

Bookkeepers & Accounting Technicians

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



Contents

1. Working as a Bookkeeper & Accounting Technician [NOC 12200].....	2
2. Skills, Education and Experience	6
3. Finding Jobs.....	7
4. Applying for a Job	9
5. Getting Help from Industry Sources.....	10

1. Working as a Bookkeeper & Accounting Technician

[NOC 2021: 12200 / NOC 2016: 1311]

Job Description

Bookkeepers maintain complete sets of books, keep records of accounts and verify the procedures used for recording financial transactions.

As a bookkeeper you perform the following duties:

- Keep financial records and establish, maintain and balance various accounts using manual and computerized bookkeeping systems
- Post journal entries and reconcile accounts, prepare trial balance of books, maintain general ledgers and prepare financial statements
- Calculate and prepare cheques for payrolls and for utility, tax and other bills
- Complete and submit tax remittance forms, workers' compensation forms, pension contribution forms and other government documents
- Prepare tax returns and perform other personal bookkeeping services
- Prepare other statistical, financial and accounting reports.

Source:

- National Occupational Classification (NOC) <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>

Industry Overview

In BC, approximately 22,000 people work in this occupation and 38% are working mostly full time.

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Employers often look to hire experienced accounting technicians and bookkeepers, which can make it difficult to find work right after you finish your education. Experience in this career may be gained by doing volunteer work or through a co-operative education program.

Being able to adapt to technological change is also important in this occupation.

Job Outlook in BC, 2021-2031

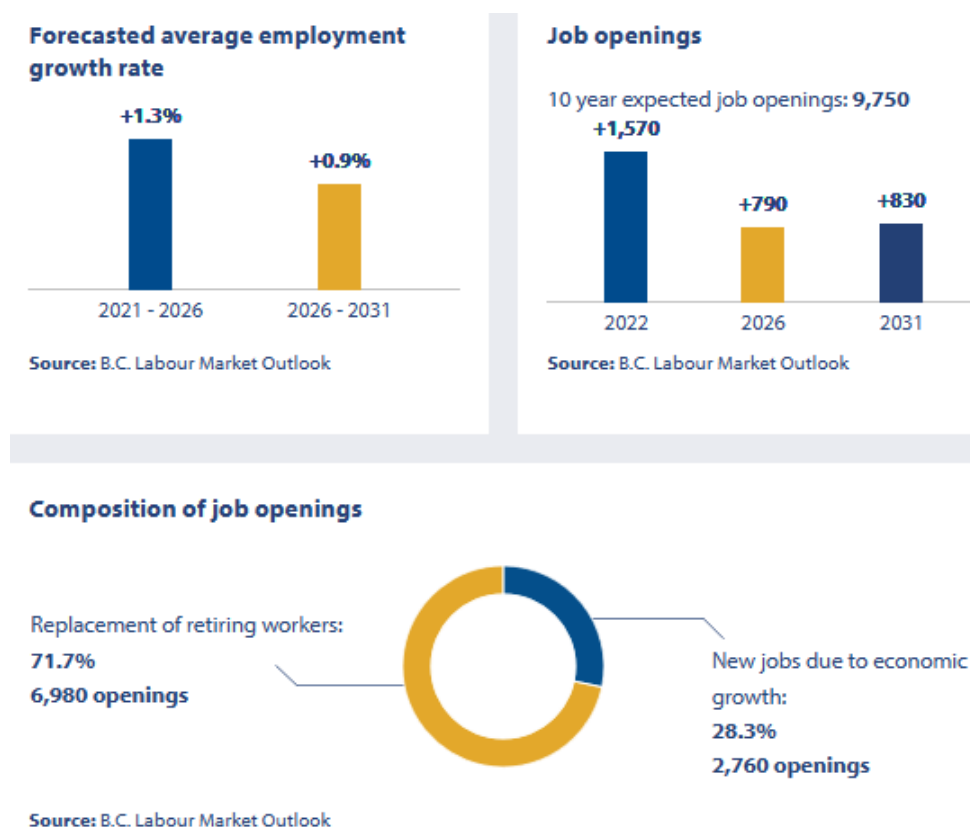


Chart from WorkBC

Outlook by BC Region, 2021-2031

Cariboo		Kootenay	
Employment in 2021:	990	Employment in 2021:	910
Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	0.3%	Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	0.3%
Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	310	Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	320
Mainland / Southwest		North Coast & Nechako	
Employment in 2021:	13,290	Employment in 2021:	550
Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	1.3%	Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	1.0%
Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	5,310	Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	210
Northeast		Thompson-Okanagan	
Employment in 2021:	740	Employment in 2021:	3,700
Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	1.4%	Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	0.9%
Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	330	Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	1,550
Vancouver Island / Coast			
Employment in 2021:	4,440		
Average annual employment growth(%) 2021-2031:	0.8%		
Expected number of job openings 2021-2031:	1,710		

Source: WorkBC

You can learn more about working as a Bookkeeper and Accounting Technician in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Bookkeepers & Accounting Technicians**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- **Career Cruising** (profile for Bookkeeper)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

Types of Employers

Bookkeepers work for all types of businesses and organizations including:

- Professional business services such as law firms or insurance offices
- Retail stores
- Wholesale businesses
- Restaurants
- Construction and manufacturing sectors
- A variety of other industries
- You may also be self-employed.

Salary

Your salary depends on experience, education, location, and employer. In BC, the annual **median** salary is \$50,138. Full-time bookkeepers usually receive benefits in addition to a salary. These may include paid sick days, vacation time, and dental coverage.

In BC regions you can expect to earn:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	16.00	24.04	36.82
Cariboo Region	16.48	24.50	38.46
Kootenay Region	15.65	25.00	32.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	16.00	24.00	36.06
Nechako Region	17.00	25.00	57.69
North Coast Region	17.00	25.00	57.69
Northeast Region	20.00	25.00	39.42
Thompson–Okanagan Region	15.65	23.08	32.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	18.50	25.00	38.46

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

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

Working Hours

You generally work a standard Monday to Friday work week, though some evening or weekend work may be required. During the tax preparation season you may have to work unusually long hours.

If you are employed in industries affected by seasonal conditions, such as forestry and construction, you may experience seasonal slowdowns or even layoffs.

Source: Career Cruising

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Highly skilled with numbers
- Strong clerical ability
- Very detail oriented
- Good at problem solving
- Knowledge of computer applications including word processing, spreadsheet and accounting software

Education and Experience

Completion of secondary school is required.

Bookkeepers also require:

- Completion of a college program in accounting, bookkeeping or a related field
OR
- Completion of two years (first level) of a recognized professional accounting program (e.g., Chartered Accounting, Certified General Accounting)
OR
- Courses in accounting or bookkeeping combined with several years of experience as a financial or accounting clerk

- Strong understanding of computers and cloud applications
- The ability to use Microsoft Office and/or other similar desktop applications

Qualifications

This occupation is not regulated in British Columbia.

There are no mandatory requirements for licensing or professional certification in order to work as a Bookkeeper in BC. However, your services may be in greater demand if you gain certification in cloud-based accounting platforms and associated applications.

Certification as a ***Certified Professional Bookkeeper (CPB)*** with the ***Certified Professional Bookkeepers of Canada*** may also increase your employment opportunities.

More information:

- **Certified Professional Bookkeepers of Canada**
<https://cpbcan.ca/certification/why-get-certified.html>

Source: WorkBC

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources.

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

- **AccountingJobs**

<https://www.accountingjobs.ca>

Search by keyword "bookkeeper"

- **Hays Specialist Recruitment**

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

Browse jobs in category "accounting and finance"; can also search by job title and city

- **Robert Half Finance & Accounting**

<https://www.roberthalf.ca/en/jobs>

- **Indeed.com**

https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards

- **Talent.com**

<https://ca.talent.com/>

- **JobConnect**

<https://bcjobconnect.ca/> **must have permanent resident number**

newcomers can post their skills, education and work experience to BC employers looking for workers

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For bookkeepers, look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- Accounting Bookkeeper
- Accounting Technician
- Bookkeeping Clerk

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.

- **Financial Services Canada**

Central Library, 332.1025 F49

- **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 "bookkeeping" or "accounting & bookkeeping" 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 or curriculum vitae and a cover letter. These should identify the position you are applying for and summarize 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 bookkeeping professionals in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Canadian Bookkeepers Association**
<https://www.c-b-a.ca/>
- **Certified Professional Bookkeepers of Canada**
<https://cpbcan.ca/about/about.html>

Industry Journals

- **In Focus, CPA BC Newsletter**
<https://www.bccpa.ca/news-events/publications/cpabc-in-focus>

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/>