

Teacher Assistants in Elementary & Secondary Schools

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Elementary & Secondary School Teaching Assistants [NOC 2021: 43100/ NOC 2016: 4413]

Elementary & Secondary School Teaching

Assistants may also be called:

- *Teacher's aide/assistant*
- *Education assistant*
- *Educational resources assistant*
- *Elementary school child care attendant*
- *Homework assistant*
- *Paraeducator/paraprofessional educator*
- *Student monitor*
- *Student support assistant*
- *Special education assistant*
- *Teacher's helper*

1. What Would I Do?

Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants help in areas of personal care, teaching and behaviour management under the supervision of teachers or other child care professionals. You assist teachers and counsellors with teaching and non-instructional tasks and support students.

Your duties may include:

- assist students with integration into the classroom and school setting
- help students individually or in small groups with assignments and reinforce learning and retention concepts under the supervision of classroom teacher

- assist students with special needs using techniques such as sign language, Braille and remedial programs
- monitor and report student progress to classroom teacher
- accompany and supervise students during activities in school gymnasiums, laboratories, libraries, resource centres and on field trips
- may assist teacher in the operation of projectors and other audio-visual or electronic equipment
- may assist in school library or office and perform other duties assigned by school principal
- may monitor students during recess, at noon hour or during the day

More information:

- **WorkBC** (Elementary and Secondary School Teacher Assistants)
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/elementary-and-secondary-school-teacher-assistants>
- **Career Cruising** (Educational Assistant)
Available from the VPL Digital Library
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Elementary and Secondary School Teacher Assistants should have:

- good communication skills
- experience working with children

You should be:

- good with people
- patient and understanding
- creative and enthusiastic

You may have a regular 9 to 10-month school year or may work year round. You work mainly indoors, but may supervise students outdoors.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for *elementary and secondary school teacher assistants* is \$54,226.

In BC regions you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	20.00	26.00	29.00
Cariboo Region	21.81	26.75	28.60
Kootenay Region	21.46	25.00	27.50
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	20.00	27.00	29.60
Nechako Region	16.90	25.00	27.75
North Coast Region	16.90	25.00	27.75
Northeast Region	20.52	24.90	26.90
Thompson–Okanagan Region	19.90	24.67	27.40
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	23.00	26.00	28.58

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

Teacher Assistants in public schools are generally not paid during the summer months when school is not in session. Instead, you are hired on a 10-month contract basis each school year, and paid only for the months when students are in class. Individual school boards may or may not pay Teacher Assistants for holidays and professional development days.

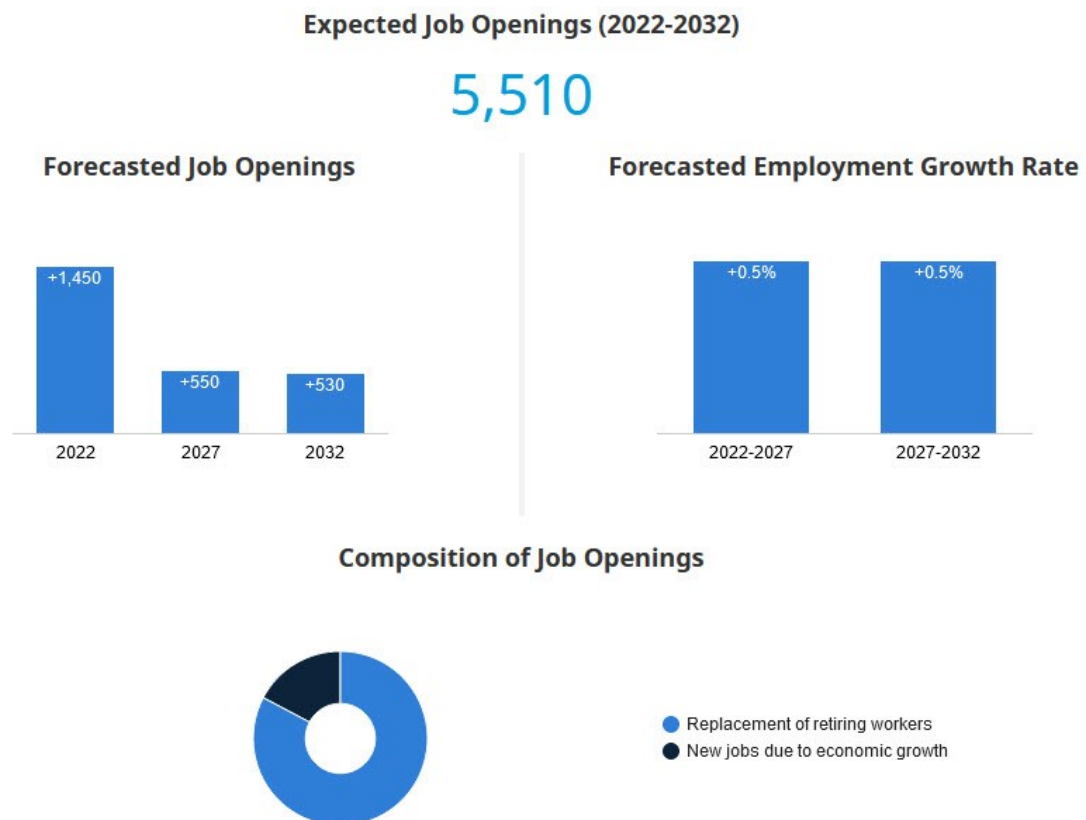
Some Teacher Assistants belong to unions. Union representatives negotiate wages and benefits, such as dental coverage and paid sick days, on behalf of their members.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

WorkBC forecasts 5,510 new jobs for Teacher Assistants between 2022 and 2032. The majority of job openings are expected to be found in the Lower Mainland (+3,510), followed by the Vancouver Island/Coast (+1,030) and Thompson-Okanagan (+740) regions.

Job Bank Canada reports that for the 2022-2024 period, the employment outlook is expected to be moderate.



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Sources:

- WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/elementary-and-secondary-school-teacher-assistants>
- Job Bank <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/outlook-occupation/16538/BC>

5. How do I become an Elementary & Secondary School Teacher Assistant?

In BC, completion of secondary school is required. Although there is no certification required to be a teacher assistant, most employers require completion of a 10-month college program in teaching assistance, educational assistance or another social science.

Teacher assistants who help students with special needs usually require specialized training and experience. Training in first aid and nonviolent crisis intervention (NCI) may also be needed.

For more information on training and certificate programs, see:

- **EducationPlannerBC** (Teacher Assistant/Aide)
<https://www.educationplannerbc.ca/search/noc/4413>
- **Make A Future: Careers in BC Education** (Education Assistants)
<https://www.makeafuture.ca/careers-in-bc-education/support-staff/education-assistants/>

For information on working in **First Nations Schools**, see:

- <https://www.makeafuture.ca/careers-in-bc-education/first-nations-schools/>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

- *in public and private elementary and secondary schools*
- *in special schools and treatment centres*
- *in community centres*
- *in tutoring centres*

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

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 in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **Apply to Education**
<https://network.applytoeducation.com/Applicant/AttSearchEx.aspx>
- **Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS)**
<https://www.cais.ca/careers>
- **Education Canada**
<https://www.educationcanada.com/search.html>
- **Vancouver School Board**
<https://www.makeafuture.ca/bc-schools-and-districts/vancouver-school-district-no-39/>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Make a Future: Careers in BC Education**
<https://www.makeafuture.ca/>
Joint venture between British Columbia's public boards of education, the BC Ministry of Education, and the BC Public School Employers' Association.
- **Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS)**
<https://www.cais.ca/>
- **Society of Christian Schools in BC (SCSBC)**
<https://scsbc.ca/employment/>

Finding "Hidden Jobs"

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will help you *with finding jobs in this "hidden" job market.*

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of schools and other educational organizations. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring teacher assistants.

- **BC Public School Districts contact information**
 - BC Ministry of Education School and District Contacts
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/Home.do>
 - BC Teachers Federation, Superintendents of School Districts
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/SP.do>
- **BC Independent (Private) School Authorities contact information**
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/IndSchoolAuthority.do>
- **Vancouver School Board**
<https://www.vsb.bc.ca/page/27772/school-directory-and-map>
- **First Nations School Association of British Columbia (FNSA)**
<https://www.fnsa.ca/about-the-fnsa/school-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 "schools" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

**You can also try searching on "private schools" or "religious schools" or "tutoring". Available from the VPL Digital Library: <https://www.vpl.ca/digitallibrary>

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).*

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**

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

- **Volunteer Connector**

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

Filter results by "Children, Youth, Family" under Causes

- **Family Services of Greater Vancouver**

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

- **YMCA of Greater Vancouver**

<https://www.gv.ymca.ca/volunteer>

- **YWCA of Metro Vancouver**

<https://ywcavan.org/help/volunteer>

Filter results by the "Child Care" under Volunteer Program

Volunteer in Public Institutions: Schools and Recreation Centres

Many public institutions accept volunteers; consider volunteering for your school district, your local neighbourhood school or your local recreation centre.

- **School Districts/Boards:** <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/Home.do>

Go to your school district's website or your local school's website and search for 'volunteer'

- **Public Recreation Centres and Parks**

Go to your local city/town website and search for 'parks' or 'recreation' or 'community centre'; when you locate your local recreation centre, search for 'volunteer'

For additional tips see the guides published on the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre Website: <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>

- **Networking for Employment**

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

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience. Use the library catalogue <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

Writing Resumes and Cover Letters

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

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

With additional training, e.g. applied behavior analysis therapy (ABA), American sign language (ASL), Classroom and Community Support Worker Program, teacher assistants may take on more challenging roles.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA)**
<http://bcpsea.bc.ca/support-staff/overview/>
- **Teachers of Inclusive Education BC**
<https://www.tiebc.com/resources.html>
- **Make a Future: Careers in BC Education**
<https://www.makeafuture.ca/resources/>
- **Open School BC: Resources for Educators**
<https://www.openschool.bc.ca/k12-educators>
- **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>

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>.