



Our Okanagan

Okanagan Valley Regional Profile

Okanagan Valley Quick Facts

The Okanagan Valley offers a skilled workforce, dynamic industry sectors, world class educational opportunities, strong transportation infrastructure and a quality of life that includes four season recreation activities and stunning landscapes. The Okanagan Valley is a great place to work, live and do business.

- Location:** The Okanagan Valley is south centrally located in the interior of BC – approximate distances from Central Okanagan (Kelowna) to: Vancouver 396 kms (246 miles), Calgary 640 kms (379 miles) and Seattle, USA 509 kms (316 miles).
- Proximity:** The Okanagan has access to over 72 million people within 2,000 kms of the Western Canadian and US Pacific Northwest markets.
- Population:** The 2009 estimated population is 350,927 and is projected to reach 461,000 by 2036. Population is concentrated around four urban areas, Vernon, Kelowna, West Kelowna and Penticton.
- Housing:** Average house purchase prices in the Okanagan Valley range between \$314,500 and \$379,800.
- Income:** Average family income in the Okanagan was \$57,351 as of the last census in 2006.
- Economy:** Major economic sectors are agriculture/viticulture, tourism, retail trade, manufacturing, forestry and construction. Emerging industries include film, aviation, health care and technology industries.
- Business:** Okanagan Valley is home to 28,897 businesses and 94% employ less than 20 employees.
- Labour Force:** Total labour force for the Valley is 266,425 people over the age of 15.
- Services:** There are a number of government and business support offices including a full service passport office, Service BC locations, and a trade commissioner, 12 Chambers of Commerce, three Downtown Associations and a variety of tourism offices.

The Valley also has a number of economic development offices representing respective regions but also collaborating to ensure a regional approach to economic development in the Okanagan.

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Disclaimer Notice

The information contained in this document has been compiled from sources deemed reliable and while every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, it is not guaranteed. The information can and will change without notice and as this document is intended to be an information resource it does not imply endorsement of any service, association or organization herein.

This Okanagan Valley Regional Profile has been compiled using the most up to date statistics and information available. Statistics Canada and BC Stats are major sources of information for this document and the detailed Regional Statistical Profiles comprised of census 2006 information were used. However, whenever possible, the more current information available has been provided with sources indicated as such.

This document also provides a snapshot of the Okanagan Valley and includes links to more in-depth information about specific areas and industries within the region.

1.0 Introduction

The Okanagan Valley is situated in the south-central interior of British Columbia, Canada’s most westerly province. The area covers 20,829 square kilometres and is home to approximately 350,927 people. One of the most scenic regions in Canada, the Okanagan offers varied landscapes, rich agricultural land, forested hillsides and mountain peaks.

The Okanagan has a diverse economy with prime industry sectors including agriculture, tourism, retail trade, manufacturing, forestry and construction. Key growth industries for the Valley include information and high technology, film, viticulture and wine production as well as aviation and health care. With much in the way of available business resources, the Valley is an ideal destination for business start ups, expansion and relocation.

The Okanagan has become a prime destination for residential and small business relocations due to the exceptionally moderate climate, strong transportation, trained labour force and availability of diverse recreational opportunities. The Okanagan has also become a very attractive destination for retirees who bring a wealth of knowledge and skills. The Valley is a great place to work, live and do business.

The Okanagan region includes several vibrant and diverse communities with over 30 cities, towns and villages. The four major urban areas of the Valley are Vernon (North), Kelowna and West Kelowna (Central) and Penticton (South).

Valley Location	Major City	Major Cities/Towns/Villages
<u>North</u>	Vernon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Vernon • City of Armstrong • City of Enderby • District Coldstream • Village of Lumby • Township of Spallumcheen
<u>Central</u>	Kelowna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kelowna • District of West Kelowna, • District of Lake Country (Winfield, Oyama) • District of Central Okanagan • District of Peachland
<u>South</u>	Penticton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Penticton • District of Summerland, • Town of Osoyoos, • Town of Oliver • Town of Princeton • Village of Keremeos

The Okanagan's climate is best described as mild and continental. The Valley is situated between the Columbia and Cascade mountain ranges creating a dry climate for most of the region. Summers (traditionally from May to September) are hot and sunny while the winters (December to February) are short and temperate. Many welcome the low humidity along with the relatively mild winters as these climates provide an attractive environment for business and recreation. Due to the Valley geography, climate will vary somewhat between the regions throughout the seasons.

Average high temperatures through the summer range from 26.2°C to 28.1°C with many days reaching 30°C and above. The mild winters average temperature ranges from -1.6°C to 0.9°C. The Valley receives approximately 2,000 hours of sunshine a year on average with about 30 cm to 40 cm of precipitation which is approximately 90% less than the lower mainland of BC.

1.1 Travel to the Okanagan Valley

The Okanagan region is south centrally located in British Columbia and within a five to eight hours of driving distance to major cities such as Vancouver, Calgary, Seattle and Spokane. Within the Valley the distance from the north to south is 198 km via the Highway 97 corridor.

Highway 97 is the Okanagan Valley's key north-south highway. From Highway 97 the connections to east-west include:

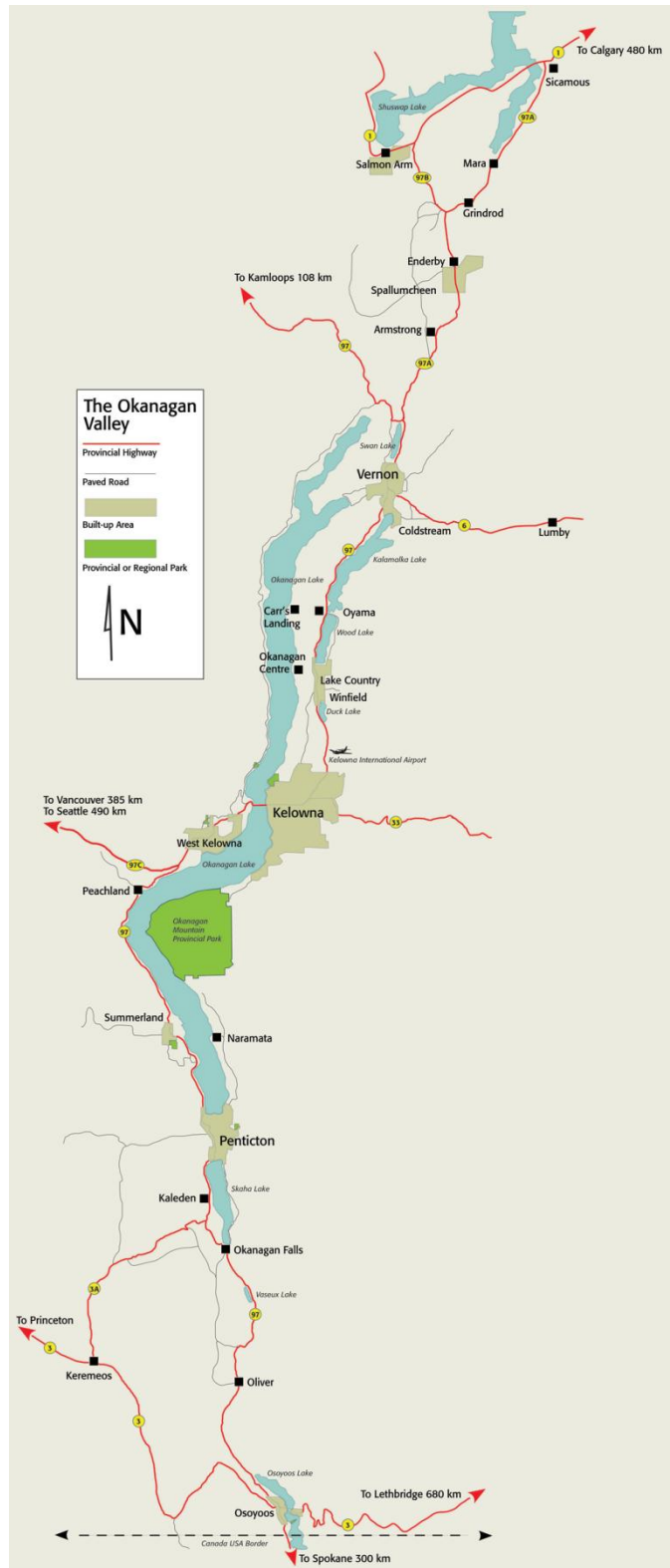
- Highway 1 - Trans Canada Highway
- Highway 3 - Crowsnest or Southern Trans Provincial Highway
- Highway 3A – connects with Castlegar/Creston
- Highway 6 – connects with the Kootenay Region
- Highway 97C - Okanagan Connector
- Highway 97A – connects with Armstrong/Sicamous
-

North-South routes that parallel various sections along the Highway 97 spine include:

- Highways 97A – connects to Armstrong/Sicamous
- Highway 97B – connects Grindrod/Salmon Arm
- Highway 33 – connects Rock Creek /Crowsnest Highway

For a map of the various transportation connections in the Valley, visit [Drive BC](#).

The Kelowna International Airport is the gateway into BC's southern interior and a vital part of the economic prosperity of the Okanagan Valley. Penticton Regional Airport offers daily flights to/from Vancouver International Airport and Vernon Regional Airport serves as an industrial centre for manufacturing and maintenance. Bus service is available from Greyhound Canada. Local transit service is available throughout the Valley via regional transportation. For passenger railway service, Via Rail offers passenger stops in Kamloops, 117 kms (1.5 hours drive) north of Vernon.



Map Source: Creative Commons – <http://wikitravel.org/en/Okanagan>

2.0 Demographics

2.1 Population

The total population for the Okanagan Valley as reported in the 2006 was 319,052 and represents the largest population of the interior region of BC. The estimated population for 2009 was 350,927 representing 7% of the provincial population with a steady growth projection to reach 461,900 by 2036.

Okanagan Valley Population		
Region	Population	% of Valley
North	77,301	24%
Central	162,276	51%
South	79,475	25%
Total Valley	319,052	100%

The population is highly concentrated in four urban centres; Kelowna, Penticton, Vernon and West Kelowna. The most populated city in the Valley is Kelowna with a population of 110,351 (2006) with projected growth to 119,253 for 2009/10.

In the 2006 Census, 51% of Valley population was aged 45 years and over and is expected to increase to 54% in 2036. Over the same period, the proportion of those people aged 0 to 44 is expected to decline from 49% in 2011 to 46%. The median age of the Okanagan is 45.9 years, higher than the provincial median age of 40.8.

Okanagan Valley Population Projections by Age and Year			
Age	2011	2021	2036
0-17	17%	17%	17%
18-44	32%	32%	29%
45-64	30%	27%	27%
65+	21%	24%	27%
Total for All Ages	359,500	406,300	461,900

2.2 Aboriginal Population

The Okanagan Valley history is tied very closely with First Nations people who have made this region their home for thousands of years. The First Nations of the Okanagan Valley have their own rich cultures and traditions and their heritage can be seen throughout the early settlements of the region. In the 2006 Census, 14,400 persons or 5% of the Valley population reported Aboriginal identity.

Aboriginal Identity	
Region	Aboriginal Identity
North	4,905 (6%)
Central	6,115 (4%)
South	3,380 (4%)
Okanagan Valley	14,400 (5%)
BC	196,075 (5%)

The following First Nations Bands provide services and facilities to their members in Okanagan Valley region:

- Osoyoos Indian Band
- Penticton Indian Band
- Lower Similkameen Indian Band
- Upper Similkameen Indian Band
- Upper Nicola Indian Band
- Westbank First Nation
- Okanagan Indian Band
- Splots'in or Spallumcheen First Nation

2.2.1 Okanagan Nation Alliance

The Okanagan Nation Alliance is the Tribal Council of all seven Okanagan Indian Bands with its offices located in the Central Okanagan. The Executive Council is comprised of the Chiefs of the participating Bands. Under the direction of the Executive Council, the Okanagan Nation Alliance staff's function is to serve the people of the Nation by fostering and supporting collective goals and actions that serve everyone.

2.3 Migration

People migrate to Okanagan Valley due to a number of reasons including the opportunity for employment, education, improved housing, to start a family or for retirement. From 2003 to 2007, the Okanagan Valley experienced positive net interprovincial migration gaining 20,924 people.

Total Net Migration 2003-2007	
Years	# of Persons
2006-07	5,545
2005-06	4,919
2004-05	5,053
2003-04	5,407
TOTAL	20,924

2.4 Immigrant Population

The Okanagan Valley has long been a destination for newcomers to Canada. Immigrant population refers to the population that is largely foreign born and granted landed immigrant status by the Canadian immigration authorities. While most BC immigrants have made their home in the lower mainland, many immigrants have moved inland from the coast of BC. At this time, 45,270 or 14% of the Valley's population are immigrants.

2.5 Ethnic Origin

The primary ethnic origin reported in 2006 was the British Isles with 55%, followed by Western European at 30%, other North American at 22%, Eastern European at 18% and French at 12%.

Reported Ethnic Origins		
Area	# Reported	% of Population
British Isles	174,345	55%
Western European	93,805	30%
Other North American	70,570	22%
Eastern European	56,215	18%
French	36,805	12%
Northern European	31,730	10%
Southern European	21,110	7%
Aboriginal	20,460	6%
Others combined	12,375	4%

2.6 Visible Minority Population

Visible minorities are defined as 'persons' other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. In the Okanagan Valley, 5% of the population are represented by visible minorities with the most common being South Asian, Chinese and Japanese. Approximately one quarter of BC's population are visible minorities.

3.0 Household Characteristics

3.1 Housing

In 2006, there were 134,120 private homes of which 103,025 were owned and 31,010 were rented dwellings. The value of an owned dwelling ranged from \$314,500 to \$379,800 in 2009. Owners on average paid \$873 per month and renters paid \$760 as reported in the last census.

Valley Housing	
# of Private Homes	134,120
# of Owned Homes	103,025
# of Rented Dwellings	31,010
Average Owners Payment	\$873
Average Gross Rent	\$760

The Okanagan Valley has been an attractive market for home buyers in recent years causing prices to increase. According to the BC Real Estate Association, the average home price in the Okanagan Valley is

Average Home Price in the Valley		
	North / Central	South
2008	\$406,647	\$339,394
2009	\$379,711	\$314,833
2010 F	\$398,000	\$328,000
2011 F	\$415,000	\$334,000

Source: [British Columbia Real Estate Association](#) Housing Forecast Summary, Quarter 1 2010

expected to rise slowly in the north and central Okanagan over the next few years. Additionally, prices in the south Okanagan were decreasing since 2008 but are also forecasted to rise in the near future.

Note: According to the [Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board](#), the Valley is segmented into three geographic zones of Central, North and Shuswap, South Okanagan – East/West: Rock Creek to Princeton, North/South: Summerland to Osoyoos.

3.2 Types of Households

The majority of households, as reported in the last Census, were single family (i.e. couple) households with 91,210 in the Valley. Single family households with children followed with 82,830 and there were 40,860 non family households in the Okanagan

Household Family Characteristics	
Single Family Households	91,210
Multiple Family Households	2,045
Non Family Households	40,860
Families with Children	82,830

region. Non family households are defined as people who share a household but are not related or consist of a single person residence. Finally in 2006, there were 2,045 multiple family households in the Valley where two or more families share a dwelling.

3.3 Household Income

The average family income in the Okanagan Valley for 2005 was \$57,351 with an after tax household income of \$50,301. This income is lower in comparison than the provincial average of \$65,787.

	Family Income	
	Valley	BC
Average Family Income	\$57,351	\$65,787
Average after tax household income	\$50,301	\$54,646

3.4 Sources of Income

Taxation statistics provide annual personal income data based on income tax returns filed with the Canada Revenue Agency. In 2006, 254,620 returns were filed from the Okanagan Valley. These returns show that the majority of income (58%) was derived from employment with 18% from pensions and 11% from investment.

Income Source	Sources of Income (# of Returns 254,620)	
	Amount (\$)	% of Total Income
Employment	\$5,351,318	(58%)
Pension	\$1,642,717	(18%)
Investment	\$1,040,177	(11%)
Self-Employment	\$514,128	(5%)
Other	\$515,294	(6%)
Tax Exempt	\$190,326	(2%)
TOTAL	\$9,243,960	(100%)

In the Okanagan Valley, the average individual income reported in 2007 was \$38,207. In comparison the average income for an individual in BC was reported as \$40,802 in 2007.

Average Individual Income (2007)			
North	Central	South	Average Total
\$37,094	\$42,285	\$35,250	\$38,207

Source: BC Taxation Statistics, 2007

4.0 Business and Labour

4.1 Economic Sectors

The Okanagan Valley has a diverse economy with agriculture, tourism, retail trade, manufacturing, forestry and construction as primary industry sectors in the region. Key growth industries include information and high technology, film, as well as aviation and health care. The Valley is continuing to diversify and build on its natural economic strengths.

4.1.1 Agriculture and Viticulture

In the southern Valley, with over 10,000 square kilometres of land, agriculture continues to be the source of value added food production, wine production and agri-science. Agriculture Canada and Agri-Food Canada operate a research station in the southern Okanagan which houses extensive lab capabilities, biotechnology skills, and food processing pilot facilities, and offers companies significant services.

The Valley climate is extremely conducive to agriculture and the region supports many high quality orchards and vineyards. In fact, the region has the greatest concentration of vineyards in Canada and is the oldest wine making region in BC. A total of 90.7% of BC's vineyards are located in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valley. Wine producers in the Okanagan have received many international awards and this industry is a major contributor to the Valley drawing thousands of tourists each year to the Valley. The Valley is home to the BC Wine Institute that plays a key role in the promotion and growth of the BC wine industry. This organization oversaw the development of the VQA (Vintners' Quality Alliance) program and is BC's lead wine industry trade association.

4.1.2 Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector in this region produces a myriad of products such as metal, plastic, concrete and fibreglass products as well as aircraft parts and specialty food goods. In addition, the Valley is home to prominent marine manufacturers who have been building fibreglass and aluminum boats in the region for over 40 years. The manufacturing sector also includes a number of companies that produce a variety of products such as textiles and chemical products (i.e. health and cleaning products). The Okanagan is home to the Okanagan Composite Manufacturers Group, a cluster of over 50 composite companies in the Valley that flourish due to the relatively low humidity and trained workforce.

4.1.3 Forestry

With the abundant wood supply in the region, the established forestry sector is well positioned with leading firms producing for North America and International markets. Many value added

manufacturing companies provide a large number of products such as furniture, cabinetry, plywood and building materials. Companies such as Tolko Industries and Gorman Brothers, both progressive lumber producers and mill operators, are major employers headquartered in the Okanagan Valley.

4.1.4 Trade

The Valley has a number of large franchise, wholesale and retail stores that provide a vast selection of goods and services for the Okanagan. Kelowna is the largest retail centre in the interior of BC and is home to the largest shopping centre between Calgary and Vancouver. The Valley is also home to hundreds of locally owned and operated specialty retail shops that provide unique products to residents and visitors to the Okanagan.

4.1.5 Tourism

Tourism in BC is a growth industry. The Valley is a prime tourism destination bringing visitors from all over the globe. The tourism sector in the Okanagan is a major employment and economic contributor to the Valley. The Okanagan has become known for its many attractions, sporting tournaments, conventions and festivals. The Okanagan also gained exposure during the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver through the “You Gotta Be Here” marketing campaign.

4.2 Emerging Industries

4.2.1 Film

The film industry in the Okanagan has experienced significant growth and the Valley is known as an established film production location. The region’s diverse scenery has sparked the promotion that “anyplace is here” as many sites in Okanagan can be transformed to represent countless locations for film and television projects. Many talented filmmakers, award winning production crew experts and artistic actors make their home in the Okanagan. The Okanagan Film Commission represents the Okanagan Valley and is a full service commission offering location scouting, tech surveys, liaison and facilitation services. Many recognized filming projects such as FIDO, My American Cousin, Stargate Atlantis and most recently the full film production, Gunless, was filmed in the Okanagan Valley.

4.2.2 Aviation

Aviation and related activities have emerged as one the growth industries in the Okanagan. Home to a number of aircraft parts manufacturers, an excellent aircraft maintenance education program, aviation instruction companies and a number of cargo and transportation businesses, the Valley is as a base for commercial, corporate and general aviation activities. Kelowna

Flightcraft, located in the Central Okanagan houses the largest aircraft hanger between Vancouver and Calgary to service commercial jet aircraft.

4.2.3 Health Care

There has been steady growth in the service and health care sectors with the attraction of service professionals, national retailers and advance technology manufacturers. The health care industry in the Okanagan Valley consists of public sector organizations, specialized private sector companies and industry associations. According to the most recent census, 17,900 people are employed in health care and social service related employment in the Okanagan.

In addition, many naturopathic and alternative health care businesses have set up shop in the Okanagan Valley. The North Okanagan is home to the new Sparkling Hills Resort offering European inspired therapies to produce a whole body wellness plan for visitors to the hotel.

4.2.4 High Tech

The high tech industry is also a major growth sector in the Okanagan Valley. The Okanagan has gained recognition as an expanding high tech centre with 8% of the technology firms in the province being located here. The major high-technology sectors represented in the Okanagan include: information technology, engineering services, aerospace, biotechnology, and technology support services. In addition there is an established R&D community. The outlook for the high-technology industry sector is extremely positive. A major advantage for the technology industry is the availability of the infrastructure and resources to assist in the start-up and growth of businesses in the Okanagan Valley.

Okanagan Research and Innovation Council (ORIC) is a non profit organization in the Central Okanagan and operates high tech business incubators to assist high tech companies with start up and sustainable growth including mentorship and business strategy development through the Okanagan Mentors Program.

4.3 Small Business

There are a total of 28,897 businesses in the Okanagan and 94% have less than 19 employees. Over half of the Okanagan Valley business firms (54%) are centrally located, primarily in Kelowna and West Kelowna.

Total Business Establishments in the Valley		
# of Small Businesses	% Share of all businesses	# of Employees
14,770	51%	None
12,547	43%	1-19
1,082	4%	20-49
798	2%	Over 50

Source: BC Stats, Establishment Counts by Employee Size, April 2009

BC was ranked first among the country in terms small business per capita with 87.7 small businesses per 1,000 people according to the BC Small Business Profile 2009. The Valley’s small business employer is a vital source of innovation, the primary provider of private sector jobs and instrumental in the growth of the Okanagan’s economy.

Self employment plays a strong role in the Okanagan Valley economy with a total of 27,035 people or 17% of the labour force reported being self employed in 2006.

4.4 Business and Employment Activity

The total labour force is 163,375 people with an unemployment rate of 6% as of the 2006 census. In the first quarter of 2010, the unemployment rate was approximately 9%.

Business and Labour Activity	
Total Population Age 15 years and over	266,425
In the Labour Force (15 years and over)	163,375
• Employed	154,020
• Unemployed	9,355
• Not in labour force	103,045

4.5 Employment by Industry

In 2006, 71% of the labour force was employed in the services sector, primarily in retail trade (13%), health care (11%), accommodation & food services (9%) and professional, scientific and technical services (6%). The goods producing sector comprised 28% of the labour force and included construction (11%), manufacturing (9%) and agriculture (4%).

Okanagan Valley Employment by Industry Sector

Industry	Labour Force (#)	Labour Force (%)	Goods or Services
Retail Trade	20,935	13%	S
Health Care & Social Assistance	17,900	11%	S
Construction	17,565	11%	G
Manufacturing Industry	15,130	9%	G
Accommodation & Food Services	13,300	8%	S
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	9,020	6%	S
Educational Services	8,855	5%	S
Other Services (excluding Public Admin)	8,055	5%	S
Administrative & Support, Waste Mgmt	7,290	4%	S
Agriculture	6,150	4%	G
Transportation & Warehousing	6,025	4%	S
Wholesale Trade	5,585	3%	S
Public Administration	5,295	3%	S
Finance & Insurance	5,135	3%	S
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	4,050	2%	S
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3,750	2%	S
Information & Cultural Industries	2,495	2%	S
Mining, Quarry, Oil & Gas Extraction	1,370	1%	G
Forestry & Logging	1,445	1%	G
Utilities	1,035	1%	G
Management of Companies & Enterprises	100	.01%	S
Industry Unclassified	1,605	1%	
Total Labour Force	163,375		71% - Services Sector 28% - Goods Producing

4.6 Employment by Occupation

Service occupations lead the employment list with greatest portion of jobs in sales and service (26%), followed by occupations in the trades, transport and equipment operators (18%), business services (16%) and management (10%) in 2006.

Employment by Occupation (% of Workers)

Sales and Service	26%
Trades Transport and equipment operators/related	18%
Business Services (Finance and Administration)	16%
Management	10%
Social science, recreation and sport	6%
Health Occupations	6%
Occupations unique to primary industry	6%
Unique to processing, mfg and utilities	5%
Natural and Applied Sciences and related	4%
Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport	2%

4.7 Business Information and Government Services

4.7.1 Taxation

The Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Finance is responsible for establishing, implementing and reviewing the economic, fiscal and taxation policies for the province. Through tax and revenue management, the government provides funding for programs such as health care, education, social services and transportation infrastructure.

For BC business tax information, which includes corporations, small business, home offices, trades and people who are self employed, the Government of BC, Ministry of Finance provides detailed [BC Business Tax Information](#).

For personal and general tax information, including information for BC residents, visitors, residents can access the Government of BC, Ministry of Finance for [BC Individual Tax Information](#).

4.7.2 Canada Revenue Agency

[Canada Revenue Agency](#) administers the tax laws for the government of Canada and provinces. The tax centre for the Okanagan Valley is located Surrey, BC. Within the Okanagan Valley, there are two Southern Interior BC Tax Services Offices providing services to individuals and businesses. These offices are located in Penticton and Kelowna.

Penticton: 277 Winnipeg Street, Penticton BC V2A 1N6

Kelowna: 100 - 1620 Dickson Avenue, Kelowna BC V1Y 9Y2

Web site: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cntct/prv/tstc/pntctn-eng.html>

Telephone: Service by appointment only
To book an appointment call:
1-800-959-8281 for individuals or
1-800-959-5525 for business and self-employed

4.7.3 Service BC Offices

Consumer and business taxation information is also available from the Service BC offices in Vernon and Penticton. [Service BC](#) offices provide the frontline source for government services and information. The Okanagan Valley has two Service BC Offices:

Vernon: 3201 - 30th Street, Vernon, BC V1T 9G3

Web Site: <http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/vernon.html>

Telephone: 250-549-5511

Fax: 250-549-5508

Penticton: 40 Calgary Avenue, Penticton, BC V2A 2T6
Web Site: <http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/penticton.html>
Telephone: 250-487-4200
Fax: 250-487-4222

Oliver: Room 101 9971 – 350th Avenue, Oliver, BC V0H 1T0
Web Site: <http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/oliver.html>
Telephone: 250-498-3818
Fax: 250-498-6333

4.7.4 Federal Government (Canada)

Information on programs and services provided by the Government of Canada can be accessed via their web site or by telephone. Service is available in English and in French and the website is the primary access point to the Government of Canada in the local areas.

Web Site: <http://canada.gc.ca>
Telephone: Toll Free: 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)

4.7.5 Service Canada Centres

Service Canada Centres offer a mix of information and transactional provincial government services. Service Canada offices are located in Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon. The services and programs are listed on the web site with links and direct telephone numbers listed. Each link below provides the 1-800 and direct phone numbers for the various programs and services provided.

Kelowna: 471 Queensway Avenue, Kelowna, British Columbia V1Y 6S5
Web Site: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-display.cgi?rc=5987&ln=eng>

Penticton: 386 Ellis Street, Penticton, British Columbia V2A 8C9
Web Site: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-display.cgi?rc=5978&ln=eng>

Vernon: 3202 – 31st Street, Vernon, British Columbia V1E 4P6
Web Site: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/hr-display.cgi?rc=5979&ln=eng>

4.7.6 Regional Trade Office

In September 2009, a new Canadian Trade Commissioner Service office opened in Kelowna, BC. Trade commissioners help Canadian companies and organizations do business in other countries by offering four key services: preparation for international markets, assessment of market potential, finding of qualified contacts and resolution of problems.

Location: 313 Bernard Avenue, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 6N6
Telephone: 250-470-5000
Web Site: <http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/bc>
E-Mail: klwna@international.gc.ca

4.7.8 Passport Office

The Okanagan Valley is home to a full service passport office in Kelowna. The Passport office is responsible for issuing Canadian passports and supervising all matters relating to Canadian travel documents. Services are provided to Canadians and Non-Canadians.

Location: Capri Centre, 1835 Gordon Dr, Ste 110, Kelowna, BC V1Y 3H4
Telephone: 1-866-255-7655
Web Site: <http://www.passportcanada.gc.ca>

4.7.9 Provincial Government

The government of BC is the provincial government authority for all regions. For provincial government services, enquiries can be directed to the provincial call centre:

In Victoria: 250 387-6121
In Vancouver: 604 660-2421
Elsewhere in BC: 1 800 663-7867
Outside BC: 604 660-2421
E-mail address: EnquiryBC@gov.bc.ca

4.8 Regional Districts of the Okanagan Valley

The province of BC is divided into 27 regional districts. Regional districts provide residents with access to commonly needed services regardless of where they live. The regional district functions as a regional government in partnership with the member municipalities and electoral areas within its boundaries. The Okanagan Valley consists of three regional districts located in the North, Central and South.

Regional District of North Okanagan

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of the North Okanagan includes the communities of Vernon, Coldstream, Spallumcheen, Armstrong, Enderby, Lumby, Lavington, Grindrod, Grandview Bench, Ashton Creek, Kingfisher, Silverstar Mountain, Trinity Valley, Creighton Valley, Cherryville, Crown and First Nations land.

Location: 9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream, BC, V1B 2K9
Telephone: (250) 550-3700
Fax: (250) 550-3701
E-mail: info@rdno.ca
Web Site: <http://www.rdno.ca>

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Incorporated in 1967, the Regional District of the Central Okanagan includes the communities of Kelowna – [Rutland, Okanagan Mission], West Kelowna – [Westbank, Casa Loma, West Kelowna Estates, Shannon Lake, Glenrosa, Rose Valley, Lakeview Heights] Peachland, Lake Country – [Winfield, Oyama, Carr’s Landing, Okanagan Centre], Big White, Native Reserves.

Location: 1450 KLO Road, Kelowna, BC, V1W 3Z4
Telephone: (250) 763-4918
Fax: (250) 763-0606
E-mail: info@cord.bc.ca
Web Site: <http://www.regionaldistrict.com>

Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen

Incorporated in 1966, the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen includes the communities of Penticton, Summmerland, Osoyoos, Oliver, Princeton, Keremeous, Kaleden/Okanagan Falls, Naramata, Okanagan Lake West/West Bench, Hedley, Cawston.

Location: 101 Martin St., Penticton, BC V2A 5J9
Telephone: (250) 492-0237
Fax: (250) 492-0063
E-mail: info@RDOS.bc.ca
Web Site: <http://www.rdos.bc.ca>

The following Okanagan Valley cities, towns and districts have web sites that include information specifics such as local government operations, business directories, area attractions.

City of Armstrong	http://www.cityofarmstrong.bc.ca
District of Coldstream	http://www.districtofcoldstream.ca
City of Enderby	http://www.enderby.com
City of Kelowna	http://www.kelowna.ca
Community of Keremeous	http://keremeos.com
District of Lake Country	http://www.lakecountry.bc.ca
Village of Lumby	http://www.lumby.ca
Town of Oliver	http://www.oliver.ca

Village of Keremeos	http://www.keremeos.ca
Town of Osoyoos	http://www.osoyoos.ca
District of Peachland	http://www.peachland.ca
City of Penticton	http://www.penticton.ca
Town of Princeton	http://town.princeton.bc.ca
Township of Spallumcheen	http://www.spallumcheentwp.bc.ca
District of Summerland	http://www.summerland.ca
City of Vernon	http://www.vernon.ca
District of West Kelowna	http://www.districtofwestkelowna.ca

4.9 Okanagan Valley Economic Development

The Okanagan Valley has a number of economic development officers that represent their respective regions. These economic development officers collaborate regionally through the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society (OVEDS). For contact information for the various economic development offices in the Okanagan, please see Section 7.0 of this profile.

4.9.1 Invest British Columbia

Invest British Columbia is a partnership of provincial, federal and local economic development organizations working together to expand business investment in BC. For information on doing business in BC, community and regional profiles, business taxation, incentives, location, information and services, the Invest BC office can be contacted in the lower mainland.

Location: 999 Canada Place, Suite 730, Vancouver, BC V6C 3E1
 Phone: (604) 775-2202
 Fax: (604) 775-2070
 Web Site: <http://www.investbc.com>

4.10 Proximity to Markets

The Okanagan Valley benefits from a south central location with close proximity to the growing western Canadian marketplace and the US Pacific Northwest. As a major region for trade and commerce, the Okanagan Valley is within 2,000 km of markets in both Canada and the United States providing access to over 72 million people.

Access to Markets [within 2,000 km of the Okanagan Valley]	
Market Population	Location
10 Million +	Canadian Western Provinces – Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Territories – Yukon, Northwest

62 Million +

United States – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana,
California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Alaska, Hawaii

Just a five hour drive or 50 minute flight from the Okanagan Valley is Canada's largest and busiest port known as **Port Metro Vancouver**. Located on the southwest coast of British Columbia, Port Metro Vancouver is North America's gateway to the world's most dynamic economies. It provides the full range of domestic and international trade and shipping services with major marine cargo terminals and Class 1 railroads. The Port also serves as homeport for the Vancouver-Alaska cruise industry supporting the robust tourism market of BC.

5.0 Infrastructure

The Valley has an extensive, well-integrated infrastructure. Goods are efficiently moved throughout the region through various transportation services. The Valley's well maintained roads, frequent domestic and international flight schedules combined with efficient transportation and telecommunications systems provide the means for optimal business services and maximized market capabilities.

Recently completed and planned infrastructure projects for the Valley include:

- Expansion of the Kelowna International Airport, completed in 2008
- Building of the new five lane William R. Bennett Bridge in Kelowna, completed in 2008
- Expansion of Kelowna and Vernon Hospitals, expected completion in 2010
- New and expanded roadways via the current Okanagan Valley Corridor Project
- Reconstruction and improvement to bike paths, walkways, trails and greenways
- Improved rapid bus service in Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton
- Trees for Tomorrow program; planting four million trees in public areas
- Improvement to various Valley recreational facilities
- Upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant in Penticton

5.1 Transportation

5.1.1 Roads and Highways

Drive BC is a traveller information system offering road conditions, incident reports, current and future planned events, camera images and ferry schedules throughout the Okanagan and BC.

Driving distances and approximate times from the Central Okanagan (Kelowna) to:

- Vancouver: 396 km (246 miles), driving time 4.5 hours
- Edmonton, Alberta: 909 km (565 miles), driving time 10 hours
- Calgary, Alberta: 610 km (379 miles), driving time 7.5 hours
- Banff: 477 km (296 miles), driving time 6 hours
- Seattle Washington, USA: 509 km (316 miles), driving time 5.5 hours

Distance calculations provided by: British Columbia Ministry of Transportation Distance Calculator:
<http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/popular-topics/distances/calculator.asp>

5.1.2 Okanagan Valley Distance Chart

The following chart depicts the local distance in kilometres within the Okanagan Valley.

	North			Central			South	
	Armstrong	Vernon	Lake Country	Kelowna	Peachland	Summerland	Penticton	Osoyoos
Armstrong	X							
Vernon	23	X						
Lake Country	43	20	X					
Kelowna	70	47	27	X				
Peachland	101	77	57	31	X			
Summerland	122	99	79	52	21	X		
Penticton	142	119	99	72	42	20	X	
Osoyoos	198	175	155	128	98	76	56	X

(Note: 10 km = 6.2 miles)

5.1.3 Air Service

The Okanagan Valley has one International Airport located in Kelowna and two regional airports located in Penticton and Vernon.

Kelowna International Airport

Kelowna International Airport (YLW) is located 20 minutes north of downtown Kelowna, on Highway 97. This airport has the longest runway in the Valley with 8,900 feet and can accommodate aircraft up to a Boeing 767. Residents can book direct flights to Kelowna from Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto. Airlines serving Kelowna International Airport include:

- WestJet
- Regional 1 Airlines
- Central Mountain Air
- Air Canada
- Air Canada Jazz
- Horizon Air

In terms of passenger activity, the Kelowna International Airport is the third busiest airport in British Columbia and the eleventh busiest airport in Canada with almost 1,400,00 passengers transported in 2008. The Kelowna International Airport also operates a Canada Customs office that provides service 24 hours a day.

Penticton Regional Airport

Penticton Regional Airport is located just south of Penticton, off Highway 97. With 6,500 feet of tarmac, the Penticton Airport offers daily flights to/from Vancouver International Airport through Air Canada Jazz. The airport dates back to World War II when it was used as an emergency aerodrome in 1944. Today, the Airport houses Southern Skies Aviation Ltd. offering commercial and private flight training as well as charter flights for the southern Okanagan.

Vernon Regional Airport

Vernon Regional Airport is located close to downtown Vernon, on Okanagan Landing Road. Designed to facilitate industry, Vernon Regional Airport has become the centre for manufacturing and maintenance in the Pacific Northwest. Fully serviced with airside lots, Vernon offers 120,000 square feet of land for new private and commercial hangars and a runway length of 3,518 feet. The Airport also offers excellent opportunity for manufacturing, maintenance and aerospace technical education.

5.1.4 Bus Service

Greyhound Canada is the largest provider of intercity bus transportation in Canada servicing over 1,100 locations. In the larger communities of the Okanagan, Greyhound offers full service ticketing and courier services while in smaller communities, locations are operated by independent agents providing schedule and courier services.

The Okanagan offers regional public transit services throughout the Valley via the BC Transit system. Accessible services are available such as low-floor buses for wheelchair and scooters, HandyDART, Taxi Saver and the Community Bus. For more information, each region can be contacted to view detailed schedules and services offered.

Vernon Regional Transit System – Telephone 250-545-7221

Kelowna Regional Transit System - Telephone 250-860-8121

Penticton and Okanagan-Similkameen – Telephone 250-492-5602

5.1.5 Railway Service

For passenger transportation, Kamloops, BC, is the nearest city centre for individuals of the Okanagan Valley to embark/disembark. The Kamloops station offers two rail services – Via Rail Canada to areas outside of BC, and Rocky Mountaineer Rail within the Canadian Rockies in BC and Alberta.

Kelowna Pacific Railway (KPR) consists of 104.2 miles of mainline track, 6.4 miles of associated sidings and spurs, and approximately 25.6 miles of running rights on Canadian Pacific Railway. The KPR connects with Canadian National Railway's (CN) Kamloops Yard. The KPR handles approximately 16,000 carloads per year and the major commodities include forest products, grain, and industrial products.

Kettle Valley Steam Railway is run by a non-profit society offering a 90 minute round trip passenger journey on a restored 1912 steam locomotive. The journey is from the Prairie Valley Station located in Summerland to the Trout Creek Trestle Bridge and is a very popular tourist attraction.

5.2 Utility Services

5.2.1 Electric Power

Fortis BC is a Canadian owned electric utility headquartered in Kelowna providing service to south-central communities of the Valley including Kelowna, Osoyoos and Princeton. Additionally, the wholesale supply of power is provided to municipal distributors in the communities of Summerland, Penticton and Kelowna.

BC Hydro is the third largest electric utility in Canada with the main office located in Vancouver. BC Hydro serves all areas of the North Okanagan and central communities of Westbank and West Kelowna producing and delivering hydroelectricity in through a system of storage dams, generators, and high voltage transmission lines to serve the needs of its customers.

5.2.2 Natural Gas

Teresen Gas is the natural gas and piped propane provider to homes and businesses throughout the Okanagan Valley and BC. Teresen Gas is a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., which is regulated by the British Columbia Utilities Commission.

5.2.3 Water Utility and Waste Disposal

The Okanagan is serviced thoroughly in water utility and waste disposal. Water and waste services for the central and south Okanagan are provided through their respective regional districts. In the north, waste services are also provided by the regional district, however water supply and distribution in the north is provided through a combination of providers. Greater Vernon Water oversees the supply and distribution of water to designated customers in the City of Vernon, the District of Coldstream and electoral areas B and C. The regional district provides water services for the remaining areas of the area.

5.3 Communications

The Okanagan Valley is well served by communication services and facilities.

5.3.1 Telephone

Telus and Shaw Communications provides landline telephone services to residential and commercial customers in the Okanagan Valley and BC. Telus and Shaw also offer services in other forms of telecommunications such as pagers and cellular phones.

Okanagan Telephone Company is a privately owned and operated company under the laws of BC. Headquartered in Kelowna, the company provides regional businesses with telephone lines and full telecommunication services. As an authorized distributor of Bell Canada's products and services, Okanagan Telephone Company services span most of the southern interior of BC including Kelowna, Penticton, Vernon and Kamloops.

Finally there are a number of local companies, such as TOPS Telecom in the Okanagan that provide business telecommunications services for businesses in the Valley including multi-line telephone system set ups and servicing.

5.3.2 Internet

There are a number of internet service providers serving the Okanagan Valley. Main providers including Telus and Shaw Cable Systems provide high speed, wireless internet to Okanagan residents and businesses. In addition, there are a number of other smaller local and BC companies that provide internet access to various areas in the Okanagan.

5.4.3 Cellular Phone Providers

The Okanagan Valley has extensive cellular phone and communication services offered through major companies including Telus Mobility, Bell Mobility, and Rogers. Many other companies provide service and roaming coverage to all areas of the Okanagan.

5.5.4 Print and Online News Services

The Okanagan Valley has a number of popular print and online news services. The following is a sample of the most popular news and information services providing access to Okanagan community residents and businesses.

Publication	Distribution/Circulation
<u>Okanagan Life</u>	24,000 audited circulation 100% delivered
<u>Events Magazine</u>	Weekly (Wednesdays) 55,000 plus
<u>Castanet</u>	Online 140,000 site hits daily
<u>Osoyoos Times</u>	Weekly delivery through Canada Post
<u>Oliver Chronicle</u>	Weekly (Wednesdays) 3,500
<u>Keremeos Review</u>	Weekly (Thursdays) 1,827
<u>Similkameen News Leader</u>	Weekly (Mondays) 1,400
<u>Similkameen Spotlight</u>	Weekly (Wednesdays) 1,267
<u>Penticton Herald</u>	Daily delivery 27,280
<u>Penticton Western News</u>	Biweekly 23,629
<u>The Kelowna Capital News</u>	Sunday 50,637 /Wednesday 50,699 / Friday 49,231
<u>The Kelowna Daily Courier</u>	Daily 18,023 / Weekend 27,800
<u>The Lake Country Calendar</u>	Weekly (Wednesdays) 4,500
<u>Vernon Morning Star</u>	Wednesday/Friday/Sunday 33,270
<u>Vernon Daily Courier</u>	Daily (Mon-Fri)
<u>Lumby Valley Times</u>	Weekly (Fridays) 2,700
<u>Okanagan Valley Advertiser</u>	Distributed throughout Armstrong, Spallumcheen, Mara Lake, Mabel Lake and Enderby areas Weekly Wednesdays 4,000
<u>Okanagan Business Examiner</u>	Monthly free circulation to 17,000 to businesses
<u>Summerland Review</u>	Weekly (Thursdays) 2,231
<u>Westside Weekly</u>	Biweekly 12,159
<u>Peachland Signal</u>	Weekly 1,400
<u>Okanagan Saturday/ Sunday</u>	Weekend 30,000

5.5.5 Radio

Okanagan Valley residents and visitors have the opportunity to listen to a variety of music and information through a number of local AM and FM radio stations provide specific music selection such as talk radio, as well as easy listening and light favourites to country and rock.

CBC British Columbia is broadcasted out of Vancouver and is picked up by the Okanagan. Locally, CBC broadcasts a three hour morning show from Kelowna and provides a comprehensive range of news, programming and community interest stories through a number of radio channels included in the listing below.

Station	Area Range
Radiowest.ca	Okanagan Radio Stations
CBC FM 93.7	Okanagan Valley
CKOR – AM 800	South Okanagan
CJMG – FM 97.1	South Okanagan
CIGV – FM 100.7	Entire area north to Sicamous
CILK – 101.5	Kelowna
CKOV 63	Kelowna
CHSU 99.9 Sun FM	Kelowna
CBC 88.9 FM	Okanagan Valley
1240 AM	Osoyoos
1450 AM	Summerland
CKPL 99.1 (CBC Radio 2)	Peachland
CBU-FM3 89.7 (CBC Radio 2)	Kelowna
1150 AM CKFR	Kelowna
CBUF-2- 90.5 (CBC French)	Kelowna
CKOV B 103 FM	Kelowna
CKLZ - Power 104	Kelowna
KISS 107.5 FM	Vernon
105.7 Sun FM	Vernon

5.5.6 Television

In the Okanagan, there are two major broadcasting companies that provide local channels reaching throughout the Okanagan Valley and British Columbia.

Canwest Global is one of Canada’s largest media companies and brings the [Okanagan’s Very Own CHBC](#) to the Valley. This regional television station originated in Kelowna in 1957 broadcasting to 500 homes that grew to 10,000 by the end of the year. CHBC, now Global Okanagan, has since grown to an estimated viewing audience of a quarter of a million viewers.

Additional television providers for the Valley include [Bell TV Canada](#) and [Telus TV](#) that bring regular Canadian and American channels, pay-per-view and specialty channels. [Shaw Communications Inc](#) provides service to Okanagan communities through a local community programming channels.

6.0 Life in the Okanagan Valley

6.1 Education

The education system of the Okanagan Valley is subject to the British Columbia and Canadian School system standards. The school system is divided into elementary (primary school), followed by secondary (high school) and post-secondary (university, college) education. Primary and secondary education are often combined and referred to as K-12 – kindergarten to grade twelve. The curriculum is a provincial responsibility (BC Ministry of Education) with School Districts and Boards of Trustees administering the educational programs.

In the Okanagan Valley, there is a range of choices available for K-12 students including:

- Community and Traditional Schools
- Aboriginal Education Program
- French Immersion
- Private Schools
- Religious Schools
- Homeschooling
- Full day Kindergarten
- Montessori Program
- Career/Life Program
- High Performers' Program
- Pre- School Program
- Distributed Learning Program
- International Student Program
- Special Needs Education

There are four school districts through the Okanagan Valley serving the communities within each region, as follows:

North: Vernon School District # 22 and
North Okanagan Shuswap School District # 83*

Central: Central Okanagan School District # 23

South: Okanagan Similkameen School District # 53

Note: School District #83 includes communities outside of the Okanagan Valley resulting in a higher student head count for this region.

6.2 Student Headcount – Kindergarten to Grade 12

For the 2008/09 school year, there were 40,803 students in Grades K-12 in the Okanagan Valley. In recent years, the Okanagan has experienced a decreasing enrolment in the educational system which can be attributed to demographic factors such as lower birthrates and lifestyle shifts as is the case with many other areas of Canada.

Okanagan Valley Student Headcount Grades K-12	
Year	Total
2004/05	42,959
2005/06	42,343
2006/07	41,723
2007/08	41,138
2008/09	40,803

6.3 Educational Attainment

In 2006, 29% of the Okanagan labour force, completed high school which is slightly above the Canadian average of 26%. Just under half (49%) did complete a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree program compared to 58% of Canadians.

Okanagan Valley Educational Attainment (2006)			
	Total #	Valley %	Canada %
Total population 15 years and over	266,425	84%	81%
No certificate, diploma or degree	59,070	22%	24%
High school or equivalent	77,865	29%	26%
Post -secondary certificate, diploma or degree	129,500	49%	58%

6.3.1 Post Secondary Education

In the Okanagan Valley, there is a full university, a college with multiple campuses and a number of private sector educational opportunities providing a myriad of educational options.

University of BC - Okanagan: The University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus (UBC-O) campus is located in Kelowna, BC and opened in 2005. UBC-O offers a growing base of academic and post graduate programs in seven distinct faculties including education, management, creative and critical studies, arts and sciences, applied sciences, health and social development and masters and doctoral graduate studies programs.

Okanagan College: Okanagan College (OC) is a comprehensive post secondary institution with roots in the Valley going back over 45 years. OC offers a wide variety of career, degree programming, continuing education, , developmental, trades and technologies, university transfer and vocational programs. Okanagan College has four campuses located in Penticton, Kelowna, Vernon and Salmon Arm and education centres in Summerland, Oliver, Armstrong and Revelstoke. OC is home to the Okanagan School of Business and is also the largest college in BC outside of the lower mainland and Victoria.

Speciality Institutions

Centre for Arts and Technology - Okanagan: Located in Kelowna, the Centre for Arts and Technology delivers accredited certificate and diploma programs for specific and targeted arts and technology, digital entertainment and information technology careers. The campus provides 20,000 square feet of production and education space including two state-of-the-art digital recording studios with mix-to-picture surrounding sound capability, a film soundstage, extensive digital video, motion graphics, visual effects labs, synthesizers, digital music and digital audio workstations, high end 3D animation workstations, green screen compositing and several other production facilities.

Okanagan Valley College of Massage Therapy Ltd. - The Okanagan Valley College of Massage Therapy located in Vernon, offers programs that are specially designed to prepare students to successfully meet the requirements set by the College of Massage Therapists of BC. As well, the educational institution has a large massage and hydrotherapy clinic, which allows the students to gain practical experience as an integral part of their education. Programs from this college can be applied to a Bachelor of Health Science from Thompson River University in Kamloops, BC.

In addition to the above, there are numerous private career colleges, institutes and education providers located throughout the Okanagan Valley offering certificate and diploma programs in many fields such as, cosmetology, service, applied arts, information technology, business, fine arts, health and human services and trades.

6.4 Health Services

Health care in Canada has long been a source of national pride. Known as ‘medicare’, the system is publicly funded, providing universal coverage and care that is mostly free at the point of use.

British Columbia’s Ministry of Health is responsible for BC’s health care system. Health services are available to all British Columbians and Canadian citizens visiting BC via a health card issued in each province. Virtually all essential basic care is covered. Services not covered are generally those considered not to be medically necessary.

In the Okanagan Valley, health care services are managed and delivered by the Interior Health Authority (IHA) which is one of five health authorities in the province of BC. Interior Health serves a large geographic area covering 215,000 square kilometres and includes Okanagan Valley cities such as Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon, and a multitude of rural and remote communities.

6.4.1 Hospitals

There are four primary hospitals in the Valley offering a variety of primary and secondary care procedures. Currently the Kelowna and Vernon hospitals are expanding to increase care available to the area residents. Throughout the Valley, residents have access to extensive medical and surgical care, emergency and diagnostic services.

City	Hospital	Type	Services
Kelowna	<u>Kelowna General</u> Major expansion began: Nov 2009	Tertiary Referral	Extensive Medical and Surgical Ambulatory Care Outpatient Clinics Diagnostic Paramedical
Oliver	<u>South Okanagan General Hospital</u>	Community	Laboratory and Radiology Emergency Care Acute care
Penticton	<u>Penticton Regional Hospital</u>	Regional	Acute Services Ambulatory Care Outpatient Clinics Diagnostic Paramedical
Vernon	<u>Vernon Jubilee Hospital</u> Major expansion began: Nov 2009	Regional	Acute/Emergency Care Medical /Surgery Maternity/Pediatrics Psychiatric Care

6.4.2 Primary Health Care Centres in the Okanagan

Primary health care centres offer a range of programs and services at a single site. There are two health care centres that provide health services staffed by a team of physicians, nurses, program support and pharmacists that reflect the unique needs of the community. These care centres include the Kelowna Outreach Urban Health Centre and the Vernon Downtown Primary Care Centre.

6.4.3 Public Health Centres

Public Health Centres in the Okanagan Valley focus on health promotion, early intervention, communicable disease prevention and community development. Services include immunizations, home visits, child health clinics, health education, infant and preschool development assessments and community partnership projects. Interior Health's Public Health Centres (Units) are listed below.

Facility Name	Street Address*	Postal Code	Phone
Armstrong (Pleasant Valley Health Centre)	3800 Patten Dr	V0E 1B2	(250) 546-4700
Enderby Community Health Centre	707 3rd Ave	V0E 1V0	(250) 838-2450
Kelowna Central Health Centre	1340 Ellis St	V1Y 1Z8	(250) 868-7700
Kelowna South Health Centre	#218-1626 Richter St.	V1Y 3M3	(250) 868-7707
Rutland Health Centre (Kelowna)	155 Gray Rd	V1Y 1W6	(250) 980-4825
Keremeos Health Centre	700 3rd St	VOX 1N3	(250) 499-3029
Lumby Health Centre	2135 Norris Ave	V0E 2G0	(250) 547-2164
Oliver Health Centre	7139 362nd Ave	V0H 1T0	(250) 498-5080
Osoyoos Health Centre	8701 76th Ave	V0H 1V0	(250) 495-6433
Penticton Health Centre	740 Carmi Ave	V2A 8P9	(250) 770-3434
Princeton Health Centre	98 Ridgewood Dr	VOX 1W0	(250) 295-4442
Summerland Health Centre	12815 Atkinson Rd	V0H 1Z0	(250) 404-8000
Vernon Community Care Health Centre	4505 - 25th St	V1T 4S8	(250) 541-2200
Vernon Health Centre	1440 14th Ave	V1B 2T1	(250) 549-5700
West Kelowna Health Centre	160 - 2300 Carrington Rd	V4T 2N6	(250) 980-5150

6.5 Recreation and Tourism

The Okanagan is home to more than 250 freshwater and glacial lakes. Spanning most of the region is Lake Okanagan covering 130 km (80 miles) from the Vernon to Penticton. Skaha Lake is situated directly south of Okanagan Lake and covers 11.8 km (7.3 miles) meeting the shoreline boundary of the City of Penticton. Directly south of Vernon is Kalamalka Lake, known as the “lake of many colours” which spans 4 km (2 miles). Many parks, beaches, look-outs and provincial campgrounds provide easy access to these lakes for swimming, boating or viewpoints of the Okanagan Valley.

The land is diverse and provides an abundance of scenery, and activities. Known as a four season playground, the Okanagan offers a myriad of recreational opportunities that span a wide spectrum with most the popular being water sports, skiing, hiking, biking and golf. There are also numerous cultural activities, international events, regional festivals and business conventions each year.

Some of the recreational activities that are unique to the Valley include:

Okanagan Wine Festivals – Events showcasing wine and culinary tourism are held throughout the Valley during the summer, spring and fall and winter. These Festivals showcase many of Okanagan wineries and restaurants.

Funtastic – The largest slo-pitch and music festival in North America is held annually each July long weekend in the North Okanagan. With the capacity for 300 slo-pitch teams, 30,000 guests take part in the weekend festival, of which 70% visit from outside the region. Proceeds of the annual event support non-profit sport and recreation improvements.

Greater Vernon Dragon Boat Race & Festival – Noted as one of the best run and most fun dragon boat festivals in Western Canada, this event is held at the picturesque setting of Kalamalka Lake Beach in Coldstream, BC.

Motoplex Speedway and Event Park - A first class motorsport facility is located just outside of Vernon in Spallumcheen, and features a quarter mile, tri-oval track with fully serviced pit area, spectator seating with prime sight lines for events.

Parks Alive – Offered through Festivals Kelowna, Parks Alive coordinates over 60 events and activities from May to September each year throughout many of Kelowna’s parks. Entertainment is family-oriented and suitable for all ages. Activities include performances from local artists to world class “name” acts performing in a variety of venues.

Kelowna Seed Swap – This annual event offers a wide selection of local seeds, plants and garden related items, for trade or purchase, all with a focus on local and organic growing.

Peach Classic Triathlon – The oldest triathlon race in the Okanagan, this race has been named as the 2010 BC Provincial Championships for Olympic distance triathlon events and attracts hundreds of participants from all over Canada.

Penticton Peach Festival – “PeachFest” is a five day festival that is attended by an estimated 70,000 people each year. Originating in 1947, as a celebration for peach harvest in the South Okanagan, PeachFest offers a variety of events including parades, live entertainment, food and merchandise vendors, exhibits and a midway.

Ironman Canada Triathlon - This race is held annually in Penticton and is entered by participants from throughout the world. This triathlon is an official qualifier race for Ironman World Championship.

Vernon Downhill – Vernon is home to the annual Vernon Downhill longboard race and has been for six years. The Vernon DH is the longest running downhill skateboard, streetluge and buttboard event in the Valley. Vernon has become part of the International Gravity Sports Association (IGSA) DH North American Championship Longboard Races world cup circuit.

In addition to the traditional snow and water recreation, the Okanagan Valley offers unique festivals, markets, historic and heritage sites, leisure and sporting activities. The Okanagan Valley is home to Canada’s first commercial grade precious opal stones with the Klinker Deposit first found in the late 1990s. Hikers and mountain bikers can enjoy countless trails and hiking areas that show off some of the most spectacular views of the Valley’s beauty and amenities. The Okanagan is home to Big White, Silver Star, and Apex Mountain, three major ski hill and resorts that provide a variety of skiing and winter activities that attract thousands of international visitors. Sovereign Lake Nordic Centre located in the north has been host to the Haywood NoRam races, an FIS Cross Country Ski World Cup race and the Sparkling Hills Masters World Cup Championships.

The following chart is an extensive listing of the various recreation and tourist activities and amenities in the Okanagan Valley.

Okanagan Valley Recreation Activity Options		
Summer Recreation	Winter Recreation	Year Round
ATV, 4 Wheel Drive, Quad Tours	Curling	Casinos
Baseball	Dog sledding	Event Festivals
Bird Watching	Hockey	Farmers Market
Cycling	Ice Fishing	Fitness & Rec Centres
Fishing	Skating	Healing/Spiritual Sites
Football	Skiing	Walking
Gardens	- Downhill	Hiking
Gem and Rock Hunting	- Cat-skiing	Historic/Heritage Sites
Golfing	- Cross Country	Libraries
Hang Gliding	- Heli-skiing	Museums
Horse Back Riding	Snowboarding	Pilates
Hot air balloon Rides	Snowmobiling	Pool/Billiard Halls
Inline Skating	Snowshoeing	Shopping Centres
Lacrosse	Tobogganing	Yoga
Martial Arts	Tubing	Winery Tours
Race Track/Speedway		
Rock Climbing, Mountaineering		
Running		
Skateboarding		
Soccer		
Tennis		
Walking		
Water activities		
- Swimming, Water slides		
- Dragon Boat Racing		
- Kayaking, Canoeing		
- Water skiing, Wakeboarding		
- Boating, Dinner Cruises, Sailing		
- Parasailing, Windsurfing		
- Scuba Diving, Snorkeling		

6.5.1 Tourism

With tourism being a major economic contributor to the Okanagan, there are a number of tourist websites providing information, events and listings of the Okanagan Valley.

- Hellobc.com – Super Natural British Columbia – Thompson Okanagan Region
- Totabc.org – Thompson Okanagan Tourism
- Travel-british-columbia.com – Travel BC, Thompson Okanagan Regional Information
- Tourismpenticton.com – Penticton & Wine Country
- Tourismkelowna.com – Tourism Kelowna
- Tourismvernon.com – Vernon Tourism

6.5.2 Okanagan Valley Visitor Centres

Okanagan Valley visitor centres are located in each of the major cities to provide helpful tourist information. The centres form a network by sharing and exchanging information and also connect with the small communities which operate seasonal tourist information booths.

Penticton: 553 Railway Street, Penticton, BC V2A 8S3
Telephone: 250-493-4055
Toll Free: 1-800-663-5052
Website: <http://www.tourismpenticton.com>
Email: vistors@penticton.org

Kelowna: 544 Harvey Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6C9
Telephone: 250-861-1515
Toll Free: 1-800-663-4345
Website: www.tourismkelowna.com
Email: info@tourismkelowna.com

Vernon: 701 Hwy 97 South, Vernon, BC V1B 3W4
Telephone: 250-542-1415
Toll Free: 1-800-665-0795
Website: <http://www.tourismvernon.com>
Email: info@vernontourism.com

Each region produces comprehensive tourist guides that provide information about all of the events, amenities and attractions for the area.

6.6 Arts and Culture

The Valley's rich and diverse arts and cultural scene includes an events calendar filled with music, theatre, dance, exhibits, festivals and crafts for every month of the year. The Valley communities have a number of nightclubs, outdoor theatre, events centres, dinner cruises and coffee houses with live entertainment. The Valley hosts several cultural districts including food and wine offerings, studios and galleries showcasing the unique talents and art works.

The Okanagan Valley is home to a vast number of local artists and the [Okanagan Valley Artists and Fine Art Artisans](#) provides a listing of artists and fine artisans throughout the region.

The Okanagan has many festivals, galleries, historical sites and museums that offer a wonderful insight to the past, present and future of the Valley. Below is a listing of many of the Okanagan cultural events and amenities.

Festivals

- Winter/Summer/Fall/Spring Wine Festivals
- Okanagan Fest-of-Ale
- Penticton Peach Festival
- Fat Cat Children’s Festival
- Mardi Gras Street Festival
- Peach Blanket Film Festival
- Roots and Blues Festival
- Mozart Festival
- Vernon Winter Carnival
- Penticton Elvis Festival
- Vernon Cowboy and Wild West Show Festival
- Vernon International Film Festival
- Sunshine Festival (Vernon)
- Okanagan International Film Festival

Art Galleries

- Vernon Art Gallery
- Kelowna Art Gallery
- Penticton Art Gallery
- Art Gallery of South Okanagan
- Grand Gallery
- Tutt Street Gallery
- The Lloyd Gallery
- Turtle Island Gallery
- Gallery Vertigo
- Gallery 421

Science and Nature

- Okanagan Science Centre
- Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory
- Allan Brookes Nature Centre
- Summerland Ornamental Gardens
- Covert Organic Gardens

Museums, Historical Sites, Cultural Sites

- O’Keefe Ranch
- Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre
- Father Pandosy’s Mission
- Kelowna Museum
- BC Wine Museum
- Greater Vernon Museum
- SS Sicamous – Okanagan Inland Marine Heritage Park
- Guishigan Heritage Park
- BC Orchard Industry Museum
- Okanagan Military Museum

Theatre

- Caravan Theatre
- Kelowna Community Theatre
- Sunshine Theatre Company
- Cleland Theatre
- Kelowna’s Actors Studio
- Powerhouse Theatre

Performing Arts

- Ballet Kelowna
- Okanagan Symphony
- Vernon Jazz Club
- Okanagan Jazz and Blues

Agri-tourism

- Davison Orchard and Country Village
- Planet Bee Honey Farm
- Interior Provincial Exhibition
- Summerland Sweets
- The Jammery
- Grist Mill
- Golden Mile Bench

Events Centres

- South Okanagan Events Centre
- Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre
- Prospera Place
- Rotary Centre of the Arts

Particularly known for its wineries, the Valley is BC's largest wine producing area. With many of the Okanagan wineries located in clusters, thousands of visitors explore the Okanagan Wine Region. Many wineries have restaurants on site offering innovative menus with local produce paired with the winery's best vintages.

6.8 Protective Services

6.8.1 Emergency Management

Emergency preparedness involves the commitment of all relevant individuals and organizations at every level – community, provincial, national and international. The communities of the Okanagan Valley have established emergency management programs including integrated emergency preparedness, planning, communications, response and recovery based on proven practices for public safety and security.

Municipal and regional staff along with volunteers, first responders, first nations and non-government agencies plan, train and exercise together to be ready for any emergency or disaster. Each region of the Valley administers its own emergency plan and sets up a local emergency operations centre to support responders if the situation escalates and the response requirements become more complex. Day-to-day, the provincial government is available to respond to calls through an emergency coordination centre that is staffed 24/7.

The 911 emergency telephone line is used for police, fire or ambulance services. The communications centre is located in Kelowna in partnership with the 911/RCMP dispatch team.

6.8.2 Fire Service

Each region of the Valley is fully equipped with staffed and volunteer fire stations. Stations with professional firefighters, trained volunteers and support staff collectively provide emergency service response utilizing the latest technology and mobile equipment. Year round, staff promote public safety and prevention through fire inspections and public education programs contributing to emergency efforts in all areas of the Valley.

6.8.3 Police Service

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provides 24/7 policing services for the Okanagan Valley via detachments in the following cities: Armstrong, Enderby , Kelowna, Lumby, Osoyoos, Penticton and Vernon.

In addition to the members of the RCMP, community policing offices work in partnership with the other agencies to prevent or resolve problems that affect community safety and quality of life. Operational support for the community policing is provided by the Community Operational Support Unit (COSU). The success of community policing can be attributed in a large part to the more than 300 highly skilled and trained community volunteers.

6.8.4 Ambulance Services

Each of the major centres in the Okanagan Valley has ambulance services that service the entire region. Emergency calls to 911 are routed to a dispatch centre which coordinates the movement of all ambulances in the Okanagan.

7.0 For More Information

For more information about the Okanagan Valley, contact the economic development offices below:

City of Vernon Economic Development Office

Location: 3400 30th Street, Vernon BC, V1T 5E6
Telephone: 1-250-550-3249
Website: <http://www.investvernon.ca>
Contact: Kevin Poole, Economic Development Officer

Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission

Location: 1450 KLO Road, Kelowna BC, V1W 3Z4
Telephone: 250-469-6280
Toll Free: 1 877-332-2673
Website: <http://www.investkelowna.com>
Contact: Robert Fine, Economic Development Officer

Summerland Chamber of Economic Development and Tourism

Location: 13211 Henry Avenue, PO Box 159 Summerland BC, V0H 1Z0
Telephone: 250-494-2686
Website: <http://www.summerland.ca/departments/economic/>
Contact: Scott Boswell, Director of Economic Development

Penticton Economic Development

Location: 553 Railway Street, Penticton BC, V2A 8S3
Telephone: 250-493-3323
Website: <http://www.imaginepenticton.ca>
Contact: David Arsenault, Economic Development Officer

Destination Osoyoos

Location: 9912 Hwy 3, Osoyoos BC, V0H 1V0
Telephone: 250-495-5075
Toll Free: 1-888-OSOYOOS (676-9667)
Website: <http://www.destinationosoyoos.com>
Contact: Jo Knight, Executive Director

Okanagan Nation Alliance Economic Development

Location: 3255C Shannon Lake Road, West Kelowna, BC V4T 1V4
Telephone: (250) 707-0095
Website: <http://www.syilx.org/economicdev-bizdev.php>
Contact: Geoff Greenwell, Economic Development Officer