



Why is B.C.'s cultural diversity unique?

B.C. fosters cultural harmony by inviting immigrants to contribute the wealth of their cultural heritage, thereby enriching every aspect of life in B.C.

As the province's largest urban centre, Vancouver is Canada's city of the future. This culturally diverse urban centre is poised on the edge of the Pacific Rim, and on the brink of international economic and societal success.

British Columbia's cultural diversity was a key factor in Vancouver's successful bid for the 2010 Olympics. The city's Olympic bid says it best:

"Vancouver is a city that reflects the world. It is a living mosaic of peoples and cultures from around the globe."

How have changing demographics shaped British Columbia?

Joining B.C.'s Aboriginal people came fur traders, explorers, gold miners, railroad workers, foresters, fishers and settlers to take advantage of the abundance of resources our landscape had to offer.

Anti-immigration policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century gave way to increasing immigration to B.C. That inflow of international talent and energy continues today.

Immigration has created a dynamic, open and diverse society that continues to enrich the social and cultural fabric of our province.

Immigrants bring unique values and insights from their cultures and countries of origin.

B.C.'s strategic position at the edge of the Pacific Rim makes it an economic gateway to Canada. Resources, commodities, manufactured goods, knowledge and ideas enrich us as they strengthen B.C.'s role in the global marketplace.

As a result, B.C. is rapidly becoming the most culturally diverse and best integrated multicultural society in Canada.

Given the contributions of immigrants to B.C.'s unique society, cultural diversity means vital, dynamic and economically sustainable communities.

B.C. is first in Canada in terms of cultural diversity. As of 2001, 22% of B.C.'s population were visible minorities. Today, immigrants to our province have access to some government services in up to 130 languages, reflecting the wealth of languages and cultures that make up British Columbia.

By 2017, one in three British Columbians will be from a visible minority; almost half of these will be of Chinese origin.





How does British Columbia make cultural diversity a success?

All levels of government in B.C. are working in partnership to make immigrants feel welcome in our province and to foster intercultural harmony in our communities.

The provincial government provides a wide array of programs for immigrants, including:

- ▶ needs assessment, information and support services
- ▶ orientation
- ▶ mentoring by matching newcomers with Canadians
- ▶ professional development
- ▶ English language training (including child minding and transportation during training)
- ▶ funding interpreters

B.C. is leading the way, developing programs promoting racial and cultural harmony and building social cohesion.

We also have programs to support urban and regional communities to welcome newcomers.

Contact information:

For more information on British Columbia's thriving cultural diversity and for further information on provincial government programs to welcome and assist immigrants, visit the following web site: <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/mib>

For a list of key cultural associations in British Columbia, check out the following web site: <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/sam/maiso/index.htm>

For information on Vancouver as the host city of the 2010 Olympics, visit <http://www.ecdev.gov.bc.ca/2010Secretariat/>

What is the British Columbia Advantage?

In B.C., we all benefit from diversity in ideas, languages and cultures. For us, cultural diversity is a tremendous advantage that contributes to our:

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| ▶ communities | ▶ businesses |
| ▶ urban landscapes | ▶ cuisine |
| ▶ workplaces | ▶ fashion/dress |
| ▶ schools/universities/colleges | ▶ festivals/celebrations |
| ▶ religions | ▶ music |
| ▶ design/architecture | ▶ sports/games |
| ▶ visual and performing arts | ▶ sense of justice |
| | ▶ values |

British Columbia's diversity is already the profile of Canada's tomorrow. We are truly leading the way!

