



EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS SUPPORT

There are specialized employment support services for various groups, such as newcomers, people with disabilities, youth, and people with barriers to employment. The services include but are not limited to assistance with resume development, preparation for a job interview, sharing job postings, etc. Some services, such as Work BC, offer some clothing and equipment (e.g. safety shoes) to eligible clients.

Here are a few tips from your fellow-immigrants for your job search journey:

- Do some homework before you move. A good resource for your research is www.pentictonbiztoolkit.com Here are some research questions to consider: What is the labour market like for your professional field? Do you need to have your credentials assessed? Do you need to go through a licensing/registration process? If so, how can you prepare for it before you arrive to Canada?
- Make sure your resume is written and structured in accordance with the locally accepted style (find samples online). For example, your resume should not exceed two pages and should not include your photo, age, and hobbies.
- Include your local mailing address (some people apply from abroad, so it is important to show that you are local).
- Consider capturing your potential employer's attention by highlighting your key skills and experiences right in the beginning of your resume (Highlights of Qualifications).
- You would need to amend both your cover letter and resume to respond to each individual job posting.
- Create a list of at least three references and bring it with you to interviews.
- Consider volunteering while you are looking for a job – it's a great way to gain local experience, make connections and establish a support network (e.g. references for a job or an apartment rental).
- If you are not used to it, try to practice “small talk” – talking to neighbours about the weather or sports with an eye contact and a smile; this could help set a warm and friendly tone before your interviews.
- Be ready to re-invent yourself. There might not be enough jobs in your profession in the region or your profession might entail a lengthy licensing and registration process that you may not be interested in. Assess your skills and experiences and figure out where else you could apply them. For example, if you used to work with clients as a service provider, you could use your customer service experience in any field, including hospitality and retail sectors. Alternatively, consider starting your own business (see a list of supports for entrepreneurs below).
- And the most important part- network! It doesn't have to be in the form of self-promotion at business networking events. The best way is to go to meet-ups/social events and volunteer (check South Okanagan Volunteer Centre for a list of volunteer opportunities: <http://www.volunteercentre.info>). You may think that with your experience and qualifications you don't need this, but how will others know that you have excellent credentials if they don't get a chance to meet you?

Employment Supports

Start Here Okanagan - Your online guide to living & working in Penticton and the South Okanagan: <https://starthereokanagan.com>

For immigrants:

- South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services (SOICS), 340 Ellis St., Penticton; 250-492-6299; www.soics.ca
- International Credential Assessment: <https://www.bcit.ca/ices> and https://www.cicic.ca/927/identify_the_organization_responsible_for_recognition.canada

For people with disabilities:

- Neil Squire Society, Penticton Indian Band, 250-492-5289, mindyr@neilsquire.ca
- Community Living BC STRIDE program (developmental disabilities), 250-762-3494; www.communitylivingbc.ca

For people with barriers to employment:

- Work BC Centre, Suite 174, 1848 Main St. Penticton, 1-833-313-0547, info-penticton@workbc.ca, <https://workbccentre-penticton.ca>

For youth:

- YMCA Jumpstart to Employment Essentials, 203-501 Main St., Penticton; 250-770-7873; jumpstart@ymcaokanagan.ca

Online job bank:

- www.starthereokanagan.com

Supports for Entrepreneurs:

- Community Futures, 102-3115 Skaha Lake Road, Penticton; 250-493-2566, 1-877-493-5566; <http://www.cfokanagan.com>
- Penticton Biz Toolkit – business climate, industry trends, workforce, and environment: www.PentictonBizToolkit.com
- Co-work (shared work space for small businesses): 129 Nanaimo Ave West, Penticton; 778-476-6028; www.coworkpenticton.com
- Accelerate Okanagan (coaching, connections, info sessions and a shared workspace), #201-460 Doyle Ave., Kelowna; 250-870-9028; <https://www.accelerateokanagan.com>
- Women's Enterprise Centre (business advice, resources and referrals), Suite 201, 1726 Dolphin Ave., Kelowna; 250-868-3454; <https://www.womensenterprise.ca>
- Small Business BC (resource centre for knowledge-based business development): <https://smallbusinessbc.ca>
- Downtown Penticton Association: <http://downtownpenticton.org>

Chambers of Commerce and B2B Events:

- Oliver: <https://www.sochamber.ca>
- Summerland: <https://www.summerlandchamber.com>
- Penticton: <https://www.penticton.org>
- Princeton: <https://www.princeton.ca>