

LABOUR MARKET NEWS

Government of Alberta ■

CALGARY AND AREA



Jason Murphy turned his part-time job as a residential house painter into a career.

A colourful career Becoming a painter

JASON MURPHY NEVER dreamed seven years ago that his part-time job would turn into a career.

“At the time I was just looking for a way to pay the bills,” he admits.

“I didn’t have a post-secondary education at the time so my options were really limited and my mom knew someone who owned a painting company. I had done some work in construction and landscaping and some painting here and there so I had some experience with it. I knew it was relatively easy work compared to some of the other labour jobs I had done so I thought it would be a good choice.”

Over the next few years Murphy continued working at various student painting companies.

“I sometimes worked for a couple companies at the same time,” says Murphy. “Because the work is seasonal I would find work with one company for a few months, get laid off and work for another company, and that’s how I made ends meet.”

He then got a job with a professional painting company. “During the summer months we would do exteriors and in the winter we would do interiors so it was great, we had year-round work for the most part.”

Now a franchise owner, Murphy heads up a painting crew of his own for College Pro Painting.

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Painters and decorators (NOC 7294) apply paint, wall coverings and other finishes to the interior and exterior surfaces of buildings and other structures.

They work indoors and outdoors for contractors involved in new construction, repair, alteration or remodeling work.

Although no formal education or training is required for painting, certification is available through Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training. For more information on apprenticeship training in painting, see page 5.

This makes painting an excellent choice for students looking for summer work and people who are wanting to make some extra cash.

And now is the time to find work in this field.

“Painting is a very seasonal job,” says Murphy. “The busiest time is between May and September and employers are always looking for painters during these months.”

Student painting companies such as College Pro currently have job postings on websites like kijiji.ca and wowjobs.ca.

“Student painting can be part-time or full-time,” explains Murphy. “These painters can work a normal workday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and weekend work is optional.”

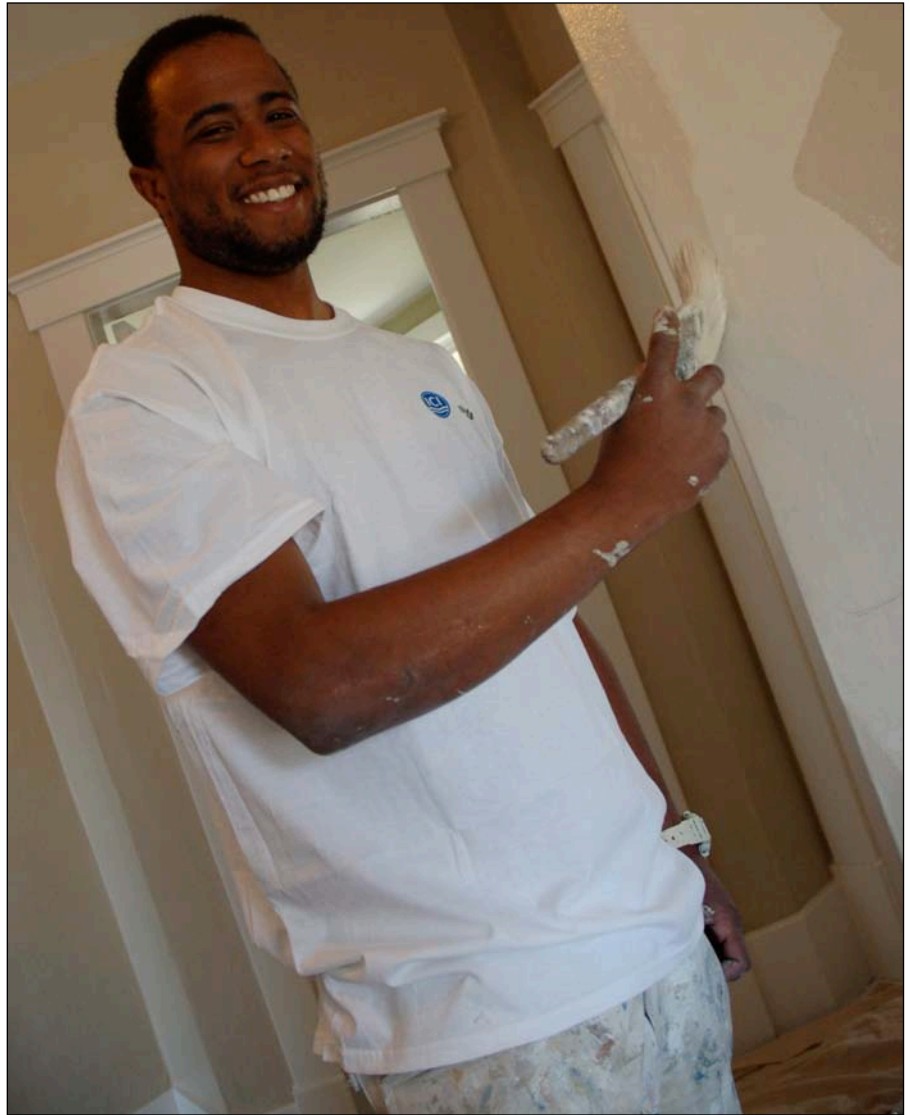
Student companies are also a great place to start a career. “That’s usually where painters get started,” says Murphy.

“From there, more serious painters can go on to work year-round for professional painting companies.”

Many painters also choose to open their own businesses.

A typical day

In painting companies, workers are split into crews, with anywhere from two to four workers in each crew. The painters usually arrive on the job site by 8 a.m.



In painting companies, painters are split into crews with anywhere from two to four workers in each crew.

DID YOU KNOW?

Painters can earn up to \$30 per hour.

While many painters usually start out earning around \$12 per hour, they can earn much more. But wages fluctuate with the market.

“Painting is very market-based,” says Murphy. “If there is a lot of work and employers need painters then the wages will rise to attract workers. But if the work slows, the wages also decrease.”

Painters aren’t only paid by the hour. “They can also be paid on a piece-meal basis,” says Murphy.

“So if a house is estimated to take 40 hours of work and you do it in 17, then you still get paid for the full time. It’s kind of motivation to get the job done more quickly.”

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“I like that it’s an honest day’s work and that I can make clients happy at the end of the day.”

They are then assigned a painting job by their manager and get down to work.

“It’s pretty straight forward and doesn’t require much responsibility, other than to get the job done and get it done well,” says Murphy.

Training is provided on the job. “We give employees all the tools and equipment they need to work with and teach them how to do the job,” Murphy says.

“We take a half-day to go over on-the-job safety, which is very important in this line of work. The job site can be dangerous at times, and we cover things like how to protect yourself against the chemicals, how to do first aid and how to properly set up and use equipment such as harnesses, ladders and scaffolds.”

The painter is then taught the basics, like how to hold a brush and paint properly. New painters will be assigned a small project, such as a window trim. “Then the manager will inspect it and assess their performance to see where they may need to improve,” says Murphy.

Getting hired

Although experience isn’t necessary in painting positions, employers do look for people who have past

experience in labour positions, a good work ethic and a positive attitude.

“It also helps if they are a physical or athletic person because the job does take some stamina and strength,” says Murphy.

Painters should also have an attention to detail, be well-coordinated and be comfortable with heights.

Moving up

Murphy, like many painters, used his experience to start up his own franchise this summer.

“I saw other painters who were opening their own businesses and thought if they can do it, so can I.”

Although his job now includes more responsibility, Murphy says he embraces the challenge.

“I’m always looking for new challenges, and opening your own franchise forces you to expand your horizons, which I really enjoy.”

But his painting days aren’t over.

“I’m still on the job site every day with the crew and I’m still painting, which I enjoy. I like that it’s an honest day’s work and that I can make clients happy at the end of the day.”



Training for painters is provided on the job, covering things like safety, how to hold a brush and how to paint properly.

CALGARY COMPETES: World Skills 2009 series

Event info: worldskills2009.com

Painter and decorator one of first to compete



Tiffany Vandermey will be one of the first painters and decorators to compete in the upcoming World Skills competition this September.



AT ONLY 21 years old, Tiffany Vandermey will be one of the first painters and decorators to compete at this year's World Skills Competition.

"This is the first year this trade is included in the competition," says Vandermey. "I'm nervous but I see the work I can do now and I'm training a lot so I think I have a good shot at winning."

Held every two years, the World Skills Competition brings together more than 900 of the best young professionals from trades, service and vocational programs from around the world.

Over the course of four days, competitors will get the chance to showcase their talents and abilities. This year's competition will be held in Calgary from September 1-7 at Stampede Park.

During the competition, Vandermey and her competitors will be given three walls and various tasks to complete, such as transferring blue prints to the walls, painting murals, doing graphic design, drywall finishing, wall coverings, colour matching and fully finishing the walls.

"It's all timed and at the end we will be graded on each aspect of the work," says Vandermey.

Currently employed by Ray Nor Painting and Decorating Ltd., Vandermey got her start in the painting business four years ago.

"My aunt was a painter at Ray Nor and I was always jealous of how she got off at 4 p.m.," laughs Vandermey. "I had no experience and I was just looking for a job with better hours and a better wage. My aunt told me to give them a call, so I did and they hired me."

Working indoors on commercial projects, Vandermey found she liked the job right away.

"I liked how the job kept me busy all day, cutting and painting drywall. It's very rewarding. When you first walk into a project, there's nothing but concrete walls and drywall and you get to see how much it changes while you work. It feels great to take a space and make it look good."

Although the work was physically tiring at first, Vandermey quickly adapted.

"It is a physical job and for the first while you're definitely tired at the end of the day. But once your body adjusts to the physical aspect of the job, it's actually pretty easy work."

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DID YOU KNOW?

Journeyman painters and decorators can earn up to \$40 per hour.

"Painters and decorators who aren't certified apprentices generally start out earning \$12 an hour," says Vandermey.

"But once you become a journeyman those wages increase a lot."

According to Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, Journeyman wage rates range from \$16 to \$40 an hour plus benefits.



Working Monday to Friday, Vandermey's typical work day includes preparing and painting walls.

Working eight hours a day Monday to Friday, Vandermey received all her training on the job.

"I learned things like which brushes to use, how to hold them and how to cut a straight line with a paint brush before filling the area in. For me, painting a straight line was the hardest part. I couldn't do it for the longest time. One day I spent two hours locked in my room trying to cut these straight paint lines in the drywall and I finally got it. That's how you learn a lot of the technique—just by practicing."

All that practice paid off when Vandermey entered her apprenticeship training at SAIT in 2006.

"During my first year, my teacher saw how I could paint a straight line and asked me if I wanted to compete in the World Skills, so I decided to do it."

While you don't necessarily need to become a certified apprentice to be a painter and decorator, Vandermey says it's a good idea to get the training.

"I definitely recommend people do the training. It increases your wages and you learn a lot of important theory about painting and decorating—things like what colours go best together, how colours affect and set moods and how to read blue prints."

Vandermey says she doesn't use a lot of this theory in her day-to-day work at Ray Nor. "Interior designers generally make the decisions about things like colour and the layout of a room, so as a painter you just do what they tell you to do."

But for those who want to open their own company or go into interior design, the classes are very useful. "Most painters end up owning their own business and that's when the apprenticeship education comes in very useful," she says.

Many painters and decorators can make the jump to interior design with more education and training (see page 6 for more information on the role and required education for interior designers).

"For people who want to make that move, many of those classes are already covered in the apprenticeship so you don't have to take them when you get your degree, which shortens the amount of time that you spend in school," she says.

Vandermey is looking into making the move to interior design herself.

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Education for painters and decorators

While apprenticeship training isn't necessary in order to be a painter or decorator, formal training can help painters and decorators get higher paying jobs. The term of apprenticeship is three years (three 12 month periods) and includes a minimum of 1,300 hours of on-the-job training and eight weeks of technical training each year. Technical training is arranged through Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (tradesecrets.alberta.ca) and is offered through SAIT (sait.ca).

“It’s very rewarding. When you first walk into a project, there’s nothing but concrete walls and drywall and you get to see how much it changes while you work. It feels great to take a space and make it look good.”

“I would really like to go into interior design or start up my own business, I haven’t decided yet. I’m going to make that decision after the World Skills Competition,” says Vandermey.

“I’m lucky because I’m young in this field, and many people who work in this trade are older, so I have a lot more opportunity to do what I want with my career.”

Safety

Another aspect of technical training is safety. “Safety is very important in these jobs,” says Vandermey.

“In school you learn a lot more about safety but employers will always train painters on the job as well. You work on ladders and scaffolds often so you need to know how to set them up and use them properly. Sometimes you’re working on 10 ft. tall ladders so you need to make sure they’re secure.”

Because painters also use toxic substances such as lacquers and paints, they often wear masks and gloves to protect themselves.

But overall, Vandermey says the job is easy and anyone could do it.

“One thing is you have to be ready to work,” she says. “Some days you have to work really hard. But most of the time it’s not that difficult of a job and anyone can learn how to do it if they’re dedicated enough and interested in the trade.”

Making the move ...

Education for interior designers

Many painters and decorators make the move to interior design.

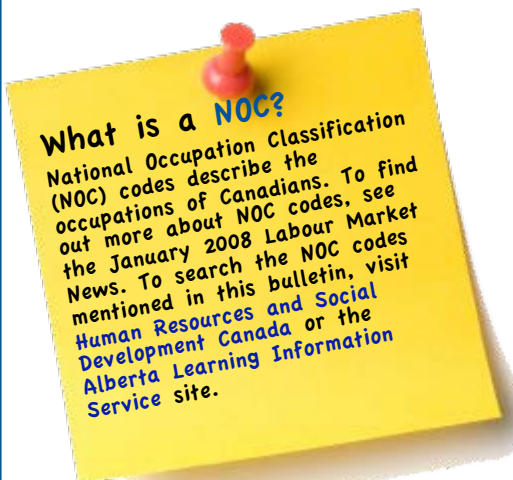
Interior designers (NOC 5242) plan new interiors and renovate existing ones in commercial buildings and single and multi-family dwellings. Their responsibilities can vary from one project to the next but in general they:

- identify clients’ goals, safety requirements, budget limitations and project schedules
- prepare and create design concepts
- ensure building and other code permits are obtained
- prepare working drawings and specifications for construction, including materials, finishes, millwork and furnishings
- collaborate with professionals and technical subcontractors such as engineers and architects

Education:

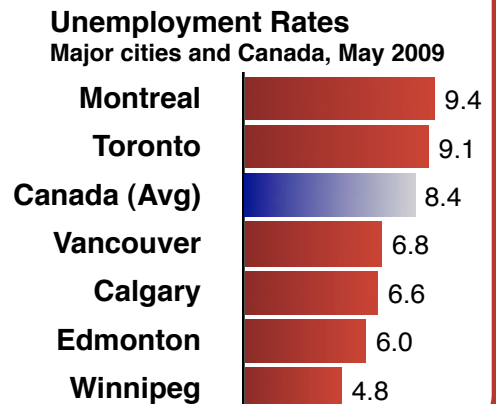
There are no standard education requirements for interior designers in Alberta. However, to be licensed by the [Alberta Association of Architects](#), interior designers must have a degree in interior design plus related experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

In Calgary, Mount Royal College ([mtroyal.ca](#)) offers a four-year Bachelor of Applied Interior Design degree program.



✓ Employment check-up

Unemployment rates across the country continue to rise. Canada’s unemployment rate rose from eight per cent in April to 8.4 per cent in May. Meanwhile Calgary’s unemployment rate rose from 6.3 per cent in April to 6.6 per cent in May.





Working in... Construction of buildings



WHILE THE RECENT economic downturn has meant fewer construction projects on the horizon, there is still action in this industry.

In fact, Alberta has \$234 billion worth of major construction projects that are either planned, currently under construction or are proposed to start construction within two years. These projects will mean continued opportunities for those looking for jobs in construction.

Another option for people in this field is the renovation industry. While new construction may be slow, renovations can be more recession-proof. Also, more homeowners will be taking advantage of recent federal and provincial government tax incentives for fixing their homes.

The industry

There were nearly 21,000 people employed in construction trades in Calgary in 2006, according to the 2006 Calgary Census. Of those, about 4,100 are carpenters and cabinetmakers, 2,400 are in other construction trades (such as roofers, glaziers, insulators, painters and decorators and floor covering installers), and just over 1,000 are in masonry and plastering trades.

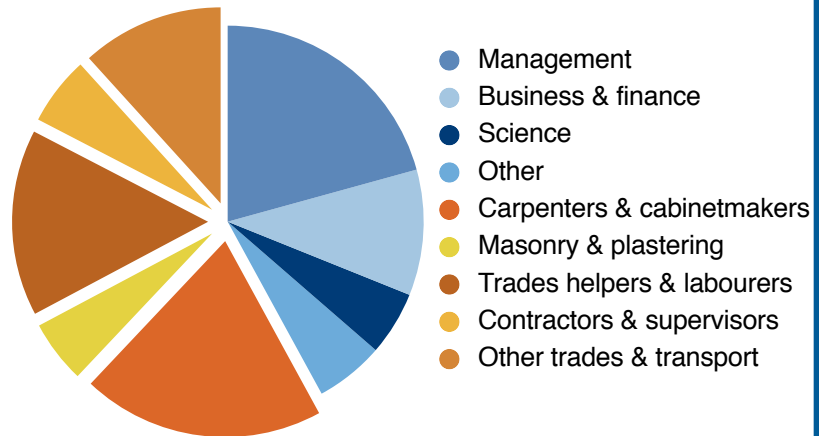
Over a third of workers (about 8,700) in construction of buildings were employed in non-trades occupations (see chart to the right).

DID YOU KNOW?

Millions of Canadians plan to renovate their homes this year.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Association, 40 per cent of the nation's homeowners plan to do renovations this year. But in Calgary the rate is much higher. About 85 per cent of homeowners in this city plan to do home alterations and improvement, the highest rate in the country.

Jobs in construction of buildings, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Resources for job hunters

Organization	Services	Contact
Calgary Construction Association	This association provides general information about the local construction industry and COOLNet, an up-to date job database for job seekers.	cca.ca
Canadian Home Builder's Association—Calgary region	This association offers local industry information, market trends and career information.	crhba.com
Alberta Construction Safety Association	This association has information about education in the trades, safety in the workplace and a jobline for job seekers.	acsa-safety.org
Merit Contractors Association	This association has information on the local industry, training and recruitment assistance. It also hosts a job board, Merit Alberta Construction Jobstore.	meritalberta.com ab.constructionjobstores.com
Building Trades Alberta	This organization has a listing of all Alberta trades unions.	buildingtradesalberta.ca

Working in... Construction of buildings

There are some great online resources for finding a job in construction.

Other great resources in addition to the ones listed on the previous page are kijiji.ca, Calgary Herald's working.com and wowjobs.ca.

But there are many other, possibly more effective means of getting a job in the industry.

Find a construction company

There is plenty of construction still going on in Calgary, particularly in the downtown core, and many of the construction companies working on these projects are looking for workers to hire.

So if you happen to walk past a construction site, take note of the company's name, look up the phone number online or in the Yellow Pages and give them a call.

Alternatively, you could be proactive and walk up to a job site and inquire if they are hiring or not. While this route may be a little intimidating, it is more effective as the employer and workers will get the chance to meet with you face-to-face and will be more likely to remember you.

Check out the unions

There are various unions for construction jobs, and most of these post job opportunities as well. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (ibew.org) has a listing of all trade unions in Alberta on its website, and so does Building Trades Alberta (buildingtradesalberta.ca).

Using networking/word of mouth

According to the [Calgary & Area Labour Market Report, Second Quarter 2008](#), 60 per cent of employers use word-of-mouth or referrals to find staff. This equals great opportunity for the job seeker. So get out there and chat with people. If you know someone in construction, ask them if their company is hiring.

If not, just start meeting people—you never know who they might know. Going to networking events is a great way to get involved in the industry. In fact, many of the associations listed on page 7 also offer networking events.

These events can be a great way to get your name out there to potential employers. For some tips on how to network effectively, see our June issue of the [Calgary Labour Market News](#).

JOB SOURCE OF THE MONTH

The Calgary Sun classifieds section is a great resource for jobs in construction. In fact, in May there were more jobs posted in construction than any other industry. Most of the jobs advertised are for entry-level positions such as general labourers, framers and painters.

Best sources of job ads by Industry

Not all sources are the same! Here's a quick guide to the best sources for newspaper and online ads for the job you want.

	Calgary Herald Working	Calgary Herald Classifieds	Calgary Sun Classifieds	Workopolis	Monster	Job Bank	Post Secondary job boards
Accommodation & Food Services		✓	✓			✓	
Administration & Support			✓	✓		✓	
Arts and Recreation		✓				✓	✓
Construction		✓	✓			✓	
Education	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Finance and Insurance	✓	✓		✓			
Health Care	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Information (IT) and Culture			✓	✓	✓		
Manufacturing		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mining, Oil and Gas	✓			✓	✓		✓
Other Services		✓	✓			✓	✓
Professional Services	✓			✓	✓		✓
Real Estate	✓	✓					
Retail Trade		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Transportation & Warehousing		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Wholesale Trade			✓			✓	

Series
**Adjusting to
 economic change**

Part 3:
Negotiating the best offer
When a raise isn't an option

JUST A FEW years ago, employers were in the midst of a hiring spree, adding new members to their staff and even going so far as to bring in workers from out of the country. Times have changed and hiring has slowed, but that doesn't mean all employers are looking to lay off the staff they've worked so hard to find. Rather than lay their employees off, some employers are simply doing away with pay raises for the time being and finding other ways to keep their staff happy.

"When times got tough before, some employers might have downsized, but this time they don't want to have to go through the hiring process again," says Glenn Tibbles, president of the Human Resources Association of Calgary.

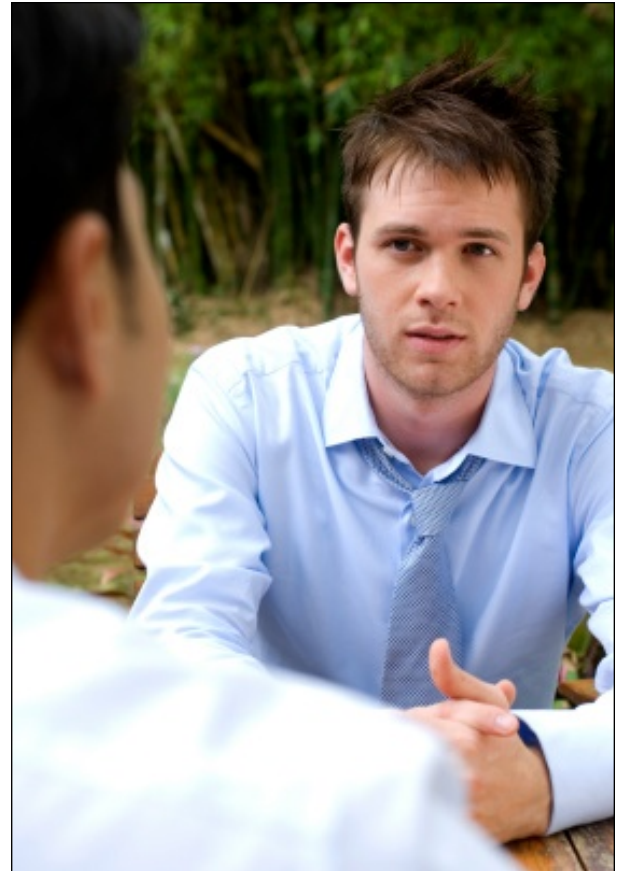
"Now they're more likely to give in to employee requests for things like flex time and job sharing."

So while getting a raise might be out of the question right now, there are a few things you can ask for that might make your work life a little easier until economic conditions improve.

☑ **Flex time:** As Tibbles mentioned, flex time is something many employers are willing to consider. It might involve coming into the office earlier and leaving earlier, or working longer hours so you can take a day off once a week or once every two weeks. Flex time is convenient for those who want more time at home with their families, or even just some time to regroup away from the office and get their errands done.

☑ **Free or discounted parking:** If you're like many Calgarians who work in the downtown core, you know parking can definitely add up each month. Talk to your employer about the possibility of free or discounted parking instead of a raise.

☑ **Job sharing:** "Job sharing is becoming more common," says Tibbles. "One person might go to half-time and have another person pick up the rest of their shifts. Or you might have two people go to half-time and share job duties." This option is great for those who don't mind sharing their workload. But people who job share have to communicate well with the person they're job sharing with so they can pick up where the other left off.



If a raise isn't possible, ask your employer about other options that can help make your life easier.

☑ **Family-friendly terms:** If your company has onsite childcare, consider asking your employer to help supplement the costs of this program. If your company doesn't have this service, your employer might agree to terms that are more family-friendly. This could mean granting family days once a month or allowing you to leave a half-hour earlier to pick up your children from daycare. Explore the options with your employer and you just might be able to find a way to accommodate both your work and your family schedule.

☑ **Working from home:** Working from home isn't always an option, depending on your position and your line of work. But many employers are willing to accommodate a work-from-home day or even half-day from time to time, provided you have the resources to complete your work from home and you're available when needed.

Need more info? Visit a Calgary LMIC!

Labour Market Information Centres (LMICs) can provide you with information to help you make career, learning and work decisions. LMICs have books, magazines, newspapers, software and videos about all kinds of employment related topics.



Calgary Locations

Downtown 5th Floor, Century Park Place, 855 - 8 Avenue
SW Phone: 403-297-6344

South 100 Fisher Park II, 6712 Fisher Street SE
Phone: 403-297-4024

East 1520 Marlborough Mall, 515 Marlborough Way NE
Phone: 403-297-7570

North One Executive Place, 1816 Crowchild Tr NW Phone:
403-297-3951

South/Central Third floor, 10th & 10th, 1021-10 Ave SW
Phone: 403-297-2094

For further contact information and office hours:
employment.alberta.ca/calgary

Finding work in Calgary

Job search and career websites

alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)

jobbank.gc.ca (Job listings)

workopolis.ca (Job listings)

monster.ca (Job listings)

nextsteps.org (Job resources for youth)

albertajobs.com (Job listings)

hgcareers.com (Job listings)

healthjobs.ab.ca (Health care job listings)

wowjobs.ca (Job listings)

Job search and career information by phone

Alberta Career Information Hotline: 1-800-661-3753

Fax: 780-422-0372 TDD: 780-422-5283

Sources of Labour Market Information

These websites offer a wealth of labour market information on Alberta and specific communities

employment.alberta.ca/lmi

employment.alberta.ca/calgary

(Alberta Employment and Immigration)

alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)

albertacanada.com (Business and economic information)

calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com

(Calgary Economic Development)

[Alberta Employment and Industry's Calgary Region](http://AlbertaEmploymentandIndustry.org) site offers labour market information, employer connections, career and employment workshops, a training and career services directory and more.

Where to find us

This publication and other labour market information products can be found at
employment.alberta.ca/calgary

We welcome your feedback! Send comments or suggestions to EI.Webmaster@gov.ab.ca.

New to Calgary?

A new website, calgarypedia.com, is driven by people who work and live in Calgary. Here, you will find information on housing, living, working and playing in Calgary.

Calgary Economic Development (CED) is a great source of potential **employment**, with a comprehensive list of employers organized by industry. For more information, call CED at 403-221-7831 or click on the Calgary Business Directory at calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com

The City of Calgary's website provides a wealth of **information**, such as the history of the city, traffic reports and cameras, bylaw issues, parks and recreation and events going on year round. For more information call 403-268-CITY or visit calgary.ca. For **transit** route information call 403-262-1000 or visit calgarytransit.com

There are more than 25 hospitals, medical clinics, home care, outpatient clinics and long term care centres in the **Calgary Health Region**. Visit calgaryhealthregion.ca. or call 403-943-1111 or You can also contact Health Link at 403-943-LINK or online at calgaryhealthregion.ca/yourhealth.

Calgary has a thriving **cultural** scene. Visit calgaryplus.ca, ffweekly.com or discovercalgary.com.

The [Calgary Real Estate Board](http://CalgaryRealEstateBoard.com) and the [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](http://CanadaMortgageandHousingCorporation.com) are excellent sources for **housing market** information in Calgary including valuable information on information for homebuyers, homeowners, renovators and renters. Calgary's current rental vacancy rate is 2.1 per cent. In October 2008 the average monthly rental price for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,148. For rentals in Calgary, visit albertarent.com, http://calgary.kijiji.ca, craigslist.ca,

places4rent.ca, lowcostrent.org or the [Calgary Housing Company](http://CalgaryHousingCompany.com).

The 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey covers more than 400 occupations and provides information on **wages and salaries** for full-time and part-time employees in Alberta by occupation, geographic area and industry group. To find out more information about your career, visit alis.alberta.ca