

Architects

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as an Architect [NOC 2021: 21200 / NOC 2016: 2151]

Job Description

Architects plan and design the construction and renovation of buildings. You can choose to specialize in a type of construction such as residential, commercial, industrial or institutional.

As an architect you do the following:

- Consult with clients to determine style and purpose of building
- Conceive and design buildings
- Develop design specifications, building materials, costs, and construction schedules
- Prepare bidding documents, participate in contract negotiations, and award construction contracts
- Monitor activities by contractors and on construction sites to ensure compliance with specifications
- Conduct feasibility studies and financial analyses of building projects

Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/architects>

Industry Overview

WorkBC shows this as a high opportunity occupation. There are approximately 3,000 architects in British Columbia. The majority (84%) are employed in the Mainland/Southwest region of the province.

The largest architecture sector is non-residential (projects such as hospitals, schools, retail buildings, restaurants, hotels, and office buildings). The second largest sector is residential construction, especially multi-family units.

Job Outlook in BC

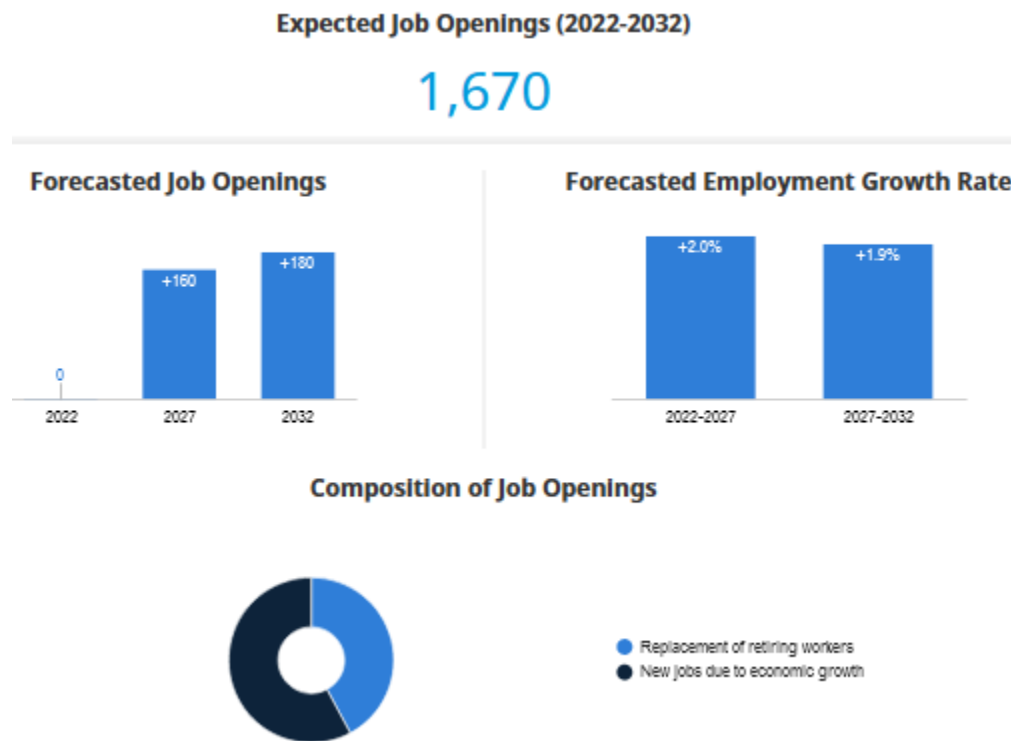


Chart from WorkBC

Work BC provides job openings in BC regions from 2022-2032:

Region	Employment in 2022	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island	480	2.3%	200
Lower Mainland/Southwest	3,540	2.0%	1,380
Thompson-Okanagan	210	0.9%	70

You can learn more about working as an architect in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Architects**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/architects>

- **Career Cruising** (profile for 'Architect')
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library

Types of Employers

Most architects work for architectural firms and building contractors, but you may also work for government agencies and real estate companies. You may also be self-employed.

Salary

The *median* annual salary for architects in BC is \$82,131. There is a huge range in incomes. If you work as an intern after graduation from an architecture program you generally earn between \$45,000 and \$70,000 a year. After completing this training period your annual salary is between \$60,000 and \$125,000, although some make more than this. The highest incomes are earned by architects who are the principal architects at a firm, or who become partners in large firms.

However, all architect salaries depend on the economy. Because you are often paid by the project, a slow-down in construction generally means lower earnings.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for Architects in BC regions:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	30.00	39.38	60.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	30.00	39.06	60.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	30.00	39.38	60.00

Source: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Working Hours

Working hours vary greatly. Some architects work 7 to 8 hours a day, 5 days a week; others might work 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. If you are self-employed, your hours depend on how much business you have.

Source: Career Cruising

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Innovative, imaginative, creative
- Detail-oriented
- Good spatial perception
- Computer aided design
- Drafting (CADD) program

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

Education and Experience

To work as an architect in BC you usually require:

- A post-secondary education certified by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board <https://cacb.ca/> or recognized equivalent
- Internship or significant prior work experience
- Completion of the architect registration examination
- Registration with the **Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)**

Qualifications

This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.

In order to practice as an architect in B.C., registration with the **Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)** is mandatory.

There are three different pathways to register as an architect in BC, depending on your level of education and experience.

More information on becoming an architect:

- **Architectural Institute of British Columbia**
<https://aibc.ca/registration/become-an-architect-aibc/>

Internship in Architecture Program (IAP): The most common route to becoming an architect in BC is through the Internship in Architecture Program (IAP), which is suitable for those who have never been registered as an architect, or who have been registered outside of Canada in a foreign jurisdiction for seven years or less.

More information:

- **Internship in Architecture Program:** <https://aibc.ca/registration/become-an-architect-aibc/internship-in-architecture-program/>

Internationally Trained and Accredited Architects

Mutual Recognition Agreement: If you are an architect already registered in another jurisdiction outside British Columbia, you may be eligible to apply for registration with the AIBC under the terms of a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). Qualification requirements vary for each MRA. For detailed information on how you may qualify see:

- **Mutual Recognition Agreement:** <https://aibc.ca/registration/become-an-architect-aibc/mutual-recognition-agreement-mra/>

Alternative Qualifications - The AIBC provides two alternative paths to certification for internationally trained architects who do not qualify under a Mutual Recognition Agreement or Internship in Partnership Program.

Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) Program:

The **BEFA** Program streamlines the licensing through a three-step process that includes a review of your eligibility, an on-line assessment, and an interview with registered architects. The program is administered by the **Canadian Architecture Certification Board (CACB)** (<https://cacb.ca/foreign-architects/>).

Broadly Experienced Applicant (BEA) Program: Through the **BEA Program**, the AIBC assesses your qualifications and experience for equivalency and can register individuals who demonstrate they meet admission standards through alternative qualifications.

More information:

- **Alternative Qualifications**
<https://aibc.ca/registration/become-an-architect-aibc/alternative-qualifications/>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section is in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **WorkBC**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)**
<https://aibcclassifieds.wordpress.com/category/career-opportunities/>
- **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC):** job board
<https://raic.org/raic/job-board>

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant. For architects, look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- Architectural Standards Specialist
- Chief Architect
- Consulting Architect
- Industrial and Commercial Buildings Architect
- Residential Architect
- Project Architect

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers who work in the architecture sector in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Architectural Institute of British Columbia, Membership Directory**
<https://aibc.ca/resources/online-directory> (click on "search for a firm")
- **Home Builders Association of Vancouver Directory**
<https://members.havan.ca/directory>

- **Business in Vancouver. "Book of Lists"**

Available at the Central Library, see lists of top architects and construction companies. 338.9711 B97b

- **Canadian Construction Association Membership Directory**

<https://www.cca-acc.com/membership/corporate-members-directory/>

- **Reference Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "architects" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>
- **Networking for Employment**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for architects in BC and Canada provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)**
<https://aibc.ca/>
- **Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB)**
<https://cacb.ca/>
- **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)**
<https://raic.org/>
Voluntary national association representing architects from across Canada
- **Eco Canada:** career profile of Sustainable Architect
<https://eco.ca/career-profiles/sustainable-architect/>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. You'll find recent editions at the Central Library:

- **Canadian Architect**
Available at the Central Library, 720.5 C212 or online at
<https://www.canadianarchitect.com/>

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- **Construction Canada**

Available at the Central Library, 692.05 S74 or online at

<https://www.constructioncanada.net/>

- **Journal of Commerce**

Available at VPL Central Library, 338.47 J86 BU or online at

<https://canada.constructconnect.com/joc>

**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>.