

Accountants (CPA)

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) (NOC 1111)

Job Description

Chartered Professional Accountants organize and analyze the financial records and transactions kept by businesses and individuals.

You perform the following duties:

- plan, set up and maintain accounting systems
- provide financial, business and tax advice
- prepare financial statements, reports and income tax returns
- ensure accuracy and compliance with established accounting standards and procedures
- project future earnings and cash requirements
- assist with financing initiatives to secure bank or equity funding
- act as trustees in bankruptcy proceedings

Source: WorkBC, Career Profile for Accountants

<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1111>

Industry Overview

In Canada all three accounting designations, CA / CMA / CGA have merged under the Chartered Professional Accountant (**CPA**) designation. Intermediate level accounting professionals who don't meet the requirements to register as a CPA may choose to obtain the Advanced Certificate in Accounting and Finance (**ACAF**) designation.

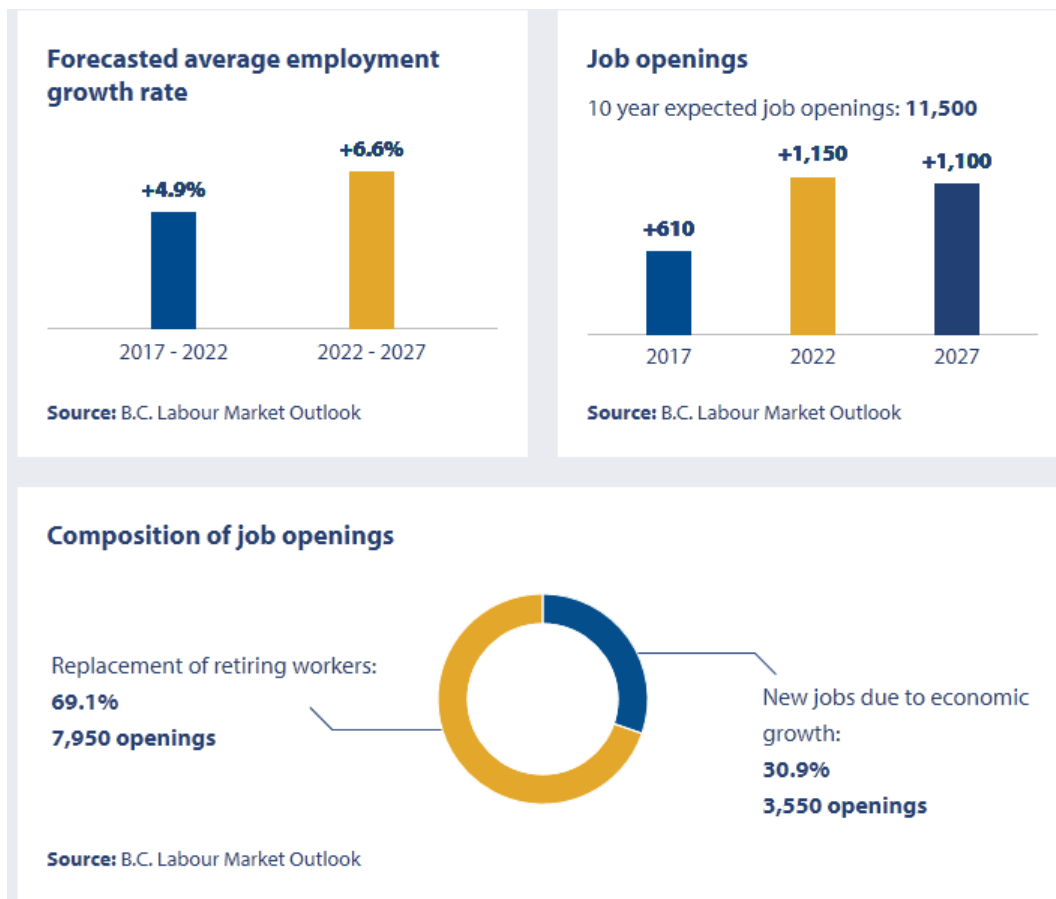
CPAs and ACAFs have a variety of employment opportunities and are in high demand in BC.

Demand for tax, financial instrument, forensic accounting, bankruptcy and information experts is increasing, and demand for accountants specializing in a specific industrial sector may also be on the rise.

With the rise of international trade, job opportunities are opening for accountants who speak additional languages.

Sources: CPA, BC <http://www.bccpa.ca/> and Work BC, <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1111>

Job Outlook in BC - Accountants



Source: Work BC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2017-2027:

Region	Employment in 2017	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island	3,290	0.1%	1,030
Lower Mainland/Southwest	22,950	1.3%	9,140
Thompson-Okanagan	2,230	1.1%	870
Kootenay	400	0.7%	140
Cariboo	550	0.5%	200
North Coast & Nechako	230	0.2%	70
Northeast	140	0.6 ^	50

You can learn more about the accounting sector from:

- **WorkBC Careers**, <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
[search NOC 1111]
- **Career Cruising**
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profile for Accountant]
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

Types of Employers

Accountants work for:

- businesses of all kinds
- government
- educational and health care organizations
- non-profit organizations

You may also be self employed.

Salary

The median annual salary for accountants and financial auditors in BC is \$57,750. You usually receive benefits, such as dental plans, pension plans and sick days. You may also receive performance bonuses or profit-sharing plans.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

In BC regions you can expect to make:

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	17.00	27.88	47.00
Cariboo Region	17.00	27.88	47.00
Kootenay Region	17.00	27.88	47.00
Lower Mainland - Southwest Region	16.50	27.15	45.67
Nechako Region	17.00	27.88	47.00
Northeast Region	17.00	27.88	47.00
Thompson--Okanagan Region	18.22	28.00	48.70
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	21.00	30.29	45.67

Source: Job Bank Wage Report http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wage-outlook_search-eng.do?reportOption=wage [Search 1111]

Total Compensation for CPAs in BC Cities (\$ in 000's)

City	Median	Mean	Percentile 25	Percentile 75
Vancouver	\$102	\$145	\$77	\$150
Prince George	\$105	\$131	\$80	\$132
Abbotsford - Mission	\$96	\$125	\$73	\$137
Victoria	\$94	\$125	\$77	\$131
Kelowna	\$96	\$124	\$75	\$132
Chilliwack	\$99	\$121	\$80	\$154
Kamloops	\$85	\$120	\$65	\$123
Nanaimo	\$90	\$120	\$65	\$122
Penticton	\$92	\$105	\$72	\$114
Other	\$100	\$120	\$79	\$137

Source: <https://www.cpacanada.ca/en/members-area/profession-news/2015/november/2015-cpa-compensation-study-report>

Also see this salary survey:

- *The Robert Half 2018 Salary Guide – Accounting & Finance*,
<https://www.roberthalf.ca/en/finance/the-salary-guide-for-accounting-and-finance>

Working Hours

You generally work between 8 and 10 hours a day, 40 to 50 hours a week. You may have to work nights and weekends if an important deadline is approaching.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to share financial results, explain projections, report the impact of financial decisions and prepare detailed reports on audit findings
- Work well independently and as part of a team

Education and Experience

CPA

- Canadian post-secondary degree or equivalent is required
- successful completion of the CPA Professional Education Program (PEP)
- successful completion of the Common Final Examination (CFE)

For information on how to **become a CPA**, attend an information session:

<https://www.bccpa.ca/become-a-cpa/cpabc-events/>

Advanced Certificate in Accounting & Finance (ACAF)

- Individuals without a Canadian post-secondary degree may choose to qualify as an *ACAF*, which is an intermediate level accounting professional. The *ACAF* qualification may be ideal for internationally trained accountants wanting to work in Canada.
- a minimum of one year study at a recognized post-secondary institution or ability to meet the entry requirements through prior work experience is required
- completion of the Advanced Certificate in Accounting and Finance program
- successful completion of the *ACAF* National Examination

For more information on how to **become an ACAF**, see:

<https://www.bccpa.ca/become-a-cpa/programs/advanced-certificate-in-accounting-and-finance-ac/>

Qualifications

This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.

In order to work as a CPA or ACAF you must be registered with *Chartered Professional Accountants BC*.

- For qualification requirements see:
Chartered Professional Accountants British Columbia
<https://www.bccpa.ca/become-a-cpa/programs/>

Internationally Educated and Trained Accounting Professionals

- For information on how to become a CPA, visit
<https://www.bccpa.ca/become-a-cpa/programs/cpa-designation/what-are-mras/>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and Internet websites, 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.

Job White Pages

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom>

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

- **Indeed.com**
http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
- **AcctJob.Ca**
<http://www.accountingjob.ca>
- **Hays Specialist Recruitment**
<http://www.hays.ca/>
- **Robert Half Finance & Accounting**
<http://www.roberthalffinance.com>

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) of BC**
<https://careers.bccpa.ca/>
- **Institute of Internal Auditors**
<https://chapters.theiia.org/vancouver/Careers/Pages/default.aspx>

Identifying the Right Position

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

Look for these related job titles (NOC 1111):

- Accountant
- Financial Auditor
- Income Tax Expert
- Industrial Accountant
- Internal Auditor
- Controller/Comptroller

Source: NOC <http://noc.esdc.gc.ca/English/noc/welcome.aspx?ver=16>

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers in the accounting services industry in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Business in Vancouver. Book of Lists.**
Includes biggest accounting firms in BC
Available at the Central Library 338.9711 B97b and online at
<http://www.biv.com/lists>

- **Financial Services Canada**

Available at the Central Library, 332.1025 F49

- **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 "*accountants*" 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).*

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, <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 pathfinders 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 accounting professionals in BC provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Chartered Professional Accountants of BC**
<http://www.bccpa.ca>
- **Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada**
<http://www.cpacanada.ca/>
- **Institute of Internal Auditors**
<https://na.theiia.org/Pages/IIAHome.aspx>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples at the Central Library

- **CPA Magazine**
Available at VPL Central Branch, 657.05 C21 and online at;
<https://www.cpacanada.ca/en/connecting-and-news/cpa-magazine>
- **CPABC In Focus/** Chartered Professional Accountants of BC
<http://www.bccpa.ca/news-events-publications/publications/cpabc-in-focus/>
- **Industry Update/** Chartered Professional Accountants of BC
<http://www.bccpa.ca/news-events-publications/publications/industry-update/>

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/>.