Librarians & Library Technicians: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia

skilled immigrant infocentre

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Librarians & Library Technicians: Alternative Careers

In BC, **librarians** plan, organize and maintain libraries and their collections and provide programs and advisory services for users. **Library technicians** help users to access library resources, assist in cataloguing, help users with interlibrary loans and reference searches, as well as processing the checkout and return of books and other library materials.

Both librarians and library technicians may work in public, academic, school or special libraries.

You may find that your international training and experience as a librarian or a library technician are not immediately accepted in B.C.

The skills you have acquired as a **librarian** (instructional, communication, research, organizational, computer and customer service skills) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Policy researchers, consultants and program officers
- Researchers
- Post-Secondary Teaching and Research Assistants

The skills you have acquired as a **library technician** (attention to detail, well organized, customer service, communication, and computer skills) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Library Clerks
- Records Management and Filing Clerks
- Administrative Clerks

Alternative Careers – Librarians:

Researchers

You find, evaluate, and summarize information for banks, insurance firms, ad agencies, and many other types of organizations.

Duties include:

- develop strategies to search the Internet, databases, publications, and other sources to find information
- evaluate sources and check facts
- write summaries or analyses of your findings

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree is minimum requirement
- many positions also require a master's degree, either in an area related to the organization's work or in library or information studies

Skills

- highly organized
- detail-oriented and analytical
- strong writing skills

Wages

- median annual wage: $70,000

Source: Career Cruising database (Profile for "Researcher")

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

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

Policy Researchers and Program Officers including:

- **Natural & Applied Science Policy Researchers (NOC 4161)**
- **Economists and Economic Policy Researchers, (NOC 4162)**
- **Business Development Officers and Marketing Researchers (NOC 4163)**
- **Social policy Researchers (NOC 4164)**
- **Health Policy Researchers (NOC 4165)**
- **Education Policy Researchers (NOC 4166)**

You conduct research, prepare reports, analyze information, and manage programs in a variety of areas. You work for federal, provincial and municipal governments, educational institutions, research organizations, and consulting firms.

Natural and applied science policy researchers *(e.g. energy policy analyst, environmental impact analyst)* may work for environmental and conservation organizations.
Economic policy researchers may work for unions, banks and investment firms.
Business development officers *(e.g. community economic development) and marketing researchers* may work for marketing firms and business associations.
Social policy researchers *(e.g. social policy development officers, housing policy analysts)* may work in hospitals, professional associations, non-government organizations and international organizations.
Health policy researchers *(e.g. health care planner, health promotion program officer)* may work for hospitals, community agencies, professional associations and international organizations.
Education policy researchers may work for school boards, post-secondary institutions and research institutes.
Duties include:

- ***Natural & Applied Sciences****: promote public awareness and education on issues such as the use of natural resources, the environment, and the reduction of waste
- ***Economics Policy****: develop models to analyze and forecast economic growth, income and expenditure, interest rates, unemployment, wages, etc.
- ***Business Development****: manage programs to promote industrial and commercial business investment; carry out social or economic surveys on local, regional or national areas to assess development potential and future trends
- ***Marketing****: design market research questionnaires, survey the buying habits and preferences of wholesale or retail customers; develop social and economic profiles

- ***Social Policy***: develop questionnaires, coordinate and conduct surveys, analyse data, and compile and interpret statistics on social issues and policy areas
- ***Health Policy***: help develop government health policy by doing interviews; collect and analyze statistics provided by health-care institutions; evaluate health-care programs
- ***Education Policy***: manage education policies and programs; evaluate program curriculum and recommend improvements; do statistical analyses to determine the cost and effectiveness of policies and programs

Requirements:

- Bachelors (undergraduate) degree in a science or social sciences field related to the program area
- Master's degree may also be required

Skills

- analytical
- able to understand complex issues
- strong written and oral communication skills
- knowledge of current social, economic, and environmental issues

Wages:

- median hourly wages:
    - $42.86 (applied & natural sciences researchers)
    - $38.78 (economic researchers)
    - $32.05 (business development and marketing researchers)
    - $32.82 (social policy researchers)
    - $34.00 (health policy researchers)
    - $29.90 (education policy researchers)

Source: https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx

Post-Secondary Teaching and Research Assistants (NOC 4012)

Also look for this job title: college teaching assistant

You help university professors, community college teachers and other faculty members in teaching and research activities.

Duties as a *Teaching Assistant* include:

- organize reference materials, visual aids and other materials as required by university professors or college professors for lectures
- conduct seminars, discussion groups and laboratory sessions to supplement lectures
- help with the preparation and administration of exams, and grade exams, term papers, and assignments

Duties as a *Research Assistant* include:

- conduct literature reviews, surveys, laboratory experiments and other research for use in scholarly publications
- compile research results and help professors with preparation of journal articles or papers

Requirements:

- usually currently enrolled in a Master's or Doctorate program at a University or College
- teaching assistants usually have a Bachelor's degree and some previous teaching experience and experience in the course's subject area

Skills

- strong organizational skills
- able to communicate ideas, motivate students and be creative
- able to work on your own, as well as work in a team environment

Wages

- median hourly wage: $20.00

Source: https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/4012

Additional alternative careers for librarians:

You may also wish to investigate these additional careers:

Indexer: come up with suitable index terms to describe the ideas in a text concisely and precisely; organize the index so that users can easily find what they are looking for

Information architect: design the structure and organization of websites, intranets and online communities

Information Brokers (also known as Independent Information Professional): provide a variety of research services for clients

Competitive intelligence professional: collect and analyze information on the strengths and weaknesses of business competitors

Knowledge management specialist: capture knowledge, especially the knowledge which resides in the heads of people, and organize it to be readily usable and shareable.

Usability specialist: make sure that products, especially technical ones, are easy to use

Sources:

http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/paths/jobtypes/privatesector

https://www.aiip.org/Discover/

https://www.scip.org/default.aspx

https://indexers.ca/

Alternative Careers – Library Technicians:

Library Clerks (NOC 1451)

Also look for these job titles: library assistant, circulation clerk, serials clerk, acquisitions clerk, library page, shelver

You receive and organize library materials, sort and shelve books, provide general library information to users and perform clerical duties

Duties include:

- issue and receive library books and other materials
- reshelve books and other library materials
- perform clerical duties
- maintain journal subscriptions
- help library users in finding basic library materials and making interlibrary loans

Requirements

- completion of secondary school
- you may need prior library experience for some specialized positions (e.g. acquisitions, periodicals clerk)

Skills

- detail oriented
- clerical skills

Wages

- median hourly wage $21.00

Source: https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1451

Records Management and Filing Clerks (NOC 1253)

Also look for these job titles: file clerk, records clerk, records management clerk, technical records clerk

You manage the retention and disposal of records according to established procedures and schedules. You file papers, records, documents and other material according to subject matter or other filing system.

Duties include:

- classify, code, log and store records
- maintain indexes for classification systems
- operate information retrieval systems and respond to requests for records
- prepare files for disposal
- compile statistics and reports on activities
- sort and file material

Requirements

- completion of secondary school
- records management clerks may require completion of a program in records management; you usually require prior experience as a filing clerk

Skills

- clerical ability
- detail-oriented
- numerical ability
- finger dexterity

Wages

- median hourly wage $24.18

Source: https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1253

General Office Support Workers (NOC 1411)

Also look for these job titles: administrative clerk, documentation clerk, office administration clerk

You organize and process forms and documents, such as applications, licences, permits, and contracts. You work in the private and public sectors in places such as banks, government offices, insurance companies, hospitals, colleges and universities.

Duties include:

- prepare correspondence, reports, statements, forms, presentations, applications and other documents
- provide general information to clients and the public
- assist with administrative procedures such as budget submissions, contracts administration and work schedules
- perform other clerical duties

Requirements

- completion of secondary school
- typing and computer skills
- may require business office training courses and work experience involving general office procedures, computing, filing and dealing with public

Skills

- strong organizational and time management skills
- good keyboarding and computer skills
- strong communication and interpersonal skills
- detail-oriented

Wages

- median hourly wage $21.00

Source: https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1411
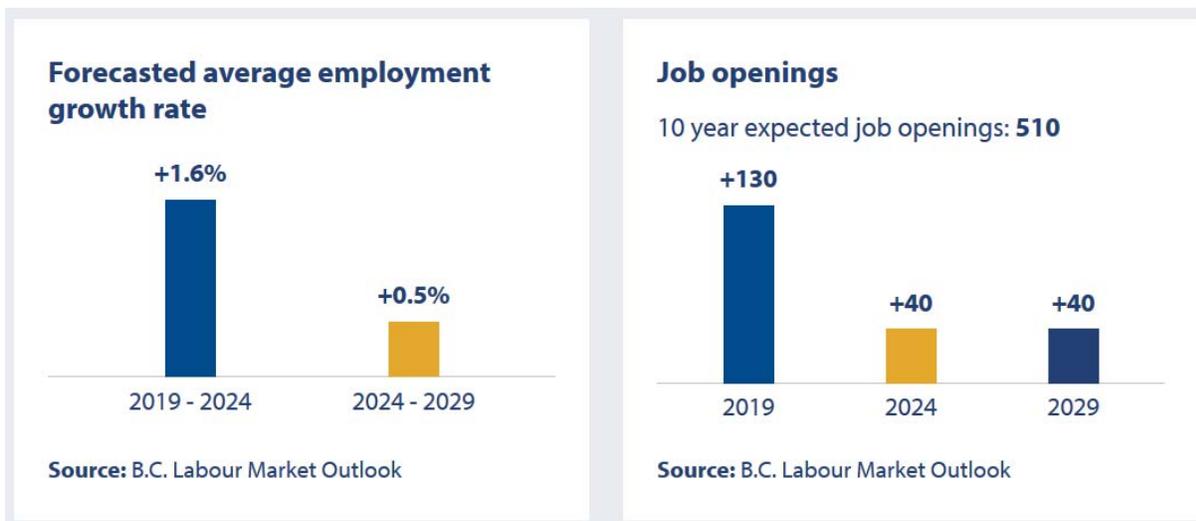
Employment Outlook

Job Opening Outlook: Policy and program researchers, consultants and officers (NOC 416 Group). NOC 4161, 4162, 4163, 4164, 4165, 4166

In British Columbia, a total of 8,950 job openings are expected for these occupations between 2019 and 2029. The majority of jobs will be in the Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island regions.

Most job openings will likely be found in consulting firms, professional associations, research institutes, educational institutions and non-government organizations. Industry sources expect more work opportunities to be either part time or contractual, with self-employment becoming more common.

Source: Work BC https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx

Job Opening Outlook: Library Assistants and Clerks, NOC 1451

Forecasted average employment growth rate

+1.6%   +0.5%

2019 - 2024   2024 - 2029

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings

10 year expected job openings: **510**

+130   +40   +40

2019   2024   2029

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Source: Work BC https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1451

General Office Support Workers:

You will be more in demand if you have good computer skills (i.e., knowledge of Windows, records management, etc.). More opportunities will be available in urban areas, where centres of government and educational institutions tend to be located.

Due to technical advances, less routine work and more decision-making and judgment may be required in the future.

Retraining

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

Douglas College: *English for Internationally Trained Professionals*

Improve your speaking, listening and reading skills within the context of the professional workplace.

https://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/catalogue/courses/EASL/EASL0635

Vancouver Community College: *English for Professional Advancement (EPA)*

This program is designed for internationally trained professionals. The focus is on language and socio-cultural competencies required for success in the Canadian workplace.

https://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/english-as-a-second-language/english-for-professional-advancement-epa/

You may also wish to browse workshops and courses announced through:

- BC Library Association, Professional Development:
  https://bclaconnect.ca/professional-development/
- Special Libraries Association, Western Canada Chapter:
  https://connect.sla.org/wcanada/home
- University of Fraser Valley, Library & Information Technology Program, Continuing Studies at:
  https://www.ufv.ca/continuing-education/programs/library-technician-professional-development/
- University of BC, School of Library, Archival & Information Studies:
  https://slais.ubc.ca/
- Langara, Department of Library and Information Technology
  https://langara.ca/departments/library-information-technology/index.html
- Public Libraries, BC Ministry of Sports, Education, Arts & Culture
  https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries

Searching for Jobs:

AdminJobs.ca

https://www.adminjobs.ca/en/

Administration positions in a variety of levels and experience

BC Government Job Postings

https://search.employment.gov.bc.ca/

British Columbia public services employment opportunities

Federal Government of Canada Job Postings

https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/opportunities/government.html

The Partnership Job Board *(Network of provincial and territorial library associations)*

https://partnershipjobs.ca/

Jobs from across Canada in the library and information sector

UBC School of Library, Archival and Information

https://slais.ubc.ca/news/student-jobs/

Employment and placement opportunities in libraries

Indeed.ca

https://www.indeed.ca/

Positions as library clerk (library assistant, library page, shelver)

These positions may only be posted on a library's website, not on larger job boards. Check the "careers" or "jobs" section of your local library's website.

Complete list of BC public libraries' websites available at:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries/find-your-public

Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering can help you to explore a new career and learn more about library work in B.C. You will meet new people and build a network of contacts that may lead to information on job openings and an inside connection at a potential employer.

Go Volunteer

https://www.govolunteer.ca/

Not-for-profit organizations across BC post volunteer positions

Volunteer BC

https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/

Volunteering in Libraries

Many **public libraries** accept volunteers; check your local library's website for further details, look for 'Friends of the Library' or 'Volunteers '. Complete list of library websites available at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries/find-your-public

Some examples are:

- Library Champions, NewtoBC, https://newtobc.ca/newcomer-resources/champions-project/
- Friends, Vancouver Public Library, https://www.friendsofthevpl.ca/
- Friends, North Vancouver District Public Library, https://nvdpl.ca/friends-library
- Friends, Richmond Public Library, http://rpl.yourlibrary.ca/account/about_rpl/friends_of_the_library
- Surrey Libraries, Volunteer Opportunities, https://www.surreylibraries.ca/support-your-library/volunteer

Volunteer in Public Institutions

Consider volunteering for your local school district, your municipality or your local recreation/community centre.

- **School Districts/Boards:** complete list of school districts available at: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/Home.do, an example is:
    - o Vancouver School Board, https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Contacts/volunteer/Pages/default.aspx

- **Municipalities:** complete list of BC cities and towns available at:

  https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/about/ubcm-members/municipalities.html examples are:

    o City of Vancouver, https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/volunteering.aspx

    o City of Richmond, https://icanhelp.richmond.ca/custom/501/

- **Recreation/Community Centres:** check your local municipality's website for links to recreation and community centres. Examples are:

    o City of Surrey, https://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/483.aspx

    o Richmond Recreation & Community Centres,

      https://www.richmond.ca/parksrec/centres/city/volunteer.htm

    o North Vancouver Recreation Commission,

      https://www.nvrc.ca/about-us/employment-volunteering/volunteering

Helpful Resources

BC Library Association (BCLA)

https://bclaconnect.ca/

Canadian Federation of Library Associations

http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/home-page/

Library Technicians and Assistants Section (LTAS) of BC Library Association

https://bclaconnect.ca/ltas/

Special Libraries Association - Western Canada Chapter (SLAWCC)

https://connect.sla.org/wcanada/home

Visible Minority Librarians of Canada

https://vimloc.wordpress.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/ .