

# Psychologists: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## **1. Psychologists: Alternative Careers**

In BC, psychologists assess and diagnose behavioural, emotional and cognitive disorders, counsel clients, provide therapy and research and apply theory relating to behaviour and mental processes.

You may find that your international training and experience as a psychologist are not immediately accepted in B.C. The skills you have acquired as a psychologist (excellent listening, interpersonal and analytic skills, and creative approach to problem solving) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Family, marriage and related counsellors
- Social worker
- Social and community service workers
- Social policy researchers, consultants and program officers

### **Alternative Careers:**

#### **Family, marriage & related counsellors**

**[NOC 2021: 41301 / NOC 2016: 4153]**

*Also referred to as: clinical counsellor, child/youth counsellor, group home counsellor, grief/bereavement counsellor, crisis counsellor, addictions counsellor*

You help people and groups of clients identify, understand and overcome personal problems. You may work for counselling centres, social service agencies, group homes, government agencies, family therapy centres, and health-care and rehabilitation facilities, or you may work in private practice.

**Duties Include:**

- interview clients, prepare case histories and assess problems
- counsel clients, provide therapy and mediation services, and run group sessions
- 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
- an undergraduate degree or college diploma in a social science is required for certain areas of counselling
- *Certification as an RCC (Registered Clinical Counsellor) or RMFT (Registered Marriage and Family Therapist) may be required. See:*

**BC Association of Clinical Counsellors** (RCC Certification)

<https://bcacc.ca/members/become-a-member/>

**Canadian Association for Marriage & Family Therapy CAMFT** (RMFT)

<https://camft.ca/Applications-page>

- a clear criminal record check

**Skills:**

- strong communication and listening skills
- patient, understanding, empathetic, compassionate and non-judgemental

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$31.20

<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

**Social Workers [NOC 2021: 41300 / NOC 2016: 4152]**

*Also referred to as: social work caseworker*

You help individuals, couples, families, and groups develop the skills and resources needed to enhance social functioning; you may provide counselling, therapy and referral to other supportive social services. You work for hospitals, school boards, social service agencies, child welfare organizations, correctional facilities, community agencies, employee assistance programs and Aboriginal band councils.

**Duties include:**

- interview clients to assess their situation and determine the services required
- provide counsel and therapy to assist clients with their social and personal problems
- plan programs of assistance including referral to agencies that provide financial assistance, legal aid, housing, medical treatment and other services
- investigate cases of child abuse or neglect and take authorized protective action when necessary

**Requirements**

- Bachelors Degree or Masters Degree in Social Work
- Successful completion of the ASWB Licensure Exam
- Registration with the BC College of Social Workers <https://bccsw.ca/>
- Clear criminal record check
  - *Applicants with Degrees from Outside of Canada or the USA, BC College of Social Workers*  
<https://bccsw.ca/applicants-with-degrees-from-outside-of-canada-or-the-usa/>

**Skills:**

- must be empathetic, understanding and able to work in difficult situations
- emotionally mature with good communication & problem-solving skills

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$37.00  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

**Social & community service workers [NOC 2021: 42201 / NOC 2016: 4212]**

*Also referred to as: Aboriginal outreach worker, addictions worker, mental health worker, community service worker, crisis intervention worker, group home worker, youth worker*

You set up and manage a variety of social assistance programs and community services. You work for social services, mental health and government agencies and

may work in group homes for youth or persons with disabilities, seniors' services, shelters, substance abuse centres, school boards, and correctional facilities.

**Duties Include:**

- interview clients to get case history and background information
- help clients 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 services
- advise clients living in group homes and half-way houses
- provide crisis intervention and emergency shelter services

**Requirements:**

- completion of secondary school
- 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
- a clear criminal record check

**Skills:**

- strong communication skills and leadership abilities
- patient, compassionate, emotionally mature and responsible

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$21.75

<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

**Social policy researchers, consultants and program officers**

**[NOC 2021: 41403 / NOC 2016: 4164]**

*Also referred to as: labour market/policy analyst, social policy/welfare analyst, child welfare policy analyst, community social development officer, social policy researcher*

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You research, develop policy and set up or manage programs in areas such as consumer affairs, employment, immigration, law enforcement, corrections, human rights, housing, labour, and family services. You work in government departments and agencies, hospitals, educational institutions, professional associations, research institutes, non-government organizations and international organizations.

#### **Duties include:**

- develop social programs, social legislation, or proposals
- assess, coordinate and develop awareness of existing social services
- identify and assess economic, demographic, and social developments

#### **Requirements:**

- a bachelor's degree or college diploma in a social science or related discipline
- a master's degree in a social science or related discipline may be required.

#### **Skills:**

- organized, detail-oriented, analytical
- strong writing and communication skills

#### **Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$35.00

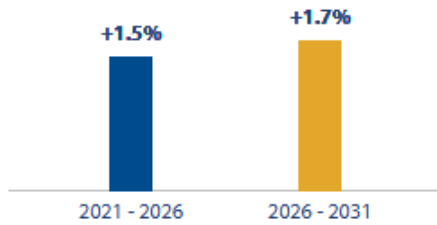
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>

## **2. Employment Outlook**

New jobs will be created to take care of the growing population of aging people, those with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, pregnant teenagers, homeless people 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. Job opportunities will be highest in job-training programs, residential care facilities and non-governmental social service agencies.

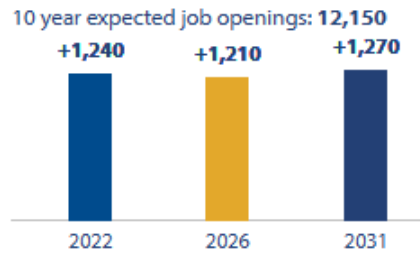
### Social & Community Service Workers - Employment Outlook

#### Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

#### Job openings

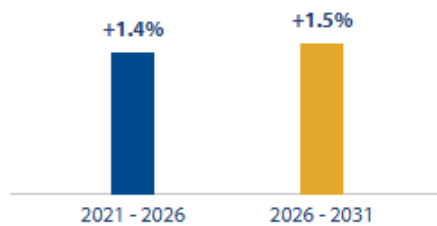


Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Source: WorkBC Career Profile

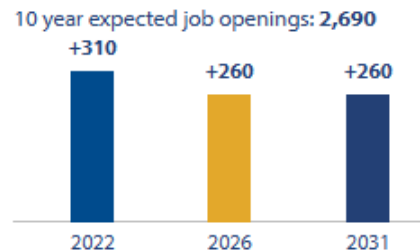
### Family, Marriage & Related Counsellors - Employment Outlook

#### Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

#### Job openings

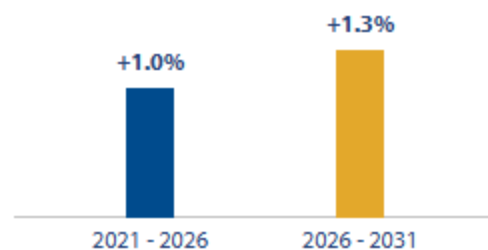


Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Source: WorkBC Career Profile

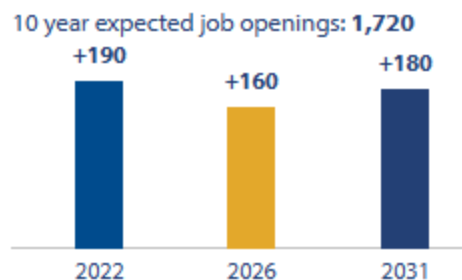
### Social Policy Researchers & Program Officers - Employment Outlook

#### Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

#### Job openings



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Source: WorkBC Career Profile

### 3. Retraining

Listed below are just some of the short term retraining programs available for alternative psychology careers. There are other schools offering programs.

- **Douglas College, Community Social Service Work**  
<https://www.douglascollege.ca/courses/CSSW>
- **University of the Fraser Valley, Social Services Diploma**  
<https://www.ufv.ca/swhs/programs/social-services-diploma/>
- **University of the Fraser Valley, Community Support Worker Certificate**  
<https://www.ufv.ca/swhs/programs/community-support-worker-certificate/>
- **Langara College, Social Service Worker**  
<https://langara.ca/programs-and-courses/programs/social-service/>
- **Justice Institute of British Columbia, Counselling & Community Safety Programs**  
<https://www.jibc.ca/about-us/health-community-social-justice>

### 4. Searching for Jobs

BC has five regional health authorities that provide acute care and community programs (acute care hospitals, public health, *mental health, addictions, and home and community care services*)

- **Fraser Health Authority** <https://careers.fraserhealth.ca/>
- **Interior Health Authority** <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers/>
- **Northern Health Authority** <https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority** <https://careers.vch.ca/>
- **Vancouver Island Health Authority** <https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
- **BC Provincial Health Services Authority PHSA**  
<http://careers.phsa.ca/>  
Operates agencies that provide province-wide health care services including, *BC Mental Health and Addiction Services*
- **BC Government Job Postings**  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr>



- **Community Social Services Employers' Association of BC – CSSEA**  
<https://www.cssea.bc.ca/> (click on 'Careers')
- **Federation of Community Social Services of BC**  
<https://fcssbc.ca/about/careers/>
- **BC211**  
<https://bc.211.ca/>  
use to locate relevant community service organizations in your area (includes Fraser Valley, Metro Vancouver, Squamish-Lillooet and Sunshine Coast)
- **Indeed.ca**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)
- **Talent.com**  
<https://ca.talent.com/>

## 5. Volunteering in the Field

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

- **Family Services of Greater Vancouver**  
<https://fsgv.ca/volunteer/>
- **Crisis Centre of BC**  
<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/volunteer/administration/>
- **MOSAIC BC – Social Mentoring**  
<https://www.mosaicbc.org/about/volunteer/>
- **Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division**  
<https://cmha.bc.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>
- **Go Volunteer.ca**  
<http://govolunteer.ca/>
- **Volunteer BC**  
<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

## **Volunteering in Community Organizations and Recreation Centres**

Many community organizations provide social services – contact your local community organization to see if they are accepting volunteers. You can start by looking for organizations in:

- **bc211.ca**  
<https://bc211.ca/> [provides contact information for community, government and social services organizations/agencies in BC]

## **6. Helpful Resources**

Counselling / Social Service Workers:

- **BC Association of Clinical Counsellors**  
<https://bcacc.ca/>
- **BC Association of Social Workers**  
<https://www.bcasw.org/>
- **Canadian Professional Counsellors Association**  
<https://www.cpcarpc.ca/>
- **Canadian Counselling & Psychotherapy Association**  
<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/>
- **Federation of Community Social Services of BC**  
<https://fcssbc.ca/>

Social Policy Researchers:

- **Institute for Research on Public Policy**  
<https://irpp.org/>
- **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**  
<https://policyalternatives.ca/>
- **Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC)**  
<https://www.sparc.bc.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/>.

