

Health Care Assistants

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Health Care Assistants [NOC 2021: 33102 / NOC 2016: 3413]

Health Care Assistants may also be called:

- *nurse aides*
- *orderlies*
- *patient service associates*
- *home support worker*
- *personal care attendant*

1. What Would I Do?

Health care assistants help care for people who are old or sick. You may help nurses, hospital staff and physicians in the basic care of patients in hospitals. You may also provide care in community settings including home support and residential care facilities.

Your duties can include:

- basic personal care of patients including bathing, dressing, grooming and feeding
- weighing, lifting and repositioning patients and transporting them in wheelchairs or stretchers
- supervising patients' exercise routines
- making beds and maintaining patients' rooms

- setting up and providing leisure activities for patients
- accompanying patients on outside recreational activities and performing other duties related to patient care and comfort
- taking patients' blood pressure, temperature and pulse
- observing or monitoring patients' status and documenting patient care on charts
- administering first aid in emergency situations

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Nurse Aides, Orderlies and Patient Service Associates**
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- **Career Cruising (Profile for Personal Care Attendant)**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

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

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Health Care Assistants:

- *enjoy working with people who are old or sick*
- *have excellent interpersonal and observational skills*
- *must be patient and sensitive*
- *must be healthy and able to stand, move and lift heavy weight*
- *must be fluent in English*

Health care assistants work in hospital wards, residential long-term care facilities, or for home support agencies. Shifts are usually 8–12 hours and you are often expected to work on weekends, holidays or evenings. On-call and part-time work is common.

This work can be physically demanding, with constant standing, walking and lifting. You may also experience stress and fatigue from working with sick or disabled

patients. You may be exposed to infectious diseases, and to violent behaviour from patients with mental illnesses.

Source: WorkBC

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the median annual salary for health care assistants is \$47,477.

Many employers pay for vacation, sick leave, and extended medical insurance. Some also pay dental insurance and partial retirement benefits.

In BC's regions you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	19.00	24.00	25.85
Cariboo Region	17.00	24.35	30.00
Kootenay Region	20.00	21.93	25.33
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	19.00	24.00	25.99
Nechako Region	20.40	25.21	25.35
North Coast Region	20.40	25.21	25.35
Northeast Region	20.56	23.00	25.33
Thompson–Okanagan Region	19.26	23.59	25.33
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	18.95	24.00	26.00

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

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

There is a strong demand for health care assistants in all regions of BC. Employment opportunities are especially high in long-term care facilities and privately run institutions, and in rural and remote areas.

The demand for health care assistants is leading to higher salaries. Also, the role of care aides is expanding, especially in workplaces without a registered nurse on site.

Employment Outlook

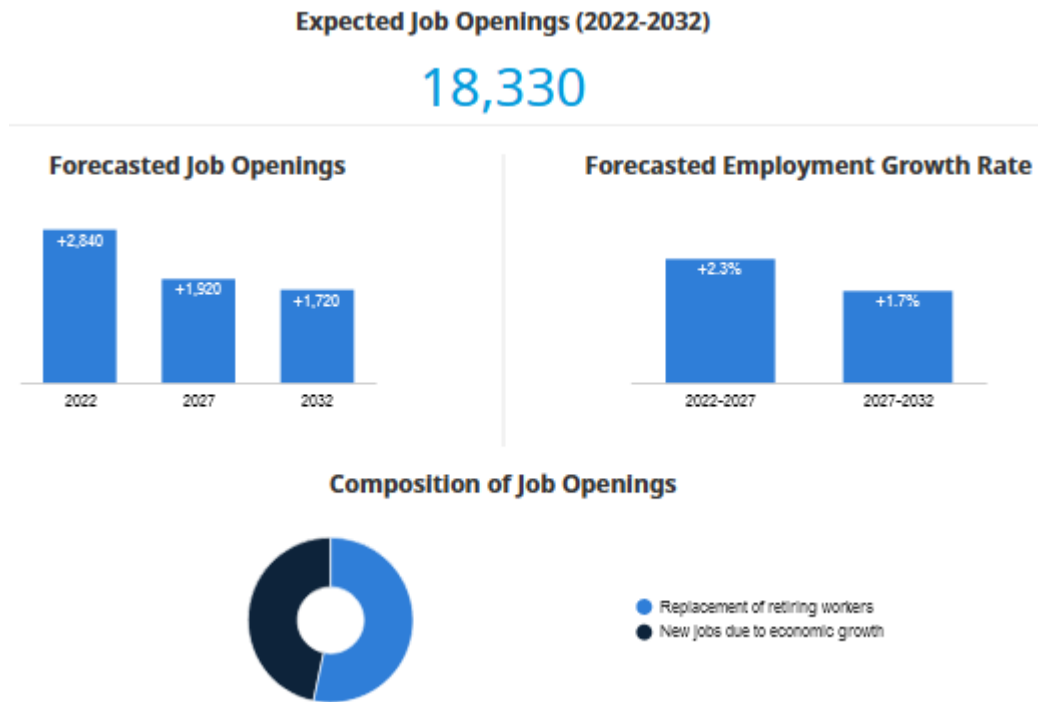


Chart from WorkBC

5. How do I become a health care assistant?

To be eligible to work as a health care assistant in any *publicly funded health care setting in BC*, you must be registered with the **BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry**. In order to qualify to register, you must complete a six- to nine-month Health Care Assistant program offered by colleges in BC, or show proof of equivalent training and experience.

For more information see:

- **BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry**
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Registrants.aspx>

Currently, *private health care providers* may hire health care assistants who are not registered, but this may change at any time. Although some private health care employers will accept applicants with less than Grade 12 education, most prefer candidates who have completed a high school diploma and who have completed a Health Care Assistant program.

Most employers also require a criminal record check, and tuberculosis screening.

If you are an **internationally trained health care professional** wishing to register with the BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry you will also need to:

- have your training and education evaluated by the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) or equivalent agency
- provide evidence of English language proficiency to prove you can listen, speak, read and write in English
- complete a competency assessment by the Nursing Community Assessment Service

For more information:

- **Internationally Educated Health Care Professional**
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Application/International.aspx>

BC Health Career Access Program, Government of BC

This BC government program provides a path for applicants with no health care experience to get hired and receive paid health care assistant training. Through the *Health Career Access Program*, the Province pays for your post-secondary education. New hires in the program start in a health care support worker position and receive paid training that leads to full qualification as a health care assistant.

- More information

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/job-seekers-employees/find-a-job/health-care>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Health Care Assistants work in:

- *hospitals, long-term care facilities, group homes, home support and community care*

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.

Online Job Postings

- **B.C. Health Authorities** [five geographic, independent regions]
 - Vancouver Coastal Health <https://careers.vch.ca/>
 - Fraser Health <https://careers.fraserhealth.ca/>

- Vancouver Island Health <https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
- Interior Health <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers>
- Northern Health <https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
- **B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority** Job Postings [specialty institutions such as BC Transplant, Womens Hospital, BC Childrens Hospital] <http://careers.phsa.ca/>
- **First Nations Health Authority** <https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>
- **Providence Health Care** [Catholic health care agency operating over ten health care facilities including St. Paul’s Hospital, Mount St. Joseph and Holy Family Hospitals] <https://careers.providencehealthcare.org/>
- **BC Care Providers Association Job Board** <https://bccare.ca/jobs/>
- **BC Seniors Living Association - Privately funded residential care facilities** <https://www.bcsla.ca/senior-housing-career-opportunities/>
- **Indeed.com** https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

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 long term care facilities, hospitals and other employers. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **Long Term Care and Assisted Living Directory** <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/long-term-care-directory/>
- **BC Seniors Living Association Members Directory** <https://www.bcsla.ca/search-bcsla-member-directory/>

- **Directory of Canadian Healthcare Personnel**

Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resources, 362.11025 C21a
See section covering hospitals and long term care facilities in BC.

- **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 "hospital" or "home 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).*

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**

<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<https://govolunteer.ca/> [search 'health' or 'medical']

Volunteering in Health Care Facilities

Volunteer positions in hospitals, residential care facilities, and other community settings.

- **Health Authorities:**

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**

- <https://www.vch.ca/en/about-us/get-involved/volunteer>

- **Fraser Health Authority**

- <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/volunteer-opportunities>

- **Providence Health Care**

- <https://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>

- **Long Term Care and Assisted Living Directory**

- <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/quickfacts/location/>

Other volunteer opportunities may be available from individual care facilities across BC

For additional tips see:

- **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>

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, <https://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**

- <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

Care aides typically begin their careers in casual or on-call roles. However, it is becoming more common for new graduates of health care assistant programs to find permanent positions.

With additional education and certification, a care aide can become a licensed practical nurse (LPN). From there, you can train to become a registered nurse (RN).

Source: WorkBC

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry**

<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Home.aspx>

- **BC Care Providers Association**

<https://bccare.ca/>

- **FAST Seniors Care**

This free program serves as a bridge between B.C. employers who need skilled talent and immigrants seeking to start their careers in the seniors' care and living sector.

<https://www.ltcbc.ca/about>

- **Choose2Care, BC Health Care Assistants**

<https://www.choose2care.ca/>

- **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>

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 <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>.