

Olivier Berger is a trained computer programmer from the south of France. He moved to the Yukon in 2017.  
Photo: Emilie Thibeault-Maloney

# Smooth sailing: Olivier Berger's Integration Experience in the Yukon

Originally from the south of France, Olivier Berger moved to the Yukon about a year ago. The 33-year-old former IT specialist is enjoying his new role as a school bus driver. An interview with a Francophone immigrant about his relatively problem-free integration experience.

After a month-long visit with friends who had immigrated to Quebec in 2013, Olivier decided to apply to immigrate himself. Although his original idea was to move to Quebec like his friends, after two years of efforts, a number of factors made him broaden his horizons and choose a different part of Canada.

"I focused on the provinces where it was easier to stay. In Newfoundland, Manitoba and the Yukon, it's easier," he explains.

So he spent the summer of 2017 in Winnipeg volunteering at a youth hostel. Although Olivier enjoyed his experience in that city, with its population of 700,000, it was still too busy for him. "It was nice, but it wasn't my cup of tea," he says.

Then he remembered a talk about the Yukon that he'd found interesting. He had attended it in France at the Destination Canada job fair. "In France, when people think about Canada, Quebec is what usually comes to mind. At Destination Canada, I discovered that it's a big country," he explains.

So he packed his bags and headed for Whitehorse.

## The Yukon: a Good Fit

Olivier is solitary by nature and loves the Yukon, where he believes the quality of life is better.

"In France I was out of work. And there are a lot of people... it's not that I don't like people, but I prefer when there aren't so many," he admits with a chuckle.

In 2016, while researching the different provinces and territories in Canada, he found a job posting on [yuwin.ca](http://yuwin.ca) for a school bus driver. "I filed it in the back of my mind, but by the time I got here, the posting was gone," he says.

Since he had some savings, he wasn't in a hurry to find work. "First I wanted to find somewhere to live and get myself a set of wheels, and then I'd find a job." Once he'd found housing and a vehicle, the job posting that had interested him earlier popped up again. With a background in IT, Olivier had no experience driving a bus. "I showed up and said, 'Hello, I've never driven anything bigger than my 4x4, and never worked with kids,' but they told me, 'We'll give you a try,'" he says. The training was provided by the employer.

Olivier is happy with his current job, which could hardly be more different from anything he's ever done before. "I was looking for a place where I would feel good, where I'd have work that suits me. My job is half-time and I make enough to pay my rent. That's the sort of pace of life I was looking for. As long as I have a place to sleep, enough to eat and good people around me, it's great. I'm happy!" he assured me.

All in all, Olivier's journey turned out to be quite simple. According to him, that was mainly because of his professional skills and strong preparation. "It didn't happen over night, but it was easy. I had everything I needed for Express Entry, so that made the process easier. Also, I did a lot of research beforehand," he explains.

As he described how he immediately liked the first suite he looked at, I couldn't help but think that his easygoing, optimistic nature must have played a part in the success of his integration.