Travel Counsellors

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia
1. Working as a Travel Counsellor [NOC 6521]

Job Description

Travel counsellors arrange trips for travellers and provide them with travel advice and information.

As a travel counsellor you perform the following duties:

- give clients information about travel options and tour packages
- make bookings and reservations
- prepare tickets and receive payment
- investigate and promote particular destinations, tour packages and other travel services

Industry Overview

The job market for travel counsellors is very competitive. You will be more successful finding work if you are fluent in several languages, particularly Asian languages. Computer skills are also an asset.

Employment in this field is dependent on economic conditions, so the number of openings is likely to vary from year to year.

The majority of BC travel counsellors are employed in Metro Vancouver.
Job Outlook in BC

Travel Counsellors (NOC 6521)

The Employment Outlook for BC provides job openings projections for travel counsellors within BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2010 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>2015 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>Avg Annual % Change, 5 Years, 2010 to 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland / Southwest</td>
<td>3,930</td>
<td>4,390</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson-Okanagan</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootenay</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast &amp; Nechako</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Regional Employment Projections, BC Stats. Projections for development regions.
You can learn more about working as a travel counsellor in BC from these sources:

- **Work BC Career Profiles**
  
  [http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/] [Search 6521]

- **Career Cruising** (Profile for Travel Agent)
  
  Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
  
  [http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising]

**Types of Employers**

Travel counsellors work for a variety of businesses including:

- travel agencies
- tour wholesalers
- airlines and other transportation companies
- tourism organizations
- hotel chains
- corporate offices that have enough business travel to need their own booking divisions

You may also be self-employed.

**Salary**

The average annual salary for travel counsellors in BC is between $33,000 and $44,000.

You may also get bonuses or incentives such as inexpensive fares, free promotional vacations, and other travel-related rewards.
Job Bank provides hourly wages for travel counsellors in these BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>16.73</td>
<td>28.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>16.73</td>
<td>27.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>14.14</td>
<td>19.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
- Go2HR [https://www.go2hr.ca/careers/travel-counsellor](https://www.go2hr.ca/careers/travel-counsellor)

**Working Hours**

Most travel counsellors have regular work schedules: 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. You may be expected to work evenings and weekends, especially during peak travel periods.

If you are self-employed you usually work longer hours.
2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong written and verbal communication skills
- customer service
- aptitude for selling and marketing
- ability to work under pressure
- ability to handle money and other forms of payment
- proven research, organizational and time management skills
- travel experience and knowledge of world geography an asset
- second language an asset

Education and Experience

To work as a travel counsellor in BC you require:

- Completion of secondary school
- A college diploma or vocational training in travel or tourism is usually required

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 travel counsellor in BC.

However, some employers may request you have certification with the Canadian Institute of Travel Counsellors (CITC). Additional information on certification can be found here:

- Canadian Institute of Travel Counsellors

Sources:

- Go2HR
- Career Cruising (Profile for Travel counsellor)
- WorkBC Career Profile
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.

Job White Pages
- Available in print at the Central Library or online at

*NOTE:* You can only access this database from the Central Library or VPL branch libraries. Access is NOT available from home or outside the Library.

Online Job Postings
- **go2 Job Board**
  [http://www.go2hr.ca/jobboard.aspx](http://www.go2hr.ca/jobboard.aspx)
  Tourism jobs available throughout BC. Search for available positions by sector, region, city, job type or keyword.
- **Indeed.com**
  [http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search](http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)
  Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards

Professional Associations’ Career Resources
- **Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA)**
  [http://www.acta.ca/acta-careers](http://www.acta.ca/acta-careers)
Identifying the Right Position

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

For travel counsellors, look for these related job titles

- Booking Agent
- Reservation Sales Agent
- Tourist Information Counsellor
- Travel Consultant
- Travel Agent
- Travel Specialist


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.

- **Personnel guide to Canada’s travel industry**
  Listings of travel agencies, tour operators and other companies in the travel industry across Canada
  Available at the Central Library, 338.479 P46

- **Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority of British Columbia – Licensed Travel Agencies**
  http://www.bpcpa.ca/index.php/businesses-travel-services-home
  Listing of all licensed travel agencies in British Columbia - search by city

- **Meeting places: a guide to planning a successful meeting in British Columbia**
  Available at Central Library, 338.47905 M49

- **Association of Canadian Travel Agencies Travel Directory**
  http://www.acta.ca/travel-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 “travel agencies” 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 (curriculum vitae) and a cover letter. These should identify the position you are applying for and summarize your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, http://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:

- **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 travel professionals in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Association of Canadian Travel Agencies**
  
  http://www.acta.ca

  A national professional association for travel counsellors

- **Go2: The Resource for People in Tourism**
  
  http://www.go2hr.ca/

  Provides information about careers in BC’s tourism industry

- **Discover Tourism**
  
  http://discovertourism.ca

  A website created to promote careers in tourism.

**Industry Journals**
Provide current information about the travel industry. Examples include:

- **Travel Agent Central**
  
  http://www.travelagentcentral.com/

- **Travel Industry Today.com (Canada)**
  

- **Travel Weekly**
  
  http://www.travelweekly.com/

**Questions?** Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch,
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/*