

# Finding Apprenticeship Opportunities

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## **1. What's an Apprenticeship?**

An apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and classroom learning that leads to trade certification. As an apprentice you work for an employer while learning your trade. Once you complete your apprenticeship and receive your "ticket", you are qualified to work in a skilled trade.

### *Benefits*

- *You gain valuable work experience*
- *You learn the skills you need by actually practicing them in a work setting*
- *You get paid while you're doing it*
- *You complete the program as a certified tradesperson – assuming you pass your certification exam*

You spend about 20% of your time in school and the other 80% of your time on the job, getting paid, and being mentored by a certified tradesperson.

Apprenticeships are open to everyone - women, men, and youth. Most apprenticeships take four years to complete, depending on the trade.

### Sources:

- About the Trades. Skilled TradesBC  
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/about-the-trades>
- BuildForce Canada  
<https://www.buildforce.ca/en/how-to-get-started/>

## ***What Trades Qualify for Apprenticeships?***

There are over 100 apprenticeship trade programs in British Columbia including carpenters, electricians, plumbers and welders, as well as bakers, cooks, hairdressers, etc.

For a complete list of trades see Skilled TradesBC:

- **Discover the Right Trade for You. Skilled TradesBC**  
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/find-your-trade>

*For more information about apprenticeships see:*

- **Apprenticeship. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum**  
<https://caf-fca.org/apprenticeship/for-apprentices/>
- **About the Trades. Skilled TradesBC**  
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/about-the-trades>
- **Trades Training BC**  
<https://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/tradeprograms>
- **What's an Apprenticeship? Careers in Trades**  
<https://careersintrades.ca/whats-an-apprenticeship/>

## **2. Finding an Employer**

Finding an employer is the first and often most difficult step in an apprenticeship.

To become an apprentice it is up to you to find an employer or sponsor willing to train you. You and the sponsor then register the apprenticeship with Skilled TradesBC.

*You look for a sponsor the same way you would look for any other type of employment.*

*You can do this by:*

- *applying directly to companies and job ads*
- *networking*
- *participating in employment programs*

### **Online Job Postings**

Employment can be found through online job sites. Try searching these sites using the title of job you are interested in. Some sites also specify apprenticeship opportunities.

A few sites to try:

- **Apprenticeship Job Match**

<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/find-your-trade>

<https://www.workbc.ca/explore-training-and-education/trades-training>

Job seekers can identify themselves as apprentices, search to find jobs as apprentices, and receive job alerts

- **Indeed.com – Apprenticeship Jobs**

<https://ca.indeed.com/Apprenticeships-jobs-in-British-Columbia>

- **Neuvoo**

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

## **Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers**

Many job vacancies are not advertised. You can use company directories to produce lists of employers who employ apprentices in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

A few directories to look at:

- **BC Regional Construction Associations**  
<https://bccassn.com/about-bcca/regional-associations/>  
See member directory for each association
- **BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association Members List**  
<https://www.roadbuilders.bc.ca/members/>
- **BC Electrical Association Member Directory**  
<https://www.bcea.bc.ca/membership>
- **Homebuilders Association Vancouver HAVAN – find a professional**  
<https://members.havan.ca/directory>
- **Tourism Companies. Go2HR**  
<https://www.go2hr.ca/company-directory>

## **Networking**

Talking with people who are already employed in your trade is a good source of information. You may find employers through family and friends.

Another good place to meet potential employers is through organizations such as trade unions and business associations. You can attend professional development seminars, tradeshow and information events.

To find contact information for local **business associations** try:

- **Canadian Construction Association – Partnership Directory**  
<https://www.cca-acc.com/membership/partner-association-directory/>

- **Associations Canada**

Available at VPL Central Branch, 060 A84

Contact information for local **trade unions**:

- **BC Building Trades Directory – Affiliate Unions**

<https://bcbuildingtrades.org/about/affiliate-unions/>

<https://bcbuildingtrades.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Directory-2024-Final.pdf>

- **BC Federation of Labour – Member Unions**

<https://bcfed.ca/unions/members>

### ***Job Clubs & Employment Programs***

Job clubs are a great way to network and can be very effective in your job search. There are also special employment programs for people interested in trades and apprenticeships.

Job search and related programs can be found at:

- **WorkBC Labour Market Programs**

<https://www.workbc.ca/research-labour-market/bcs-labour-market-outlook-2023-edition>

- **STEP Skilled Trade Employment Program**

<https://stepbc.ca/>

*For more advice on finding an employer see:*

- **Career in Trades – Finding an Employer**

<https://careersintrades.ca/resources/finding-an-employer/>

- **Networking for Employment**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>

### 3. Protect Yourself

*In British Columbia it is not legal for employers to offer unpaid apprenticeship positions. As an apprentice you are being trained while working for an employer and must be paid **at least the minimum wage**.*

More information about BC's labour laws can be found at:

- **WorkBC – Know Your Rights as a Job Applicant**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/job-application-tips/know-your-rights-job-applicant>
- **Employment Standards. British Columbia**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards>
- **Employment Standards– Minimum Wage**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/wages/minimum-wage>

### 4. Financial Support for Apprentices

You may be eligible for temporary financial support during the in-school portion of your apprenticeship program.

Two types of financial supports are available while attending apprentice class room training:

**Part I / Employment Insurance benefits** provided through Service Canada.

**Part II / WorkBC Apprentice Services Financial Support** managed by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, to assist with your expenses while you attend in-school training and may cover:

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- Living Supports to assist with basic living expenses, such as food, shelter and utilities
- Dependent-care / childcare expenses – new cost that is a result of participating in training
- Commuting costs for daily commuting to and from the training location
- Travel costs for relocation to a temporary residence while in training at the beginning and end of training
- Disability related costs - new cost that is a result of participating in training
- Living Away from Home costs to maintain a temporary residence during training

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/discover-employment-services/apprentice-services/access-online-workbc-apprentice-services>

For more information:

- **WorkBC. Apprenticeship Training Supports**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/discover-employment-services/apprentice-services/training-supports>
- **Trades Training BC. Financial Assistance**  
<https://www.tradestrainingbc.ca/FinancialAssistance>
- **Skilled TradesBC. Financial Support**  
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/financial-support>

## 4. Additional Resources

- **Skilled TradesBC. Newcomers and International Tradespersons**  
<https://skilledtradesbc.ca/get-certified/newcomers-international-tradespersons>
- **BC Building Trades**  
<https://bcbuildingtrades.org/build-a-career/start-apprenticeship/>
- **Go2HR (Tourism & Hospitality)**  
<https://www.go2hr.ca/>
- **WorkBC – New To BC**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/resources/people-new-bc>



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- **Canadian Apprenticeship Forum**

<https://caf-fca.org/>

- **Trades Training BC**

<https://www.tradetrainingbc.ca/>

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch,  
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>*

