

Licensed Practical Nurses: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



Contents

1. LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES: ALTERNATIVE CAREERS	2
2. EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK	7
3. RETRAINING	9
4. SEARCHING FOR JOBS	9
5. VOLUNTEERING IN THE FIELD	10
6. HELPFUL RESOURCES	11

1. Licensed Practical Nurses: Alternative Careers

In BC, licensed practical nurses work as frontline health care professionals caring for a wide range of clients at all stages of life. You work in collaboration with other members of the health care team.

You may find that your international training and experience as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) are not immediately accepted in BC. The skills you have acquired as an LPN (patient care, ability to work well with others, good communication skills, compassion and understanding) can be used in these alternative careers:

- **Health Care Assistant (HCA)**
- **Home Support Worker**
- **Mental Health and Addictions Worker**
- **Hospital Service Worker**

Health Care Assistant (HCA) [NOC 2021: 33102 / NOC 2016: 3413]

You assist people, especially older adults, who require basic nursing care. You also help to promote and maintain clients' physical, emotional, and social well-being. HCAs work within a health care team in care facilities or independently within the community. HCAs who work in hospitals and facilities are generally known as care aides.

Also look for these job titles:

- Care aide
- Patient service associate
- Orderly
- Nurse aide

Duties:

- Assist patients with the tasks of daily living such as bathing and feeding
- Administer medications and take basic health measurements and recording
- Document patient care and progress
- Provide immediate first aid assistance in the event of an emergency
- Help facilitate rehabilitation and recreational activities

Requirements:

To be certified as an HCA, care aides must:

- Undergo a criminal record check and a tuberculosis screening
- Complete a recognized six- to nine-month HCA program
- Complete CPR, FOODSAFE and first-aid certification
- Register with the B.C. Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry

Additional training on topics such as mental health first-aid or medication management may also be required.

Skills:

- Good understanding of the conditions that lead to disability
- Demonstrate sensitivity and respect for patients
- Communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to work as a member of a team
- Physical ability to carry out the duties of the position
- Ability to organize work and manage time
- Ability to safely operate lifts and other equipment

Wages:

- Median hourly wage: \$24.00

Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/nurse-aides-orderlies-and-patient-service-associates>

Home Support Worker [NOC 2021: 44101 & 65310 / NOC 2016: 4412]

In BC, home support workers are generally known as community health workers. They are health care assistants (HCAs) who primarily assist clients in their homes. There, they provide personal care for seniors, people with disabilities, and people recovering from illness or accident.

Also look for these job titles:

- Community health worker
- Attendant, home care
- Caregiver (live-in)
- Companion
- Home support attendant
- Family caregiver/worker

Duties:

- Provide care and company to people facing health issues
- Help clients with daily personal care, like bathing, dressing and grooming
- Keep track of medications
- Help clients with movement and transport
- Report changes in clients' behaviour and condition
- Able to work independently, under the direction of a supervisor or nurse

Requirements:

Most community health worker jobs require certification as a health care assistant (HCA).

To be certified as an HCA, community health workers must:

- Undergo a criminal record check and a tuberculosis screening
- Complete a recognized six- to nine-month HCA program
- Complete CPR, FOODSAFE and first-aid certification
- Register with the B.C. Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry
- Have a valid B.C. driver's licence and a reliable car

Skills:

- Physical stamina
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Sensitivity and patience
- Excellent observational skills
- Ability to adapt to constantly changing environments
- Carefully follow direction, policy and procedure

Wages:

- Median hourly wage \$21.00

Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/home-support-workers-housekeepers-and-related-occupations>

Mental Health and Addictions Worker

You provide care and support to patients with mental or emotional difficulties, including those with substance use issues. You may work in a health facility or out in the community.

Also look for these job titles:

- Psychiatric aide
- Mental health aide
- Substance use worker
- Mental health support worker

Duties:

- Assist with eating and personal hygiene
- Socialize with patients
- Plan and supervise recreational activities
- Help patients attend appointments and remember to take medications
- Report medical or behavioural changes to nurses, doctors, or psychologists

Requirements:

There is no specific educational requirement for this occupation, however employers may require a postsecondary certificate in mental health work, addictions counselling, or a related field. For some positions, certification as a health care assistant (HCA) and registration with the B.C. Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry may even be required.

Skills:

- Calm, patient, and compassionate
- Organized and able to follow instructions
- Dependable and able to work under limited supervision

Wages:

- Between minimum wage and \$26/hour

Source: Career Cruising <https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising> (Psychiatric Aide)

Hospital Service Worker

You help keep hospitals running by preparing meals, ordering supplies, moving patients, and doing other tasks as necessary.

Also look for these job titles:

- Dietary aide
- Linen attendant
- Lab aide
- Porter

Duties:

- Serve meals
- Wash and iron sheets and clothing
- Lift patients in and out of wheelchairs
- Transport patients around hospitals
- Order and distribute supplies

Requirements:

- High school diploma
- On the job training

Skills:

- Energetic and in good physical condition
- Responsible, reliable, able to follow instructions
- Work well independently and as part of a team

Wages:

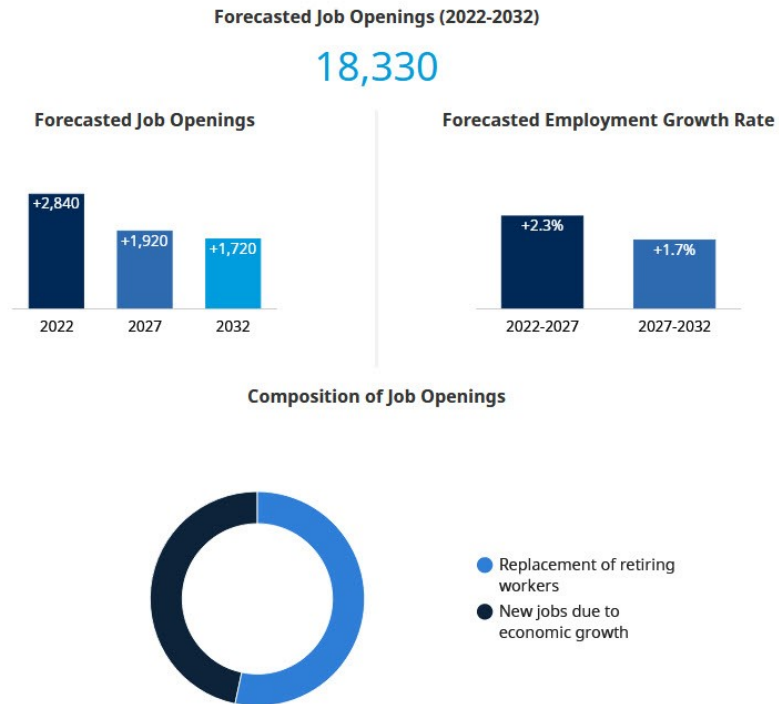
- Between minimum wage and \$25/hour

Source: Career Cruising <https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising> (Hospital Service Worker)

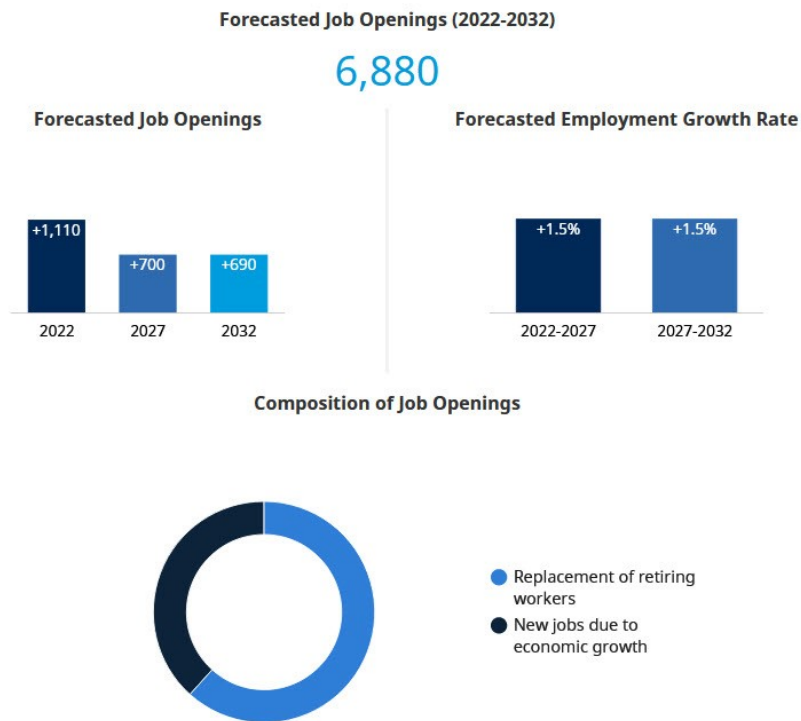
2. Employment Outlook

A growing and ageing population will require more health services, which will result in an increased demand for health care support workers. Employment opportunities will be high throughout the province, especially in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and privately run institutions. Strong demand for resident care aides is contributing to higher salaries and increased opportunities to work in diverse environments.

Health Care Assistant (HCA)



Home Support Worker



Source: WorkBC

3. Retraining

- **Recognized BC Health Care Assistant Programs**

List of all certified HCA education programs in the province of BC:

<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/about-the-registry/list-of-hca-programs-in-bc>

- **Health Career Access Program (HCAP)**

This free program provides a path for applicants with little to no experience in the health care sector to get hired and receive paid training as part of their employment. There are two HCAP pathways: you can train as a **health care assistant** or become a **mental health and addictions worker**.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/job-seekers-employees/find-a-job/health-care>

- **FAST Seniors Care**

This free program assists newcomers with prior related experience who are seeking to fast-track their careers in the seniors' care sector.

<https://www.ltcbc.ca/about>

- **EducationPlannerBC**

Search for additional programs such as “mental health worker” or “unit clerk”:

<https://www.educationplannerbc.ca/search>

4. Searching for Jobs

Publically funded job postings:

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**

<https://www.vch.ca/en/careers>

- **Fraser Health Authority**

<https://careers.fraserhealth.ca>

- **Island Health Authority**

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>

- **Interior Health Authority**
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers>
- **Northern Health Authority**
<https://careers.northernhealth.ca>
- **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)**
<http://www.phsa.ca/careers>
- **Providence Health Care**
<https://careers.providencehealthcare.org/jobs>
- **First Nations Health Authority**
<https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>

Privately funded job postings:

- **BC Seniors Living Association**
<https://www.bcsla.ca/senior-housing-career-opportunities>
- **BC Care Providers Association**
<https://bccare.ca/jobs>
- **Indeed.ca**
<https://www.indeed.ca>

5. Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering in health care facilities can help you to explore a new career and learn more about the health care system in BC. You will meet new people and build a network of contacts that can lead to information on job openings and inside connections with potential employers.

The following organizations accept volunteers in hospitals, residential care facilities, palliative care and other community settings.

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**
<https://www.vch.ca/en/about-us/get-involved/volunteer>
- **Fraser Health Authority**
<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/volunteer-opportunities>

- **Providence Health Care**
<https://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>
- **Canadian Mental Health Association**
<https://bc.cmha.ca/get-involved/volunteer>
- **Volunteer BC**
<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca>
- **Long Term Care and Assisted Living Directory**
Other volunteer opportunities may be available at individual care facilities across BC:
<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/quickfacts/location>

6. Helpful Resources

- **Health Career Access Program (HCAP)**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/job-seekers-employees/find-a-job/health-care>
- **Choose2Care**
<https://www.choose2care.ca>
- **BC Care Providers Association**
<https://bccare.ca>
- **BC Health Careers**
<https://www.bchealthcareers.ca>
- **FAST Seniors Care**
<https://www.ltcbc.ca/about>
- **Canadian Support Workers Association**
<https://canadianswassociation.com>
- **Canadian Home Care Association**
<https://cdnhomecare.ca>
- **BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry**
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca>
- **Personal Support Worker Canada**
<https://www.personalsupportworker.com> (for samples of cover letters and resumes)

Click on 'Job Search Resources' at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic> for help with:

- Writing resumes & cover letters
- Getting Canadian work experience
- Networking for employment
- Using online social networks
- Navigating a new workplace culture
- And much more

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library,
Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>.