



# INFORMATION BULLETIN

Bulletin #: I2026-22  
April 07, 2026

**To:** District Membership  
**CC:** Board of Directors, Ontario Soccer Staff  
**From:** Johnny Misley, Chief Executive Officer  
**Subject:** Introducing the New Canadian Guide to Soccer in Ontario and Strengthening Our Commitment to Welcoming Newcomers to the Game

Please ensure you read this Bulletin in its entirety for an exciting new initiative.

District Association and Club Leaders,

As communities across Ontario continue to grow and diversify, **soccer remains one of the most powerful tools we have** for building belonging, strengthening local connections, and supporting newcomers to Canada as they begin their lives in our country.

**Today, Ontario Soccer is pleased to introduce a new resource created to support that mission: the New Canadian Guide to Ontario Soccer** – A reference for newcomers to help you settle into your community life in Ontario through participation in soccer.

**This project is one of nine (9) strategic initiatives identified in our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan called “Participant Recruitment and Retention”.** New Canadians are identified as one of several special interest groups we want to serve through the “beautiful game”.

Ontario Soccer has been working closely with both **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada** and the **OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants** to ensure this Guide has been designed specifically with a new Canadian in mind, **including the translation into six (6) common newcomer languages arriving in Ontario.**

This guide is designed to help individuals and families who are new to Canada understand how the Ontario soccer system works—our structure, our pathways, the role of Districts and community Clubs, **and how people of all ages can get involved as players, parents, coaches, officials, or volunteers.** It is

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also a resource for Clubs and Districts to use in their own outreach, onboarding, and community engagement efforts.

## Why This Guide Matters

Ontario welcomes tens of thousands of newcomers each year. Many arrive from strong soccer (footballing) cultures where the sport is deeply woven into community identity. As these individuals settle into life in Ontario, **soccer often becomes a familiar and accessible entry point into community life for both children and adults.**

### Soccer provides:

- **A sense of belonging in an unfamiliar environment**
- **Opportunities for health, recreation, and mental well-being**
- **A social and cultural bridge across languages and backgrounds**
- **Pathways to leadership, volunteerism, and personal development**

By helping newcomers to Canada navigate our soccer landscape, we are helping them build roots in their new home—and we are strengthening our Clubs, Districts, and the entire provincial system in the process. **In simple terms, we want the game of Soccer (football) to be the “Welcome Wagon” for new immigrants to Canada, our province and community.**

## What This Means for Member District Associations and Clubs

To fulfill this commitment, we ask all District Members and Clubs to begin preparing to welcome new Canadians by:

1. **Reviewing and Using the Guide** - The New Canadian Guide to Soccer in Ontario will be distributed (physical copy and digital) through the various settlement agencies (offices) in Ontario and made available in seven (7) languages to ensure accessibility. The languages are Arabic, Dari, Urdu, Chinese, Spanish, French and English. We encourage you to integrate it into your onboarding materials, share it within your communities, and post it on District and Club websites and social channels.

You can view and download the Guides [HERE](#).

2. **Enhancing Your Newcomer-Friendly Practices** - Consider how your organization can create a more welcoming environment by focusing on:

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- i. **Offer a complimentary (free) “Try-It” Program** before or after school or whenever fits best and remove the economic barrier immediately. Let the newcomer start their experience by easing into your Club and community rather than over burdening them with “plug- and play” programming. Once they feel comfortable with their new surroundings, allow them to choose standardized programming when they are ready.
- ii. **Set up a clear, simple registration process.** Use multilingual communication where possible, arrange orientation sessions for new families and when applicable, provide volunteer opportunities for newcomer parents. **Be aware of culturally sensitive programming.**
- iii. **Train your staff and volunteers.** Ensure that your coaches, administrators, and volunteers understand the unique needs of newcomers, particularly those transitioning from different sport systems or who may be facing settlement challenges. **Working with Ontario Soccer and OCASI, we can help in this area so feel free to contact us.**
- iv. **Build Community Partnerships.** Explore opportunities to partner with local settlement agencies, schools, municipalities, and cultural organizations. These connections not only support newcomers but can also introduce your District and Club to new volunteers, players, officials, coaches and community champions. **Ontario Soccer and OCASI are here to help if needed.**
- v. **Strengthening Community Through Soccer.** At its best, soccer is far more than a sport, it is a platform for unity. Helping newcomers feel welcomed, respected, and included enhances the social fabric of every community in Ontario. As leaders in the game, we have a responsibility to ensure our environments are accessible, culturally welcoming, and built on the values of respect, inclusion, and opportunity. **Does your District and or Club have a New Canadian strategy? This New Canadian Guide is a start!**
- vi. **Engage your Municipality.** This tool can help build more effective relationships with local municipalities. By leveraging this resource, Clubs may be able to enhance collaboration with municipal departments, ultimately improving access to fields and facilities, indoor spaces and supporting infrastructure to better meet the growing demand for year-round programming across their communities.

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In closing, we look forward to working with every member District and Club across the province to ensure that when newcomers choose soccer, they are choosing a pathway

to connection, friendship, and community. Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive Ontario through the beautiful game.

For more information, please contact Maria Alba, Coordinator, Club Development at [malba@ontariosoccer.net](mailto:malba@ontariosoccer.net)

### **How To Stay Connected to Ontario Soccer**

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