



# **A Guide for Ukrainian Settlement in the Comox Valley**

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## Dear Ukrainians

The Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society (CVUCS) sincerely welcomes you to Canada. We are very sad because of the situation in Ukraine. We regret that you had to leave your homes and go so far from your home, friends, and family. CVUCS is a non-profit organization. We are a cultural association that has organised volunteer help for Ukrainians displaced by war and arriving in the Comox Valley. We want to help you get settled in a new country as soon as possible. In this guide, we summarise the most important information, service providers and links to website sites that will help you become settled in the Comox Valley. We organise this information into ten settlement steps in order of priority. The Guide highlights important details and provides useful tips to help you accomplish these steps successfully.

We will also come to meet you soon and bring a welcome basket. We look forward to getting to know you and hopefully you will find that CVUCS offers a way to create your first friendships in Canada. If for some reason we don't come for a visit right away, please email and let us know you are here in the Comox Valley. (Email: [cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com))

We advise you to begin gathering your important Canadian documentation records soon after you arrive, because it will be more difficult to do it later when you get a job and may be busy working during business hours. Please know that the members of the Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society are here to guide you through these steps. Please ask us questions and if we don't know the answers, we will help you find answers.

**Here is our first helpful tip for you:** Be prepared to work through these steps by having your original copies of your Ukrainian identification, passport, Canadian documents, CUAET documentation and all other original documents ready. We suggest getting a special folder to manage all your documents. Getting copies can be helpful, but many steps will involve using original documents. Protect all your original identification documents very carefully because you will need them many times during the first few months of settlement.

**More helpful starting tips:** We've organised this list of steps in order of priority to help simplify your settlement as much as possible. These first few weeks in Canada are a tiring time, with many required steps involved, so please get plenty of rest when needed. Some gentle movement or walking may also help you soothe any confusion or anxiety you feel. Be patient. Soon you will feel more settled. And remember we are here to help you along the way.

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	<p><b>Please note:</b> CVUCS Offers the guide as volunteer effort. CVUCS will do its best to update the information regularly and the guide is dated to indicate when it was last updated. CVUCS is not responsible for any errors or inaccuracies in the guide. CVUCS is also not responsible for changes in government policies or other services that make any information irrelevant or inaccurate.</p>	

## **1) Buy a SIM card for a mobile phone.**

You need to buy a SIM card right away, because all government organisations, community service providers and potential employers will ask for your phone number. There are several large mobile operators in Canada: Telus, Rogers, Fido, and Bell are the names of some providers. Each provider will have contracts and plan details on their website. It is also important to know that in Canada you have to pay an additional \$50 for SIM card activation. This is a one-time payment. Whatever service you choose, always ask about discounts and whether it is possible to cancel the activation fee. It is often possible to negotiate a more affordable or better plan by asking lots of questions. Also ask about family plans if multiple family members need phones. Usually the best priced plan with these large service providers involves a contract where you agree to one to three years of service.

Cell phone plans in Canada are quite expensive, so it's good to know that money can be saved by choosing some of the simpler monthly phone services such as Public Mobile, Koodo and Chatr. These simple plans range from \$15-25 per month. You can use your existing phone, and after you purchase SIM card activation, you then pay per month for simple plans that include a set amount of long-distance minutes, unlimited texting, and some Internet data.

## **2) Open a bank account.**

You must choose a bank for yourself. If you look online using the names of the banks, you can find details about each one on their websites. There are several large national banks in the Comox Valley: Royal Bank, Scotia Bank, Bank of Montreal, CIBC, and TD Bank. These large banks have services across Canada. There is also the Canadian Western Bank and the Coastal Community Credit Union. All are fully insured, accredited by the Canadian government and safe to use. All offer in-person and online banking services. Some banks will offer specialized services for newly settled Canadians. Always ask about services for new immigrants. These services might include low-fee accounts or credit cards. Some even offer one-time only bonus deposits when new Canadians open an account. It's good to do some research before deciding. You will need the original copy of your Ukrainian passport and Canadian work permit when you go to establish new bank accounts. If you think your family may move to another province, choose one of the national banks, then you won't need to change banks if you move. If you are confident about staying in the Comox Valley you may find that the Coastal Community Credit Union is helpful. The Canadian Western Bank operates in all the western provinces of Canada.

**Helpful Tips:** Ask the bank of your choice how to arrange electronic deposits in your new account(s). Sometimes the bank provides a form that can be used when setting up your accounts that will be helpful when applying for government financial benefits or employment payroll deposits. Each bank will organize their electronic deposits a little differently, so ask when you first open your bank accounts to make automatic payments of benefits or wages easier. Also ask how to set up online banking and your passwords. Most banking in Canada will be done online for bill payments and deposits such as payroll.

### **3) Get one-time financial assistance from Canadian government.**

To receive one-time financial assistance from the federal government of Canada, you need to register:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures/settlement/get-financial-assistance.html>

Anyone who successfully obtained the CUAET (Canada-Ukraine Authorisation for Emergency Travel) qualifies for this assistance.

You will need a bank account first to receive the deposit.

Amount of financial assistance: CAD \$3,000 per adult and CAD \$1,500 per child.

**Here are some helpful tips:** Sometimes the website gives an error and it is not possible to register for help. If you need help, go to the Comox Valley Immigration Welcome Centre located at 407A-5th Street in Courtney and their staff will help you solve problems. Call the hotline together with their staff and find out what the problem is with your application. As a rule, the problem is with the UCI number. It is usually possible to solve all this by telephone. In step six we will discuss the Comox Valley Immigration Welcome Centre in more detail. They offer many helpful services for new Canadians.

**Another helpful tip:** Whenever you are working with federal government services of Canada, if you need in-person help, you can seek help at the Comox Valley Service Canada Centre. See more details in step four about the Service Canada Centre.

### **4) Get your SIN**

Everyone in your family will need a Social Insurance Number which is your most basic Canadian identification. You will notice Canadians abbreviate this important number by calling it "SIN". You will use your SIN to obtain many other types of identification documents, banking services and after you have been hired by an employer. After you are employed you will use your SIN to pay taxes and receive future financial benefits from the government.

To get a SIN, you need to go to the Service Canada Centre:

Address: 130 19th Street, Courtenay, BC V9N 8S1

Working hours: Monday - Friday 08:30 - 16:00

Website: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/> Phone: +1 800 622 6232

You must have an original Ukrainian passport and an original work permit with you.

**Helpful Tip:** Your SIN card is confidential. It is your most important identity number in Canada. Protect your SIN as it is often used for fraud. It can be used for identity theft and can ruin your credit rating in Canada. Learn when the SIN is required in Canada and when to keep it private:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/sin/protection.html>

**Another Helpful Tip:** Inquire about how to obtain a Government of Canada online account when you are at the Service Canada Centre getting your Canadian SIN documentation.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/my-account.html>

## **5) Register for MSP (Medical Services Plan) & BCService card**

Everyone in British Columbia must enrol with MSP for their Medical Services Plan. Everyone is also eligible for a BC Service Card that provides their MSP identification for free health care called your Personal Health Number (PHN).

To do this, you need to visit the BC Service Centre.

Address: 2500 Cliffe Ave, Courtenay, BC V9N 5M6

Working hours: Monday - Friday 09:00 - 16:30

Phone: +1 250 897 7500

**Here are some helpful tips:** You must have an original Ukrainian passport and an original Canadian work permit with you. Many organisations in Canada will ask for two photo documents that confirm your identification (ID). The BC Service card will provide you with one official photo ID card. You can also complete the MSP form for health insurance at the BC Service Centre. The ID cards themselves will arrive by mail within 2-3 weeks to the address you specify during registration. Often this is the address of the Canadian family with whom you temporarily live. Later, when you move to your rented accommodation, you must change the address to your permanent location. To do this, you will need to go to BC Service again.

**A helpful tip:** Whenever you are working with provincial government services of British Columbia, if you need in-person help, you can seek help at the Service BC Centre for help with any provincial government service.

## **6) Register at the Comox Valley Immigrant Welcome Centre**

The Comox Valley Ukrainian Society recommends that you visit the Comox Valley Immigrant Welcome Centre to learn about all the services they offer new Canadians. Some of the services include free English language courses and other settlement services. Their staff can answer various questions about documents, immigration and how to successfully settle in Canada.

The free language classes are called LINC or Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. It is a functional literacy program using Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) that gives new Canadians English for daily life usage in CLB levels 1-4 in the Comox Valley and CLB levels 1-7 in nearby Campbell River. Space is often limited due to class sizes and student numbers.

CLB Levels 2 & 3 are currently offered online in a limited basis, and the online courses may change over time, please ask the Immigrant Welcome Centre for more details.



Proof of completion of Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) Level 4 or higher is one of the accepted proof of language for Canadian citizenship. If you decide not to use LINC classes for English, you can ask the Immigration Welcome Centre staff about other ways to provide proof of English or French language for Canadian citizenship.

Visit the Comox Valley Immigrant Welcome Centre:

Address: 407A 5th Street, Courtenay, BC V9N 1J7

Working hours: Monday - Friday 09:00 - 17:00

Phone: +1 250 338 6359

Website: <https://www.immigrantwelcome.ca/>

## **7) Register in local schools and childcare**

### **Schools K-12:**

Public schools in Canada are free for all children from kindergarten to grade twelve. Your local school district is called Comox Valley Schools (SD #71). Your children have the right to an education while you have a work permit or later permanent residence status. In Canada children must go to the school that is located in your area nearby your home.

The Comox Valley Schools (SD #71) has website:

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/>

School registration is available online only at My Education BC (MyEDBC):

<https://myeducation.gov.bc.ca/aspen/logon.do>

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Online-Registration-Instructions.pdf>

Questions can be directed to Comox Valley Schools (SD #71): phone **250 334 5500**

The school district has a school locator function on its website:

<https://mybaragar.com/index.cfm?event=page.SchoolLocatorPublic&DistrictCode=BC71>

**Helpful tips:** It's also possible to find the school using Google Maps. Enter your address into Google Maps to see what is the name of the nearest school. It's helpful to think about where you live temporarily with your host family vs. where you may permanently settle in your first home. Registering at a school within easy walking distance of your home can be helpful when you first manage settlement in Canada, especially until you have a vehicle. If you have problems with online registration, go to the local school and they will help you in-person with any questions. You will need proof of your residence address, your child's birth certificate, any immigration documents, and any Canadian documents you may have obtained. Your child's Personal Health Number or PHN is also needed. Children who are older than five years of age by December 31 of the current school year are eligible for kindergarten.

**Other Helpful tips:** Currently the online registration requires a desk-top computer, not a cell phone or tablet for technology reasons. Registration forms will not permit submission until all required information is completed. Gathering everything will help make the application easier.

**More Help:** If you find the school registration online process confusing, go to the Comox Valley Schools office located at 607 Cumberland Road for some in-person help. Their staff will help you get started.

### **Early Childhood Learning Opportunities:**

Finding connections with other Canadian parents with young children is a good way to learn about the many early childhood education opportunities in the Comox Valley. Ask other local families that you meet and begin to trust. Here are some good websites for parents with young children aged 0-5 years:

Comox Valley Schools:

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/courtenay-elementary/programs-services/>

Comox Valley Family Services Association:

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

Comox Valley Regional District Parks & Recreation:

<https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/parks-recreation> \*Note: They offer recreation for all ages.

### **Childcare:**

Securing safe, affordable, good quality childcare is challenging for working parents in Canada, but beginning to improve in costs. The fees for childcare are decreasing due to government subsidies aimed to provide parents with good quality childcare for affordable prices. When you successfully secure childcare at a licensed care centre, ask about the provider about government initiatives to reduce monthly costs. Childcare is offered by several private childcare services in the Comox Valley. You can find them on Google by using these Internet search words: “Daycare Comox Valley”. Referrals by Comox Valley families that you begin to meet and trust are a good way to find trustworthy childcare.

**Helpful Tip:** It may be helpful to understand that childcare spaces are limited and all Canadian parents find childcare difficult to obtain. Finding local families who share your parenting values will be important because they can give you suggestions and once you form friendships, you will begin to build a support system for your family.

We suggest these websites to learn more about childcare opportunities:

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

[pacific-care.bc.ca](http://pacific-care.bc.ca)

For general information on how childcare is offered in British Columbia this website may provide you an overview:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/how-to-access-child-care/licensed-unlicensed-child-care>

The government of British Columbia also offers an Affordable Child Care Benefit. You can learn all the details on this website or by visiting a Service BC Centre:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

### **Child Development Needs:**

Families who have children and youth with diverse abilities can contact the Comox Valley Child Development Association to speak with a family advocate who can help parents find many specialized development services for their children.

Comox Valley Child Development Association (CVDA):

Address: 237 3rd Street, Courtenay, BC V9N 1E1

Working hours: Monday - Friday 08:30 - 17:00

Phone: +1 250 338 4288

Email: [info@cvda.ca](mailto:info@cvda.ca)

Website: [www.cvcda.ca](http://www.cvcda.ca)

### **Post-Secondary Education:**

The North Island College located here in the Comox Valley and in nearby Campbell River has many learning opportunities. We encourage Ukrainians to learn about all the North Island College has to offer:

<https://www.nic.bc.ca/programs/>

Here are some details specific to the North Island College campus in the Comox Valley: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/about-us/our-locations/comox-valley/>

The best way to learn more is to go visit the North Island College campus:

Address: 2300 Ryan Road  
Courtenay, BC V9N 8N6

Hours: 09:00 to 16:00

General Phone: +1 800 715 0914

Website:

<https://www.nic.bc.ca/audienc>

[e/future-students/connect-with-us/](https://www.nic.bc.ca/future-students/connect-with-us/)

Email: [futurestudents@nic.bc.ca](mailto:futurestudents@nic.bc.ca)

New Students Phone: 250-923-9700 ext. 7840

The North Island College offers many support services for new students. Give them a call or visit the campus. They also have education advisors to help new students.

## **8) Complete mandatory medical exam within 90 days of arrival**

Although this is step 8, it's **important** to get this step completed. It's mandatory. It is **important** to understand that not every doctor or medical centre can perform a medical examination for immigration to Canada. You must make an appointment with a certified doctor who is known as a "panel physician". The website link below will help you find one. Enter the country "Canada"; then province "British Columbia"; and then a list is given by city. Currently the closest panel physicians to the Comox Valley can be accessed in nearby cities named Campbell River, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, or Victoria. The list will be updated regularly, but at this time some travel will be necessary.

### **Find a Panel Physician:**

<https://secure.cic.gc.ca/pp-md/pp-list.aspx>

Beginning on October 01, 2022, the BC Ministry of Health began funding the medical examinations, including chest x-rays and blood tests, that Ukrainians under CUAET must complete within 90 days of arrival in British Columbia. You may ask at the Service BC Centre described in step five more details.

Those who may have already paid for testing can be reimbursed by sending the appropriate information to Health Insurance BC. The form required for reimbursement is available at: [www.gov.bc.ca/MSP/eligibility](http://www.gov.bc.ca/MSP/eligibility).

Completed forms can be mailed to:

Health Insurance BC

Patient Benefits

PO Box 9480 Stn Prov Govt Victoria BC V8W 9E7

## **9) Medical Care for Everyone & Support for Pregnancy**

### **Important Medical Care Information for Everyone:**

It can be difficult to find a family doctor in Canada due to a shortage of doctors. The best way to find a family doctor is to inquire at family medicine clinics to see if they are accepting new patients. Ask others that you meet and trust in the Comox Valley if they will ask their doctor to accept you or have they heard of any new doctors establishing practises. You may find that a search for a family doctor takes time, so it's important to know where to access urgent or emergency care in the Comox Valley. All of the care in this list is available free under our MSP or Medical Services Plan, with the exception of ambulance services which may cost about \$80 for paramedic transport to hospital.

### **Emergency Care:**

911 Paramedic Care & Ambulance Transport - Call **9-1-1** and state your emergency

**North Island Hospital** - Comox Valley - Emergency Medical Care

101 Lerwick Road Courtenay

Website: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/hospitals-health-centre-locations/north-island-hospital-comox-valley>

### **Mental Health Care**

**Immediate Mental Crisis Help:** North Island Hospital - Emergency Medical Care

**24 Hr Vancouver Island Crisis Line: 1-888-494-3888**

Comox Valley Intake Nurse Mental Health & Substance Use: 250-331-8525

Nanaimo Walk-In Crisis Counselling

#203-2000 Island Highway, Nanaimo V9S 5W3 Monday-Friday 10:00-18:15

### **Urgent Care & Walk-In Care:**

Comox Valley Medical Clinic

Address: 3199 Cliffe Avenue, Courtenay (Inside the Walmart Store)

Phone: 250 334 1512

Website: <http://www.comoxvalleywalkinclinic.com/index.html>

## **Urgent Care & Walk-In Care:**

Washington Park Medical Clinic

Address: 757 Ryan Road, Courtenay

Phone: 250 334 9241

Website: <https://walkinmedicalclinic.com/>

## **811 Health Link BC:**

Call 8-1-1 for free health information available by phone. By calling 8-1-1 you can speak with a nurse or pharmacist. This phone service offers translation upon request in more than 130 languages.

## **Where to find support for pregnancy:**

An important step for pregnant families newly arrived in Canada is to secure the care of either a physician or midwife. The physicians offering birth medical care will either be family doctors or specialists called obstetricians. Midwives are trained in the management of pregnancy, labour, birth and postpartum recovery. In Canada we also have caregivers called birth doulas whose primary role is offering pregnant women support during the birthing process. Internet searches can help locate some of these services. Most pregnancy medical services are free through our public health and others are private services available by fee for service.

Helpful starting information can be found on the websites for these organizations:

**Island Health** offers all kinds of free support for pregnant families from public health nurses under their program called Right Start. The health care they offer includes prenatal services, postpartum support, breastfeeding support, family health, and immunization. As soon as you know that you are pregnant, you can register to access all their services.

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-services/pregnancy-birth-services/right-start>

**Pregnant in the Comox Valley** offers a comprehensive website that lists all the doctors, midwives and doulas who work in the Comox Valley helping with pregnancy, births and postpartum care. Their website offers all kinds of service access for pregnant families.

<https://pregnantinthecomoxvalley.ca/>

**Valley Child** connects parents and caregivers in the Comox Valley with many resources and services to help their children find success in life. They offer a special section on their website filled with information for new and expecting parents.

<https://valleychild.ca>

**Comox Valley Family Services Association** helps families and children. Their website has a section called the Healthy Families Program with all kinds of support for pregnancy and children from birth to age three years.

<https://www.comoxvalleyfamilyservices.com/programs--2/healthy-families-program>

**Comox Valley Pregnancy Care Centre** offers free practical support like diapers, clothing, groceries, and more. They also offer emotional health support during stressful pregnancies, miscarriages or abortions. They will also assist pregnant women without a family doctor to find one. The Pregnancy Care Centre offers all kinds of support.

<https://cvpregcare.ca/>

## 10) Obtain a BC Driver's Licence

**Experienced Drivers:** If you have come to Canada with a Ukrainian driving permit you can begin to drive legally in Canada for 90 days, giving you a chance to then obtain a BC driver's licence (BCDL). Once you are ready to exchange your Ukraine driver's licence for a BC driver's licence, you will need to complete a knowledge test and road test, much like any new driver in British Columbia.



<https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/moving-bc/Pages/Moving-from-another-country.aspx>

**New Drivers:** The province of British Columbia has a multi-year graduated licensing program that requires 3 tests as you move from a learner's Permit, novice Permit and then a fully-licensed driver's permit. The first test is a multiple-choice knowledge test and then two road tests to demonstrate driving skills. Anyone older than 16 can begin the process and anyone under age 19 requires a parent or legal guardian's signature. The government organization that regulates driver's licences and vehicle insurance is called ICBC.

The Service BC Centre in Courtenay also serves as the ICBC Driver Licensing Office for the Comox Valley. Service BC is located at 2500 Cliffe Avenue. You can go to this location to ask questions. This website also offers all the details for obtaining a BC driver's licence:

<https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/Pages/default.aspx>

**Helpful Tips:** When it comes time to take any of the three tests, you can book in a neighbouring city to get an appointment more quickly, rather than waiting weeks or months for testing in your home city. This is one way to speed up the multi-year process. The knowledge test is available in several languages, one being Russian. It's a good idea to check if more test languages, such as Ukrainian become available, by asking ICBC staff. You will perform the road tests in English. ICBC offers language services in both Russian and Ukrainian for general questions by telephone. Call **1-800-663-3051** and ask for translation. There are private driving instruction businesses in the Comox Valley that help new drivers learn the skills required for the road tests. They offer lessons for fees. You can find them on Google by using the search words: "driving lessons Comox Valley".

**Very Helpful Tip:** Obtain a copy of the book called **Learn to Drive Smart**. It is available online and in paper copy at the BC Service Centre or any ICBC office. It teaches everything you need to study for the knowledge and road tests. There are also practise knowledge tests available online on the ICBC website that are good training for passing the knowledge test successfully.

<https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/driving-guides/Pages/Learn-to-Drive-Smart.aspx>

**Most Helpful Tip:** Start the process of obtaining a driver's licence as soon as you can. It takes time to complete the process and makes transportation to work, school and stores much easier. Independent transportation makes settlement an easier process in the Comox Valley.

### **BC Service Centre - Driver's Licences**

Address: 2500 Cliffe Ave, Courtenay, BC V9N 5M6

Working hours: Monday - Friday 09:00 - 16:30

Phone: +1 250 897 7500

Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/servicebc/courtenay>

### **Other Helpful Guidance**

**Soon you will create a new home for your family. Here are some ways to gather affordable items to establish a new home.**

In Canada, you will need many things to set up your new home and enable your family to feel comfortable. Almost anything can be found in good condition in second-hand stores for affordable prices. Here's a list of some favourite second-hand stores in the Comox Valley:

#### **Blessing Boutique**

Address: 218 Church street, Comox, V9M 2G3

Working hours: every Thursday from 10:00 to 14:00

#### **The Salvation Army - two locations**

Address: 1671 Ryan Rd E, Comox & 1580 Fitzgerald Ave, Courtenay

Working hours: Monday - Saturday 09:00 - 17:00

<http://www.salvationarmy.ca/>

#### **Thrift Shop - Auxiliary for Comox Valley Healthcare**

Address: 2137 Comox Avenue, Comox, BC V9M 1P2

Inside the main entrance of the St. Joseph's Hospital on Comox Ave

Working hours: Wednesday - Saturday 10:00 - 16:00

<https://comoxvalleyauxiliary.ca/2020/06/09/new-phone-number-for-the-auxiliary-thrift-shop/>

### **Too Good to be Threw - two locations**

Address: 239 Puntledge Road, Courtenay & 456-5th Street, Courtenay  
(Soon moving to 6th Street, Courtenay)

Working hours: Monday - Saturday 10:00 - 16:00

<https://cvts.ca/thrift-store/>

### **Value Village**

Address: 350 Old Island Hwy, Courtenay, BC V9N 3P3

Working hours: Monday - Saturday 09:00 - 21:00, Sunday 10:00 - 20:00

<https://stores.savers.com/bc/courtenay/valuevillage-thrift-store-2125.html>

**Several local organizations help families access free nutritious food to feed themselves on a limited budget.**

### **Comox Valley Food Bank**

This organization offers monthly household hampers and drop-in service for weekly food from Monday to Friday between 9:00 to 12:00. Families will register using some photo identification for adults and birth certificates for children. Once registered then only the person picking up the food will need identification. They offer some limited home delivery for families with mobility issues. Here is the form for home delivery.

They also have a healthy families program that supports pregnant women and parents with young children from birth to 6 years.

<https://comoxvalleyfoodbank.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Home-Delivery-Program-2022.pdf>

Address: 1255 McPhee, Courtenay

Working hours: Monday - Friday 09:00 - 16:00

Email: [administration@comoxvsllygoofnsnk.vs](mailto:administration@comoxvsllygoofnsnk.vs)

Phone: 250 338 0615

Website: <https://comoxvalleyfoodbank.ca/>

### **Lush Valley Food Action Society**

This organization offers a Food Share Program that includes the Good Food Box and Hot Meal Programs. The Good Food Box is a large grocery bag of fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs, available every week. Lush Valley Food asks for a one time donation that ranges from \$30-\$50 depending on the size of the Good Food Box need for your family size. You can find more details on their website:

<https://www.localline.ca/fruit-and-veg>

Address: 2342 Rosewall Crescent, Courtenay

Working hours: Monday - Friday 10:00 - 15:00

Email: <https://lushvalley.org/contact-us/>

Phone: 250 331 0152

Website: <https://lushvalley.org/>

**Other organizations, such as local churches, in the Comox Valley offer more help with meals and affordable food supply. CVUCS will also help with affordable food through financial support of VI Helps Ukraine, when available. If you send us an email, we will be glad to help you learn about how CVUCS and other organizations can assist with affordable food.**

**Email: [cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com)**

**It's good to know that if you experience financial difficulties, you have access to some extra support.**

The province of British Columbia offers Ukrainians who need support some temporary hardship assistance for up to twelve months. This BC government website has details about financial support in English, Russian and Ukrainian languages.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/tourism-immigration/ukraine/assistance>

The BC government offers up to CAD \$935/month for single adults and up to CAD \$1770/month for a family of four people for up to six months.

To apply you will need to have completed several of the ten settlement steps: The hardship assistance application requires these things:

- Email address
- SIN (Social Insurance Number)
- BCeID
- Photo Identification (eg. passport)
- Banking Direct Deposit Information
- Financial Information (eg. income and/or assets owned)

You can apply online by establishing a My Self Serve account:

<https://myselfserve.gov.bc.ca/>

Or you can apply in-person at the Comox Valley Income Assistance office located at 730 Grant Avenue in Courtenay. Visit the office and their staff will guide you through the process. Some translation services may be available upon request. You can also call toll-free **1-866-866-0800** to ask about income assistance and translation services.

The **Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society** offers assistance for Ukrainian adults and families establishing themselves in the Comox Valley. We have a financial assistance application form that we can provide to you by email.

You're welcome to talk with our organization about any other support that you may need. Our members will help you and your family to become independent as you manage the settlement process. We can help you find answers to your questions.

### **CVUCS Temporary Financial Hardship Assistance:**

Please email us: [cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com)

### **Public Transportation in the Comox Valley**

The Comox Valley offers public transit services by bus on a regular schedule. In October 2022 bus fares are \$2.00/adult and a book of ten tickets is \$18. Day passes for \$4 and monthly \$55 passes are also available. There are dual passes

that enable transit for both Comox and Campbell River. Special rates are available for children, seniors 65+ and students. There is also a service called handyDART for anyone with disabilities.

General Transit Information:

<https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/services/transit>

Phone: 250-334-6000

Bus Fares:

<https://bctransit.com/comox-valley/fares>

<https://bctransit.com/comox-valley/fares/where-to-buy>

Schedule and Route Information:

<https://bctransit.com/comox-valley/schedules-and-maps>

Trip Planner: How to Get from Point A to Point B

<https://bctransit.com/comox-valley/home>

### **Recreational Opportunities in the Comox Valley**

The municipalities of Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland all offer affordable social and recreational opportunities for adults, children and families. The Comox Valley Regional District offers many opportunities too.

Here are some links for websites with lots of information on how to find some fun:

<https://www.courtenay.ca/EN/main/community/recreation.html>

<https://www.comox.ca/recreation/recreation-guide>

<https://cumberland.ca/recprograms/>

<https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/registration/recreation-guide>

The Comox Valley also offers many beaches, parks, hiking trails and cycling paths. Our local mountain called Mount Washington offers many snow sports, including alpine skiing, snowboarding, nordic skiing, tubing, and snowshoeing.

Getting outside and enjoying time outdoors is a really healthy way to help yourself settle and learn about your new home.

Here are some websites to help you enjoy the outdoors:

<https://www.courtenay.ca/EN/main/community/parks.html>

<https://www.comox.ca/parksandfields>

<https://cumberland.ca/parks/>

<https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/parks-recreation/parks-trails-beach-accesses>

<https://experiencecomoxvalley.ca/activity/beaches-parks/>

<https://bcparks.ca/>

## **Work BC Services**

The government of British Columbia provides both online and in-person services to help people find employment. While this government service is helpful, please know that it is limited. The very best ways to find work are the simple methods of:

- A) telling everyone you know that you need work
- B) applying in-person to businesses, especially those who advertise with signs
- C) using some online listing websites

Here is how you can use the WorkBC Courtenay Centre:

Address: 103-555 4th Street Courtenay, V9N 1H3

Working hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 08:30 - 16:30; Wednesday 08:00-20:00 & Friday 08:30-12:30

Phone: +1 250 334 3119

Website: <https://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC-Centres/Vancouver-Island-Coast/Courtenay>

If you go into the WorkBC Courtenay Centre you can ask about these opportunities: provision of laptop computers, bus passes, and work clothing. WorkBC may also have some training and education opportunities. Ask lots of questions to see how they might be able to help you start finding employment in the Comox Valley. Other good questions are help for resume writing and job search strategies.

The Canadian government also offers some online employment services:  
[www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)

### **Other Employment Advice**

Some private websites useful for finding employment are listed below. Remember to use the following terms for locations of jobs: Comox Valley, Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland to find work near by.

<https://ca.indeed.com>

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

Labour Unlimited is private company that connects employers with temporary workers, which can often lead to permanent work, in construction and other labour industries. They provide basic safety equipment for jobs requiring safety gear. This is one way to get started with labour-type employment. Their staff will help you get started by making contacts with employers and you can use this network of contacts to find more work and better wages.

Address: 1935 Cliffe Avenue, Courtenay

Phone: +1 250 897-1073

Email: [courtenay@labourunlimited.com](mailto:courtenay@labourunlimited.com)

Website: <http://www.labourunlimited.com/>

Trades in British Columbia are regulated by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) as a government service of British Columbia. There are over 100 trades recognized in British Columbia and 49 of these are Red Seal Trades. Red Seal is a system of apprenticeship and recognition of hours leading to certification.

Here is the ITA website for more information:

<https://www.itabc.ca/>

The process for getting foreign credential recognition for degrees, diplomas, licences and certificates is regulated by various authorized organizations that determine occupational standards. This can be a long process. In most cases you will need to find the regulatory professional organization or trade apprenticeship authority to get specific instructions for your occupation credentials. You can begin to learn how to get your credentials recognized on these Canadian government websites:



<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/foreign-credential-recognition.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/prepare-life-canada/prepare-work/credential-assessment/process.html>

Often people need to acquire greater proficiency in English before they can successfully obtain their occupation credentials in Canada. The best place to ask about how to obtain English proficiency for career advancement is the North Island College. Some courses for English proficiency are available online. A student visa from the Canadian government is required for courses longer than 6 months, but there are ways to register immediately upon arrival with your CUAET if your studies are less than 4 months per learning session.

<https://www.nic.bc.ca/international/become-an-nic-student/admission-requirements/language-pathway/>

<https://www.nic.bc.ca/international/ask-a-question/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit/apply.html>

You can find education advisors at North Island College to help you learn more:

Website: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/audience/future-students/connect-with-us/>

Email: [futurestudents@nic.bc.ca](mailto:futurestudents@nic.bc.ca)

Phone: 250-923-9700 ext. 7840

## **Our Welcome to You**

### **Dear Ukrainians**

We wish you and your family only the best while you settle in Canada. We know that the first few months away from Ukraine are a challenging time of transition, filled with anxiety about life back home and anticipation as everything is new and different in Canada.

We hope that our guide provides you helpful and essential information to establish a safe home, whether temporary or permanent, for your family in the Comox Valley.

Please know that the Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society is here to support you as settle in Canada, for however long you may stay. We share your love for your home country in Ukraine and we hope to offer assistance as you become familiar with life in the Comox Valley.

Please know that we have some understanding of life as new immigrants in Canada. Our members have either come from Ukraine themselves or our parents and/or grandparents came before us.

We welcome new members.

If you would like to meet new people in the Comox Valley who share an appreciation for Ukrainian food, culture and traditions, please join our Society.

We would enjoy getting to know you!

Together we are stronger; together we can survive and thrive.

**With Best Wishes & Great Respect from the Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society**

For more information and memberships:

**Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society**

**Email: [cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:cvukrainianculturalsociety@gmail.com)**

We're here to help you