

Social Workers: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Social Workers: Alternative Careers

In BC, social workers provide individuals and families with the resources and support they need to address personal and social issues.

You may find that your international training and experience as a social worker are not immediately accepted in B.C. The skills you have acquired as a social worker (empathy, compassion, understanding, ability to work in difficult situations, good communication skills,) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Social & Community Service Worker
- Career Counsellor
- Therapists in Counselling & Related Therapies [Family, Marriage, Addictions, etc]
- Settlement Worker
- Program Coordinator
- Adoption Counsellor

Alternative Careers:

Social & Community Service Worker [NOC 2021: 42201]

Also look for these job titles: addictions worker, drop-in centre worker, family service worker, group home worker, life skills coach, mental health worker, native outreach worker, women's centre coordinator, youth worker

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You deliver a variety of social assistance programs and community and health services. You are typically a frontline worker who assists clients to better manage their personal and social problems.

Duties include:

- interview clients to obtain case history and background information
- help clients to determine options and develop plans of action while providing appropriate support and assistance
- help clients locate community resources including legal, medical and financial assistance, housing, employment, transportation, day-care and other referral services
- provide crisis intervention and emergency shelter services
- refer clients to other social services and maintain contact with other social service agencies and health-care providers

Requirements:

- completion of a one-, two- or four-year college or university program in social work, child and youth care, counselling or other social science or health-related discipline is usually required
- experience in the social services field is helpful; in some cases, experience may replace formal education requirements

Skills:

- speak, write and read English
- know about the needs and issues of different social groups, such as newcomers, the elderly, women, **or** know about a particular issue such as sexual assault or addiction
- be culturally sensitive and communicate well with people from different backgrounds
- work well with other people and on your own
- prepare notes, case documents and reports

Wages: median hourly wage: \$25.00

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/social-and-community-service-workers>

Career Counsellors [NOC 2021: 41321]

Also look for these job titles: career coach, employment counsellor, career development practitioner, occupational counsellor, outplacement counsellor

You give information and advice to clients about employment search, career planning, human resource and employment issues.

Duties include:

- interview clients in order to assess their interests, skills, and abilities
- coach clients on interview techniques, resume writing, and networking
- identify barriers to work and help clients with matters such as job readiness skills or career changes
- give and interpret tests designed to determine the interests, aptitudes and abilities of clients
- research labour market trends and occupations
- advise employers on staffing and other employment-related issues

Requirements:

- usually four-year college or university program
- certification as a certified career development practitioner (CCDP) through the BC Career Development Association may be required (<https://www.bccda.org/certification>)

Skills:

- an interest in human behaviour and development
- knowledgeable about careers and the labour market
- communication skills
- patience and understanding

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$27.00

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/career-development-practitioners-and-career-counsellors-except-education>

Therapists in Counselling & Related Specialized Therapies [NOC 2021: 41301]

Also look for these job titles: child & youth counsellor, family therapist, addictions counsellor, bereavement counsellor, marriage counsellor, couples counsellor

You help individuals, families and groups understand and overcome their personal problems and reach their goals. Counsellors may specialize in areas including rehabilitation, addiction, marriage and family therapy, behavioural disorders or trauma.

Duties include:

- interview clients, prepare case histories and assess problems
- counsel clients, provide therapy and mediation services, facilitate group sessions
- liaise with community agencies or partners, and identify additional services and provide referrals
- prepare assessment, progress, follow-up and court reports

Requirements:

- a master's degree in the field of counselling, mental health or a related social service discipline is usually required
- membership with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors is required to use the title "Registered Clinical Counsellor": <https://bcacc.ca/>
- registration with the Canadian Association for Couple and Family Therapy is required to use the title "Registered Marriage & Family Therapist": <https://camft.ca/membership-explained-page#RMFT>

Skills:

- patient
- understanding and empathetic
- non-judgemental

- excellent communication and listening skills

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$33.50

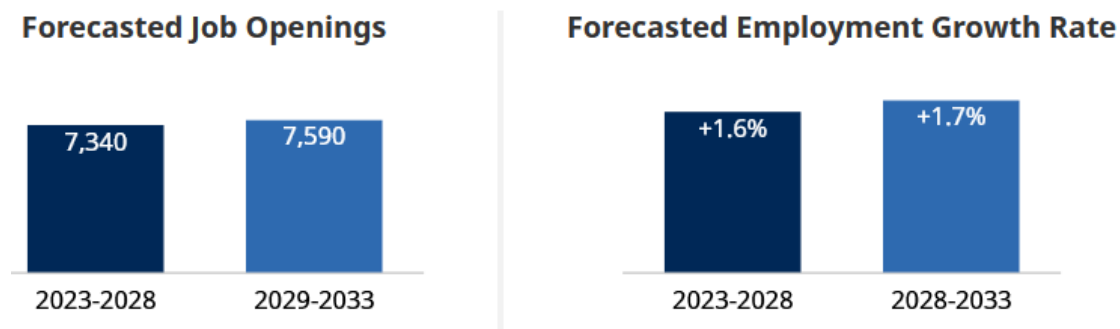
Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/therapists-counselling-and-related-specialized-therapies>

2. Employment Outlook

The future job outlook is good. New jobs will be created to address the needs of the growing population of elderly persons, persons with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, homeless persons and those with substance abuse problems.

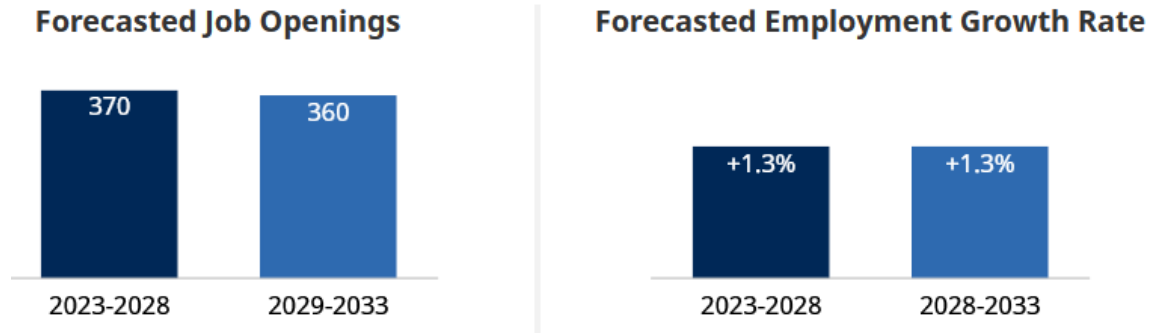
Growth is also expected in the area of First Nations outreach and community development, especially for youth and in rehabilitation.

Social & Community Services Worker – Job Openings Outlook in BC 2023-2033



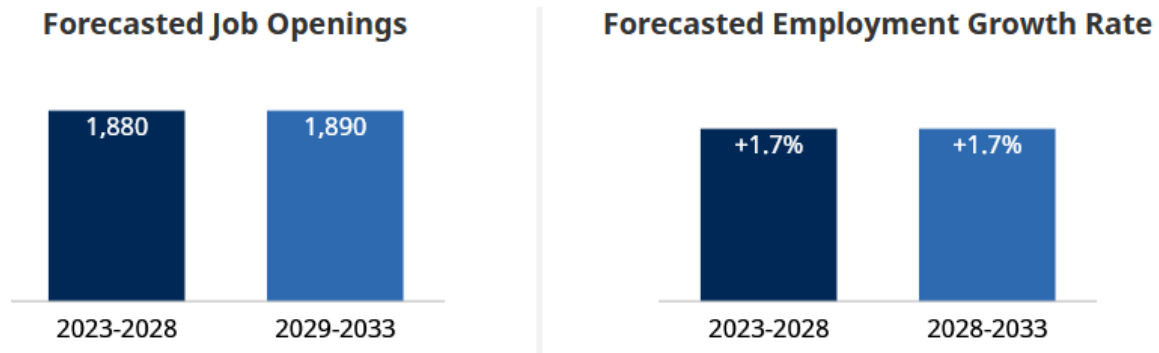
Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/social-and-community-service-workers>

Career Counsellors - Job Openings Outlook in BC 2023-2033



Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/career-development-practitioners-and-career-counsellors-except-education>

Therapists in Counselling & Related Therapies Job Openings Outlook in BC 2023-2033



Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/therapists-counselling-and-related-specialized-therapies>

3. Retraining

You may want to consider upgrading your skills to increase your employment options in this field. The following courses may improve your current skills:

Simon Fraser University: *Career Development Practitioner Certificate:*

- Full-time; online course is completed in 14 weeks. You will build skills for employment counselling and career coaching jobs

<https://www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/programs/career-development-practitioner-certificate.html>

Douglas College: *Career Development Practice Programs*

- Part-time, 9 month certificate program; develop skills to work in the career, employment or vocational rehabilitation fields

<https://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/continuing-education/child-family-community/career-development-0>

University of the Fraser Valley: *Community Support Worker Certificate*

- 1 year program, available both part-time and full-time

<https://www.ufv.ca/programs/community-support-worker-certificate/>

Vancouver Community College: *Counselling Skills Foundations – Mental Health & Addictions Certificate*

- 1-3 year program, available both part-time and full-time

<https://continuingstudies.vcc.ca/public/category/courseCategoryCertificateProfile.do?method=load&certificateId=1023175&selectedProgramAreaId=1020357&selectedProgramStreamId>

4. Searching for Jobs

BC Government Job Postings

<https://bcpublicservice.hua.hrsmart.com/hr/ats/JobSearch/index>

B.C. Regional Health Authorities

Regional services including publicly funded hospitals and residential care facilities

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities> (select link for each region and then go to 'Careers')

B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority Job Postings

Lists jobs available in specialty institutions such as BC Transplant, Women's Hospital, BC Children's Hospital

<https://jobs.phsa.ca/>

First Nations Health Authority

<https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>

Community Social Services Employers' Association of BC

<https://www.cssea.bc.ca/> (click on 'Careers')

Greater Vancouver Community Services Society: Community Living Workers

<https://www.gvcss.bc.ca/communitylivingjobs.htm>

Indeed.ca

<https://ca.indeed.com/>

5. Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering can help you to explore a new career and learn more about the social services 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 :

Canadian Red Cross

<https://www.redcross.ca/volunteer>

Crisis Centre BC

<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/volunteer/>

Elizabeth Fry Society

<https://efry.com/work-with-us/volunteer/>

Family Services of Greater Vancouver

<https://fsgv.ca/volunteer/>

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/en/get-involved>

Inclusion BC

<https://inclusionbc.org/get-involved/volunteer/>

GoVolunteer

<https://govolunteer.ca/>

6. Helpful Resources

Canadian Professional Counsellors Association

<https://thecpca.ca/>

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Associations

<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/>

Canadian Council for Career Development

<https://3cd-canada.square.site/>

BC Career Development Association

<https://www.bccda.org/>

BC Association of Social Workers

<https://www.bcasw.org/>

Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division

<https://bc.cmha.ca/>

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

- resumes & cover letters
- getting Canadian work experience
- networking for employment
- online social networks
- Canadian workplace culture

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>.