

New Students in Waterloo



Great neighbourhoods start with you.



How to reach us

EMAIL AND PHONE

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☎ 519.747.8772

☎ 1.866.786.3941 (TTY)

E-NEWS UPDATES

Visit waterloo.ca/subscribe and sign up to receive updates on all things neighbourhoods.

Waterloo Neighbourhoods e-newsletter includes information about neighbourhood projects, grants, ideas, and what's happening.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This material is available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

Please contact us a minimum of 3-5 business days before it is required.

About this guide

Welcome to Waterloo and congratulations on choosing to study here! With three post-secondary schools, wonderful neighbourhoods, and great spaces to connect, Waterloo is a supportive place to be a student.

This guide is designed to provide students with resources and information to help them thrive in their new community. The information is divided into three sections:

- Living in Waterloo
- Working in Waterloo
- Having fun in Waterloo

If you have any questions about the information, please reach out to neighbourhoods@waterloo.ca.

Living in Waterloo

WHO DOES WHAT?

The City of Waterloo is located within the Region of Waterloo, an upper tier municipality. The Region is made up of the following lower tier municipalities: Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, and North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich townships. The City and Region work together to provide different services and programs for Waterloo residents.

Check out this brief chart, for an overview of the different responsibilities of the City and Region:

The City of Waterloo	The Region of Waterloo
For more information on the topics listed below, check out the City of Waterloo website .	For more information on the topics listed below, check out the Region of Waterloo website .
• Building permits and compliance, heritage alterations • Bylaws	• Child care and early learning • Employment programs and financial assistance

The City of Waterloo	The Region of Waterloo
• Fire and safety services • Marriage licenses • Animal licenses • Neighbourhoods • Parking • Parks and city facilities • Property taxes • Recreation and leisure opportunities • Trails • Water billing and delivery, sewers, and storm water	• Garbage and recycling • Public health and emergency services • Public Transit (GRT and ION) • Services for older adults • Water and wastewater • Waterloo Region Police Services (WRPS) • Waterloo Regional Airport



The City and Region's responsibilities are connected in many ways. For example, both play key roles in urban planning, the promotion of arts and culture, providing senior supports, and the delivery of community services. For more information on services offered by each level of government, visit their websites or reach out to a helpful neighbour!

CITY COUNCIL

The City of Waterloo Council is made up of one mayor and seven ward councillors that serve on four-year terms. City council makes important decisions that affect life in Waterloo. For more information on the city council, their meetings, and to find your local councillor, check out the [City Council webpage](#).



Council meetings are hosted on Monday's throughout the year and anyone is welcome to attend.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Across the city, interested neighbours, block connectors, neighbourhood groups, neighbourhood associations, and homes associations, work to create opportunities for recreation and foster neighbourhood connection in their areas. To find out if you live in an identified neighbourhood with an established name, neighbourhood group, or association, check out this [neighbourhood map](#).

Neighbourhoods often have social media pages to share information and promote community connections. If you are interested in joining a virtual group, search for your neighbourhood on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Nextdoor. If you are having difficulty finding a group online, connect with fellow neighbours or email neighbourhoods@waterloo.ca.



If a neighbourhood group hasn't been created, consider developing one! For more details check out the Establishing and Managing a Neighbourhood Facebook Group guide on the [neighbourhoods website](#).

The City of Waterloo recognizes that when neighbours feel safe, engaged, and share a sense of belonging, their neighbourhood feels like home. The City of Waterloo offers a variety of programs including learning and skill-building workshops, a program to recognize kind neighbours, and funding opportunities from \$50-\$7,500 to support resident-led projects that promote neighbourly connections. For details on all things neighbourhoods, check out the [neighbourhoods website](#).

If you value neighbourhood connection and are interested in building relationships, consider volunteering in Waterloo neighbourhoods! Getting involved in neighbourhoods is a rewarding experience that can help you develop positive relationships. There are many ways to get involved, check out the list below for inspiration:

- Become a block connector and enhance neighbourhood connections by planning events, projects, and activities.
- Volunteer at an outdoor rink and help a team of neighbours maintain the ice.
- Reach out to your local neighbourhood group, association, or homes association to help deliver neighbourhood events and projects. Waterloo has many organized groups that promote neighbourly connections, recreation opportunities, and develop vibrant and engaged spaces. Visit this [interactive map](#) to check out if your space has a group established!
- Volunteer at a community vegetable garden. Work with a team of volunteers to administer plots and maintain the garden space.
- Consider volunteering on your own terms! If you have a great idea to improve neighbourhood cohesion, apply for a neighbourhood grant. The City of Waterloo offers two funding opportunities – mini-grants for neighbours and the Neighbourhood Fund.

For more information on volunteer opportunities and to apply online, visit the [neighbourhoods website](#).

Renting In Waterloo

Renting a place to live is a common part of the student experience. This guide compiles a list of helpful resources to support you throughout the rental process.

Roommate conflict

Disagreements and conflict can occur between roommates – living with new people can be challenging and take some getting used to. To help prevent and work through conflict, check out these helpful suggestions:

- Plan a roommate meeting where you can work together to establish shared rules such as quiet hours, division of cleaning and housework, guests, and parking. Once you have agreed on rules, it is a good practice to write them down and post them in an accessible location. Having a commonly understood list of rules will help provide clarity and reduce future conflict. For helpful tips on hosting a roommate meeting, check out this [this blog post](#).
- Clearly define how you and your roommates will pay for shared services, like utilities, water, and internet. Make sure everyone is on the same page!
- Establish a group chat or a space to communicate as a group.
- Be considerate and respectful by following rules and communicating with your roommates. If you plan to have a guest over for the weekend or will be at the library late, send your roommates a quick message. After using a common space, make sure you leave it clean and tidy. Simple actions can help build positive relationships and make sure all roommates feel engaged and respected.
- If there is a disagreement, address it quickly and thoughtfully. Depending on the nature of the issue, it may be beneficial to set up a meeting for roommates to discuss the problem and work together to develop a solution.
- Foster open and polite communication. If you are experiencing a problem with a fellow roommate, reach out directly and voice your concern in a polite way. Try to remain calm and listen to their thoughts and attitudes.
- Be patient. Whether it is a difficult exam, a large assignment, or living away from home, being a student can be stressful. Provide support for fellow students by being understanding and willing to compromise on issues.

Overall, it is important that all roommates feel safe, respected, and comfortable in the space they call home. For more information on preventing and managing conflict, check out the following resources:

- City of Waterloo's Being a Good Tenant guide provides helpful tips for handling conflict between roommates, neighbours, and landlords. Check out the [neighbourhoods website](#) for this toolkit and many more helpful resources!
- [The Region of Waterloo Renter's Toolkit](#) highlights important tips for handling roommate conflict.
- [The University of Waterloo](#) provides helpful information on the entire rental process, including selecting a roommate and addressing conflict.
- [Wilfrid Laurier University](#) highlights important information and resources for students renting off-campus.
- [Conestoga College Student Inc.](#) provides a student living guide that includes tenant supports and resources, important contacts, and more.

Handling issues at your rental

Unexpected issues at your home (repairs or pests) can be stressful and disruptive. If an issue arises, quickly report it to your landlord or property manager and work together to coordinate repairs and address the concern. Being cooperative can help ensure the issue is resolved in a timely manner. If the property owner fails to make necessary repairs or resolve the issue, start thinking about next steps.

Check out this [helpful brochure](#) for details on landlord responsibilities and what a tenant can do if a problem isn't repaired.



The City of Waterloo's [property standards bylaw](#) dictates the minimum health, safety, and maintenance standards for the upkeep of rental properties. If your rental does not meet the property standards and your landlord is not fixing the problems, report your concern [online](#).

Know your rights

The Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) is an independent tribunal that resolves disputes between residential landlords and tenants. The LTB also provides information about the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. For more information on the LTB and your rights, visit the [Being a Good Tenant guide](#).

Garbage, recycling, and other waste collection

The Region of Waterloo is responsible for waste management. Waste can be divided into garbage, recycling (blue bin), compostable material (green bin), household hazardous waste, and yard waste. If you are unsure how to dispose of something, use the [Region of Waterloo's waste whiz](#).

If you live in a single-family home, legal duplex, eligible townhouse unit, or a small apartment building (six units or less), household waste (excluding hazardous waste) is collected curbside. Make sure to check out the [collection calendar](#) to find out the pick-up dates for your neighbourhood.



A helpful tip – sign up for text reminders on the [Region's website](#) or print the collection calendar to post in a common area in your space (like the fridge!) This will help remind you and your roommates to take out the waste and pick-up the containers after collection. To share this responsibility, assign certain dates to certain roommates.

Additional services

Sometimes your monthly rent will also cover additional services, such as utilities, hydro, and internet. When looking for a place to rent, clarify what the rent payment includes. If services (utilities, internet, hydro etc.) are not included, factor these additional costs into your monthly payment.

To set-up payments for the following services, check out the helpful resources listed below:

- Hydro – Enova Power manages the delivery, maintenance, and billing of hydro services in Waterloo. Information for new customers and details for setting up an account can be found on [their website](#).
- Natural Gas – Union Gas (Enbridge Gas Inc.) provides natural gas to homes in Waterloo. If your home uses natural gas, visit [their webpage](#) for information on setting up your account.
- Water – The City of Waterloo handles the distribution of drinking water and the collection of wastewater. For details on water rates, payment, and setting up an account, visit the [City of Waterloo water billing webpage](#).
- Internet – A number of providers offer internet in Waterloo. Research different providers, their plans, and compare pricing to select the best option for you. If you have roommates, make sure to consider everyone's respective budgets and internet needs. As you are reviewing different options, ask about promotional deals for students – sometimes discounts are available!



If you have roommates, it is important to discuss how you will handle paying for additional services that are not included in the monthly rent. Work together to figure out a payment plan and process that works well for everyone – sometimes it is helpful to plan a roommate meeting to discuss these details. Clarifying a payment plan early on can prevent future confusion and conflict.

MEDICAL SERVICES IN WATERLOO

Depending on the support you need, there are different medical services available in Waterloo. This section provides an overview of important information and key contacts.

Emergency or urgent needs

Depending on the nature of emergency, contact one of the numbers below:

- Call **911** for serious or life threatening emergencies.
- Visit an emergency department at [St. Mary's General Hospital](#) or [Grand River Hospital](#).
- If you suspect contact with poison or hazardous material, contact [Ontario Poison Centre](#) at 1-800-268-9017.

Non-urgent medical services

The Region of Waterloo offers helpful information on non-urgent medical services such as visiting a walk-in clinic, finding a family doctor, vaccines and immunizations, prenatal support, sexual health services, and dental health. For details on these services, visit the [Region of Waterloo's Public Health and Emergency Services webpage](#).

Your post-secondary school will also have health and wellness services specifically available for students. For more information on these services and support, check out the following webpages:

- University of Waterloo – [Campus Wellness](#)
- Wilfrid Laurier University – [Health and Wellness](#)
- Conestoga College – [myWellness](#)



For free, immediate medical advice, call [Telehealth Ontario](#) at 1-866-797-0000 or toll-free 1-866-797-0007. Do not call Telehealth for medical emergencies.

There are also resources available to support students and their mental well-being. Check out this list of resources for more information:

- MindBeacon offers an online, therapist-guided program that is based in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Ontario residents may access this service for free. For more information or to sign up, visit [MindBeacon's website](#).
- For information on local mental health services, help, and supports in the Waterloo Region, check out this [resource list](#).
- The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin provides a full care system for those with addictions, mental health, or developmental needs. For more information on the services offered, visit the [CMHA website](#).
- HERE 24/7 provides intake, assessment, referral, waitlist, and appointment bookings. This phone service will help connect people with access to addiction, mental health and crisis services provided by local agencies. For more information, visit the [HERE 24/7 website](#).
- Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line provides access to confidential peer support and referral services that support the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, 2-spirited, queer, and questioning youth in Ontario. For information, check out the [Youth Line website](#).
- Connex Ontario provides free and confidential information about mental health services and supports in communities across Ontario. This service is offered in 170 languages. For more information, check out the [Connex Ontario website](#).
- The Region of Waterloo Mental Wellness page provides important information about ways to support your mental health and links to helpful resources. For more information, visit [the Region of Waterloo website](#).

SAFETY SERVICES IN WATERLOO

In an emergency or life threatening situation, call 911.

Fire Services

Waterloo Fire Rescue responds to fires, medical emergencies, car accidents, and chemical incidents. Learn what to do after a fire, how to book a fire inspection, and how to prevent a fire in your home on the [Fire and Emergency Services webpage](#).

Police Services

The Waterloo Region Police Service (WRPS) serves all of Waterloo Region. Certain non-emergencies, such as lost property and theft (under \$5000), can be reported online. To find more information and submit an online report, visit the [WRPS website](#).



For information on volunteering with the WRPS, obtaining a police records check, car collisions, traffic complaints, and more, visit the [WRPS website](#).

GETTING AROUND

There are a number of public transit options to help students travel within the city and beyond. A brief list of the available services is included below:

- Bus – There are a number of bus routes to help students connect with different parts of the City. For more information on bus schedules, fares, and planning your trip, visit [the Grand River Transit website](#).
- ION – The ION light rail travels between Conestoga Mall in Waterloo and Fairway Mall in Kitchener. This form of rapid transit makes it easy to travel across the city. For more information on the ION light rail, visit [the Grand River Transit website](#).
- GO Transit – GO Busses and Trains connect Waterloo residents with places in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. For more information about GO transit, fares, schedules, and the different destinations, visit [the GO Transit website](#).
- Region of Waterloo Airport – Waterloo is home to a regional airport that provides air travel to a variety of different domestic and international destinations. For more information on flights, destinations, and fares, check out the [airport's website](#).



A special GRT pass is available for university and college students. For more information on the GRT pass for students, check out [this helpful page](#).

Working in Waterloo

If you are a student or a recent graduate looking for work in Waterloo, the following resources can help you find a job that fits your schedule and skill level:

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

The University of Waterloo (UW) offers a variety of resources to support students and their job search. For more information on UW employment resources, visit their website directly.

- Job Listings – UW maintains a comprehensive job list that includes full-time, co-op, and other opportunities. This is a great place to start your job search.
- The Career Action Centre – UW students looking for career planning, resume and interview help, graduate school preparation, or work search tips, can visit the Career Action Centre for more information.

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) offers resources to help students find work. For a comprehensive list of supports available for WLU students, visit the university's page directly.

- Online Guide – This guide provides information about on-campus jobs, off-campus opportunities, and the International Student Work Experience Program.
- The Career Centre - The Career Centre provides WLU students with career counselling helpful resources, and learning events and opportunities throughout the year.
- Navigator – Use your student login credentials to access this online hub that provides information on career opportunities, training seminars, and more.

CONESTOGA COLLEGE

Conestoga College provides resources to help their students find full-time, co-op, part-time, and summer employment opportunities. For a full list of resources and programs available, visit Conestoga College's page directly.

- Work Study Program – This program provides current students with on-campus, program related employment to offset the costs of tuition.
- The Career Centre – The centre provides students and graduates with personalised support for their job search efforts. For more information on the services offered, check out their webpage.

REGION OF WATERLOO

The Region of Waterloo offers a number of supports for students.

- Student Job Opportunities – The Region compiles a list of jobs tailored to secondary and post-secondary students. Check this job board for information on current opportunities available.
- Collection of Online Resources – The Region provides a number of helpful resources for job seekers including, online job boards, employment counsellors, information on creating effective applications, interviewing techniques, and more.

THE CITY OF WATERLOO

- Employment Page - For information on jobs available at the City of Waterloo, visit the employment page. Here you will also find details on the recruitment process, applying online, interviews, and employee testimonials.



Online job boards, like Monster, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and Indeed, also post jobs that are tailored to students (summer opportunities, part-time work, internships, etc.) When looking for employment opportunities, consider checking out these sites as well.

Having fun in Waterloo

There are so many fun things to do across the City of Waterloo. This section provides some inspiration for activities to do (when you are not studying!)



We encourage you to make the most out of your time in Waterloo. Consider creating a Waterloo bucket list that outlines all the things you want to do here. Do this independently or together as a group.

HEAD OUTSIDE

The City of Waterloo has many great trails, parks, and natural spaces to enjoy. Whether you are interested in a park picnic or a hike, check out these resources to find a great space to get outside:

- For details on park spaces across Waterloo, check out [the parks directory](#).
- Waterloo has over 150 km of off-road and multi-use trails to explore. For a list of trails and a map, visit the [City of Waterloo website](#).
- In addition to city-managed outdoor spaces, the Grand River Conservations Authority (GRCA) manages the Laurel Creek Conservations and other natural areas in nearby municipalities. For more information on these spaces, check out the [GRCA website](#).

GET ACTIVE

The City of Waterloo offers opportunities for recreation and leisure including fitness and wellness classes, pickle ball, dance classes, swimming, and more! Check out [Active Waterloo](#) and the [PickupHub](#) for details on activities, drop-in programs, and to register.

In the winter months, Waterloo has many outdoor rinks for neighbours to enjoy free of charge. For a list of all outdoor rinks, visit the [City of Waterloo website](#).

ATTEND EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Events and festivals take place all year long across Waterloo and the Waterloo Region. For details on events hosted by the City of Waterloo, check out [this calendar](#). For details on other events in the city, check out the following pages:

- [Waterloo Public Library Programs and Events](#)
- [Uptown Waterloo BIA Events](#)
- [Explore Waterloo Region Festivals and Events](#)

Neighbourhood and community groups also host fun events throughout the year, such as street closure events, barbeques, and socials in local parks. Follow your neighbourhood group or association on social media to stay in the loop. Attend these events to have fun and form positive connections with your neighbours.



Neighbourhood events are great places to develop relationships with your neighbours. Say hello, strike up a conversations, and get to know one another. Strong neighbourly connections promote mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing – when connected we feel safer, more engaged, and happier!

CHECK OUT A MUSEUM OR GALLERY

The City of Waterloo Museum is a heritage portal where visitor can learn more about the City and it's fascinating history. Connect with the museum on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) to stay informed on special events, exhibits, and programs being offered.

There are also a number of galleries to explore in Waterloo, like the [Clay and Glass Gallery](#), [Uptown Gallery](#), and [University of Waterloo Art Gallery](#). For a full list of museums and galleries across the Waterloo Region, visit [Explore Waterloo Region](#).

VISIT A LIBRARY

The Waterloo Public Library (WPL) has four branches located across the City. The WPL offers programs (for adults and children), special events, books, digital resources, and workshops and learning opportunities. The library is also a great space to connect with friends, work on an assignment, or relax.

Membership at the WPL is free for persons who reside or own property in Waterloo. To register, visit a [WPL location](#) or sign up [online](#).

ENJOY SOME DELICIOUS FOOD

The Waterloo area has many great spots to enjoy delicious and diverse foods. For a list of restaurants in Waterloo Region, check out this [helpful website](#).

If you are looking for something fun to do, visiting a local farmer's market or stand can be a great outing. Check out these resources for information on farmer's stands and markets in Waterloo:

- St. Jacob's Market is Canada's largest year-round farmers' market and flea market, with hundreds of local vendors. For more details, check out their [website](#).
- Many farmers in the area participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). In the spring, residents can subscribe to a share of the organic produce. Upon harvesting, shares are

distributed. For a list of farmers that provide CSA subscriptions, visit [CSA's in the Waterloo Region](#).

- View [a list of farm gates in the Region](#). Farm gates are stands and stalls located in different areas that showcase fresh and local produce, meat, and other products.

Helpful Resources

In addition to the helpful information shared throughout this guide, this section provides some other great resources for Waterloo students. Notice a resource that is missing – let us know by reaching out to neighbourhoods@waterloo.ca.

- The City of Waterloo has a variety of how-to guides with helpful information. For a full list of helpful guides, check out the [neighbourhood's website](#). Guides available include:
 - Creating Connections in Multi-Unit Buildings
 - Being Neighbourly
 - Being a Good Tenant
 - Understanding Waterloo Bylaws, and many more!
- Many community organizations provide support and services to residents across Waterloo, visit the [neighbourhoods website](#) for more information.