avoid transferring money before you've seen the property in person and confirmed its legitimacy.
- Verify the Landlord or Agent: Ensure the person you're dealing with is the rightful owner or an authorized representative.
- Be Wary of Deals That Seem Too Good to Be True: Extremely low rent prices or overly eager landlords can be red flags.
- Inspect the Property in Person: Always visit the property and ensure it matches the description provided in the listing.
- Check for Duplicate Listings: Scammers often copy legitimate ads. Perform an online search of the listing to ensure it hasn't been posted multiple times with conflicting details.
- Use Trusted Platforms: Stick to reputable websites and apps with secure communication and payment systems.

### Step 3: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities

- Understand Your Rights and Responsibilities

Before signing any rental agreement, educate yourself about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Visit the following websites for detailed information:

- Residential Tenancy Branch: Learn about the [Residential Tenancy Act](#), security deposits, rent increases, and dispute resolution.
- BC Housing: [rights and responsibilities](#) and [starting your tenancy](#)- Understand tenant eligibility, tenancy agreements, and other housing support programs.

### Step 4: Prepare Your Application

- Understand the Application Process

Once you've found a rental property you're interested in, the next step is submitting an application. Understanding the typical documents required can help you prepare and avoid any delays.

- Proof of income or employment: Landlords typically ask for proof of income to ensure that applicants can afford the rent. This could include pay stubs, employment letters, or bank statements showing deposits. If you are a newcomer and have just started a job in Canada, providing a recent employment letter or a contract can help. If you are self-employed, tax documents or recent invoices can serve as proof.
- References from previous landlords: Landlords may request references from your previous landlords to confirm your rental history. If you're new to Canada and don't have a rental history here, you can provide references from landlords in your home country or from other people who can vouch for your reliability and responsibility.
- Credit checks: Landlords often ask for a credit check to assess your financial responsibility.

### Step 5: After Signing: Settle Into Your New Home

- Set Up Utilities and Services

- Electricity: Arrange service through BC Hydro.
- Gas: If applicable, set up an account with FortisBC.
- Internet and Phone: Compare plans from different providers to find the best deal for your needs.
- Water and Garbage Disposal: Often included in rent, but confirm the details with your landlord.

- Conduct a Walkthrough

- Inspect the property with the landlord and document its condition before moving in.
- Take photos or videos of any existing damages or issues to avoid disputes later.

# Housing

## Resources for Newcomers

### • Obtain Tenant Insurance

- Protect your belongings and cover liability by purchasing a tenant insurance policy.
- Shop around for competitive quotes; many providers offer budget-friendly options.

### • Familiarize Yourself: Neighbors, Building Rules, and Community

- Introduce yourself to neighbors.
- Learn about recycling expectations and garbage pickup days.
- If you're in a strata building, read the building bylaws and rules to avoid violations.
- Join neighborhood social media groups to stay informed about local updates. and community events.

### • Furnish Your Home Affordably

- Thrift Stores and Nonprofits: Check the Salvation Army Thrift Store, Value Village, or Habitat for Humanity ReStores.
- Online Marketplaces: Browse Facebook Marketplace, Kijiji, or Craigslist for secondhand finds.
- Community Groups: Join local "buy nothing" or giveaway groups for free or low-cost items.
- Introduce yourself in Jewish Community social groups and check if someone has items they are looking to giveaway.
- Furniture Banks: Contact organizations like Furniture Bank for affordable or free basics.
- Big Box Retailers and Discounts or Clearance sections in stores.
- DIY Options: Upcycle or repurpose secondhand items to personalize your space.

## Access Housing Aid

If you find yourself in urgent need of housing, these resources can provide critical support:

- Emergency Housing Programs: Organizations like [BC Housing Assistance](#) and local shelters offer temporary accommodations and assistance for those in immediate need.
- Jewish Community Organizations:
  - [JFS Homelessness Prevention](#) – learn about Jewish Family Services support, criteria, and eligibility.
  - [Tikva Housing Society](#) provides access to affordable housing solutions. Visit the website to learn about the different programs, criteria, and who is eligible.
- Nonprofit and Charity Support: Reach out to agencies like Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC) or the Salvation Army for emergency housing solutions and referrals.
- Government Assistance: Contact your local municipal office to learn about government-funded housing programs or subsidies for low-income individuals and families.

