

Administrative Assistants

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as an Administrative Assistant [NOC 2021: 13110 / NOC 2016: 1241]

Job Description

Administrative assistants carry out office support tasks in order to keep organizations and their departments running smoothly.

As an administrative assistant, you may perform the following duties:

- Type letters, reports and other documents
- Schedule and confirm appointments and meetings
- Respond to telephone, in-person and email enquiries
- Organize files and keep records
- Establish and oversee office procedures
- Prepare minutes of meetings
- Arrange travel schedules and make reservations
- Compile data, statistics and other information for reports
- Prepare department budgets
- Supervise and train other office support staff

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Administrative Assistants**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- **Career Cruising** (Profile for Administrative Assistant)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

Industry Overview

Future job prospects for administrative assistants are expected to be good. Changes in technology have affected the duties of administrative assistants. Many employers now expect you to take on more complex tasks such as:

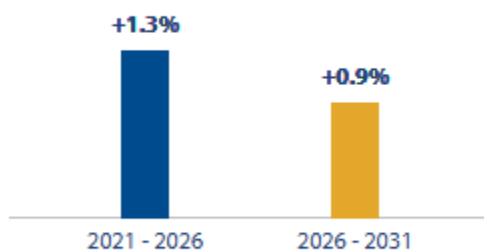
- developing spreadsheets
- drafting correspondence
- supervising databases
- updating websites
- producing presentation materials

As a result, you will be in higher demand if you have a wider variety of computer skills. Many positions also require some experience with project management or coordination.

There is good opportunity for flexible work arrangements. If you work with a placement agency (also known as a “temp” agency) you can work on short-term placements with private sector companies and government clients.

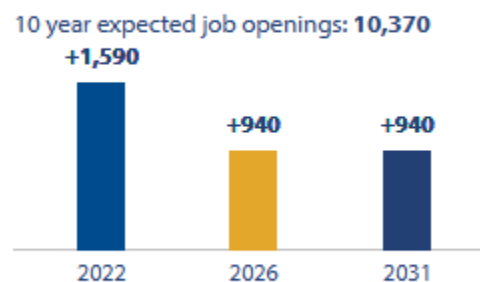
Job Outlook in BC, 2021-2031

Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

Composition of job openings



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC’s regions from 2021-2031:

Region	Employment in 2021	Estimated Annual Employment Growth 2021-2031	Estimated # of Job Openings 2021-2031
Vancouver Island / Coast	4,680	1.0%	1,800
Lower Mainland / Southwest	17,400	1.2%	6,590
Thompson-Okanagan	3,100	1.0%	1,200
Kootenay	720	0.5%	230
Cariboo	930	0.3%	190
North Coast & Nechako	470	1.0%	130
Northeast	660	1.1%	200

Sources: WorkBC Career Profile & Career Cruising

Types of Employers

Administrative assistants work in offices in every kind of organization, including:

- non-profit organizations
- government agencies
- universities, colleges and educational institutions
- hospitals
- banks
- businesses of all types and size

You may also find employment through temporary staffing agencies in BC’s cities. These temporary jobs can lead to permanent employment.

Salary

The median annual salary for administrative assistants in BC is \$50,054. Your salary depends on experience, location, and employer.

In addition to a salary, most full-time administrative assistants receive health and dental benefits, paid sick days, and paid vacations.

In BC's regions, **administrative assistants** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	16.00	24.00	35.00
Cariboo Region	16.00	24.00	30.00
Kootenay Region	16.00	24.00	35.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	15.65	23.10	38.79
Nechako Region	16.00	24.00	35.00
North Coast Region	16.00	24.00	35.00
Northeast Region	15.65	25.00	41.03
Thompson–Okanagan Region	16.71	24.04	34.60
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	18.00	25.00	33.70

Table from Job Bank Canada Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Working Hours

Most administrative assistants have regular hours. A 9-to-5, Monday to Friday workweek is most common.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Excellent organizational and time management skills
- Ability to multi-task and prioritize jobs
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Excellent customer service and interpersonal skills
- Good keyboarding and computer skills
- Good attention to detail
- An interest in working both independently and as part of a team in an office setting

Education and Experience

- Completion of secondary school is usually required
- Other training or requirements may include:
- Completion of a one or two year college program for administrative assistants or secretaries
- or*
- Previous clerical experience

Experience using a wide range of computer programs and other office technology is also often required. Depending on the industry and the specific role, it may also be an advantage to have a working knowledge of finance, marketing or communications.

Qualifications

This occupation is not regulated in British Columbia.

You do not require certification to work as an administrative assistant. However, designation as a ***Canadian Certified Administrative Professional (CCAP)*** may be an advantage.

More information:

- **Canadian Certified Administrative Professional**
<https://canadianadmin.ca/certification/overview/>

3. Finding Jobs

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

Staffing agencies are a good source of temporary work that can also lead to permanent employment. Check local newspapers to find the names of local staffing agencies or look in the Yellow Pages

- <https://www.yellowpages.ca/locations/British-Columbia>, search for 'Employment Agencies'

Local Newspapers

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

Online Job Postings

- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
<https://ca.indeed.com/Administrative-Assistant-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards
- **AdminJobs.ca**
<https://www.adminjobs.ca/en/>
- **Talent.com**
<https://ca.talent.com/>

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Association of Administrative Professionals Careers**

<https://canadianadmin.ca/careers/career-opportunities/>

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant. For administrative assistants look for these related job titles:

- Executive secretary
- Secretary
- Office administrative assistant
- Office administrator

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of potential employers. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Business in Vancouver Book of Lists**

This lists top companies in specific categories. Available at the Central Library, 338.9711 B97b

- **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 "admin" and click LOOKUP. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

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 (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>
- **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>
- **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 administrative assistants in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Association of Administrative Professionals**
<https://canadianadmin.ca/>

- **International Association of Administrative Professionals**
<https://www.iaap-hq.org/>

**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/>.*