

Immigrants and Housing Facts & Resources

For many immigrants, finding an appropriate and affordable place to live is one of the biggest challenges of life in Canada. This is certainly true in Langley City and Township, one of the fastest growing areas in Canada, and subject to Metro Vancouver's housing and affordability crisis. These are some of the issues facing immigrants who are considering making the City or Township of Langley their home.

- **As with all areas in Metro Vancouver, both the City and Township of Langley are facing a housing shortage.** Over the past several years, more families are moving to Langley from other municipalities to find more affordable homes and space for kids. Further, housing starts in Langley dropped off during the pandemic and have yet to fully recover.
- **Between 2016 and 2021, the immigrant population in Langley City and Township increased by 49% and 33% respectively**—by far the most rapid rates among Metro Vancouver municipalities. Immigrants accounted for more than 50% of Langley's population growth during the period, and visible minorities for about 90%.

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- **Canada's total immigrant intake will increase over the coming three years**, and B.C. as a place where immigrants choose to settle is likely to continue to grow.
- **Larger families are often at a disadvantage.** Most apartments, as may typically be found in the City of Langley, have two bedrooms or less. Townhouses and houses, more often found in the Township of Langley, offer more room but are proportionately more expensive to rent, own and maintain. Housing in the Township is also further situated from commercial and settlement services, adding transportation challenges for new immigrants.
- **Racialized communities can face discrimination.** While the City and Township of Langley are working towards ensuring that they are welcoming and inclusive of



Immigrants and Substandard Housing

The Government of Canada's Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation measures a community's housing situation using a variable called **Core Housing Need**, which considers the adequacy, suitability and affordability of housing. These are the percentages of Langley City and Township owners and renters whose housing falls below the standard (2016).

- 12% of non-immigrant households
- 14% of all households
- **18% of immigrant households**
- 18% of aboriginal households
- 29% of seniors living alone households
- 30% of lone-parent family households
- **36% of recent immigrant households**

Affordability is the main reason for substandard housing in Langley, as the housing stock is in generally good condition. From a financial perspective, those in need of core housing have a median household income of \$30,461 while the median income of households not in need of core housing is \$102,052. Notably, Core Housing needs increased between 2006 and 2016 and this trend can be presumed to have continued and be indicated when 2021 data becomes available.

A Tight Rental Market

Purpose-built housing are buildings that consist of multiple units that must remain as rental housing for a period of at least 20 years from the date a building permit is issued. Although the data for Langley specifically is not available, here are the vacancy rates in 2022, according to the [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](#) (CMHC) for Metro Vancouver purpose-built rentals compared to other major cities in Canada:

Montreal	2.0%
Ottawa	2.1%
Toronto	1.7%
Calgary	2.7%
Edmonton	4.3%
Vancouver	0.9%

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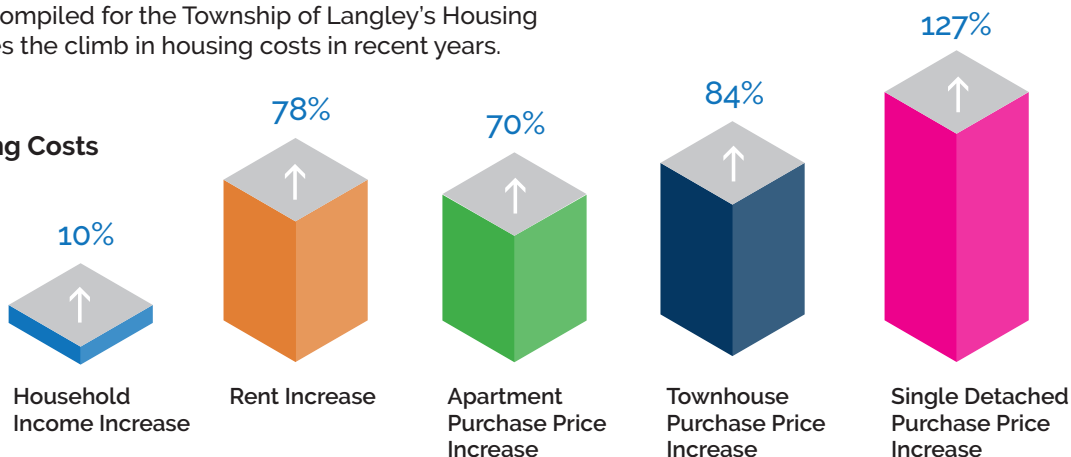
immigrants, diversity amongst residents is a more recent reality in Langley as compared to other Metro Vancouver areas. Some residents may be unfamiliar with the contributions immigrants are making in their communities, and fearful of the changes they see.

- **When renting a home, immigrants lack the references, documentation and local credit histories required by landlords.**
- **When buying a home, immigrants also often run into documentation issues or lack of credit history.**
- **Many immigrants are unfamiliar with tenancy laws and vulnerable to bad landlords and scams.**
- **In Langley, as throughout Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, housing is simply too expensive**, forcing many people into substandard living situations.

Rising Costs of Housing

Immigrants have been especially affected by rapidly growing housing unaffordability, as they are the primary source of new arrivals to Langley. This chart, compiled for the Township of Langley's Housing Action Plan, illustrates the climb in housing costs in recent years.

Income and Housing Costs 2010-2020



Finding a Home to Rent

Finding a home to rent in Langley City or Township can be difficult, as it is in other places in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. The vacancy rate is typically around 1%, while 4% is considered a balanced market. Accordingly, competition is stiff, and rents are higher than in other Canadian cities. Here's a look at how the rental process works, along with some tips that might give you an edge.

Most market rentals can be found on websites such as **Craigslist**, **Kijiji** and **Facebook Marketplace**, **Rent-It-Furnished**, and **Zumper**. Some are managed by professional rental companies, but most are offered by individuals who own investment properties or have suites to rent in their own homes. Many seeking rental units find places through word of mouth, making it a challenge for new immigrants who have limited or no access to local networks. Settlement workers emphasize that you should pursue all avenues, and speak to as many people as possible – they might know someone who is wanting to rent their home or apartment.

Some rental agencies and apartment complexes have waiting lists, and it is a good idea to join them. Attempting to contact a building manager directly can also be helpful. Some buildings post lawn signs when an apartment

becomes available, so walking or driving around the area you are interested in is also a good idea.

Many immigrants are eligible for public, non-profit and co-op rentals. BC Housing (www.bchousing.org) provides application information and an online listings service that can be filtered to focus on North Delta, Langley and Surrey. It also provides housing for people with various needs and abilities. There are waiting lists for BC Housing, so get your name in as soon as you are eligible, typically one year after your arrival in B.C.

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Agencies Offering Help with Housing

Immigrants are more likely than others to have challenges finding appropriate rental housing. Fortunately, there are several organizations and government bodies who are trying to help.

Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC) is geared specifically to helping tenants in B.C., and offers many resources, including legal assistance.
www.tenants.bc.ca

RentSmart serves the unstably housed and homeless by providing online training and resources to renters and community workers.
www.rentsmarteducation.org

Residential tenancy laws are administered by the Province of B.C. This page outlines landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, and links to resources, calculators and FAQs.
www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/residential-tenancies

And here's a **Government of Canada** link with similar information, along with a description of the rental process and helpful tips.
www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/housing/renting.html

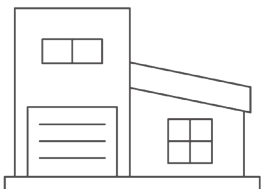
There are **immigrant servicing agencies** in Langley that might be able to provide personal help.

- **Langley Community Services Society** has workers focused specifically on housing:
www.lcss.ca
- **ISSofBC** also offers settlement-related services in 13 languages:
www.issbc.org
- **Langley School District #35** has workers dedicated to assisting new immigrants with such things as housing.



BC Housing helps renters find housing and may offer financial assistance. Some immigrants may be eligible for one of the following:

- Public, non-profit and co-op housing. (Information, listings, applications.) www.bchousing.org
- Assistance for lower-income seniors not in public housing: <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance-programs/SAFER>
- Assistance for working but lower-income renters with children: <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance-programs/RAP>



Buying A Home

Metro Vancouver property and housing is Canada's most expensive real estate. Langley and the Fraser Valley, once considered a better option for people looking for more affordability, saw unprecedented price increases between 2020 and 2022. The high prices throughout the whole Metro Vancouver are due in part to a long-term housing shortage, and also because properties in Metro Vancouver have proven to be a reliable investment, making them very desirable. The increase in housing prices in Langley in particular is due to young families moving out of Vancouver and surrounding areas to communities in the Fraser Valley such as the City and Township of Langley. The anticipation of the Surrey Langley SkyTrain extension is likely to strengthen this trend.

In Langley prices are still a little lower than in most areas of Metro Vancouver, but higher than in more rural areas of the Fraser Valley.

In Canada almost all properties are sold and purchased through the Multiple Listing Service or MLS. Real estate agents do not charge purchasers a commission (only sellers), and you have no obligation to buy once an agent has been retained. Numerous online sources are available to search for properties, including: www.realtor.ca / www.rew.ca

In Langley prices are still a little lower than in most areas of Metro Vancouver, but higher than in more rural areas of the Fraser Valley. Neighbourhoods in the City and Township vary widely in character and composition, but none are considered dangerous or should be discounted as an undesirable place to live.

Before deciding to buy a home, it's important to understand the process. This guide, [Homebuying Step by Step](#), developed by an agency of the Government of Canada, is a good place to start.

All Levels of Government in Action

The situation is likely to get worse before it gets better, but governments are aware of the challenges and are taking action. Federal and provincial governments have recently introduced programs to help renters, fund social housing, and encourage the construction of rental properties. For example, the **Growing Communities Fund (BC government)** has just announced \$7,186,000 to the City of Langley and \$24,306,000 to the Township of Langley to support local infrastructure, affordable housing, etc.

Local governments for both the City and Township of Langley are developing housing action plans that include rental and social housing as a focus. They are also committed to supporting the growing diversity in Langley, and building communities that are welcoming and inclusive of immigrants.

About the Langley LIP

The **Langley Local Immigration Partnership** is one of more than 86 Immigration Partnerships in Canada. With funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Langley LIP was established in April 2020 to bring community leaders together to develop and implement a plan to improve immigrant and refugee settlement and integration in the City and the Township of Langley. For more information about the Langley Local Immigration Partnership contact:

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