

Living in Vancouver

Housing

Homes in Vancouver

Vancouver has a variety of housing, including single-family homes, apartments, condominiums, and townhouses. The downtown West End is mainly high-rise apartment buildings and condominiums, while much of the rest of the city is single-family homes mixed with low-rise, apartments, medium density condos and townhouse developments along major streets.



Renting: tenants and landlords

The Province of British Columbia has rules and regulations about what landlords and renters must do. These rules and regulations are contained in BC's *Residential Tenancy Act*. Contact the BC Residential Tenancy Office (Tel: 604-775-2829) or their 24-hr Information Line at 604-660-1020. The Office also publishes a useful guide titled *A Guide for Landlords & Tenants In British Columbia*, which is

also available on their website at:

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/rto/

Where to stay until you find a home

Staying in a hotel in the heart of the city may be too expensive for some people, but the Downtown YMCA and YWCA have rooms with kitchens for low prices. In addition, there are apartment hotels that have rooms or suites with kitchens. Check the Yellow Pages in the telephone book under "Hotels" and "Motels".

If you are not purchasing a home and are considering rental accommodation, there are a number of ways to find a rental home. Check classified ads in city and community newspapers, bulletin boards in shops, neighbourhood agencies or local community centres. Check the Yellow Pages under "Rental Agencies". Or go to a neighbourhood you like and walk or drive around looking for "For Rent" signs posted in front of the building.

For low-cost housing information, check with B.C. Housing (www.bchousing.org) at 4382 Kingsway (Tel: 604-433-2218). You may also look at the City of Vancouver's non-market housing inventory through the Housing Centre's webpage at:

www.city.vancouver.bc.ca

If you rent and have issues as a tenant, you can contact Tenants Rights Action Coalition (TRAC, Tel: 604-255-0546, hotline: 1-800-665-1185). They also have a handbook called the *Tenant Survival Guide*. The City's Tenant's Assistance Program (Tel: 604-873-7487) also provides information and assistance.

Finding a home to buy

You may be considering the purchase of a house, a townhouse or a condominium. There are special newspapers that only have listings of homes for sale. You can also walk or drive around neighbourhoods you like, looking for "For Sale" signs. Almost all houses are sold through real estate agents. A real estate agent can help you look for a home. The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver can provide more information on home buying. Check their website at:

www.realtylink.org

Property Taxes

People who own land, houses and other buildings in the city pay property taxes to the City of



Vancouver. The money received from property taxes is used to provide City services, some of which are described in this guide.

Property tax is based on how much a property is worth according to the government. The BC Assessment Authority, a provincial body, conducts property assessments to determine how much each property is worth in the city. The City of Vancouver sets the tax rates. Every year, property owners get a tax assessment in the mail that indicates how much tax must be paid to the City. Vancouver residents pay property taxes twice a year: once in February and once in July. There are various methods of payment, including at a bank, via the Internet, by mail or in-person at the Tax Office in City Hall. Late payments are subject to a 5 percent fine. To inquire, call: 604-873-7633.

The Province also provides a tax subsidy to some homeowners through the Homeowners Grant Program. Eligible homeowners must apply for and complete a Homeowner's Grant application each year in July when they pay their property taxes.



Getting Around

Walking

The City of Vancouver encourages people to get around by walking as much as possible. Unlike many cities in North America, Vancouver has no highways cutting through the city. It is possible to walk almost anywhere in Vancouver and the many parks and tree-lined streets make walking a pleasure.

While it's always important to pay attention to traffic and follow signs for pedestrian crossings, it's especially important at night and in rainy weather when motorists can have difficulty seeing people on foot crossing the street. It's a good idea to wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight when walking on dark streets at night. It is illegal – and dangerous – to walk across a street anywhere but at an intersection. Crossing in the middle of the street – or jaywalking – is against the law in Vancouver.



Cycling

The City of Vancouver has developed an extensive system of bikeways for cyclists in the city. The *Cycling in Vancouver* map has information on bicycling and the best ways to cycle to any part of the city. You can pick up the map from City Hall, or by

calling the City's Bicycle Hotline (Tel: 604-871-6070). Maps are also available at Vancouver libraries, community centres and some bicycle stores.

Public Transit

TransLink, a local transportation authority, provides an integrated public transportation system of buses, SkyTrain, SeaBus and the West Coast Express, a commuter rail service. Riders can use the same tickets for different modes of travel in



the system and buy books of tickets and passes. Riders need to have exact change to pay for bus fare. Schedules are available in Vancouver Public Library branches, at City Hall, as well as information booths at some shopping malls. For schedule information, call 604-521-0400. Also check TransLink website: www.translink.bc.ca

Driving a vehicle

You must have a valid BC driver's licence to drive a car or other motor vehicle in Vancouver. The Province of BC is responsible for licenses, insurance, speed limits and road safety. For more information, contact the Driver Service Centres in the Lower Mainland. Their telephone numbers are listed in the White Pages of the telephone book under "ICBC". For accident claims, call the Accident Claim Centres in Vancouver, also listed in the telephone book. You can also check the ICBC's website at: www.icbc.com

Emergency vehicles

When a police car, fire truck or ambulance has its lights and siren on, you must get out of the way as quickly and safely as you can. Move your car to the right lane, and stop until the emergency vehicle has passed you.

Speed limits

The speed limit on all Vancouver roads is 50 kilometres per hour (km/h), unless you see a sign for

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BY THE SLICE

Sale



another speed. The speed limit on lanes behind houses and buildings is 20 km/h. Any park or school area has a speed limit of 30 km/h to keep children safe. Vancouver Police give out tickets with heavy fines for people who go over the speed limits in the city.

Street parking

Never block a fire hydrant, a bus stop, a crosswalk, a road, an alley or a driveway when you park. Make sure you pay parking meters, or you can be fined. Parking meters operate every day of the week, from 9:00 in the morning to 8:00 at night.

Residents Parking Only and Residents Permit Parking



Around some homes there are signs which say **Resident Parking Only**. This means that the street parking is intended for people who live on that block or in that area. If you are not a resident and park your car in that area, you may get a ticket. If you see the sign

Residents Permit Parking, you will need to display a special permit from the City to park your car in that area. Cars with no permit can be ticketed. For more information, call Residential Parking Permits (Tel: 604-873-7338).

Cars in your neighbourhood

If you feel that too many cars are using your street or that drivers are going too fast, you can ask for changes that will force drivers to go more slowly or keep them from your street when main roads are busy. These changes are called “traffic calming”. Call 604-873-7130 for a Traffic Calming Toolkit or talk to staff about traffic calming in your neighbourhood.



Transportation for people with disabilities

Vancouver has special buses and sidewalk ramps to make it easy for people with disabilities to get around. TransLink’s handyDART service has small buses that are easy for people in wheelchairs to use. HandyDART buses pick people up at their homes and take them where they want to go. Call the handyDART (Tel: 604-430-2692) for more information.

About 60% of Vancouver’s curbed streets and lane corners have curb ramps to make it easy for people in wheelchairs to cross the street and get back on the sidewalk on the other side.

To inquire about curb ramps, call the City’s Engineering Department (Tel: 604-871-6131).

For more information about accessibility for people with disabilities, call the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (Tel: 604-875-0188).



Schools and Education

The Vancouver School Board (VSB), a municipally elected body funded by the Province, is responsible for schools and education in Vancouver. The VSB, with 56,000 students, is one of the largest school districts in BC. The VSB has 91 elementary schools and 18 secondary schools. There are schools close to, or in, each neighbourhood of the city. The VSB has a yearly operating budget of more than \$350 million and employs more than 3,200 teachers and staff.

The Federation of Independent Schools Association (Tel: 604-684-6023, www.direct.ca/fisa/) is an umbrella organization which offers information regarding private schools, including Catholic schools, in the Province. The Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (Francophone Education Authority of BC, Tel: 1-888-715-2200) is an independent school board that provides French programming to students who have French as a first language.

Registering for schools

For information about schools for your children or courses for adult education, call the Vancouver School Board at 604-713-5000. The VSB web site



is www.vsb.bc.ca. The District Reception and Placement Centre at 2530 East 43rd Ave (Tel: 604-713-5999) evaluates new students for placement in classes.

Multicultural Liaison Workers at schools provide parents and children with additional help in communicating with school staff. In Vancouver, staff speak the following languages: Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Punjabi, Tagalog, Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, Korean. The Vancouver School Board also has Aboriginal Liaison Workers to assist with aboriginal students.

VSB Community Education Services (CES)

Community Education Services (CES) has more than 2,000 programs for adult education and special courses. There are special courses for all ages, for people trying to get into college or university, and also classes in English as a Second Language (ESL) for beginner to advanced levels. Call CES at 604-713-4500 or visit their web site at: www.vsb-adult-ed.com

CES offers courses in many languages, including Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Sign Language and Spanish.

Colleges and Universities in Vancouver:

British Columbia Institute of Technology
(Tel: 604-434-5734) www.bcit.ca

Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design
(Tel: 604-844-3800) www.eciad.bc.ca

Langara College
(Tel: 604-323-5686) www.langara.bc.ca

Simon Fraser University
(Harbour Centre: Tel: 604-291-5000) www.sfu.ca

University of British Columbia
(Tel: 604-822-2211) www.ubc.ca

Vancouver Community College
(Tel: 604-871-7000) www.vcc.bc.ca

Health Services

The Province of British Columbia has responsibility for all health services. Any citizen or permanent resident who has been landed and living in BC for more than three months is eligible to apply for health services offered under the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP). To find out more about MSP, call 604-683-7151.

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA)

The Provincial Government set up the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority in 2001. It is the governing body responsible for planning, funding and coordinating health services in Vancouver, Richmond, and the Sunshine Coast (up to Powell River). For general inquiries, call 604-736-2033. For further information, check their website at: www.vancoastalhealth.ca Also, check the Blue Pages in the telephone book listed under “Health Authorities”.

Hospitals & Emergencies

Vancouver’s hospitals are also part of the VCHA. If you need help in a medical emergency, you can call 9-1-1 for Ambulance or go to the Emergency Department at a hospital. The Emergency Department at hospitals in Vancouver are open during the day, but only some are open at night. To make sure, call the hospital to find out if their emergency department is open.

Vancouver hospitals include:

Vancouver General Hospital,

899 W. 12th Ave., Tel: 604-875-4111

St. Paul’s Hospital,

1081 Burrard St. (Downtown),
Tel: 604-682-2344

BC Children’s Hospital,

4500 Oak St., Tel: 604-875-2345



BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre,
4500 Oak St., Tel: 604-875-2424

Mount Saint Joseph’s Hospital,

3080 Prince Edward St.
(near Kingsway and 14th),
Tel: 604-874-1141

St. Vincent’s Hospital,

749 W. 33rd Ave.
(between Oak and Cambie St.),
Tel: 604-876-7171

University Hospital,

2211 Westbrook Mall UBC,
Tel: 604-822-7121



Community Health Centres and Offices

Community Health Centres (CHCs) in Vancouver offer “one-stop” health care services. Many are staffed by physicians, nurses, rehabilitation therapists, nutritionists, mental health workers and other health specialists. There is no cost for BC residents to use services at these centres. In many cases the staff of these centres speak different languages other than English and know the cultures of newcomers. There are also Community Health Offices and Community Health Clinics. Call them for hours they are open for service.

Some services at Community Health Centres include:

- services such as prenatal classes, Newborn Telephone Hotline (Tel:604-737-3737), visits from community health nurses and immunization clinics, are available to pregnant women and new parents
- services for children such as dental care, speech language services (Tel: 604-659-1107), and eye examinations
- nine youth clinics in Vancouver to provide confidential health care services to youth
- home support and long-term care aid to help older people, those just returning home from the hospital, and those with serious illnesses with their daily activities
- mental health services to help people suffering from depression and other mental illnesses (Tel: 604-874-7626)

Downtown Community Health Centre,
412 East Cordova St., Tel: 604-255-3151

Evergreen Community Health Centre,
3425 Crowley Drive, Tel: 604-872-2511

Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre,
2110 West 43rd Ave., Tel: 604-261-6366

Raven Song Community Health Centre,
2450 Ontario St., Tel: 604-709-6400

Three Bridges Community Health Centre,
1292 Hornby St., Tel: 604-736-9844

South Community Health Office,
6405 Knight St., Tel: 604-321-6151

North Community Health Office,
#200-1651 Commercial Drive, Tel: 604-253-3575

The **Vancouver Native Health Society** (449 E. Hastings, Tel: 604-254-9949) offers a number of free services primarily for aboriginal people in Vancouver, including home health care, pre-employment training, the Sheway project for pregnant women, and TB outreach nurses.

Some Multilingual Health Services for newcomers:

- The VCHA’s Multicultural Health Education Programs provide health information and education materials in a variety of languages to clients and the ethnic media. (Tel: 604-736-2033)
- The **Bridge Community Health Clinic** offers health services in English and other languages, and can provide services to people who do not have Medical Services Plan (MSP) or other health insurance. (3rd fl., North Wing, Mount Saint Joseph’s Hospital, 3080 Prince Edward Street, near Kingsway and East 14th Ave., Tel: 604-877-8550)
- **Healthiest Babies Possible** is a prenatal outreach program that provides nutrition and lifestyle counselling to pregnant women who may be at risk. Multilingual services are provided. Self-referrals are accepted and services are for Vancouver residents only (Tel: 604-877-4673).

Community Services

The City supports and assists many non-profit community service agencies in Vancouver. For more information, call the Social Planning Department (Tel: 604-873-7487) or check the department's website at: www.city.vancouver.bc.ca

Information and Referral

To find out more about what community services are available in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, contact Information Services Vancouver (ISV) at 604-875-6381. ISV also produces a *Directory of Services for the Lower Mainland* (the *Red Book*) which can be accessed on their website (www.vcn.bc.ca/isv) and is also available at public libraries.

Neighbourhood Houses

Neighbourhood Houses in Vancouver are friendly, welcoming local service organizations offering social, educational, cultural and recreational services for families and individuals, including new immigrants and refugees. Most have after school programs, childcare for children, day camps, ESL classes, seniors and youth programs, family support programs and community information in many languages.

Most of the neighbourhood houses run the **Nobody's Perfect Program**, which provides parents with children from birth to five years old useful information about children's health, safety, behaviour, and parenting skills. The program is delivered in various languages.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House,

5288 Joyce St., Tel: 604-435-0323

Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House,

4065 Victoria Drive, Tel: 604-874-4231

Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House,

2131 Renfrew St., Tel: 604-251-1225

Gordon Neighbourhood House,

1019 Broughton St., Tel: 604-683-2554

Kitsilano Neighbourhood House,

2325 West 7th Ave., Tel: 604-736-3588

Kiwassa Neighbourhood House,

2425 Oxford St., Tel: 604-254-5401

Little Mountain Neighbourhood House

3981 Main Street, Tel: 604-879-7104

Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House,

800 E. Broadway St., Tel: 604-879-8208

Legal information and services:

▪ **BC Human Rights Commission**

(306-815 Hornby Street, Tel: 604-660-6811)

investigates and mediates complaints of discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code.

▪ **Law Courts Education Society of BC**

(260-800 Hornby Street, Tel: 604-660-9870)

assists the public to better understand the court system and delivers educational programs in partnership with community groups.

▪ **Law Students Legal Advice Program**

(Tel: 604-822-5791) enables law students to give free legal advice to low income people.

▪ **Legal Services Society of BC**

(1500-1140 West Pender Street, Tel: 604-601-

6000) administers legal aid in BC, operates a Law Line (Tel: 604-601-6100), and has a Resource Centre.

▪ **People's Law School**

(150-900 Hornby Street, Tel: 604-331-5400)

provides a public legal education program and free law classes, with services available in different languages.

Volunteer Information and Referral

Contact **Volunteer Vancouver** (#301-3102 Main Street, Tel: 604-875-9144) to find out more about volunteer opportunities in the city. **Volunteer Vancouver** also provides volunteer training and has a Resource Centre and Library.

Services For Immigrants & Refugees

▪ **Immigrant Services Society of BC** (530

Drake Street, Tel: 604-684-7498 and #501-

333 Terminal Avenue, Tel: 604-684-2561)

helps new immigrants and refugees with information in English and other languages, provides ESL language training, job search, job skills training and other services.

▪ **Inland Refugees Society**

(#101-225 East 17th Avenue, Tel: 604-873-

6660) provides assistance to refugee

claimants including shelter, food, information and referral, counselling and English classes.

- **MOSAIC**
(1522 Commercial Drive, Tel: 604-254-9626) helps immigrants and refugees adjust to their new lives in Canada, and provides services such as language instruction, employment programs, orientation, settlement counselling, family support, paralegal counselling, interpretation and translation, and community outreach.

- **Pacific Immigrant Resources Society**
(#205-2929 Commercial Drive, Tel: 604-718-2780) provides services for immigrant women and their children, including English language training, childcare, leadership skill development and volunteer placement.

- **SUCCESS** provides many services for immigrants, including settlement information and referral, family and youth counselling, language training, employment and small business training, volunteer and community development programs. Many of their programs are offered in Cantonese and Mandarin. Offices in Vancouver are:

- 28 West Pender St., Tel: 604-684-1628
- 5836 Fraser St., Tel: 604-324-1900
- #203- 8268 Granville St., Tel: 604-323-0901
- #501-1788 West Broadway, Tel: 604-732-3278
- #801-1788 West Broadway, Tel: 604-721-7622

- **Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society** (306-4980 Kingsway, Tel: 604-436-1025) provides services to immigrant and visible minority women, children and their family who are experiencing family violence. Also works with women victims of sexual assault. Confidentiality is strictly maintained.

Starting a new business

- **Canada BC Business Services Centre**, 601 West Cordova Street (Tel: 604-775-5525), is a provincially and federally funded agency that provides information on how to

start a new business in BC and has a business resource library. (www.sb.gov.bc.ca)

- **SUCCESS** - Small Business, Training & Development, #501-1788 West Broadway (Tel: 604-732-3278), assists newcomers and local Canadians to research and start small businesses in the Greater Vancouver area.

(www.success.bc.ca/business)

- **Business Development Bank of Canada** (Tel: 604-666-7850) provides financial assistance (loans/financing) and information to new, small and medium-size businesses.

Other useful Guides

- *Newcomers' Guide to BC* (Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Tel: 604-660-2203)
- *A Newcomer's Introduction To Canada* (www.cic.gc.ca)
- *The Citizenship Handbook* (BC Civil Liberties Association: Tel: 604-687-2919, available in five languages)
- *Learning about the Law* (The People's Law School, Tel: 604-331-5400)



Childcare

Children from birth to 12 years old may need to be cared for by someone other than their parents or immediate family. The parents may have to work or attend school, or may want their child to play and learn with other children. Childcare (also called "daycare") can provide this service for children and families. Childcare can be provided in a caregiver's home, a group centre, or pre-school. These places may or may not be licensed. When childcare is licensed, it meets certain health and safety standards.

If you need childcare, it is up to you to find the right services for your children, and keep in mind that childcare services are not all run the same way. You can get help by calling Westcoast Information Daycare (3rd Floor, 210 West Broadway,

Tel: 604-709-5699) for information about:

- childcare options available
- childcare locations, with lists and maps
- how much child care costs
- hours childcare programs are open
- what to look for when choosing childcare
- other facts about childcare.

Westcoast Information Daycare staff can speak different languages, and translated information is available.

Getting help to pay for childcare

If you need help paying for childcare, go to the office of the Ministry of Human Resources closest to you (see Blue Pages in the telephone book) or call the Westcoast Information Daycare number. Tell them you want to apply for a childcare subsidy.

Family Places

These are drop-in centres for parents and pre-school age children, including support to parents in a group setting and creative play for preschool children.

Eastside Family Place,

1661 Napier St., Tel: 604-255-9841

Hastings Community Family Enrichment

Centre, 3096 East Hastings St., Tel: 604-718-6222

Marpole Oakridge Family Place,

1305 W. 70th Ave., Tel: 604-263-1405

Mount Pleasant Family Centre,

2910 St Georgia St., Tel: 604-872-6757

Roundhouse Family Place,

188 Drake St., Tel: 604-718-6559

South Vancouver Family Place,

2295 East 61st Ave., Tel: 604-325-5213

Thunderbird Family Place,

2311 Cassiar St., Tel: 604-713-1818

Westside Family Place,

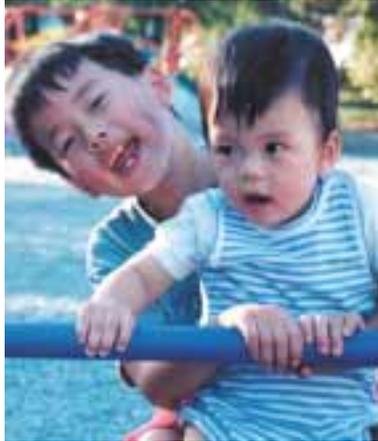
2819 West 11th Ave., Tel: 604-738-2819

Children and Youth Programs

The Vancouver Park Board offers a variety of programs for children and youth through its 23 community centres.

Children's programs

All community centres offer safe, supervised programs in such areas as sports, recreation and arts activities. Many centres have swimming and skating lessons. Summer day camp programs are also available. Some of these programs are subsidized and low cost. Low income families may be eligible for a Leisure Access Card. For more information, contact your local community centre or pick up a copy of their program brochure.



Youth programs

Most community centres have youth programs run by Community Youth Workers who have experience in child and youth care and recreation leadership. Youths themselves are actively involved in planning for programs such as sports, recreation, arts, leadership training, pre-employment training and out-trips. For more information, contact your local Community Centre Youth Worker. (For community centre listings, see Part Two, "Parks and Recreation")

Neighbourhood houses also offer some youth programs. Other organizations providing children and youth services include:

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Vancouver Tel: 604-879-6554

Big Brothers of Greater Vancouver
Tel: 604-876-2447

Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland
Tel: 604-873-4525



Seniors Services and Programs

A person over 65 is usually considered to be a “senior.” Each of the three levels of government is responsible for different programs or services that seniors may use. In Vancouver, the Federal government is responsible for the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security. The BC government is responsible for health, transportation, and income assistance. The City government supports many recreation and social programs.

Vancouver’s community centres offer seniors’ courses and classes on fitness, health and wellness, arts and crafts, drop-in programs and excursions. Neighbourhood houses and independent seniors groups also provide services and activities for seniors. Contact the Seniors Worker at your nearest neighbourhood house or community centre for more information.

Other useful sources of information about services for seniors:

- The **411 Seniors Centre** (411 Dunsmuir St., Tel: 604-684-8171) has a Seniors Information and Referral Service. It also offers many drop-in services and programs for seniors.
- A booklet titled “*When I’m 64*” describes pensions, Old Age Security and how to apply for Medical Services Plan among other topics of interest to seniors. This booklet is available free from the **Legal Services Society** office (#1500-1140 West Pender St., Vancouver)

The following are some local seniors organizations and services supported by the City. Call to find out more about their programs or services.

Britannia Community Centre Vietnamese Seniors Program (Tel: 604-718-5815)

Chinese Community Library Seniors Outreach Program (Tel: 604-254-2107)

411 Seniors Centre (Tel: 604-684-8171)

Japanese Community Voluntary Association

(Tel: 604-687-2171)

Jewish Family Seniors Outreach

(Tel: 604-257-5151)

Marpole Oakridge Seniors Council

(Tel: 604-266-5301)

Renfrew Collingwood Seniors Society

(Tel: 604-430-1441)

South Granville Seniors Centre/Spanish Outreach (Tel: 604-732-0812)

South Vancouver Seniors Network

(Tel: 604-324-6212)

SUCCESS Seniors Outreach Project

(Tel: 604-684-1628)

Vancouver Second Mile Society

(Tel: 604-254-2194)

Westend Seniors Network

(Tel: 604-669-5051)

Cultural Activities and Special Events

Vancouver offers a wide range of cultural activities – from many different cultures. You can experience live theatre, dance, concerts, film and video screenings, art gallery and museum exhibitions, literary readings, lectures, fairs and festivals. Many different arts organizations and community groups sponsor and/or stage these events, which take place at different private and public venues, including community and cultural centres, libraries, churches and rented halls.

The City of Vancouver supports a range of cultural venues, including City-owned theatres such as the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse and the Orpheum Theatre. The City also supports major civic facilities such as the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Museum, Maritime Museum, the Pacific Space Centre, and Science World.

The City assists many non-profit arts groups through the **Office of Cultural Affairs** (Tel: 604-873-7487).

The Office also works with artists to develop public art, which is exhibited in public spaces in parks and neighbourhoods.



Photo by MianKitt Kwan

Where to get information and tickets

Local newspapers and free weeklies such as the *Georgia Straight* and *Vancouver Courier*, are good sources of information on local cultural activities. Tourism Vancouver has a website with current event information: www.tourismvancouver.com. The Alliance for Arts and Culture helps hundreds of Vancouver arts groups share information about events and activities. Stop by the Alliance Resource Centre at 938 Howe Street or call them at 604-681-3535. The Alliance website is: www.allianceforarts.com

For many events you need to buy tickets in advance. Ticketmaster (Tel: 604-280-4444) sells tickets for many major events, either at its various locations or over the telephone. You can also buy tickets at theatre box offices or from organizations staging events or at the events themselves.

You can often save money on tickets by buying them early, buying a subscription to a series of events, such as concerts or plays, or buying an entertainment book with discount coupons for arts events. Most events offer discounts for seniors, children and students. While most museums charge an entrance fee, many commercial and non-profit galleries are free.

Special events and festivals

On July 1st, Canada's birthday, there are special events in neighbourhoods all over Vancouver. Read your local newspapers or talk to staff at your local community centre to find out how and where to participate in these events. Other popular Vancouver events include:

- Vancouver International Children's Festival (May)
- International Jazz Festival (June)
- Dragon Boat Festival (June)
- Vancouver Folk Music Festival (July)
- Vancouver International Comedy Festival (July)
- Vancouver Chamber Music Festival (July-August)
- Vancouver Fringe Festival (September)
- Vancouver International Film Festival (October)
- Vancouver International Writers Festival (October)



Vancouver has lots of other arts festivals and community celebrations, many of which are organized by people from diverse cultures (e.g. Powell Street Festival, Asian Heritage Month, Black History Month, Aboriginal Art and Cultural Celebration). These events bring people together from around Greater Vancouver to enjoy the music, arts and cuisine of many different cultures. Watch for posters and look in different language newspapers and media to find out about these events.

