



# Orientation to Ontario

## YOUTH

There are many special services for children, teenagers and young adults in Ontario. Many organizations and government agencies provide assistance with education, employment, volunteering, health, and social issues.

[NewYouth.ca](http://NewYouth.ca) is an online community for newcomer youth with information on school, work, health and immigration. It also lists events for young people across the province and lists a number of scholarships, grants and bursaries available to newcomer youth [newyouth.ca](http://newyouth.ca)

Youth Opportunities Ontario provides information on employment, education, social programs and volunteering across the province [youthconnect.ca](http://youthconnect.ca)

## EDUCATION

Youth in Ontario must attend school until the age of 18, or until they have completed a high school diploma. There are different educational paths available in Ontario. High schools in Ontario cannot ask you for your immigration status when you enroll.

The high school Cooperative Education (co-op) program allows students to earn credit towards their diploma while gaining work experience. Co-op students can also begin an apprenticeship in the trades through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) - [findlink.at/oyap](http://findlink.at/oyap)

Ontario has over 40 publically funded colleges and universities

There are also more than 400 private career colleges in the province.

Learn more about post-secondary education at [findlink.at/findschool](http://findlink.at/findschool)

The Canadian Armed Forces offer a wide range of education and career opportunities to young men and women. However, you must be a Canadian citizen to join the armed forces.

## EMPLOYMENT

Youth employment is a major concern in Ontario. There are many organizations and agencies that assist youth in finding both part-time employment and exploring career opportunities.

The Youth Jobs Program website lists the jobs, skills training and entrepreneurship supports that may be available to youth based on their age and status in Ontario [findlink.at/yjprogr](http://findlink.at/yjprogr)

## RIGHTS AND SAFETY AT WORK

Young people are almost twice as likely to be injured in the workplace. Learn more about workplace safety on the government of Canada Services for Youth website: [findlink.at/jobsafe](http://findlink.at/jobsafe)

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1-855-626-0002  
<https://orientationontario.ca>

The Ontario Ministry of Labour provides information on your rights as a worker:  
[findlink.at/youngwork](http://findlink.at/youngwork)

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

Many community centres offer programs for youth, including clubs, social gatherings, sports and fitness activities and civic involvement.

Look online for organizations in your area or contact your local settlement agency:  
[newyouth.ca](http://newyouth.ca)

To learn about advocacy groups, visit  
[newyouth.ca](http://newyouth.ca)

Volunteering is a good way to meet people, learn new skills, and get to know your community. Learn more on volunteering at the Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge:  
[ctw.ovcn.ca](http://ctw.ovcn.ca)

## YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The youth justice system is separate from the regular court system. When youth between the ages of 12 and 17 break the law, the police can use different strategies to deal with the situation. Youth who commit crimes may get a warning or caution from the police or be referred to a community program. In serious cases, youth may be charged with a crime and will go to court.

## GETTING HELP

KidsHelpPhone is an anonymous and confidential counselling service for young people of any age. You can call their 24-hour hotline or post questions online. KidsHelpPhone can help with every day issues like dating, peer pressure and more serious issues such as mental health, abuse, and bullying. Call [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868) or visit [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)

To learn more about how KidsHelpPhone can help children and youth, visit New Youth at [newyouth.ca](http://newyouth.ca)

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can apply for a G1 driver's license when you are 16 years old.

You can apply for Ontario Works at age 16, provided you meet certain conditions.

You can apply for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) student loans if you are a full-time post-secondary student.

You can vote in municipal, provincial, and federal elections when you are 18 years old.

You have to be 19 years old to buy tobacco products in Ontario.

You have to be 19 years old to buy and consume alcohol in Ontario.

