

Medical Office Assistant

The person who runs the front desk of a clinic. Six months to a year of college, a job in every town, modest pay.

TYPICAL PAY

\$52,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$39k to \$67k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 year

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Family clinics, hospitals, specialist offices, walk-in clinics

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Grade 12 English is the main requirement. Some programs test typing speed, for example 25 words a minute at Vancouver Community College.
- 2 Medical office certificate** 6 to 12 months
 6 months to 1 year at a public college. Medical terminology, anatomy basics, scheduling, billing, electronic medical records, and a work placement.
- 3 Placement and first job** After the program
 Most programs end with a few weeks in a real clinic. Many students are hired by their placement.
- 4 Learn the clinic** First year
 Every doctor's office runs a little differently. The first year is about the software, the billing codes and the patients.

Pros and cons

- + Under a year of school and low tuition
- + Jobs in every town with a clinic
- + Regular daytime hours, weekends off
- Modest pay that flattens early
- Phones ring all day and some callers are rude
- Small clinics often offer few benefits

Good to know

You are the doctor's business partner

Most family doctors in Canada run their own small business and bill the province for every visit. In a small clinic, the medical office assistant is often the only employee, and the one who makes sure th...

The words are Latin and Greek

Medical terminology is built from a few hundred Latin and Greek word parts. Once you know that 'itis' means inflammation and 'cardio' means heart, thousands of long words suddenly make sense. It is the first co...

Optional boosts

Medical billing specialist. Office manager. Health information management diploma. Unit clerk in a hospital.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Medical administrative assistants, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 Vancouver Community College: Medical Office Assistant certificate
 Conestoga College: Medical Office Practices certificate
 Ontario Colleges: program search and applications

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/medical-office-assistant>



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