

# Conference & Event Planners

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## **Conference & Event Planners [NOC 2021: 12103 / NOC 2016: 1226]**

**Conference & Event Planners may also be called:**

- *conference and meeting planner*
- *conference planner*
- *convention co-ordinator*
- *festival organizer*
- *meeting planner*
- *event planner*
- *event organizer/ special events organizer*

## **1. What Would I Do?**

**Conference & event planners** plan, organize and coordinate conferences, conventions, meetings, seminars, exhibitions, trade shows, festivals and other events. As a conference & event planner, your duties can include:

- meeting with trade / professional associations and other groups to promote and discuss conference, convention and trade show services
- meeting with sponsors and organizing committees to plan scope and format of events, establish and monitor budgets and review progress of events
- co-coordinating services for events, such as accommodation and transportation for participants, facilities, catering, signage, displays, translation, special needs requirements, audio-visual equipment, printing and security

- organizing registration of participants, prepare programs and promotional material, and publicize events
- planning entertainment and social gatherings for participants
- ensuring the conference centre or other facility can meet needs for catering, signage, displays, translation, special-needs requirements, audio-visual equipment, printing and security
- ensuring compliance with required local by-laws
- negotiating contracts for services, approve suppliers' invoices, maintain financial records, review final billing submitted to clients for events and prepare reports.

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Conference & Event Planners**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx> [search Conference and Event Planners]

## 2. Am I Suited For This Job?

**Conference & Event Planners should be:**

- *detail-oriented*
- *persuasive*
- *organized*

**Conference & Event Planners should have:**

- *excellent social skills*
- *strong communication skills*
- *ability to multi-task and respond quickly to unexpected situations*
- *strong customer service skills*

Conference & Event Planners often work long hours, including evenings and weekends. They may work from an office; however, much of the work is performed on-site at hotels, convention centres or other event locations.

Sources:

- *WorkBC*

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

- **Career Cruising database** (profile for 'Event Planner')

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

### 3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the average annual **median** salary for **conference & event planners** is \$48,1316. JobBank Canada provides the following hourly wages in BC's regions:

#### **Conference & Event Planners, – Hourly Wages**

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	15.85	23.08	36.92
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	17.98	22.15	36.92
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	15.85	23.08	36.92
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	15.85	23.08	36.92
<a href="#">Canada</a>	15.77	23.00	38.08

Source: Job Bank Wage Report [http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook\\_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage)

Earnings for conference & event planners vary widely, depending on experience, education, geographic location, and whether they work full-time or part-time. Some types of event planning are more lucrative than others. Corporate event planners, tend to earn more than those who plan events for private individuals.

Sources:

- *WorkBC*
- **Career Cruising database** (profile for 'Event Planner')

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

## 4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

The majority of job openings are expected to come from retirements. British Columbia has become increasingly popular as a tourist destination and this will improve demand for workers in this occupation. New conference facilities (i.e. the Vancouver Convention Centre) are also increasing the capacity of the province to host large events. Industry sources report increased demand for workers may be in response to more positive economic conditions. Competition for employment in this field will likely be strong due to the desirable nature of this work.

The forecasted average annual employment growth rate is 2.2% for 2021-2026 - and then 1.1% from 2026 until 2031. The majority of employment and growth is in the Lower Mainland / Southwest BC (1.6% average annual employment growth) and the Vancouver Island / Coast region (1.5% average annual employment growth)

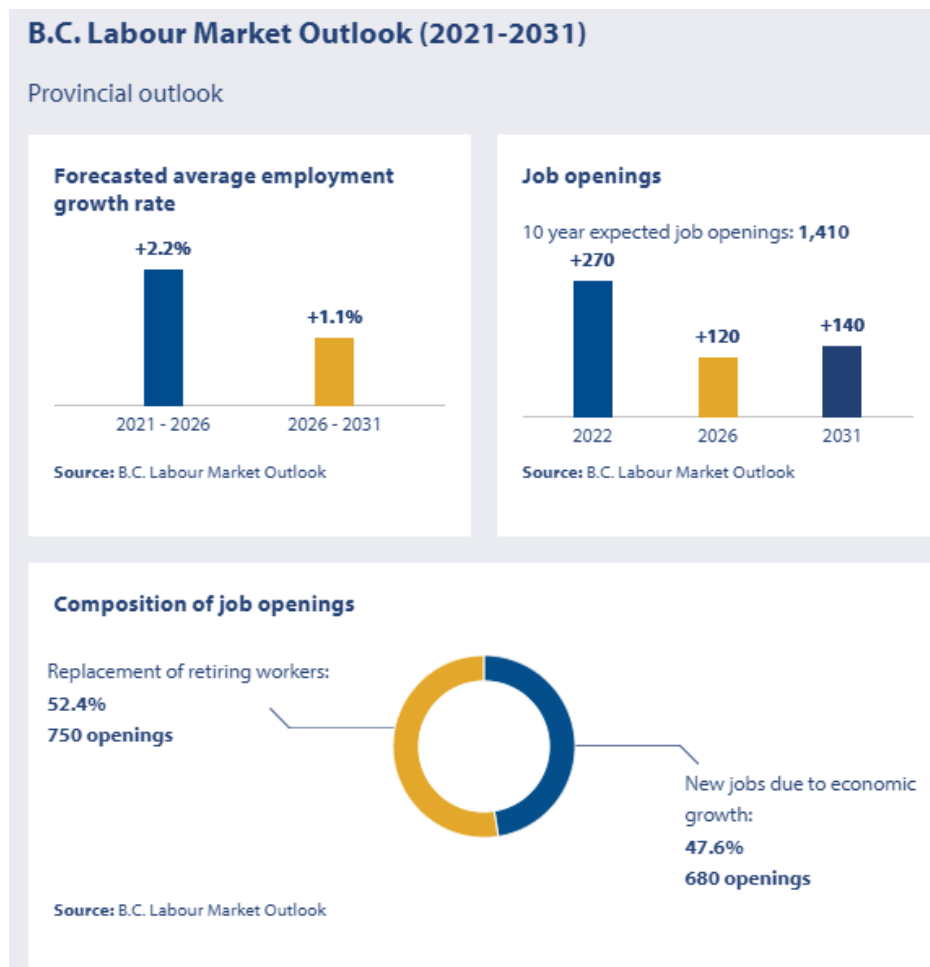
JobBank Canada predicts that the employment outlook will be good for Conference and event planners in British Columbia. Positions will become available due to retirements.

Source:

- **WorkBC**
- **JobBank Canada**

<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home>

## Conference & Event Planners– Employment Outlook



## 5. How do I become a Conference & Event Planner

Conference & event planners do not require certification in BC. However, certification related to special events, meetings or conference management can provide better employment opportunities. See for example:

- CMP – ‘Certified Meeting Professional’ designation awarded by Events Industry Council, see: <https://www.eventscouncil.org/CMP/About-CMP>
- CEM – ‘Certified In Exposition Management’ awarded by CAEM (Canadian Association of Exposition Management): nine courses plus three years of

experience required to gain the CEM professional designation, see:

<https://caem.ca/education/cem-certified-exposition-management/>

Minimum requirements to be a conference & event planner include:

- university degree or college diploma in business, tourism or hospitality administration is usually required.
- several years of experience in hospitality, tourism administration, public relations or in a comparable position at a conference centre or hotel are usually required and **\*may\*** substitute for formal education requirements.

For further information, see:

- **WorkBC**
- **Events Industry Council** (*responsible for Certified Meeting Professional CMP designation*): <http://www.eventscouncil.org/>
- **MPI, BC Chapter (Meeting Professionals International)**, Certification as CMP <https://www.mpi.org/chapters/british-columbia/education-events/cmp-program>
- **JobBank Canada**  
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home>
- **BCIT Event Management Associate Certificate**  
<https://www.bcit.ca/programs/marketing-management-event-marketing-associate-certificate-part-time-630yacert/>

## 6. How Do I Find A Job?

### ***Where would I work?***

#### ***Conference & Event Planners work in:***

- *tourism associations*
- *trade and professional associations*
- *convention and conference centres*
- *conference and event planning companies*
- *large hotels/resorts*
- *large companies that stage events for their staff or clients*
- *may also be self-employed*

## ***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***

- **American Marketing Association, BC Chapter (BCAMA), Job Board**  
[http://careers.bcama.com/home/index.cfm?site\\_id=16202](http://careers.bcama.com/home/index.cfm?site_id=16202)  
(search for 'conference planner' or 'event planner' or 'event organizer')
- **Go2HR**  
<https://www.go2hr.ca/> (job board for tourism and hospitality jobs in BC)  
(search for 'conference planner' or 'event planner' or 'event organizer')
- **Sport Information Research Centre, SIRC,**  
<http://sirc.ca/careers> (job board for **sports** related administration careers in Canada) search for 'Events' or 'Activation'
- **Charity Village, 'Find a Job'**  
<http://charityvillage.com/> (website for Canadian **non-profit** professionals, search for 'event planner')
- **Canadian Marketing Association, 'Search Jobs'**  
<https://www.marketing-jobs.ca/jobs/>  
(search for 'event planner' or 'event organizer')
- **Canadian Association of Exposition Management CAEM**  
<https://caem.ca/careers-temp/>
- **Indeed.ca**  
<http://ca.indeed.com/> (search for 'event planner' or 'conference planner')
- **BC Jobs.ca**  
<http://www.bcjobs.ca/>



- **Talent.com**  
<https://ca.talent.com/>
- **BC JobConnect**  
<https://www.bcjobconnect.ca> \*\*must have permanent resident number\*\*  
newcomers can post their skills, education and work experience to BC employers looking for workers
- **WorkBC Job Postings**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Find-Jobs/Jobs.aspx#/job-search>
- **Job Bank**  
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/findajob>

Also look for postings of 'event planners/conference planners/event organizers' in the 'careers' or 'jobs' section of websites for these industries:

- large hotels
- tourist destinations (e.g. Grouse Mountain, Whistler)
- conference centres (e.g. Vancouver Convention Centre, Anvil Centre, Whistler Convention Centre)
- large local sports teams (e.g. Vancouver Canucks)
- private clubs or golf & country clubs

### ***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 employers who are in the restaurant, food service and hospitality business. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners CanSPEP** – Planner directory  
<https://canspep.ca/Membership-Directory>

- **Reference Canada**

<http://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 "event planning" 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).*

### ***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**

<http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<http://govolunteer.ca/>

- **Charity Village**

<http://charityvillage.com> [under search, click on 'volunteer']

***Volunteering in Community Organizations, Recreation Centres, Local Cities***

Many public community organizations, recreation centres and municipalities sponsor or hold events – contact your local community organization to see if they are accepting volunteers for events. You can start by looking for organizations in:

- **bc211.ca** [The Red Book]

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

- **Municipalities:** complete list of BC cities and towns available at:

<https://www.ubcm.ca/about-ubcm/member-directory/local-government-member-directory>

go to your local city/town 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'

Also check with local sports organizations to see if they need Tournament volunteers.

*For additional tips see:*

- **Networking for Employment**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search 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, <http://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**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

## 8. Where Can This Job Lead?

Recent graduates typically find work as event coordinator assistants, junior meeting planners in a hotel and catering assistants. Conference planners who have gained experience managing a wide range of activities are qualified for a range of administrative and managerial tasks as senior planners, team managers or directors of sales. With experience, it is possible to move up to related positions in marketing or hospitality management or to progress to managing larger events. -

Source: WorkBC

## 9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners**  
<http://www.canspep.ca/>
- **Meeting Professionals International, BC Chapter MPIBC**  
<https://www.mpi.org/chapters/british-columbia>
- **Corporate Meetings Network** (for Canadian corporate meeting planners)  
<https://www.corporatemeetingsnetwork.ca/>

<https://www.corporatemeetingsnetwork.ca/category/people-profiles/career-development/>

- **Canadian Association of Exposition Management - CAEM**

<http://www.caem.ca/>

- Learn More About Working in BC and Canada

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

**Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central 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 <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.*



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