

# Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN): Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN): Alternative Careers

In BC, licensed practical nurses (LPNs) work as frontline health care professionals caring for a wide range of clients at all stages of life. You work in collaboration with other members of the health care team.

You may find that your international training and experience as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) are not immediately accepted in B.C. The skills you have acquired as an LPN (patient care, ability to work well with others, good communication skills, compassion and understanding) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Health Care Assistant (NOC 3413)
- Home Support Worker (NOC 4412)
- Psychiatric Aide
- Hospital Service Worker

### Alternative Careers:

#### Health Care Assistant (HCA) OR Nurses Aides (NOC 3413)

You assist people, especially older adults, who require basic nursing care. You also help to promote and maintain clients' physical, emotional, and social well-being. HCAs work within a health care team in care facilities or independently within the community.

#### Duties:

- Assist clients with the tasks of daily living
- Help deliver care and rehabilitation programs to people with disabilities and chronic medical conditions
- Provide for the comfort, safety and well-being of clients
- Assist with recreational activities

**Requirements:**

- 5-7 month post-secondary certificate program may be required; criminal record check

**Skills:**

- Good understanding of the conditions that lead to disability
- Demonstrate sensitivity and respect for clients' individuality and culture
- Communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to work as a member of a team
- Physical ability to carry out the duties of the position
- Ability to organize work and manage time
- Ability to safely operate lifts and other equipment

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$21.00

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3413>

**Home Support Worker (NOC 4412)**

You help individuals in all areas of daily living: personal hygiene, meal preparation, routine housekeeping and mobility assistance.

Also look for these job titles:

- personal care attendant - disabilities
- family caregiver
- housekeeper
- live-in caregiver - seniors
- home care worker
- personal care attendant
- resident care aide
- respite worker - home support

**Duties:**

- Help patients with daily living activities, such as bathing, dressing and eating
- Provide care and companionship for individuals during periods of bed-rest and convalescence
- Keep track of medications and take basic measurements such as temperature and pulse
- May perform routine housekeeping duties such as laundry, washing dishes and making beds

**Requirements:**

- Home Support/Resident Care Attendant (HSRCA) certificate or the equivalent from a recognized college may be required
- first Aid, CPR and FOODSAFE certification

**Skills:**

- physical stamina
- strong interpersonal skills
- sensitivity and patience
- excellent observational skills
- ability to adapt to constantly changing environments
- carefully follow direction, policy and procedure

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage \$18.00

Source: <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/4412>

**Psychiatric Aide**

You provide care and support to patients with mental or emotional difficulties.

Also look for these job titles:

- mental health aide
- community mental health worker
- mental health support worker

**Duties:**

- assist with eating and personal hygiene
- socialize with patients
- plan and supervise recreational activities
- report medical or behavioural changes to nurses, doctors, or psychologists

**Requirements:**

- secondary school education plus on the job training
- some jobs may require certification as a Health Care Assistant or Mental Health worker

**Skills:**

- calm, patient and compassionate
- organized and able to follow instructions
- dependable and able to work unsupervised
- enjoy helping others

**Wages:**

- most earn between minimum wage and \$22/hour

Source: Career Cruising <http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

## **Hospital Service Worker**

You help keep hospitals running by preparing meals, ordering supplies, moving patients, and doing many other tasks.

*Also referred to as: dietary aide, linen attendant or lab aide or porter*

**Duties:**

- serve meals
- wash and iron sheets and clothing
- lift patients in and out of wheelchairs
- transport patients around hospitals
- order and distribute supplies

**Requirements:**

- high school diploma; most training is on the job

**Skills:**

- energetic and in good physical condition
- responsible, reliable, able to follow instructions
- work well independently and as part of a team

**Wages:**

- between minimum wage and \$20/hour

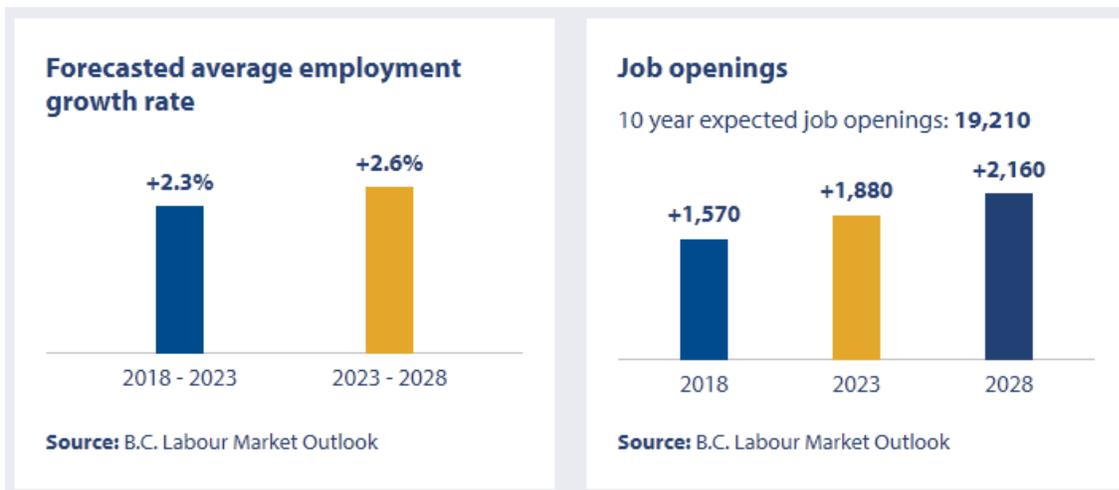
Source: Career Cruising <http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

## 2. Employment Outlook

A growing and ageing population will require more health services, which will result in an increased demand for health care support workers. Employment opportunities will be high throughout the province, especially in nursing homes, long-term care facilities and privately run institutions. Strong demand for resident care aides is contributing to higher salaries and increased opportunities to work in diverse environments.

### Health Care Assistant (HCA) OR Nurses' Aides

#### Job Openings Outlook in BC (NOC 3413)



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

### Home Support Worker

#### Job Openings Outlook in BC (NOC 4412)



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

### 3. Retraining

#### Health Care Assistant programs:

Graduates may work in any level of continuing care, including: home support, adult day care, assisted living, and complex care (including special care units).

- **Recognized BC Health Care Assistant Programs**

<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/About-the-Registry/List-of-HCA-programs-in-BC.aspx>

#### Health Care Support Worker Program

- **Douglas College**

Students learn to assist with daily living (bathing, personal grooming, eating, maintaining mobility), and with psychosocial challenges. This program is combination of the Health Care Assistant (HCA) Certificate Program (two semesters) and the Community Mental Health Worker (CMHW) Certificate Program (one semester).

<https://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/faculties/health-sciences/health-care-support-worker>

#### Nursing Unit Clerk programs:

Unit Clerks work with physicians and nurses; you process doctor's orders and instructions and perform other clerical duties. The complex and detailed nature of this job requires excellent communication, decision making and problem-solving skills to coordinate quality patient care. These are full time programs.

- **University of Fraser Valley:**

<https://www.ufv.ca/continuing-education/programs/nursing-unit-clerk/>

- **Vancouver Community College, Health Unit Coordinator**

<https://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/health-sciences/health-unit-coordinator/>

## 4. Searching for Jobs

### 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>

### Providence Health Care

<http://www.providencehealthcare.org/careers>

### Indeed.ca

[www.indeed.ca](http://www.indeed.ca)

### Neuvoo

<https://neuvoo.ca/>

### Privately funded residential care facilities

<https://www.bcsla.ca/senior-housing-career-opportunities/>

## 5. Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering in health care facilities can help you to explore a new career and learn more about the health care 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 in hospitals, residential care facilities, palliative care and other community settings.

### **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**

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

### **Fraser Health Authority**

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

### **Providence Health Care**

<http://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>

### **Community Care Facilities, BC Ministry of Health**

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

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/ccf/survey/index.php/displaycommunity/index>

### **Canadian Mental Health Association**

<https://cmha.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>

### **Volunteer BC**

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

## 6. Helpful Resources

### British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals

<https://www.bccnp.ca>

### Canadian Home Care Association

<http://www.cdnhomecare.ca/index.php>

### BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry

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

### Personal Support Worker Canada

Provides samples of cover letters and resumes

<http://www.personalsupportworker.com/>

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/>.