

Social Worker: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Social Worker: Alternative Careers

In BC, social workers provide individuals and families with the resources and support they need to address personal and social issues.

You may find that your international training and experience as a social worker are not immediately accepted in B.C. The skills you have acquired as a social worker (empathy, compassion, understanding, ability to work in difficult situations, good communication skills,) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Community Worker
- Employment Counsellor
- Family, marriage and related counsellors
- Settlement Worker
- Program Coordinator
- Adoption Counsellor
- Addictions / Substance Abuse Counsellor

Alternative Careers:

Community & Social Service Worker (NOC 4212)

Also look for these job titles: addictions worker, drop-in centre worker, family service worker, group home worker, life skills coach, mental health worker, native outreach worker, women's centre coordinator, youth worker

You deliver a variety of social assistance programs and community and health services. You are typically a frontline worker who assists clients to better manage their personal and social problems.

Duties include:

- interview clients to obtain case history and background information
- help clients to determine options and develop plans of action while providing appropriate support and assistance
- help clients locate community resources including legal, medical and financial assistance, housing, employment, transportation, day-care and other referral services
- provide crisis intervention and emergency shelter services
- refer clients to other social services and maintain contact with other social service agencies and health-care providers

Requirements:

- the minimum requirement for community and social service workers is completion of a one-, two- or four-year college or university program in social work, child and youth care, counselling or other social science or health-related discipline
- volunteer experience in social services field is helpful

Skills:

- speak, write and read English
- know about the needs and issues of different social groups, such as newcomers, the elderly, women, *or* know about a particular issue such as sexual assault or addiction
- be culturally sensitive and communicate well with people from different backgrounds
- work well with other people and on your own
- prepare notes, case documents and reports

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$19.11

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/4212>

Employment Counsellors (NOC 4156)

Also look for these job titles: career coach, career counsellor, occupational counsellor, outplacement counsellor

You give information and advice to clients about employment search, career planning, human resource and employment issues.

Duties include:

- interview clients in order to assess their interests, skills, and abilities
- coach clients on interview techniques, resume writing, and networking
- identify barriers to work and help clients with matters such as job readiness skills or career changes
- give and interpret tests designed to determine the interests, aptitudes and abilities of clients
- research labour market trends and occupations

Requirements:

- usually four-year college or university program

Skills:

- an interest in human behaviour and development
- knowledgeable about careers and the labour market
- communication skills
- patience and understanding

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$24.00

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/4156>

Family, Marriage and Related Counsellors (NOC 4153)

Also look for these job titles: child & youth counsellor, marriage and family therapist

You assist individuals and groups of clients to identify, understand and overcome personal problems and achieve personal objectives.

Duties include:

- interview clients, prepare case histories and assess problems
- counsel clients, provide therapy and mediation services, facilitate group sessions
- liaise with community agencies or partners, and identify additional services and provide referrals
- prepare assessment, progress, follow-up and court reports

Requirements:

- a master's degree in the field of counselling, mental health or a related social service discipline is usually required

- membership with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors is required to use the title "Registered Clinical Counsellor": <http://bc-counsellors.org/>

Skills:

- patient
- understanding and empathetic
- non-judgemental
- excellent communication and listening skills

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$25.83

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/4153>

Addictions Counsellor (NOC 4153)

Also look for these job titles: abuse/crisis counsellor, behavioural consultant, rehabilitation counsellor

You help people overcome alcohol, drug, gambling, and other addictions.

Duties include:

- meet with clients to assess the extent of their addictions
- develop treatment plans or refer clients to recovery programs
- counsel, support, and encourage clients through the recovery process
- monitor clients' progress and write reports
- educate the public on addiction prevention

Requirements:

- usually four-year college or university program
- a master's degree in the field of counselling, mental health or a related social service discipline may be required

Skills:

- patient
- understanding and empathetic
- non-judgemental
- excellent communication and listening skills

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$25.83

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/4153>

2. Employment Outlook

The future job outlook is good. New jobs will be created to address the needs of the growing population of elderly persons, persons with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, homeless persons and those with substance abuse problems.

Growth is also expected in the area of First Nations outreach and community development, especially for youth and in rehabilitation.

Community & Social Service Worker (NOC 4212)

Job Openings Outlook in BC

% of job openings from replacement	65%
% of job openings from expansion	35%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.5%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	10,780

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/>

Employment Counsellors (NOC 4156)

Job Openings Outlook in BC

% of job openings from replacement	72%
% of job openings from expansion	28%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.0%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	1,060

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/>

Family, Marriage and Related Counsellors (NOC 4153)

Job Openings Outlook in BC

% of job openings from replacement	67%
% of job openings from expansion	33%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.4%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	2,330

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/>

3. Retraining

You may want to consider upgrading your skills to increase your employment options in this field. The following courses may improve your current skills:

Simon Fraser University: *Career Development Practitioner Certificate: Career Management (part-time)*

- Part-time; course can be completed within 8 months. You will build skills for employment counselling and career coaching jobs
<http://www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/programs/part-time-career-development-practitioner-certificate/overview.html>

Douglas College: *Career Development Practice Programs*

- Part-time, 9 month certificate program; develop skills to work in the career, employment or vocational rehabilitation fields
<http://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/continuing-education/child-family-community/career-dev-practice-certificate>

University of the Fraser Valley: *Community Support Worker Certificate*

- 1 year program, available both part-time and full-time
<http://www.ufv.ca/swhs/programs/community-support-worker-certificate/>

Vancouver Community College: *Addictions Counselling Skills Certificate*

- 1-3 year program, available both part-time and full-time
<http://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/human-and-family-services/addiction-counselling-skills-certificate/>

Vancouver Community College: *Community Counselling Skills Certificate*

- 1-3 year program, available both part-time and full-time
<http://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/human-and-family-services/community-counselling-skills-certificate/>

4. Searching for Jobs

BC Government Job Postings

https://search.employment.gov.bc.ca/cgi-bin/a/searchjobs_quick.cgi

B.C. Health Authorities

Regional services including publicly funded hospitals and residential care facilities

www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/ (select link for each region and then go to 'Careers')

B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority Job Postings

Lists jobs available in specialty institutions such as BC Transplant, Women's Hospital, BC Children's Hospital

<http://jobs.phsa.ca/>

Community Social Services Employers' Association of BC

<https://www.cssea.bc.ca/> (click on 'Careers')

Greater Vancouver Community Services Society: Community Living Workers

<http://www.gvcss.bc.ca/communitylivingjobs.htm>

Inclusion BC: Careers in Community Living

<http://www.inclusionbc.org/member-associations/careers-community-living>

Indeed.ca

www.indeed.ca

Neuvoo

<https://neuvoo.ca/>

5. Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering can help you to explore a new career and learn more about the social services system in BC. You will meet new people and build a network of contacts that can lead to information on job openings and inside connections with potential employers.

The following organizations accept volunteers:

Canadian Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.ca/where-we-work/in-canada/british-columbia-and-yukon>

Crisis Centre BC

<http://www.crisiscentre.bc.ca/volunteer/>

Elizabeth Fry Society

<http://www.elizabethfry.com/humanresources/volunteering.htm>

Family Services of Greater Vancouver

<http://www.fsgv.ca/get-involved/volunteer-with-us/>

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

<http://www.vch.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>

Fraser Health Authority

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

Providence Health Care

www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers

Volunteer BC

www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/

6. Helpful Resources

Canadian Professional Counsellors Association

<http://www.cPCA-rpc.ca/>

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Associations

<http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/en/>

Canadian Council for Career Development

<http://cccda.org/cccda/>

BC Career Development Association

<http://www.bccda.org/>

BC Association of Social Workers

<http://www.bcasw.org/>

Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division

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

Click on 'Job Search Resources' at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca> for help on:

- resumes & cover letters
- getting Canadian work experience
- networking for employment
- online social networks
- Canadian workplace culture

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/>.