

Policy Analyst

Research a problem, weigh the options, and write the advice a minister or a city council acts on.

TYPICAL PAY

\$89,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$55k to \$125k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Federal and provincial departments, city halls, non-profi...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Strong English and a second language if you can. Debate, student government and model parliament are directly relevant.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Political science, economics, public policy, sociology, environmental studies or law. What matters is that you can research and write.
- 3 Get inside** During your degree
A co-op term, a summer student job through the federal student program, or a constituency office. Nearly every analyst had one.
- 4 Optional master's degree** 2 years
A Master of Public Policy or Master of Public Administration. The Munk School program at the University of Toronto, for example, runs two years full time with a paid internship built in.
- 5 Apply to a pool** 6 to 12 months
Federal hiring runs through advertised processes on GC Jobs (Government of Canada Jobs). Expect written exams, an interview and months of waiting.

Pros and cons

- + Your work can change how a whole country or city operates
- + Strong pension, benefits and job security in government
- + Clean hours compared with law or consulting
- Slow. A file can take years and then get shelved
- Your best advice can be ignored for political reasons
- Hiring processes are long, opaque and frustrating

Good to know

Two pages or nothing

The briefing note is the standard unit of government writing, and most departments hold it to one or two pages. Learning to compress a year of research into that space is the core craft of the job.

Federal jobs come with a language test

Many federal policy positions are designated bilingual, which means being tested on reading, writing and speaking in your second official language before you can hold the job.

Optional boosts

Data analysis. Economics. French and English at a high level. A subject specialty.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Housing policy analyst, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Government of Canada: GC Jobs and how to apply

University of Toronto Munk School: Master of Public Policy

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/policy-analyst>



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