

# ✓ Increasing Access to Financial Services

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“Before immigrating to Canada, I contacted BMO’s Shanghai branch, and was invited to an information seminar where I learned about Canadian banking, real estate and culture. I was also introduced to a customer service manager who served as my advisor. BMO welcomed me. I liked that.”



**Jun Yuan**  
BMO customer

## Priorities

1. **Provide** affordable banking to Canadians of all income levels.
2. **Offer** free banking to qualifying students, youths, young adults and seniors.
3. **Ensure** that all our customers have access to our products and services.
4. **Work** with First Nations peoples to increase access to financial services in Aboriginal communities and grow our On-Reserve Housing Loan and On-Reserve Home Renovation Loan Programs.
5. **Provide** products and services that meet the needs of our customers from diverse communities.

## Meeting the Needs of Our Customers

At BMO, we understand that increasing access to financial services benefits us all. By providing all of our customers – whatever their financial needs and circumstances – with the right products and services to realize their financial goals and dreams, we meet the needs of both individuals and communities. We also serve our company while helping to create the foundation for a robust economy and society.

## Providing Affordable Banking

We believe that all Canadians should have access to a banking plan that’s affordable. For our customers with very straightforward banking needs, we offer our Practical Plan. It offers 10 monthly transactions for a low monthly fee of \$4.00. The fee is waived if a minimum monthly balance of \$1,500 is maintained.

We also offer our Performance Plan, which provides unlimited monthly transactions and is ideal for those customers who perform frequent transactions using more than one account. BMO is the only bank to offer a banking plan that allows customers to access multiple personal accounts under one plan fee.

## Meeting the Needs of Seniors and Youth

Understanding that older and younger Canadians have unique financial needs, we have extended our offer of free banking services to these age groups for the next three years. In 2007, we provided these services to approximately 874,000 customers aged 60 and above and approximately 415,000 students, youths and young adults.

Seniors who take advantage of our Performance Plan can bank without paying a monthly fee as part of our Senior Discount Program – a savings of \$13.95 per month. The plan includes unlimited transactions through any BMO channel.

We continue to be one of the few banks to offer students free banking. With BMO’s Student Discount Program, students have access to our Plus Plan for free – a savings of \$8.50 per month. The plan includes up to 30 transactions each month, cheque return and one Interac® e-mail money transfer. We have extended our offer to include recent graduates, who are entitled to an extra 12 months of free banking with the Plus Plan.



### Savings 101

BMO continues to develop products and services designed to meet the unique financial needs and challenges of Canadian students. We recently introduced the BMO Student Price Card Mosaik MasterCard to help students maximize their use of discounts for savings on clothes, food, entertainment, travel and other services from more than 250 merchants at 10,000 locations across Canada. In addition, the new card can help students establish a strong credit rating, which will be essential for the approval of car loans, business loans and mortgages after graduation.

Last year, we also became the first and only major bank to offer seniors enrolled in our free banking plans one free ABM withdrawal at another financial institution's ABM per month.

### Ensuring Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring that all our customers have access to our products and services. This begins with providing barrier-free access at our branches across the country. Today, 90% of our Canadian branches provide level or ramped entries to accommodate customers with disabilities. Many of our branches also offer wheelchair-height seating arrangements at service counters. As a result of a major upgrade of our ABM network across our 977 branches and off-site locations across Canada, our new ABM platform now offers improved accessibility. The ABMs' height has been lowered and, where possible, they provide front accessibility for wheelchair users.

To assist customers with low vision, our ABMs also have screens with contrasting bright colours to make instructions



### Improved Accessibility

A major upgrade of our ABM network throughout our branches has improved accessibility to wheelchair users with lower machine heights and, where possible, front accessibility.

easier to read, pulsing light bars that direct users to the card slot and envelope depository, and large-character keypads. In addition, BMO Bank of Montreal offers fully personalized large-print cheques with perforated guidelines as well as statements in braille.

Through BMO's Employee Affinity group, Waves, for our deaf, deafened and hard of hearing colleagues, we receive counsel on best practices for serving members of their community. Thanks to their recommendations, our BMO Bank of Montreal Direct Banking Client Service Centre is equipped with a teletypewriter (TTY/TTD) which allows our clients who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing to have all of their banking needs met through one single point of contact.

### A Matter of Diversity

In Canada, between 19% and 23% of the population will consist of visible minorities by 2017. In Toronto and Vancouver, that number will be closer to 50%. Meanwhile, in the United States, minorities make up one-third of the population and will make up almost one-half by 2050. Clearly, to achieve our business growth strategy, we must focus our efforts on ensuring that our products and services are accessible in an increasingly diverse marketplace. We want to ensure that we understand and serve all of our customers regardless of gender, race, age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

### Banking for Newcomers to Canada

At BMO, meeting the needs of Canadians of many origins continues to be a business priority. Helping newcomers make a successful transition to their new homeland is the best way to serve new immigrants as well as our business and our country.



In 2007, we completed the integration of bcpcbank Canada (pictured prior to conversion). With a network of eight branches in Toronto, Brampton, Hamilton and Mississauga and a customer base of 28,000,

this community bank has an established reputation for being the first choice for financial services amongst the Greater Toronto Area's sizable Portuguese-Canadian community. To mark the occasion, we also launched the Luso Card, a BMO Mosaik MasterCard designed specifically for the Portuguese-Canadian community.

The conversion provides former bcpcbank Canada customers with access to BMO products and services at all branch locations across Canada. It also provides BMO with the opportunity to support the greater Portuguese-Canadian community through maintaining involvement in local initiatives such as the Portugal Day Parade, Casa dos Açores and the Portuguese Disabled Persons Building Fund.

BMO has also focused on meeting the needs of newcomers to Canada from Asia. We were one of the first Canadian banks to provide a Chinese-language option on our ABMs and for telephone banking, and to offer a Chinese-language web site. More recently, we added a simplified Chinese-character option on our web site to assist recent arrivals from mainland China. BMO's online banking web site also provides Chinese, Korean and Punjabi glossaries.

We have introduced a "Newcomers to Canada" web page at [www.bmo.com](http://www.bmo.com) that lists banking services of interest to new residents of our country. For the convenience of communities that require language assistance, we display "Multi-language spoken in the branch" signage. And we continue to enhance our Newcomers credit policies to enable more newcomers to qualify for loans and mortgages.

### Aboriginal Banking

At BMO, we have long had an interest in developing the financial capability of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Since the creation of BMO Bank of Montreal's Aboriginal Banking Unit in 1992, we have opened 11 full-service branches, three community banking outlets and one instore branch within

Aboriginal communities. The total amount of business we are doing with Aboriginal people, businesses and communities has grown from \$100,000 in 1992 to more than \$1 billion. Working with Aboriginal communities, we are committed to designing and delivering a meaningful and comprehensive range of financial products and services. Among these is BMO Bank of Montreal's On-Reserve Housing Loan Program, an innovative alternative for First Nations to help provide affordable housing for their members without government guarantees. In 2007, 12 new programs were launched within First Nations communities, offering qualified members the opportunity to own their own homes through access to housing loans for the construction or purchase of owner-occupied, single-family dwellings, or to finance renovations to existing homes. To date, 33 First Nations have implemented an on-reserve housing loan program, with BMO providing more than \$70 million in loans.

BMO also offers an On-Reserve Home Renovation Loan Program, which provides personal loans of up to \$25,000 for minor upgrades to existing housing. Currently the program operates in 10 communities with more than \$2.5 million authorized for personal loans.

In February 2007, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business honoured BMO with a gold-level Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) award for our efforts to build a mutually beneficial, sustainable relationship with Aboriginal communities, businesses and individuals. BMO has been working for more than a decade to become an employer of choice and business partner for Aboriginal individuals and communities. The PAR recognition is not only an honour but also an opportunity to promote further dialogue while raising awareness of the growing contribution of Aboriginal businesses to the Canadian economy.

“ BMO is providing the tools that give First Nations the ability to meet our economic development goals.”

**Brian Titus**  
Chief Financial Officer  
Osoyoos Indian Band  
Development Corporation  
British Columbia



For more information:  
[www.bmo.com/corporateresponsibility](http://www.bmo.com/corporateresponsibility)