



## **Canadian Hispanic Congress**

### **Vol. 14 | March 2024**

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***The Canadian Hispanic Congress Celebrates  
The 2024 International Women's Day***

# The Montreal Bar Launches Campaign to Combat Rise in Fake Immigration Lawyers Exploiting Newcomers

The Montreal Bar is alarmed by an increase in the number of individuals posing as immigration lawyers, taking advantage of newcomers in Canada. These fake lawyers often approach victims, on social media, promising legal assistance and charging exorbitant fees. In 2022, nearly 40% of the bar's investigations into illegal law practice were related to immigration, a significant rise from 13% in 2018.

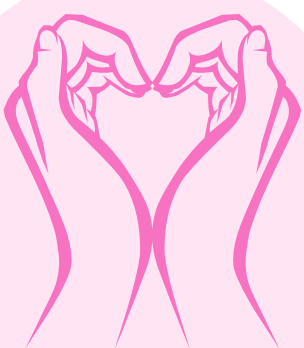
The bar has initiated an awareness campaign to caution newcomers, urging vigilance and providing information on verifying lawyers' credentials and filing complaints. The consequences of falling victim to these scams can include serious delays, abandoned claims, or even deportation. Other organizations, such as the Canadian Bar Association, note that the issue has been a concern for years, particularly in urban areas with large immigrant populations.

Alison Northcott of CBC News reports that the president of the Montreal Bar, David Etedgui, has been investigating "a growing number of allegations of illegal practice of immigration law" in Montreal. Northcott explains that "community groups in Montreal like the Welcome Collective, which helps refugees settle in the city, said they have clients who have been duped by fake lawyers or others posing as immigration consultants who aren't authorized or licensed."

The Montreal Bar's campaign aims to highlight red flags, such as promises of a quick process and meetings in unconventional locations, while providing resources to find qualified representatives. However, the powers of regulatory bodies like the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants to hold unauthorized practitioners accountable are limited.



- Let's Inspire Inclusion -



# Toronto City Council Passes Historic Property Tax Hike for 2024 Budget

The Toronto city council has approved the city's largest property tax hike in over 25 years, amounting to a 9.5% increase in residential property taxes.

Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow defended the hike, stating that it equates to an additional 80 cents per day for residents, with provisions for tax cancellation and deferral programs for those facing financial challenges. The budget also includes a \$20 million increase to the police budget.



However some councillors oppose the budget, calling it a record-breaking tax increase that will make living in Toronto more expensive. Despite the opposition, the budget passed, signaling a shift toward financial stability and sustainability, according to the city. Additionally, funding was allocated for snow windrow clearing and programming at Black Creek Pioneer Village. The police budget increase, initially contested by Mayor Chow, was ultimately approved with an additional \$12.6 million, bringing it to the requested \$20 million.

Mayor Chow expressed gratitude for federal and provincial support to address unique policing costs in Toronto. The budget aims to address a \$1.8 billion financial deficit inherited by the city.

# Canada Invests \$2 Billion to Boost BC Builds for Affordable Middle-Income Housing

The Province of British Columbia's initiative, BC Builds, aimed at providing affordable housing for middle-income individuals, will receive an additional \$2 billion in financing from the Government of Canada.



BC Builds leverages government, community, and non-profit owned and under-used land to accelerate housing delivery and align costs with middle-income earnings. The federal financing, combined with the province's investment of \$950 million and \$2 billion in low-cost construction financing, will support the creation of affordable homes. BC Builds has identified 20 initial sites through partnerships with local governments, First Nations, and non-profit organizations, with an anticipated initial construction of 8,000 to 10,000 homes for middle-income individuals over the first five years. The program aims to streamline project approvals, ensuring a 12-18-month concept-to construction timeline.

The Government of Canada's investment emphasizes the need for more affordable homes for the middle class and supports BC Builds' goal of addressing the housing crisis with public and below-market rate units. The announcement includes the fourth BC Builds site, located in Vancouver, featuring 112 new co-operative homes for middle-income households, with construction expected to begin in summer 2024.

# Government of Canada Invests in Accessible and Inclusive Childcare

The Government of Canada is collaborating with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners to establish a Canada-wide early learning and childcare (ELCC) system, aiming to bring regulated childcare fees down to an average of \$10 a day by March 2026. Minister Jenna Sudds and Minister Becky Druhan announced a three-year action plan in Nova Scotia under the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement. The plan outlines over \$440 million in spending across five areas:

- **Affordability:** Over \$285 million to achieve an average regulated childcare fee of \$10 a day by March 31, 2026.
- **Access:** \$52 million for the creation of 9,500 new regulated childcare spaces by March 2026.
- **Quality:** Over \$105 million for an early childhood educator (ECE) compensation framework, including ongoing support for the ECE wage grid introduced in November 2022.
- **Inclusion:** Over \$30 million for an inclusive early learning and childcare strategy focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across the childcare system in addition to continued support for inclusion measures for diverse and vulnerable communities, including children with additional needs, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities.
- **Administration:** \$23 million to support the implementation and administration of the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement.



This initiative is part of the Government of Canada's broader plan to make life more affordable for families, support workforce development, and contribute to economic growth.

# Government of Canada Takes Steps to Enhance Housing Support and Address Grocery Affordability Challenges



As part of Canada's economic plan, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland announced new measures to support low-income renters, address homelessness, open more emergency shelter spaces in cities across the country and tackle corporate practices affecting grocery prices.

A \$99 million national top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit was unveiled, bringing the federal contribution to \$325 million in 2023-24, aiming to make rent more affordable for over 300,000 low-income households by 2027-28. Additionally, \$100 million in emergency winter funding will enhance shelter spaces in 85 communities.

To address grocery prices, Minister of Innovation François-Philippe Champagne tripled funding to consumer organizations, launching projects to investigate price inflation and corporate practices impacting affordability in everyday goods.

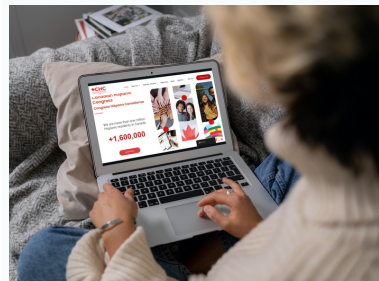
These actions align with the government's commitment to building an inclusive economy that works for everyone to make life more affordable and support those who need it most.

## CHC Community Services

The Canadian Hispanic Congress invites you to visit our website and learn about the different resources and support made available by the government and community organizations!

<https://canadianhispaniccongress.com/>

## NEED HELP?



**Visit our Webpage**  
Learn about the different resources and supports for the entire family.



- Let's Inspire Inclusion -

# Canada Introduces New Immigration Pathway that Offers Permanent Residence to At-Risk Individuals



Canada has introduced a new immigration pathway to offer permanent residence to foreign nationals who were under protective care services but never obtained permanent residence for citizenship, and now face the risk of deportation.

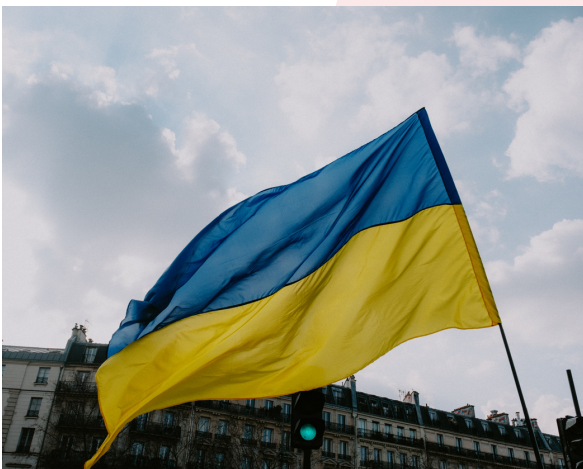
The pathway, which will be open until January 27 2027, is aimed at individuals who came to Canada before the age of 19, were under the legal responsibility of a child and family services provider, and may now be facing deportation. Eligible applicants, who have continuously resided in Canada for at least three years, can apply for permanent residence, and all fees are waived.

The initiative builds on a previous move presented in late September last year which allowed temporary residence in Canada including work and study permits. Those who applied for that permit may now become eligible to apply for permanent residence.



## Canada Donates 800 Drones to Boost Ukraine's War Effort

Canada's Defence Minister, Bill Blair, has announced the donation of over 800 SkyRanger R70 drones to support Ukraine's war effort.



Manufactured in Waterloo, Ontario, these drones, part of a \$95 million investment, can carry up to 3.5 kilograms of cargo and can be equipped with surveillance cameras for reconnaissance missions. The aid comes from a \$500-million military aid package announced in June, and the drones are expected to be delivered to Ukraine by spring. The donation aligns with Ukraine's request for increased military assistance, especially long-range munitions, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expresses concern about delays in aid and ongoing challenges on the front lines.

Canada is also awaiting approval from the U.S. Congress for a \$406 million purchase of surface-to-air missile defence systems for Ukraine. The delay in this aid is viewed as a significant threat to Ukraine's defensive capabilities, with concerns raised about shortages of artillery ammunition and air defenses, exemplified by the recent withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from the city of Avdiivka.

# Message from the president

Dear friend of the Canadian Hispanic Congress,  
Happy 2024 International Women's Day.

The 2024 campaign theme for the celebration of International Women's Day 2024 is **Inspire Inclusion**.

The women and men that first celebrated International Women's Day in March 1911 could not have predicted the magnitude of the moment. One hundred and thirteen years later, this celebration continues to unite women from across the world in a day/month of collective activism where women connect with a renewed sense of loyalty towards each other and the appreciation of what has been accomplished and a renewed commitment to do the work that remains -as we all must continue to do in the struggle for equality.

All human beings have the responsibility to fight to ensure equality and respect for the human rights of every person, including all women. This is a fight that belongs not only to women, but to any person who has ever loved a mother, sister, wife, woman friend, grandmother... Everything that you do to help women achieve equality, you are doing to help families and the world.

By inspiring others to understand and value women and encourage women's inclusion, we are indeed forging a better world for everyone. An inclusive world is a better and more resilient world and a stronger world. Continue to fight the good fight. The advancement of a woman is a step in the right direction. Remember what you learned in kindergarten and -let others have a turn too.

Women who are included have a sense of belonging, of relevance, and a sense of empowerment. The world needs fewer bystanders and more action-oriented individuals. If you notice unfair practices, call them out. You will be stronger for it.

As always, your feedback and participation in our Celebration of International Women's Day is really important to us. Here is how to participate. Please take a picture of yourself signing a heart with your hands, symbolizing your solidarity and commitment to working for women's equality and human rights and send it to: [president@canadianhispaniccongress.com](mailto:president@canadianhispaniccongress.com) throughout the month of March and we will be honoured to share your contribution on our social media channels.

Warm regards,

Monique Forster, President  
Canadian Hispanic Congress

Social Media tags: **#InspireInclusionCHC** and **#IWD2024#InspireInclusionCHC**



To sign up for our newsletter please email us at: [membership@canadianhispaniccongress.com](mailto:membership@canadianhispaniccongress.com)

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**#InspireInclusionCHC**  
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**Join our campaign!**  
Send a picture signing a heart with your hands to:  
[president@canadianhispaniccongress.com](mailto:president@canadianhispaniccongress.com)

**We will share your photos on our social media!**

**- Celebrating together International Women's Day 2024 -**



**Happy International Women's Day**

**- Let's Inspire Inclusion -**