



# Volunteer Mentor Training Manual 2019

How to support vulnerable newcomers in Grey Bruce

Making Grey Bruce Home, a project by  
United Way of Bruce Grey and  
Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce  
[WELCOMINGGREYBRUCE.CA](http://WELCOMINGGREYBRUCE.CA)

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## Introduction

In January 2018, Making Grey Bruce Home was initiated by United Way of Bruce Grey in partnership with Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Children, Communities and Social Services. This 14-month project developed, implemented and evaluated a rural service delivery model to enhance the capacity of communities and service providers to support the social and economic integration of refugees and vulnerable newcomers.

One component of the model was training for volunteer mentors. Making Grey Bruce Home adapted the Good Neighbours Network Toolkit, written by the Good Neighbours Network in 2016, into this volunteer training manual that focused on supporting refugees and vulnerable newcomers. It was tested in two training workshops in Grey Bruce, and revised based on feedback from the workshop participants.

In addition to this training manual, Making Grey Bruce Home has also published the Service Provider Training Manual 2019 and the Making Rural Communities Home – a vulnerable newcomer integration toolkit. All three publications are available for downloading from the Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce's website ([welcominggreybruce.ca](http://welcominggreybruce.ca)).

## Acknowledgements

Making Grey Bruce Home would like to thank the Government of Ontario for funding the project. We would also like to express our gratitude towards Community Foundation Grey Bruce and Power Workers' Union for their financial support. The participation of the service providers, refugee sponsors, refugees, and vulnerable newcomers in the consultation process is much appreciated, as it helped define the role of a volunteer mentor. Last but not least, we would like to thank all the individuals who have participated in the Volunteer Mentor Training, and provided us with feedback and comments.

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## About the training manual

### Who is this training manual for?

- Volunteers who are already helping refugees and vulnerable newcomers adjust to life in Canada
- Members of refugee sponsorship groups.
- Individuals who would like to become a volunteer mentor of refugees and vulnerable newcomers.
- Anyone who wants to be helpful and welcoming to their newcomer neighbours
- Volunteer coordinators of organizations whose service recipients include refugees and vulnerable newcomers

### How to use this training manual?

- If you have never done any volunteer mentor training, we recommend that you start at “Could you be a mentor?”.
- If you are a trained or experienced volunteer mentor, but have had little or no opportunity to support refugees and vulnerable newcomers, begin your reading at “Who are the refugees and vulnerable newcomers in Grey Bruce?”. However, it will be beneficial to also read “Could you be a mentor?” and refresh your memory on some concepts, such as confidentiality and code of conducts.
- Current and potential volunteer mentors are encouraged to re-visit relevant section whenever a question arises.
- “Resources” is a quick reference for services that support the settlement of refugees and vulnerable newcomers.
- Volunteer coordinators may like to use this tool kit as a guideline to develop a training program for the volunteers of their organizations

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## Could you be a mentor?

### What do mentors do?

Mentors can provide a broad range of support and assistance for newcomers based on their knowledge of their community and the services available there, their areas of expertise and interest, and the resources they have available to them. In doing so, they can help the newcomer learn how to do these things for themselves and live independently.

This can include:

- Giving newcomers an orientation to the community, community services and resources.
- Explaining how everyday things and systems (that long-time residents take for granted) work.
- Working with the newcomer to determine which services and supports they need and how newcomers can connect with these services.
- Offering practical assistance to help the newcomer obtain the needed services (health care, legal services, language and education, financial services, day care etc.)
- Assisting with filling out forms or navigating government services
- Supporting with life skills, including banking, shopping, sourcing specialty foods, paying bills, accessing day care, employment services, etc.
- Explaining letters, bills etc. that newcomers receive.
- Advocating for newcomers with businesses, government services, health and social services to ensure newcomers get and understand all the information they need and the services they are entitled to.
- Providing practical supports such as transportation (mentors will need to check with their insurance company to ensure they are covered to drive mentees), accompaniment, and assistance addressing language barriers.
- Encouraging and supporting the newcomers in using the skills, expertise and knowledge that they bring to the community.

Mentors do not:

- Provide or offer professional services to the mentee.
- Provide advice or direction on 'what to do' or how mentees should handle personal or business decisions. The role of the mentor is to provide information about options and support for the mentee to make their own decisions.
- Misuse their relationship and their power in the relationship to manipulate or take advantage of the mentees.
- Disclose any information about the mentee and/or the mentee's family to anyone without the expressed permission of the mentee.
- Give gifts to the mentee's children without discussing them with the mentee.
- Hire the mentee or lend money to mentee

## How to be a good mentor?

### *Understand your motivation, strengths and weaknesses*

Ask yourself these questions:

- Why do I want to mentor?
- What are my personal strengths which will enhance my volunteer mentor role?  
(Could overusing some of my strengths and skills create problems in the relationship or for the mentee going forward?)
- What are my personal weaknesses which will hinder my performance as a volunteer mentor?
- How much time am I willing to commit to being a mentor?
- How flexible is my time?

### *Unconscious biases and mentor-mentee relationship*

“Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups.” (<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias>) A volunteer mentor and a newcomer each bears some unconscious biases towards the other when entering a mentor-mentee relationship.

While little can be done about the newcomer’s unconscious biases, there are a few things the mentor can do to reduce their own:

- Review your own expectations and reactions from time to time to make sure that you do not form an opinion about the newcomer and their situation based on unfounded assumptions because of their race, culture or appearance.
- Cultivate an inclusive attitude, so as to become accepting and appreciative of people who are different from you.
- Apply an approach, and eventually develop a core value system, that reflects a non-judgemental attitude and respect for others
- Use an “unconscious bias” lens whenever you work with a newcomer, so that you are consciously aware of any biases you may have towards them, and try not to let those biases inappropriately affect the service you give them.

### *Code of conduct*

- Treat all newcomers with kindness, respect and sensitivity.
- Keep all personal information about the mentee and their family confidential unless the mentee grants permission otherwise.
- Focus on providing knowledge and insight into the Canadian and Owen Sound community.
- Do not assume the role of counsellor or advisor, regardless of issues brought to the table, but do provide information about needed supports. Talk the issue through with the newcomer but let them decide what they need to do.
- Develop appropriate boundaries in the relationship with newcomers to ensure that the relationship is safe, comfortable and always focused on their needs and goals.

- Recognize the intrinsic power that the mentor has in the relationship and the importance of a thoughtful and reflective approach to empower the newcomer within the relationship.
- Support each other as mentors by acting as a source of information, guidance, learning and reflection.
- Be ready to address racism and discrimination in our community, and demonstrate positive and inclusive relationships with newcomers.

### *Confidentiality & boundaries*

It is important to set the framework for the mentor – mentee relationship at the first meeting in order to build a safe and clear set of expectations.

Confidentiality is very important for both the newcomer and the mentor. It is a critical element in developing and maintaining trust. An open discussion about confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality is recommended at the first meeting. Generally, everything that is discussed between the newcomer and the mentor (both positive and negative things) should be held in confidence with the exception of the following **limits of confidentiality**:

- The mentor and the newcomer cannot hold in confidence any disclosure about a child in danger of harm or any report of child abuse or neglect that is disclosed. Everyone in Ontario is legally required to report suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or neglect to the Bruce Grey Child & Family Services (BGCFS).
- You cannot hold in confidence a threat of self-harm or a threat of harm towards another person. Call the police to discuss any concerns about threats of harm.

It is important that **confidentiality is a two way street**, and the newcomer respects the confidentiality of the mentor as well.

If a mentor is **not sure about limits of confidentiality**, they can seek advice from the volunteer coordinator of the agency or organization they volunteer for. If there is still uncertainty about threats of harm or disclosures, consult with the appropriate agency (BGCFS or Police).

The mentor and newcomer may at any time **agree to 'go public'** with a story or a disclosure in order to profile a success story, to celebrate an important milestone, or to address an experience of discrimination or unfairness that needs to be changed. However, the newcomer needs to fully understand the potential consequences of going public and must give permission (preferably in writing) for the use of their stories or for the mentor to address problems or issues of discrimination with a third party.

### *Collaborate with service providers and other mentors*

When working with a newcomer with complex or multiple needs, it is essential for the volunteer mentor to recognize the limitations in trying to deal with everything by themselves. The constraints may be caused by

- the restrictions of the mandate of the organization for which they volunteer
- the mentor's lack of knowledge or confidence in certain area of settlement (e.g. filling out government forms, the accreditation process)

- the mentor's feeling of discomfort with certain topics (e.g. domestic violence)
- the needs for professional intervention (e.g. legal matters, mental health issues)

The volunteer mentor should seek support from service providers or fellow volunteer mentors with needed expertise. The newcomer must be informed about the collaboration - the volunteer mentor has to explain to the mentee why the collaboration is needed.

The "Resources" section in this toolkit lists some common services newcomers need. Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)) contains information on service providers and their services in the region.

#### *Mentor's self-care*

- Recognize that you cannot do everything yourself.
- Set clear limits on what you are willing and able to do.
- Seek out support and assistance when needed
- Avoid getting too emotionally involved with the mentee's problems
- Be available, but assess the urgency of the matter when contacted by a mentee as you decide how to respond; volunteer mentors are not expected to be on call round the clock
- Keep your own stress level in check – acknowledge and address the stress you experience in working with a mentee.

#### How to become a volunteer mentor for newcomers?

- Become a volunteer of an organization which provides services to newcomers.
- If you know any refugee sponsorship group, ask them if they need extra volunteers. Often, a sponsor group divides up tasks among its members – housing, education, transportation etc. – and a subgroup of members is responsible for a specific task.
- Contact Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce and request to be added to their volunteer mentor list.
- Most organizations require their volunteers to have a criminal record check and a volunteer sector check with the police.

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## Who are the refugees and vulnerable newcomers in Grey Bruce?

Individuals and families from other countries come to Canada through different channels (see [Appendix](#)). While it is common knowledge that refugees need support to overcome various barriers in order to become socially, economically and culturally integrated, other newcomers can also be faced with challenges. The vulnerable newcomer population of Grey Bruce consists of refugees, other permanent residents, as well as temporary residents. In the context of this toolkit, a vulnerable newcomer is someone who is relatively new to Canada who faces significant challenges in becoming successfully integrated into the community. They may also have experienced significant challenges, trauma and/or loss for several years prior to their arrival in Canada.

### Refugees and vulnerable newcomers in Grey Bruce, current and anticipated

Making Grey Bruce Home has identified and assisted refugees from various countries of origin, as well as vulnerable newcomers who are immigrants in Economic and Family Classes, foreign students, and refugee claimants. We have also supported refugee families who moved to Grey Bruce from other parts of Ontario and Canada to be with family and friends after their sponsorship period ended in the original area where they first settled. In future, we expect additions to all of the above mentioned groups. We also anticipate immigrants to relocate here from urban areas where the cost of living skyrockets.

### Why do refugees and vulnerable newcomers come to Grey Bruce?

- Sponsors brought the refugees to Grey Bruce
- To be reunited with other newcomers who live here
- To attend college and high school or be with their spouse who is attending college
- They or their spouse found employment here
- Married somebody who lives here
- Cannot afford to live in the urban centres
- Moved here because they like this area
- Told by a friend or family member that this is a nice area to live in

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## Stages of mentoring

When working with a refugee or a vulnerable newcomer, the role of the volunteer mentor is to assist their mentee to integrate and be independent. The mentoring process is a journey of empowerment, through which the newcomer is supported to

- develop an understanding of their settlement needs, challenges and barriers
- connect with and access resources
- making informed choices
- advocate and access needed services for themselves

It is important that the mentor does not consider themselves as an expert who knows everything, and determine one-sidedly what is best for their mentee. On the contrary, they need to always keep their unconscious biases in check, be comfortable with not knowing, and keep an open mind to ensure that the newcomer is involved in the decision making in every stage of mentoring.

### Get to know one another

The first stage in the mentoring relationship is to get to know one another. This is an important stage in establishing trust between the mentor and newcomer. Avoid the urge to start problem-solving too early in the relationship. However, be aware that if the newcomer identifies an urgent need, you may have to help them deal with it immediately.

Where can you meet a newcomer?

- Somewhere near the newcomer's home to avoid transportation issues
- At any comfortable public place that is accessible for the newcomer (check that public transit is available and near the location).
  - At a coffee shop (be prepared to buy the coffee if you choose this option)
  - At the library or recreation centre
  - At a public park and go for a walk together
- At the newcomer's home if this is requested and/or their choice. We advise meeting in a public place for the first visit so the mentor can check for safety and comfort.

The first meeting starts with a general exploration between the mentor and newcomer of their interests, activities, culture, family and work interests. The first meeting should be low key and the mentor will need to provide some information about themselves.

At the second meeting, the conversation can move to a more detailed 'interest inventory' that the mentor or newcomer can write down to give a picture of some shared interests, and the current needs of the newcomer.

The goal is to establish a positive, trusting relationship where information sharing and supportive action can take place. Sometimes engaging in a shared activity that you both enjoy (drinking coffee together, going for a walk, talking about books, music), or finding some common interests of activities can get the 'getting to know one another' process started. It is something that takes time and good listening on the part of the mentor.

The 'getting to know one another' phase can have its challenges. The following chart sets out some challenges, and ideas of how to meet them:

Challenges	Tips
Transportation barriers make it hard to get together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ask them about transportation and problem solve together</li> <li>✓ Provide information on bus routes and/or accessibility transportation. Provide a bus ticket (if you want to do this)</li> <li>✓ Arrange a pick up and/or drop off (make sure your insurance company is aware of this use of your vehicle)</li> <li>✓ Arrange your meeting when the person is already in a place where you can meet them</li> <li>✓ If within walking distance arrange to meet in central place for both of you, or walk together to talk about things.</li> </ul>
Language barrier and/or dealing with misunderstandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use visual aids to help (maps, pictures, drawings, etc.)</li> <li>✓ Use simple language; avoid slang and jargon</li> <li>✓ Arrange for a translator to assist if necessary</li> <li>✓ Arrange for print materials in the person's language</li> <li>✓ Use a translation phone app or a translation device to assist but be aware of its limitations and watch for mistranslations</li> <li>✓ Remember, conversing in a new language is hard work for the newcomer</li> <li>✓ The mentor can learn some words and phrases in the newcomer's language.</li> </ul>
Cultural barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Read about the culture and cultural practices of the newcomer.</li> <li>✓ Get to know the hospitality code for the culture; for example, sharing a meal together is very important in some cultures.</li> <li>✓ Be comfortable with not knowing.</li> <li>✓ Seek out information about cultural practices from the newcomer.</li> <li>✓ Think about your own 'assumed' cultural practices and how to recognize differences</li> <li>✓ Don't assume that your way of doing things is the only way or the "right" way.</li> <li>✓ Be prepared to explain typical Canadian practices and be ready to acknowledge that they are not always logical.</li> <li>✓ Connect newcomers to other people/organizations with the same cultural background</li> </ul>

### Establish needs and wants with the newcomer

When you are well acquainted, begin to explore the needs and wants of the newcomer and look at strategies to provide information, connections, support and encouragement.

- Tailor a list of needs with the newcomer
- Ask what they don't understand or want to know about.
- Ask about the needs of everyone in the newcomer's family and include this in the checklist.

- Use visual aids or cue cards to establish needs when language or communication is a challenge, or use a translator if available.
- Ask the newcomer to write their needs in their own language if necessary, then seek out a translation of the list.
- Establish priorities
- Use examples of your own experiences as a newcomer to help 'level the playing field' and make this more interactive
- Identify resources for needs and share these with the newcomer, and seek out resources if you don't have immediate connections.
- Teach newcomer how to navigate Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)) and find services.
- Call 211 - a good source of information. Provide the newcomer information about how to use 211 (e.g. They can request translation by saying the name of their language in English).

### Develop a plan and check the plan together

Once the mentor and newcomer have an overview of the needed information and support, they can develop a plan together, and a way for the mentor and newcomer to check progress along the way. Use the checklist of needs as a starting point.

Some questions that are helpful for developing the plan are:

- What are their goals?
- Which goals are the highest priority?
- What specific information or support is needed to achieve each goal?
- For each goal, who would best meet their information or support needs?
- How can the mentor be most helpful in supporting the plan?
- When and how will the mentor and newcomer jointly assess the progress with the plan?
- What will success look like? What barriers or challenges (transportation, language, culture, money, childcare) may come along and how can they be addressed?
- How much time is needed?
- What kind of feedback from the mentor would be helpful?

Don't overwhelm them or yourself. Work on a few goals at a time. Let them decide the number of goals and how often you should meet. When developing and checking in on plans it is important for the mentor to say "I am here to help you" and to provide practical assistance and information for the newcomer to deal with challenges such as language, transportation and cultural barriers. The Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)) and 211 are good resources for the Mentor.

Write down the plan and then go over it together. Use this at meetings to talk about progress, barriers, achievements and any new emerging needs and changes to the plan. The plan is a

living document (or verbal agreement) to focus and provide a framework for the relationship and opportunities to celebrate successes along the way.

### [Wrap up and celebrate success](#)

It is important to celebrate accomplishments along the way, both big and small, and to celebrate when the goals are met, the job is done, the mentoring relationship is coming to an end. Depending on the nature of the relationship that has developed between the mentor and the mentee, the connection between them may continue on a different level (friends, acquaintances, or neighbours), or it may end with the completion and celebration of the mentoring plan.

In some cases, the wrap up takes place early because the mentor and newcomer cannot establish a workable relationship together, one or the other must leave the area, or because of health or circumstances beyond their control. In all cases, we encourage the mentor to have a final meeting with the newcomer to provide closure and a positive ending, regardless of who needs to end the mentoring relationship.

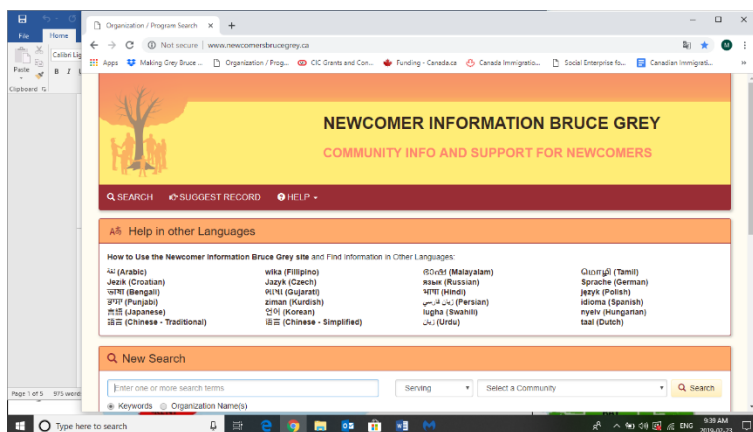
If the Mentoring relationship is not working out, or must end because of circumstances, we urge the Mentor to consult with the Mentor Team to discuss a plan for ending and to look at ways to support the newcomer transitioning to another mentor. We all want a positive ending, and a positive experience for the newcomer, and we will work together to find the newcomer the resources and supports that are needed.

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## Resources

### Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website

“Making Grey Bruce Home” has developed the Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)) to enhance the capacity of our communities to support the social and economic integration of refugees and vulnerable newcomers is the Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)). The website, which is equipped with translation function, helps connects newcomers to identify and connect to with services that support their settlement needs.



The information of the website can be translated to any of 24 different languages commonly spoken in Grey and Bruce. A service provider or volunteer using the website with a newcomer who has limited English can switch between English and the newcomer’s language. Newcomers can also use the website themselves in their languages.

### Regional & local services quick references

The following list of regional and local services offered by government agencies or not-for-profit organizations is by no means complete. Readers are encouraged to search for resources on the Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)) if they cannot find what they are looking for below. There are also many businesses that offer some of these services for a fee.

#### *Abuse / Assault*

**Bruce Grey Child and Family Services** – provides child welfare, intake/investigation/assessment, family support services, child abuse treatment and adoption services under the Child and Family Services Act to children and their families.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2003?Number=0>

**Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth** – provides short-term emotional support, practical assistance and referrals to long term services to victims of crime and tragic circumstance.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2440?Number=0>

### *Child, Youth & Family*

**Big Brothers Big Sisters** – connects children and youths with volunteer mentors, who act as their role model. Big Brothers Big Sisters Owen Sound serves Owen Sound and area; the boundary of Big Brothers Big Sisters Kincardine is 20 mile radius around the Municipality of Kincardine  
Owen Sound: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA1156?Number=1>  
Kincardine: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA1947?Number=0>

**EarlyON Child and Family Centre** - provides a place where parents and caregivers can take part with their children in a range of programs and activities, get answers to questions, get information about programs and services that are available for young children and talk to early years professionals, as well as other parents and caregivers in the community. There are several locations throughout Grey Bruce.

<https://brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon>  
<https://www.grey.ca/childrens-services>

**Happy Babies Happy Children** (Grey Bruce Public Health) - provides support and information on topics such as caring for a new baby, feeding and nutrition, growth and development, discipline, as well as many other issues.

<https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Child-and-Family-Health/Home-Visiting-Program>

**Infant and Child Development Program** – offers home visiting early intervention and prevention services to assist families with infants and toddlers with established risks, biological risks and psychosocial risks of delays in development or disability to attain an optimal level of development. The program is provided by various Community Living organizations.

Kincardine & District: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/BRU0332?Number=1>

Owen Sound & District: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA0176?Number=2>

Walkerton & District: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/BRU0101?Number=4>

**Keystone Prevention Programs** – offers services to families needing extra support to help them have and raise healthy babies and preschoolers.

[http://www.keystonebrucegrey.org/programs\\_prevention.php](http://www.keystonebrucegrey.org/programs_prevention.php)

#### **LGBTQ supports –**

PFLAG Canada Grey Bruce Chapter provides support and information about sexual orientation and gender identity, to anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or their friends and family.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0346?Number=2>

South East Grey Community Health Centre offers weekly program for networking and conversations

<https://www.segchc.ca>

**Libraries** – many libraries and library branches in Grey Bruce offer programs for families as well as different age groups. Visit their official websites for details.

### *Cultural & Community*

**Bruce Botanical Food Gardens** - provides the community with sustainable food and education about food insecurity and sustainable agriculture. Visitors can take a guided tour of over 200 varieties of food plants and choose food to take home for their meals. Located in Ripley and serving Bruce County.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/BRU0053?Number=1>

**Community Garden & Food Forest** (CMHA Grey Bruce) – Garden beds available for community members to grow their own fruits and vegetables. Anyone in the community can harvest produce in the food forest.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0243?Number=2>

**Good Food Box** - provides a grocery bin of fresh seasonal produce at a low price to encourage healthier eating. The program is run in many communities in Grey Bruce. For information about each location, go to Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)), conduct a “New Search” using the keywords “good food box” and select a community.

### *Education*

**Bluewater District School Board** – operates all public schools in Grey Bruce.

Elementary: <http://www.bwdsb.on.ca/schools/eleschools>

Secondary: <http://www.bwdsb.on.ca/schools/secschools>

**Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board** – operates all Catholic schools in Grey Bruce. To look up schools, go to the “For Community” page on the School Board’s website ([http://www.bgcdsb.org/for\\_community](http://www.bgcdsb.org/for_community)) and click on “List of Schools” in the left hand column.

**Georgian Bay Tutors** – provides one-on-one instruction for elementary, secondary and post-secondary students, including students with special needs.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0382?Number=3>

**Georgian College Owen Sound Campus** – offers a variety of full time and part time post-secondary education programs to eligible individuals, and literacy/basic skills training that helps learners prepare for employment, apprenticeship, secondary-school credit, post-secondary education and greater independence.

Post-secondary education: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2390?Number=2>

Literacy & basic skills training: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2391?Number=3>

**South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council** – works with school-aged children and youth and support their families, to improve basic reading, writing and math skills. Also offers opportunities for youth with high literacy skills to showcase abilities at events such as writing competitions and drama productions.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA1755?Number=4>

### *Employment*

**Leads Employment Services** – provides specialized one-to-one vocational and skills development services for people with disabilities as well as to those facing related barriers to employment throughout Southwestern Ontario.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0236?Number=0>

**Life Directions Employment Supports** - provides supports to individuals in South East Grey who are experiencing barriers to employment.

<https://www.southwesthealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=172885>



**VPI Solutions** – facilitates several Employment Ontario programs to help job seekers in Bruce County find work and training opportunities, and works with employers who are looking to hire.  
<https://www.southwesthealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=14960>

**Y Employment** - delivers a wide range of programs and services to job seekers and employers in Grey County.  
<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0094?Number=8>

### *Financial Assistance*

**Child Care Subsidy** – provides assistance for eligible families to pay for licenced child care programs (centered-base of home-based). Apply with Bruce County Human Services or Grey County Social Services.

Bruce County: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/BRU0316?Number=0>

Grey County: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/CWD0145?Number=1>

**EI (Employment Insurance)** – Service Canada provides Internet access and assistance locating and applying for Employment Insurance and other federal programs. Offices are located in Owen Sound and Walkerton.

Owen Sound: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2433?Number=2>

Walkerton: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA0124?Number=3>

**ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program)** – offers income and employment supports to eligible individuals with disability. Apply by phone, in person or online. Office located in Owen Sound.  
<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/CWD3381?Number=14>

**Ontario Works** – assists with immediate financial need and employment supports. Apply with Bruce County Human Services or Grey County Social Services.

Bruce County: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA0086?Number=1>

Grey County: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/CWD0584?Number=3>

**Utility Assistance Program (United Way of Bruce Grey)** – offers financial assistance for low-income families and individuals living below the poverty line to pay for the next delivery of wood, oil or propane. Also supports natural gas and electricity applications.  
<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/CWD6172?Number=12>

### *Healthcare*

**Family Health Teams** – primary health care organizations that include a team of family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, dietitians, and other professionals who work together to provide primary health care for their community. For information about each location, go to Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)), conduct a “New Search” using the keywords “family health team” and select a community.

**Health Care Connect** – helps newcomers find family doctor or nurse practitioner. Register online (<https://hcc3.hcc.moh.gov.on.ca/HCCWeb/faces/layoutHCCSplash.jsp>) or by phone (1-800-445-1822)

**South East Grey Community Health Centre** – provides primary care services and health programs to the residents of the Municipalities of Chatsworth, Grey Highlands, Southgate and West Grey. SEGCHC offers programs and services at a number of locations and satellite sites.  
[www.segchc.ca](http://www.segchc.ca)

## *Housing*

**Bruce County Housing Corporation** – provides affordable housing to eligible families, seniors, couples, single people and people with special needs in a variety of housing forms. Apply and get on waiting list. Other housing assistance available.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA0084?Number=0>

**Grey County Housing** – provides geared-to-income housing for eligible individuals and families. Apply and get on waiting list. Priority is given to victims of domestic violence. Other housing assistance available.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2392?Number=2>

**Owen Sound Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation** – provides affordable housing and rent geared to income housing. Call to inquire about eligibility.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA0521?Number=4>

**YMCA Housing Support Services** – provides assistance to adults and youth 16 and older across Grey and Bruce Counties who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or dealing with other housing issues. Located in Hanover and Owen Sound.

Hanover: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA1503?Number=1>

Owen Sound: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA0299?Number=3>

## *Language*

**Adult Learning Centres Grey-Bruce-Georgian** – offers free weekly ESL groups in some branches. If volunteers are available, students may be matched with volunteers for additional mentoring.

<http://alcentres.ca/services/esl/>

**Arden Language Centre** - offers full-time, multi-level ESL classes to adults (age 18 and up) using the Cambridge ESL curriculum, Ventures. Scholarships are available for those who does not have the means to pay.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0037?Number=0>

**Ersine Community Health Centre** – Upper Grand District School Board offers an ESL program to adults in Dundalk and area.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0388?Number=0>

**Occupation-specific Language Training** (Georgian College) – free work-oriented language training (180 hours) to help newcomers to Canada improve their workplace communication skills.

<https://www.georgiancollege.ca/academics/oslt/>

## *Legal & Policy*

**City and municipal by-laws** – go to official website of the city or municipality.

**Grey Bruce Community Legal Clinic** – provides access to advice on legal matters for Grey Bruce residents. Offers legal services (representation and more intensive assistance) to residents with low income. Does not do family law, criminal law, litigation or wills and estates

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2394?Number=0>

### *Mental Health / Addictions*

**Canadian Mental Health Association Grey Bruce** – provides a variety of preventive and remedial programs in communities through out Grey Bruce.

<http://www.cmhagb.org/programs/>

**Birth to Senior Kindergarten Mental Health Program** (Keystone) – helps children from birth to senior kindergarten and their families who are experiencing serious behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA2492?Number=5>

### *Transportation*

**Driver Examination Centre** - provides driver licensing and examination services on behalf of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). Located in Owen Sound and Walkerton.

Owen Sound: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA1880?Number=2>

Walkerton: <http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GBA1131?Number=1>

**Driver's licence and plate sticker renewal** (Service Ontario) – service counters located in Durham, Hanover, Kincardine, Markdale, Owen Sound, Port Elgin, Walkerton, Wiarton and Wiarton. For information on the a specific service counter, go to Newcomer Information Bruce Grey website ([www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca](http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca)), conduct a “New Search” using the keywords “driver's licence renewal” and select a community.

### *Translation and interpretation resources*

**Commercial translation devices** – available in a wide price range from \$70 and up. They are advertised for business and travel use. Making Grey Bruce Home has tested the Aibecy Translator, and it works reasonably well, as long as users speak slowly and clearly, and use simple short sentences. To research on and compare devices, go to Youtube and type in “translation device”.

**Owen Sound Muslim Association** – arranges translation (Arabic-English) services for refugees and any newcomers.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0091?Number=3>

**Free Phone apps** – there are quite a few translation phone apps available. Making Grey Bruce Home has tested Voice Translator by HawsoftMob Inc and Google Translate. Both are free and work reasonably well, as long as users speak slowly and clearly, and use simple short sentences. Some teachers are using the “sayhi” app to communicate with newcomer students in their classroom.

Voice Translator: <https://appadvice.com/app/translator-voice-translation/1247396868>

Google: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.translate&hl=en>

Sayhi: <https://www.sayhitranslate.com>

**Translation and Interpretation Program** (Immigration Services Guelph-Wellington) – provides trained and qualified translators and interpreters for a variety of languages. This is a fee-for-service program.

<http://www.is-gw.ca/services/translation-interpretation-program-tips>

**Volunteer translators/interpreters** – Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce has started compiling a list of volunteer translators/interpreters in a variety of languages.

[welcominggreybruce.ca](http://welcominggreybruce.ca)

### Online resources

**Anytime ESL** - an online English as a Second Language program funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) as a pilot project under its Adult Non-Credit ESL service. Its target audience is newcomer adults at Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels 1-5.

<https://anytimeesl.ca/>

**Assaulted Women's Helpline** – provide crisis counselling, safety planning, emotional support, information and referrals accessible 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

<http://www.awhl.org/>

**CLB Online Self-assessment** – a tool that assesses a newcomer's CLB levels in reading and listening. The assessment does not replace the official Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment required for the application for citizenship, which has to be taken at an assessment centre. The closest assessment centres are in Barrie, Guelph, Kitchener and Brampton.

<http://www.language.ca/home/>

**CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario)** - provides information to people who face barriers in accessing the justice system, including income, disability, literacy, and language, helps them understand and exercise their legal rights. Publications can be printed in various languages.

<https://www.cleo.on.ca/en>

**MTO's Official Driver's Handbook** – available in English and French.

English: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/official-mto-drivers-handbook>

French: <https://www.ontario.ca/fr/document/guide-officiel-de-lautomobiliste>

**Driver Licencing Information** – provides information on how and where to obtain an Ontario driver's licence.

<http://www.newcomersbrucegrey.ca/record/GRE0380?Number=0>

**LINC Home Study** – a free distance ESL program for newcomers with a minimum Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) score of 3 for listening and speaking and 2 for reading and writing, who cannot attend LINC classes in person. Students choose between online (computer with internet access) or correspondence (books and CDs) learning options and study independently from home.

<https://www.tcet.com/linc-home-study/how-to-register>

**Settlement.Org** – contains information and resources for newcomers to Ontario, and a discussion forum for newcomers to share experience or ask questions. Settlement and orientation information can be read in a variety of languages.

[www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org)

<https://settlement.org/translated-information/>

## Training and knowledge development

### **Canada Immigration Newsletter**

<https://www.cicnews.com/>

### **Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project**

<https://irmhp-psmir.camhx.ca/>

**LearnAtWork Online Learning** – contains a collection of online learning courses created and hosted by OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants). The topics are mainly on skills in working with newcomers.

<https://ocasi.org/learn-work>

### **Lifeline Syria**

<http://lifelinesyria.ca>

**Together Project** – a Toronto-based initiative to connect Government-assisted newcomers with Canadians for friendship and support as part of an effort to build stronger, more inclusive communities. Their volunteer training manuals are available for download.

<https://togetherproject.ca/matching/#resources>

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## Appendix

Individuals and families from other countries come to Canada through different channels.

### Permanent residents

#### *Refugees & Protected Persons*

- [Government-Assisted Refugees](#) (GARs) are refugees referred to the Canadian government by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) or another designated organization. The Government of Canada sponsors their initial resettlement and provides a year of financial assistance and other supports.
- [Privately-sponsored Refugees](#) (PSRs) are those refugees selected by a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), a “Group of Five” or more Canadians or community organization who provides 12 months of financial and volunteer support.
- [Blended Visa-Office Referred](#) (BVOR) Refugees are referred by UNHCR and matched with private sponsors (a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, a Group of 5, or a community sponsor). The Government of Canada provides six months of financial support and the private sponsor also provides six months of financial support and a year of social support.
- Protected persons are persons for whom staying or being returned to their country of origin would subject them to a danger for torture, a risk to their life, or a risk of cruel or unusual treatment or punishment.

#### *Immigrants*

- Economic immigrants are selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada’s economy. There are several subcategories of economic immigrant, including skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial or territorial nominees, live-in caregivers and the “Canadian experience class”.
- Canadian citizens or permanent residents can sponsor their spouse/partners, parents, grandparents and other family members to move to Canada through family class.

### Temporary Residents

- Refugee claimants are temporary residents who request refugee protection upon or after arrival in Canada. They may remain in Canada while their application is being reviewed and may apply for work permit. A refugee claimant whose claim is accepted can make an application in Canada for permanent residence.
- International students are in Canada principally to study for a specified length of time. They have been issued a study permit and are eligible to apply for a work permit. A study permit holder may qualify to work on-campus or off-campus without an additional work permit
- Temporary foreign workers are in Canada principally for professional or work-related reasons for a specified length of time. They have been issued a document that allows them to work in Canada but must leave Canada when their permit expires.
- Foreign nationals other than refugee claimants may be allowed to remain in Canada on humanitarian or compassionate grounds under special circumstances.

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