

Licensed Practical Nurses

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as a Licensed Practical Nurse

[NOC 2021: 32101/ NOC 2016: 3233]

Job Description

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) provide nursing care. You may work as part of a team, taking direction from doctors or registered nurses.

As a licensed practical nurse, you perform the following duties:

- Take patients' temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration rate
- Perform routine laboratory tests and collect samples of blood and urine to be tested for diseases
- Monitor patient diets
- Give medication and record therapeutic effects
- Provide personal and comfort care before and after an operation
- Dress wounds and apply bandages
- Check on respiratory and intravenous therapy
- Keep a watchful eye on patients, observing them and consulting with other members of the health care team when necessary

Sources:

- WorkBC Careers <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx> [Search Licensed Practical Nurses]
- Career Cruising (Profile for Practical Nurse)
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

Industry Overview

There is a need for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) across B.C. The province's growing and aging population will continue to increase future demand.

Job opportunities are higher in regions with more long-term care facilities or larger hospitals such as Metro Vancouver, Victoria, and the Okanagan.

You may find new openings for LPNs in specialty areas, such as emergency and paediatric wards, and operating rooms. LPNs are taking on increased responsibilities to provide better patient outcomes and to improve the use of nursing staff. The range of options for LPNs has expanded to include mental health, community and pharmacology studies.

Your job prospects may be better if you complete an immunization certification course and the leadership post certificate course.

Job Outlook in BC

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B.C. Labour Market Outlook (2021-2031)

Provincial outlook

Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings

10 year expected job openings: 4,500



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Composition of job openings

Replacement of retiring workers:
56.9%
2,560 openings



New jobs due to economic growth:
43.1%
1,940 openings

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2021 to 2031:

Region	Employment in 2021	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings 2021-2031
Vancouver Island	2040	1.5%	1020
Lower Mainland / Southwest	5740	1.7%	2380
Thompson-Okanagan	2220	1.6%	810
Kootenay	460	0.5%	110
Cariboo	540	0.2%	110
North Coast & Nechako	120	0.3%	30
Northeast	170	0.7%	50

You can learn more about working in BC from the following sources:

- WorkBC Careers <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
[Search Licensed Practical Nurses]
- Career Cruising (Profile for Practical Nurse)
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>
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Types of Employers

Licensed practical nurses work in many settings including:

- hospitals
- nursing homes
- extended care facilities
- rehabilitation centres
- doctors' offices
- clinics and community health centres
- community hospices
- private residences
- educational facilities

Salary

The median salary for licensed practical nurses working full-time in BC is \$58,397 a year.

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You may belong to a union. This means that your wage rates and benefits are negotiated by union representatives on your behalf.

In addition to your salary, full-time LPNs usually receive benefits, such as paid sick days, vacation time, and dental coverage.

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for Licensed Practical Nurses in BC regions:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	24.24	29.48	32.02
Cariboo Region	28.00	31.00	31.15
Kootenay Region	21.00	29.54	31.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	25.00	29.00	31.50
Nechako Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Coast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Region	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thompson–Okanagan Region	22.00	29.00	32.02
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	25.33	30.20	34.47
Canada	22.00	28.00	33.23

Source: Job Bank Wage Report http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage [Search Licensed Practical Nurse]

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

Working Hours

You typically work 8- to 12-hour shifts, usually on rotation, including weekends, evenings and holidays.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- excellent communication skills
- strong problem-solving skills

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- good observation skills
- ability to handle high levels of stress associated with emergencies and medical conditions
- ability to cope with the emotional aspects of working with the sick, injured and terminally ill, as well as patients' families
- must be able to work well in a team
- ability to follow strict guidelines to prevent infection and injury
- patience and self-control

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

Education and Experience

To work as a licensed practical nurse you require:

- completion of a recognized college or vocational program specifically for LPNs
- successful completion of the Regulatory Exam - Practical Nurse (REx-PN)
<https://www.ncsbn.org/rex-pn.htm>
- registration with the British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives
(<https://www.bccnm.ca>)

Qualifications

This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.

To work as a LPN in British Columbia you must be registered with the *British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM)*

For more information on registration see:

- **BC College of Nurses and Midwives**
https://www.bccnm.ca/LPN/applications_registration/how_to_apply/Pages/Default.aspx

Internationally Educated Nurses

If you were educated as a nurse outside of Canada you may be eligible to register as a licensed practical nurse in British Columbia.

This involves the following steps:

- apply to the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS)
(<http://www.nnas.ca/>)
- submit the required documents in order to complete an assessment of your education and nursing practice
- demonstrate English language proficiency
- complete a criminal history record search
- you *may* be asked to complete a competency assessment of your nursing knowledge and practice through Nursing Community Assessment Service (NCAS) <https://www.ncasbc.ca/>
- successfully write the Regulatory Exam - Practical Nurse (REx-PN)

For more information see:

- Internationally Educated Nurses
https://www.bccnm.ca/LPN/applications_registration/how_to_apply/IENapplicant/Pages/IEN.aspx

3. Finding Jobs

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

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

- **BC's Provincial Health Authorities**

BC's health authorities provide health services in all BC regions

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**
<https://careers.vch.ca/>
- **Fraser Health Authority**
<https://careers.fraserhealth.ca/search-jobs.aspx>
- **Interior Health Authority**
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Northern Health Authority**
<https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
- **Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA)**
<http://www.phsa.ca/careers>
- **Island Health Authority**
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
- **First Nations Health Authority**
<https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>
- **Indeed.com**
<http://ca.indeed.com>
Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Canadian Nurses Association - Nursing Careers**
<https://www.nursingcareerscanada.ca/>

Identifying the Right Position

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

For licensed practical nurses look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

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- Licensed Nursing Assistant
- Operating Room Technician
- Registered Nursing Assistant (R.N.A.)
- Registered Practical Nurse (R.P.N.)

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers in the nursing and healthcare sector in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Directory of Canadian healthcare personnel**

Available at the Central Library

362.11025 C21a

- **Guide to Canadian health care facilities**

Available at the Central Library

362.105 C212ca

- **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 "health care" and click SEARCH. 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 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 <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

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

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

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

[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**

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

[Search Networking for Employment]

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**

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

[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for licensed practical nurses in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

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- **Licensed Practical Nurses Association British Columbia (LPNABC)**
[not currently updated]
<http://lpnabc.ca/>
- **British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives**
(<https://www.bccnm.ca/>)
- **British Columbia Nurses' Union (BCNU)**
<https://www.bcnu.org/>
An independent union representing the interests of nurses in BC
- **Canadian Nurses Association**
<https://www.cna-aiic.ca/>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples include:

- **Update**
British Columbia Nurses' Union (BCNU)
<https://www.bcnu.org/news-and-events/update-magazine>
- **Canadian Nurse**
<https://www.canadian-nurse.com/home>

***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 <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/> .*