

Health Care, Settlement, Social Services and Education Information for Canadians Returning from Haiti

Ontario has services and supports to help Canadian citizens and permanent residents returning from Haiti in these difficult times receive immediate access to health care, settlement, education and social assistance services.

Ontario wants Canadian citizens and permanent residents returning from Haiti to have immediate access to services that help them re-integrate to life in the province.

A dedicated phone number has been established by the Government of Ontario to offer information on health care, settlement, social services and education to Canadians returning to Ontario from Haiti. Languages available on this line include English, French and Creole. The line is active between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The toll free number to call is 1-866-614-5951 for information, access and assistance related to:

Settlement and Social Services:

- How to find a place to live
- How to find a job
- Location and contact information for settlement organizations across the province.
- Register children in school.
- How to apply for temporary financial assistance.

Health Care:

- The location of the nearest Community Health Centre
- The location of the nearest hospital with emergency services
- OHIP eligibility
- Location of the nearest OHIP office

Canadian citizens, and permanent residents returning to Ontario from Haiti need to ensure their Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card is still valid. In cases where OHIP coverage has expired, returnees are advised to apply as soon as possible for a new OHIP card.

Canadian citizens, and permanent residents who are evacuated from Haiti and arrive in Ontario will be exempt from the three-month waiting period for OHIP until the end of the evacuation.

To speak with a nurse about non-urgent health questions, please call Telehealth Ontario at **1-866-797-0000**. Telehealth Ontario services are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Services are available in English and French

Education:

For education related questions, please contact the Ministry of Education Public Inquiries phone line at **1-800-387-5514**. Service is offered in both French and English. The phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.



More ways to find help:

211 Toronto (dial 211 on any telephone in Toronto or **416-397-4636** in the Greater Toronto Area). This is an information/connection service that can provide information and referrals to a wide range of community, social, health and government services in the Toronto area. Three websites with useful, comprehensive information are:

<http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/index.asp>

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

<http://www.211toronto.ca/index.jsp>

You can also access services and support at one of these agencies:

Ottawa

Catholic Immigration Centre - Ottawa
219 Argyle Avenue Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 2H4 Tel: 613-232-9634

Ottawa Community Immigrant Organization
959 Wellington Street West Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 2X5 Tel: 613-725-0202

Conseil économique et social d'Ottawa-Carleton
641 Montreal Road, 2nd Floor Ottawa, Ontario
K1K 0T4 Tel: 613-248-1343

Toronto

Centre francophone de Toronto
22 College Street, Main Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1K2 Tel:
416-922-2672

Hamilton

Settlement and Integration Services Organization
LIUNA Station 360 James Street North Lower
Concourse Hamilton, Ontario L8L 1H5 Tel: 905-
667-7476 24 Hour Emergency Line – 905-928-
2487

Niagara Area

Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre
26 East Main Street Welland, Ontario L3B 3W3 Tel:
905-732-5337

Fort Erie Multicultural Centre
52 Jarvis Street Fort Erie,
Ontario L2A 2S4 Tel: 905-871-
3641

Windsor

Multicultural Council of Windsor & Essex County
245 Janette Avenue Windsor, Ontario N9A 4Z2 Tel:
519-255-1127

Questions & Answers

Health Care

Q. How do I find out if my Ontario health card is valid?

Call ServiceOntario INFO line at **1-866-614-5951** Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Q. What do I do if my Ontario health card has expired?

To register for a new Ontario health card, visit your nearest ServiceOntario Health Card - OHIP office.

For further information about office locations and the requirements to renew your Ontario health card, call the INFOline at **1-866-614-5951**. You may also check out the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website at: www.health.gov.on.ca.

Q. If I have a valid Ontario health card, how can I get medical attention?

Visit a hospital emergency room if you believe or have been told that your health care needs are urgent. Go to your family physician. Visit a Community Health Centre. Call Telehealth Ontario at **1-866-797-0000**

Q. What if I don't have an Ontario health card and I need immediate medical attention?

Visit a hospital emergency room if you believe or have been told that your health care needs are urgent. You will not be denied emergency medical treatment. Visit a Community Health Centre. Call Telehealth Ontario at **1-866-797-0000**.

Q. What is Telehealth Ontario?

Telehealth Ontario is a free, confidential, around the clock telephone service you can call to get health advice or general health information from a registered nurse.

That means quick, easy access to a qualified health professional who can assess your symptoms and help

you decide your best first step. They can help you decide whether to care for yourself, see a doctor, go to a clinic, contact a community service or go to a hospital emergency room.

Q. What is a Community Health Centre?

Community Health Centres are organizations made up of teams that include physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers and dietitians.

For more information please visit the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website at: www.health.gov.on.ca or visit your nearest Service Ontario Health Card - OHIP office.

Q. Newcomers to Ontario normally have to wait three months before qualifying for medical services under OHIP. Many of the returnees from Haiti need health services because of their experience during the earthquake – do they have to wait that long too?

Canadian citizens, and permanent residents who are evacuated from Haiti and arrive in Ontario will be exempt from the three-month waiting period for OHIP until the end of the evacuation.

Call **1-866-614-5951** for information on:

- The location of the nearest Community Health Centre
- The location of the nearest hospital with emergency services
- OHIP eligibility
- Location of the nearest OHIP office

Social Services

Q. My family and I have just arrived in Ontario from Haiti. We have no money and nowhere to stay.

Ontario Works provides temporary financial and employment assistance for people who are in immediate financial need.

An individual may apply for Ontario Works by phone or in person through their nearest Ontario Works office.

The government of Ontario has set up an information line for evacuees from Haiti, toll-free at **1-866-614-5951**. Individuals can be referred to their nearest Ontario Works office by calling this number. Translation services are available for those who do not speak fluent English.

You don't require a fixed address to apply for Ontario Works; people with no fixed address are considered to reside in the area where they apply for assistance.

The local Ontario Works office can also refer people to a local emergency shelter if they have nowhere to stay. While staying at the emergency shelter, individuals/families will receive money or in-kind services for personal needs from the shelter's operator, and may access benefits and employment assistance through Ontario Works, if eligible.

Once an individual/family eligible for Ontario Works has found suitable accommodation, they may receive funds from Ontario Works to assist with the costs of setting up a new residence (e.g. rental deposit, furniture, etc.).

For assistance in locating your local Ontario Works office, please visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at: www.mcscs.gov.on.ca and follow the "Social Assistance" link on the home page.

Q. How long does it take to apply and what do I do for money in the meantime?

Eligibility for Ontario Works is based on the individual's personal and financial circumstances,

including residency in Ontario, status in Canada (e.g. Canadian citizen), age, income, and participation in employment assistance activities.

Emergency assistance may be provided while people await a decision regarding their eligibility.

Q. What documents do I need to apply for financial help? What if I don't have these documents?

To complete the Ontario Works application for financial help, applicants need:

- A Social Insurance Number
- A OHIP number
- Proof of identity and date of birth
- Employment history/information
- Income and asset statements
- Documentation outlining shelter costs (if applicable) and
- Proof of status in Canada (e.g. Certificate of Canadian citizenship, refugee protection claimant document, temporary resident permit, etc.).

Staff at the local Ontario Works office will help individuals through this process. Some flexibility regarding required documents can be used for people arriving from Haiti.

Q. Does Ontario Works require me to look for work?

To be eligible for Ontario Works applicants must be willing to participate in employment assistance activities.

Participation in employment assistance activities may be deferred for a number of reasons such as pregnancy or injury.

For people/families arriving from Haiti, the initial participation activity can be finding more permanent, stable housing.

Q. What if I'm disabled and can't participate in employment activities. Will I be cut off from Ontario Works?

People with disabilities can apply for the Ontario Disability Support Program. Please call the emergency information line for evacuees from Haiti, toll-free at **1-866-614-5951**. Staff will be able to refer individuals to their nearest Ontario Disability Support Program office.

Individuals may be able to receive emergency financial assistance from Ontario Works while they wait for a decision on eligibility for the Ontario Disability Support Program.

For further information about the Ontario Disability Support Program, please visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at: www.mcscs.gov.on.ca and follow the "Social Assistance" link on the home page.

Q. My child is disabled and I don't know where to go for help?

People applying for financial help may qualify to receive additional money through Ontario's Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities program to help care for a disabled child.

Individuals can ask about this benefit when applying for financial assistance through their nearest Ontario Works office.

Q. Will I have to pay back any financial assistance I receive?

If Canadians arriving from Haiti are not able to access their income and assets, these assets will not be included in the determination of eligibility for financial assistance in Ontario. However, people may be required to sign an agreement to reimburse all or part of the income assistance paid once they are able to access their funds in Haiti.

Education

Q. How do I enrol my child in school?

Ontario funds different types of schools - English and French Language public and separate schools. To find out what types of schools are available in your area please contact the Ministry of Education Public Inquiries line at **1-800-387-5514** for more information

Q. I need more information.

For all and any education related questions, please contact the Ministry of Education Public Inquiries line at **1-800-387-5514**. Service is offered in English and French. The phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., but are closed on weekends and statutory holidays.