

Architects

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as an Architect [NOC 2151]

Job Description

Architects plan and design the construction and renovation of buildings. You can choose to specialize in a type of construction such as residential, commercial, industrial or institutional.

As an architect you do the following:

- Consult with clients to determine style and purpose of building
- Conceive and design buildings
- Develop design specifications, building materials, costs, and construction schedules
- Prepare bidding documents, participate in contract negotiations, and award construction contracts
- Monitor activities by contractors and on construction sites to ensure compliance with specifications
- Conduct feasibility studies and financial analyses of building projects

Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/careers/2151>

Industry Overview

There are approximately 3,000 architects in British Columbia. The majority (84%) are employed in the Mainland/Southwest region of the province.

The largest architecture sector is non-residential (projects such as hospitals, schools, retail buildings, restaurants, hotels, and office buildings). The second largest sector is residential construction, especially multi-family units.

Job Outlook in BC (2019-2029)

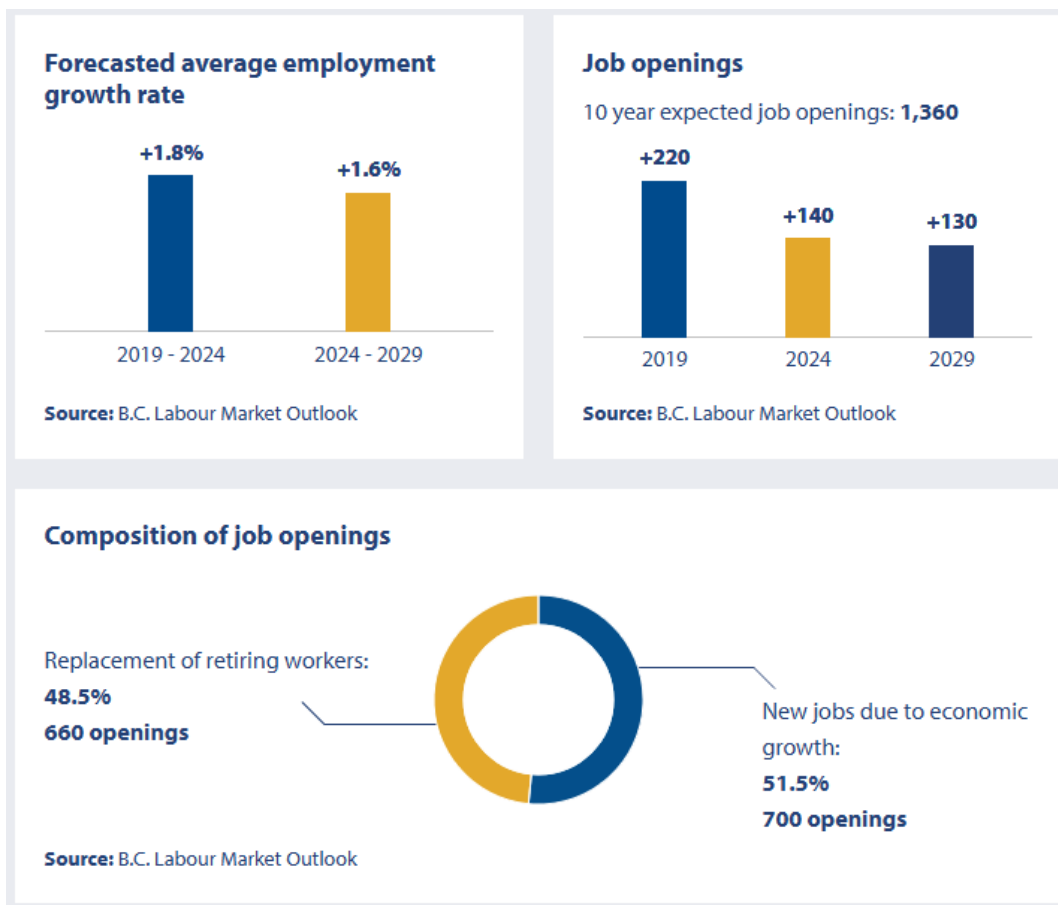


Chart from WorkBC

Work BC provides job openings in BC regions from 2019-2029:

Region	Employment in 2019	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island	390	0.8%	120
Lower Mainland/Southwest	3,140	1.8%	1,170
Thompson-Okanagan	140	2.1%	60
Kootenay	70	-0.5%	10

You can learn more about working as an architect in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Architects (NOC 2151)**

<https://www.workbc.ca/careers/2151>

- **Career Cruising** (profile for 'Architect')

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

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

Types of Employers

Most architects work for architectural firms and building contractors, but you may also work for government agencies and real estate companies. You may also be self-employed.

Salary

The *median* annual salary for architects in BC is \$63,000. There is a huge range in incomes. If you work as an intern after graduation from an architecture program you generally earn between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year. After completing this training period your annual salary is between \$50,000 and \$100,000, although some make more than this.

The highest incomes are earned by architects who are the principal architects at a firm, or who become partners in large firms. Because you are often paid by the project, a slow-down in construction generally means lower earnings. Self-

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employed architects might make as little as \$30,000 a year, while busy principal architects in large successful firms can bring in as much as \$300,000 a year.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for Architects in BC regions:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	23.93	31.25	45.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	23.93	30.29	41.03
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	23.93	31.25	45.00

Source: Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages> [Search 2151]

Working Hours

Working hours vary greatly. Some architects work 7 to 8 hours a day, 5 days a week; others might work 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. If you are self-employed, your hours depend on how much business you have.

Source: Career Cruising

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Innovative, imaginative, creative
- Detail-oriented
- Good spatial perception
- Computer aided design
- Drafting (CADD) program

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising (Profile for Architect)

Education and Experience

In order to work as an Architect in BC you require:

- A post-secondary education certified by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board <https://cacb.ca/>
- Completion of an internship (3720 hours) under the supervision of a registered architect (see: http://internship.aibc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AIBC-IAP-Graphic_revised2017.pdf)
- Completion of the architect registration examination
- Registration with the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)

Qualifications

This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.

In order to practice in B.C., you must either obtain a Certificate of Practice (licence) from the **Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)**, or work for a person or firm that holds a current Certificate of Practice.

More information on registration and licensing:

- **Architectural Institute of British Columbia**
<https://aibc.ca/registration/>

Internationally Trained and Accredited Architects

The Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (BEFA) Program is an alternative pathway for internationally trained architects to obtain your license. The program is administered by the ***Canadian Architecture Certification Board (CACB)***. The BEFA Program streamlines the licensing through a three-step process that includes a review of eligibility, an on-line assessment, and an interview with registered architects.

More information:

- **Architectural Institute of BC – BEFA Certification**
<https://aibc.ca/registration/become-an-architect-aibc/alternative-qualifications/>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, 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, the careers section is 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

JOB Freeway.com

<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom>

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

NOTE: Access at VPL locations only

Online Job Postings

- **WorkBC**
<https://www.workbc.ca/JobSeekers/SearchResults.aspx>
- **Neuvoo.ca**
<https://neuvoo.ca/>
- **Indeed.com**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)**
<https://aibcclassifieds.wordpress.com/category/career-opportunities/>
- **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada RAIC: job board**
<https://raic.org/raic/job-board>

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant. For architects, look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- Architectural Standards Specialist
- Chief Architect
- Consulting Architect
- Industrial and Commercial Buildings Architect
- Residential Architect
- Project Architect

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers who work in the architecture sector in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Architectural Institute of British Columbia, Membership Directory**
Includes the AIBC register of members and the directory of member firms.

Available at the Central Library 720.6 A67a

Also available online at:

<https://aibc.memberpro.net/ssl/main/body.cfm?menu=directory> (click on "search for a firm")

- **Business in Vancouver. "Book of Lists"**

Available at the Central Library, see lists of top architects and construction companies. 338.9711 B97b or Online at <https://biv.com/lists>

- **Canadian Construction Association Membership Directory**

Online at: <https://www.cca-acc.com/membership/search-corporate-members/>

- **Home Builders Association of Vancouver, Find a Professional**

<https://havan.ca/find-a-professional/>

- **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 "architects" 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

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 architects in BC and Canada provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)**

<https://aibc.ca/>

- **Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB)**

<https://cacb.ca/>

- **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)**

<https://raic.org/>

Voluntary national association representing architects, faculty, and graduates of accredited Canadian Schools of Architecture from across Canada

- **Eco Canada:** career profile of Sustainable Architect

<http://www.eco.ca/career-profiles/sustainable-architect/>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. You'll find recent editions at the Central Library:

- **ArchitectureBC** / Architectural Institute of British Columbia

Available at the Central Library, 720.9711 A673n or online at

<https://aibc.ca/news-events/signature-events-programs/architectural-awards/architecturebc/>

- **Canadian Architect**

Available at the Central Library, 720.5 C212 or online at

<https://www.canadianarchitect.com/>

- **Construction Canada** /

Available at the Central Library, 692.05 S74 or online at

<https://www.constructioncanada.net/>

- **Journal of Commerce**

Available at VPL Central Library, 338.47 J86 BU or online at

<https://canada.constructconnect.com/joc>

**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/>.*