

WORK CENTRAL AB

Cultural Associations

Staying Connected to Your Heritage in Central Alberta

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Cultural Associations in Central Alberta

Cultural associations play an important role in helping newcomers maintain connection to their heritage while building new lives in Central Alberta. This guide covers what these organizations typically offer and how to find one that fits your background and interests.

1. What Cultural Associations Offer

- Community events and celebrations tied to cultural holidays and traditions.
- Language and heritage programming, particularly valuable for children raised in a new country.
- Peer support and mentorship from others who share a similar cultural background or migration experience.
- In some cases, targeted settlement or employment support tailored to a specific community, such as the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association (CAIWA), which focuses specifically on immigrant women and families.

2. Finding a Cultural Association

- Ask your settlement agency (see our Settlement Services guide) - many maintain lists of active cultural and ethno-cultural organizations in the region.
- Search social media platforms, where many cultural associations post events and maintain active community groups.
- Check with local faith communities, which often serve as informal hubs for specific cultural groups in addition to their religious role.
- Attend a multicultural festival or community event, common ways for cultural associations to introduce themselves to the wider community.

3. Benefits of Getting Involved

Beyond the immediate social connection, cultural associations can be a valuable source of practical advice - from where to find familiar groceries to which employers have a track record of welcoming newcomers from your community. Many long-established members are happy to mentor newer arrivals informally.

4. Supporting Your Children's Cultural Connection

- Many cultural associations offer heritage language classes for children, helping maintain fluency alongside English or French schooling.
- Cultural events give children exposure to traditions and community role models beyond the immediate family.
- Some associations partner with local schools to support newcomer students directly - worth asking about when registering your child for school.

5. Starting or Growing a Cultural Group

If Your Community Doesn't Have One Yet

Connect with others from your cultural background informally first, through settlement agencies or social media.

Reach out to the Red Deer Local Immigration Partnership (RDLIP), which coordinates newcomer-focused community partnerships and may be able to offer guidance or connections.

Consider partnering with an existing multicultural or community organization initially, rather than starting entirely from scratch.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

Do I need to be a member to attend events? Many cultural associations welcome newcomers to attend events before formally joining - a great low-commitment way to get a feel for the group.

Are these organizations only for immigrants? Most welcome anyone interested in the culture, including Canadian-born community members and those with family ties to that heritage.

What if I don't find an association for my specific background? Broader multicultural organizations and settlement agencies can often connect you with individuals from your community even without a formal association.

6. Balancing Heritage and New Community

- Many newcomers find it helpful to maintain cultural traditions at home while also actively building connections within the broader Central Alberta community - the two aren't in competition.
- Attending multicultural festivals hosted by the wider community (not just your own cultural association) can also be a great way to share your culture with others and learn about your new neighbours.
- Consider how your cultural background can be an asset in the workplace - many Central Alberta employers value the perspective and language skills newcomers bring.

Cultural Associations Checklist

- ✓ Asked your settlement agency about relevant cultural associations
- ✓ Searched social media for active community groups
- ✓ Attended at least one cultural event or festival
- ✓ Explored heritage programming for children, if applicable

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- ✓ Considered how to get involved or contribute to community life
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See our full Newcomer Resources series and Community Resources section at workcentralab.ca/resources for more ways to build a full, connected life in Central Alberta.