

Human Resources Specialist

Hiring, pay, policies and the hard conversations. A degree, an exam, and a designation that carries weight.

TYPICAL PAY

\$85,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$54k to \$124k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Corporate offices, government, hospitals, unions

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 English, business and any course with writing and presenting.
- 2 Post-secondary** 2 to 4 years
 A 4-year degree in HR (human resources), business or psychology, or a 2-year college diploma. Graduates of other degrees often add a 1-year graduate certificate in HR management.
- 3 Knowledge exam** After graduation
 In Ontario, the CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional) knowledge exam through HRP (Human Resources Professionals Association) plus an Ontario employment law exam. In the rest of Canada, the National Knowledge Exam through CPHR (Chartered Professional Human Resources) is required.
- 4 Coordinator to generalist** 2 to 4 years
 Onboarding, benefits, records, recruiting support. Then broader files: performance, policy, employee relations.
- 5 Full designation** About 3 years of experience
 The CHRL (Certified Human Resources Leader) in Ontario or CPHR (Chartered Professional in Human Resources) elsewhere adds an experience requirement and, in Ontario, a second exam.

Pros and cons

- + Every organization needs HR (human resources), so jobs exist everywhere
- + A clear designation ladder with pay raises attached
- + Hybrid work and regular hours
- You deliver the layoffs and the bad news
- Caught between employees and management, trusted fully by neither
- Ontario and BC outlook is limited, with many graduates

Optional boosts

Compensation and benefits. Labour relations. HR analytics. Talent acquisition.

Good to know

Ontario regulates HR (human resources) by law

The HRP (Human Resources Professionals Association) is a regulatory body under an Ontario statute, with a complaints and discipline process like other professions. Its CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional) designation is recognized in Ontario.

Two designations, one country

Ontario uses the CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional) and CHRL (Certified Human Resources Leader). The other nine provinces and the territories use the CPHR (Chartered Professional in Human Resources).

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Human resources professionals, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 HRP (Human Resources Professionals Association): CHRP designation
 CPHR Canada (Chartered Professionals in Human Resources)
 Seneca Polytechnic: Human Resources Management graduate certificate

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/human-resources-specialist>



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