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**Thank you for choosing to become a Welcoming Communities Ambassador Volunteer for Oyen and area!**

*A volunteer ambassador welcoming newcomers, immigrants and refugees to Oyen and area plays a crucial role in creating a positive and welcoming environment for these individuals. Overall, the role of a volunteer ambassador is to create a positive first impression for immigrants and newcomers, provide them with essential information and resources, and foster a sense of belonging within the community. This can significantly contribute to the immigrant’s successful integration and the overall strength of the town’s social fabric.*

## Welcoming Communities Ambassador (WCA) Volunteer Responsibilities:

A Volunteer Ambassador typically serves as a representative or advocate for newcomers within a community or organization. Their role involves various responsibilities aimed at supporting and assisting newcomers in their integration process. Here are some common tasks and responsibilities of a Newcomer Volunteer Ambassador:

**Greeting and Orientation** - The ambassador warmly welcomes newcomers and provides them with a friendly introduction to the town. They might meet newcomers at community events, town halls, or even at designated welcome centres.

**Providing Information** – Ambassadors offer information about the town’s history, culture, amenities and services. This could include details about local schools, healthcare facilities, shopping, recreational activities, and public transportation options.

**Answering Questions** – Newcomers often have a lot of questions about their new surroundings. Ambassadors should be knowledgeable about various aspects of the town and be prepared to address inquiries about local customs, regulations, and anything else that might help newcomers settle in.

**Connecting with Resources** – Ambassadors can guide newcomers to resources such as government offices, community organizations, school resources, and support services. This helps newcomers find the necessary resources to make their transition smoother.

**Community Events** – Ambassadors might inform newcomers about upcoming community events, festivals, workshops, and gatherings. Attending these events together can help newcomers feel more integrated and engaged with their new community.

**Networking** – Ambassadors can introduce newcomers to other residents, facilitating connections and friendships. This can help newcomers build a sense of belonging and establish a support network.

**Cultural Sensitivity** – Understanding and respecting cultural differences is important. Ambassadors should be sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of newcomers, making them feel valued and respected.

**Providing Tours** – Some ambassadors might offer guided tours of the town, showcasing points of interest, landmarks, and important facilities.

**Follow up** – After the initial welcome, ambassadors can follow up with newcomers to check on their progress and address any ongoing concerns or questions.

**Crisis Support** – In case of emergencies or unexpected challenges, ambassadors might offer guidance and resources to navigate difficult situations.

## Welcoming Communities Ambassador (WCA) Volunteer Requirements:

**Important to Note**

Volunteer Ambassadors are required to attend a group interview and if selected, review and sign a “letter of understanding” that outlines WCA program expectations, the Code of Conduct, and Confidentiality. A Code of Conduct and Confidentiality agreement must be signed as well. At this stage a criminal background check and personal reference check is required.

**Training and Support**

* Ambassadors will receive initial online training on cultural competency, effective communication, and the resources available for newcomers.
* Ongoing training and professional development opportunities will be provided to enhance volunteer knowledge and skills.
* Ambassadors will have access to a community program coordinator who can provide guidance, support and answer questions or concerns.

**Time Commitment**

* Ambassadors are expected to commit to 5-10 hour in the first month, and in the months following 3-5 hours (or on a flexible basis, depending on the availability and the needs of newcomers).
* A minimum commitment of 6 months is encouraged for continuity and relationship building.

**Skills**

* Ambassadors should possess good communication and interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity and a genuine interest in helping others.
* Ambassadors may need to “shuttle” the newcomer around the community if transportation is required.
* Ambassadors are matched with newcomers to the best of their ability based on interest, family size, the newcomers and/or family’s needs, and the ambassador's skills and experience.

**Confidentiality and Boundaries**

* An open discussion about confidentiality is recommended at the first meeting in order to build a safe and clear set of expectations. Ambassadors must maintain strict confidentiality regarding any personal or sensitive information shared by the newcomer.
* Ambassadors want to be aware of their boundaries and refer newcomers to appropriate professionals or services when necessary.
* When working with complex or multiple needs, it is okay for the ambassador to reach out for support and guidance from their WCA program coordinator, and not feel like they must do it all themselves.

**Code of Conduct**

This code of conduct serves as a guideline to ensure that ambassadors create a welcoming and supportive environment for newcomers, fostering a sense of belonging and integration within the community.

1. Respect and Inclusivity: Treat all newcomers with respect, kindness, and inclusivity, regardless of their background, culture, or language. Embrace diversity as a strength of our community.
2. Cultural Sensitivity: Be culturally sensitive and aware of potential differences in customs, traditions, and beliefs. Avoid making assumptions and be open to learning from newcomers.
3. Empathy and Compassion: Show empathy and compassion toward newcomers who may be experiencing challenges or adapting to a new environment. Offer support and assistance when needed.
4. Clear Communication: Use simple language when necessary and be patient in explaining community resources and services.
5. Accessibility: Advocate for accessibility and inclusivity in the community. Encourage and support initiatives that make services, information, and facilities accessible to everyone.
6. Conflict Resolution: If conflicts or misunderstandings arise, address them calmly and constructively. Seek mediation or support when necessary to promote peaceful resolutions.
7. Reporting Concerns: If you observe any discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment of newcomers, report it to the appropriate authorities or community leaders.
8. Continuous Learning: Stay informed about local resources available, key provincial and federal announcements, and cultural awareness.
9. Lead by Example: Be a positive role model in the community, promoting the values of tolerance, acceptance, and unity.

**Evaluations**

* Ambassadors can gather feedback from newcomers about their experiences and use this input to improve the welcoming process for future newcomers.
* Feedback and suggestions from ambassadors will be actively sought and considered to improve the program’s effectiveness.
* Regular evaluations will be conducted to assess the programs impact, identify areas for improvement, and recognize outstanding volunteer ambassadors.

## RESOURCES

The following section includes resources for Newcomers. It is of value for the Volunteer Ambassadors to review and become familiar with some of the resources available.

## General Canadian Government Resources:

**The Canadian governments official website**: Offers information on various aspects of living and working in Canada, including healthcare, housing, education, and more. <https://www.canada.ca/en.html>

**Settlement services:** Once you arrive in Canada, settlement services can help you with various aspects of settling into your new life, including finding housing, employment, and community resources. You can find local settlement organizations and services throughout the IRCC website. <https://ircc.canada.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp>

**Job search websites:** If you are looking for information on working in Canada, you can explore job search websites and resources:

* Canadian Job Bank - <https://canadianjobbank.org>
* Indeed - <https://ca.indeed.com>
* Kijiji - <http://www.kijiji.ca>
* Workopolis - <https://workopolis.com>
* Monster - <https://monster.ca/>
* Government of Alberta Jobs - <http://www.job.alberta.ca>

## Provincial (Alberta) Government Resources:

As a newcomer working in Alberta, there are several key resources you should be aware of to help you with labor rights, tenant information, healthcare, and more. Here are a few important ones:

**Employment Resources**

***Alberta Employment Standards****:* Understand your rights and responsibilities as an employee in Alberta. Learn about minimum wage, hours of work, vacation and more.   
<https://www.alberta.ca/employment-standards>

***Taxation:***Understand how taxes work in Alberta, including income tax rates and filing requirements. <https://www.alberta.ca/personal-income-tax>

***Employment Insurance (EI):*** If you lose your job or are unable to work due to illness, you may be eligible for Employment Insurance benefits. Learn about eligibility and how to apply. <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>

***Occupational Health and Safety (OHS):***Learn about workplace safety regulations and your rights as a worker to ensure a safe and healthy workplace environment.   
<https://www.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety>

**Banking Resources**

To learn about the banking system in Alberta and what is necessary to open an account, visit the following website. <http://www.alberta.ca/financial-institutions-information-consumers>

**Health Resources**

***Alberta Health Care:***Ensure you have access to healthcare services by registering for the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP). <https://www.alberta.ca/ahcip>

***Alberta Health Services:*** Counselling and support with mental health and addictions. <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca>

**Tenant/Landlord Resources**

***Tenant Rights and Responsibilities****:*  If you're renting a property, familiarize yourself with tenant rights and responsibilities in Alberta. The Residential Tenancies Act governs most rental situations. <https://www.alberta.ca/rights-and-responsibilities>

***Service Alberta:***Information on the landlord and tenant act and landlord/tenant issues such as rental agreements, eviction questions, damage deposits, etc. <http://www.alberta.ca/service-alberta>

**Legal Resources**

***Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic****:*  Provides legal information, referral advice, and representation to low-income individuals who cannot afford a lawyer or do not qualify for Legal Aid. <https://communitylegalclinic.net/>

***Legal Aid Alberta:*** Provides legal assistance for those who cannot afford to retain a lawyer. Payment is still required for your legal fees; however, this is on a payment arrangement basis. Depending on your legal situation and financial eligibility, you could be eligible to receive legal advice, information, referrals, and limited of full representation.  [www.legalaid.ab.ca](file:///\\SERVER-PC\MuniSoft\Town%20Documents\ECONOMIC%20DEVELOPMENT\2022-23%20Strategic%20planning\Ambassador%20Program\www.legalaid.ab.ca)

**Education and Language Resources**

***Education and Language Training:***Explore opportunities for language training and educational programs in Alberta. <https://www.alberta.ca/education-training>

**Women’s Resources**

***Central Alberta Women’s Emergency Shelter (CAWES):*** Provides emergency shelter and basic needs support in crisis, as well as crisis intervention and counselling. They also have a child support program as well as outreach and follow up supports. <http://www.cawes.com>

**Emergency Resources:**

Dialing 911 is the fastest way to get help in an emergency. Our 911 dispatch provides regional emergency communication service for residents in southeast Alberta. Calling 911 is typically done in emergency situations that require immediate assistance from law enforcement, medical professionals, or the fire department. Its important to only use 911 for true emergencies.

## Local (Town of Oyen) Resources:

Remember that your local community will also offer additional support and resources tailored to newcomers. Your volunteer ambassador will provide guidance and assistance as you settle into your new life in the town of Oyen.

**Oyen’s Website:** Town of Oyen’s official website, find information and resources and all things related to the Town of Oyen. The CAO is active in supporting the Welcoming Communities Ambassador Program.

<http://www.townofoyen.com>

Email: [cao@oyen.ca](mailto:cao@oyen.ca)– chief administration officer email for inquiries directed to the town council.

Email: [communications@oyen.ca](mailto:communications@oyen.ca)– contact email for the town of Oyen for general inquiries.

**Getting to/from Oyen:**

***Air:*** The town of Oyen is approximately three hours northeast (300 km.) of the City of Calgary. Calgary is the location of the Calgary International Airport (YYC).   
A smaller airport in the City of Medicine Hat (YXH) is two hours (200 km), southeast of Oyen.   
Oyen has a small commercial airport (CED3) available for private flights.

***Bus:*** there is no community bussing available.

**Town of Oyen Services**

***Emergency Services:***  As a newcomer it is important to know the emergency services available such as Oyen’s Volunteer Fire Department, Atco Power and Gas, R.C.M.P., and other.   
<http://www.townofoyen/p/fire-department-police-services>

***Employment Opportunities:***  [[www.townofoyen/p/employment](http://www.townofoyen/p/employment)](https://returntorural.ca/work-careers/), <https://returntorural.ca/work-careers/>

***Library:*** The Town of Oyen’s library is a single point of access to millions of books, audiobooks, e-books, DVDs, event and more.   
<https://www.oyenlibrary.ca/>

***Medical Services*:**  As a newcomer it is important to know which medical services are available to you. In the Town of Oyen there is a hospital, dental clinic, community health services, medical clinic, optometry, pharmacy, seniors lodge, and veterinarian services.

<http://www.townofoyen/p/medical-services>

***Banking Services:*** local banking includes ATB Financial and TD Canada Trust

***Oyen and area realtors:***[*http://www.townofoyen/p/town-property-for-sale*](http://www.townofoyen/p/town-property-for-sale)

***Recreation***: Oyen has a number of recreation facilities ranging from an outdoor swimming pool, an indoor arena, the Oyen & District Golf Club, to the Crossroads Centre run by the Big Country Ag Society where many events happen throughout the year.   
<http://www.townofoyen/p/recreation>

**Discover Oyen**

***Education:*** – Oyen has three amazing education facilities. <http://www.townofoyen/p/education>

* Oyen Public School (K-6) – [OPSSecretary@prrd8.ca](mailto:OPSSecretary@prrd8.ca)
* Assumption Roman Catholic School (K-6)
* South Central High School – [SCHSSecretary@prrd8.ca](mailto:SCHSSecretary@prrd8.ca)

Oyen also has an adult education center. [https://bigcountrylearning.com/](%20https://bigcountrylearning.com/)

***Worship Services:*** [www.townofoyen/p/worship-services](http://www.townofoyen/p/worship-services)

* All Saints Anglican – <http://www.anglican.ca>
* Sacred Hearts RC Oyen - <mailto:shoyen@telus.net>
* Oyen Evangelical Missionary Church – <http://www.oyenemc.org>
* Oyen United Church - <http://www.bigcountryunitedchurches.ca/churches/oyen-united-church>

***Community Resources:*** Oyen has many resources available to support families and individuals such as Big Country Adult Learning, Non-profit Learning Center, Bridges Family Programs, Oyen Family and Community Support Services, and much more.   
<http://www.townofoyen/p/community-resources>

***Community Organizations:*** The town of Oyen is proud to be home to many active and thriving community organizations and groups. There are numerous organizations to choose from and participate in, which is a great way to integrate into the community.   
<http://www.townofoyen/p/community-organizations>

***Volunteer Opportunities:*** If you enjoy being of service to your community and want to meet new people, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities within the groups and organizations. <http://www.townofoyen/p/volunteer>

## Regional Resources - Village, Towns, and Cities nearby the town of Oyen:

A map of the united states

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***Return to Rural Program:***Return to Rural is a program to match employers to employees. It is coordinated on a regional level and offers the services free of charge through their job portal. The website [www.returntorural.ca](http://www.returntorural.ca/) is a comprehensive online resource offering valuable information and support for individuals and families considering a return to rural living in Alberta's Special Areas. For more information on Return to Rural please visit their website or email [return2ruralproject@gmail.com](mailto:return2ruralproject@gmail.com)

***Special Areas 2, 3 & 4:*** In the heart of southeastern Alberta's grasslands lies Special Areas 2,3, and 4. Special Areas is made up of the communities of Oyen, Consort, Empress, Hanna, Veteran, and Youngstown, and many farmers and ranchers who live in the surrounding Special Areas. For more information on their services and resources available you can visit the Special Areas Board on their website [www.specialareas.ab.ca](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca/) or email the Board at [public.input@specialareas.ab.ca](mailto:public.input@specialareas.ab.ca)

***The Village of Consort:***  Located north to the town of Oyen and is relatively close by. Consort is a charming village in Alberta, offering a peaceful and close-knit community, along with easy access to outdoor recreational activities in a serene rural setting. For more information on their services and resources available you can visit their website [www.consort.ca](http://www.consort.ca/) or email the village office at [info@consort.ca](mailto:info@consort.ca)

***The Town of Hanna:*** The town of Hanna is located to the west of the town of Oyen. Hanna is a welcoming and picturesque town nestled in the heart of Alberta, known for its friendly community, vibrant local culture, and beautiful natural surroundings. For more information on their services and resources available you can visit their website [www.hanna.ca](http://www.hanna.ca/)

***The Village of Youngstown:*** The village of Youngstown is a small and friendly village west of the town of Oyen, known for its community spirit and peaceful atmosphere. For more information on their services and resources available you can visit their website [www.youngstown.ca](http://www.youngstown.ca/)

***The Village of Empress:***  The village of Empress is a charming village south of the town of Oyen, offering a tranquil environment, rich history, and a strong sense of community. For more information on their services and resources you can visit their website [www.villageofempress.com](http://www.villageofempress.com/)

***The Village of Veteran:*** The village of Veteran is a welcoming village in Alberta, known for its warm community, recreational opportunities, and small-town charm. For more information on their services and resources you can visit their website [www.villageofveteran.ca](http://www.villageofveteran.ca/)

***MD of Acadia #34:*** The Municipal District of Acadia #34 is a rural municipality in Alberta, offering a diverse range of agricultural, recreational, and community services. For more information on their services and resources you can visit their website [www.mdacadia.ab.ca](http://www.mdacadia.ab.ca/)

***The City of Medicine Hat:*** Located to the southeast of the town of Oyen, the city of Medicine Hat is surrounded by prairies and grasslands, making it ideal for agriculture and outdoor activities. The city values inclusivity and has a range of community services and organizations. For more information on their services and resources you can visit their website [https://medicinehat.ca](https://medicinehat.ca/)