

# SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO HELP NEWCOMERS SETTLE IN HALTON

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*The following is the final instalment in a three-part series exploring experiences for immigrant families coming to Halton.*

Newcomers to Halton can face their share of challenges as they work to establish roots in the community.

From finding a place to live to securing a new job and enrolling their children in school, the to-do list can be daunting, particularly in a place where the processes to accomplish these things are unfamiliar.

For those who choose to make Halton Hills — or its fellow Halton municipalities — their home, there are several services that make the task of settling in a new town or city a bit easier.

Leading the pack is Halton Multicultural Council (HMC) Connections, which has offices across the region offering a full range of supports for newcomers to help them integrate into the community.

"The first thing people will come to us for is settlement (services). We do a needs assessment to determine what the person or family requires," said HMC Connections executive director Kim Jenkinson. "The other part of settlement is information orientation. We're sort of like the yellow pages."

With shelter topping the



Graham Paine/Metroland

HMC Connections staff (from left) Sophy Rizkalla, Babur Mobarak, Paula Castano, Sonia Figueroa, Xiaouu Chen, Samantha Wijetillake, Christine Hall, Angela Chaves and Treena Carson offer many support programs for newcomers.

list of priorities for newcomers, Jenkinson said HMC Connections offers some transitional housing to help those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness while they search for permanent accommodations in Halton.

Up next is employment, which newcomers deem one of their highest needs upon arrival, noted Jenkinson.

"They're coming in with degrees and years of experience, and they're hoping to get a job equivalent to where they left," she said.

"Often they have to step down a rung to get Canadian experience and then move up."

Unlike other employment offices, HMC Connections strictly focuses on helping newcomers find jobs, with services includ-

**"Mentoring can be professional and networking, but it can also be social if a family is finding they're really not able to connect."**

- Kim Jenkinson

ing: job search workshops, mock interviews, job fairs, networking events, and information sessions on employment topics.

The agency also has specialty employment programs for low level English speakers, and a career accelerator program for internationally trained healthcare professionals.

Other services include a language program where participants learn to speak English, and a mentoring

hosts within Milton. Together, they participate in free arts and culture activities over a period of four to five months, which in the past has included things like congo drum circles, martial arts classes, Bhangra dancing, French food cooking classes and more.

"We've had a really exciting response to the program. We're very proud of it," said program co-ordinator Kaitlyn Patience.

"It's a good way to introduce the participants to what the community has to offer in terms of arts and culture."

In the process of having fun, Patience said the program also helps newcomers overcome feelings of isolation and create connections in the community, often forming friendships by the end of their time together.

Some newcomers enjoy the experience so much they return the following year as a host. Such was the case for Ayesha Tauseef, who joined the program in 2019 with her husband and two children, then came back as a host family in 2020.

"We had a great time with the Friendship Project. There were lots of resources and education, and the activities incorporated every member of the family," she

## HALTON SUPPORT PROGRAMS

**HMC Connections:**  
hmcconnections.com

**Halton Housing Help:**  
<https://bit.ly/3AUU1n3>

**Employment Halton:**  
<https://bit.ly/3AQr1Nw>

**Halton Hills Newcomer**

**Resources Program:**  
<https://bit.ly/3oPPRln>

**Subsidized Passes for Low Income Transit:**  
<https://bit.ly/3rijdydy>

**Ontario Works provincial income support program:**

<https://bit.ly/3oIPpRU>

**Arts Milton Friendship Project:**  
artsmilton.com

**Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada:**

<https://bit.ly/349CeNb> has a full list of newcomer services that can be searched using a postal code.

said.

"Being a newcomer, you don't have a lot of exposure to how things work. So this (experience) actually really helps you settle in and meet new people."

*STORY BEHIND THE STORY: As the final piece in our immigrant series, we wanted to take a closer look at the resources available in Halton that help newcomers establish themselves in the community.*



SCAN THESE CODES for parts 1 and 2 in this series.

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