

Real estate investor

You buy property to rent out or resell. In most Canadian cities, a new rental costs more each month than it earns.

TYPICAL INCOME

\$0

a year, varies widely

INCOME RANGE

\$0 to \$60k

most to the successful few

TIME TO QUALIFY

3 to 10 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Your own rental units, renovation sites, open houses and a lot of spreadsheets

How you get there

- 1 Build steady income and credit** 2 to 5 years
Lenders want two years of steady income and a good credit score. A day job is what gets you the mortgage.
- 2 Save a down payment and reserves** 3 to 8 years
Enough for the down payment, land transfer tax, legal fees and several months of costs.
- 3 Learn your local market** 6 to 12 months
Rents, taxes, condo fees and tenancy law where you plan to buy. Run the numbers on 50 listings before buying one.
- 4 Buy a first property** 1 to 3 months
Often a home with a legal basement unit that you live in, which qualifies for an insured mortgage.
- 5 Manage, then repeat slowly** 5 to 20 years
Most people add a property every few years as savings and equity allow.

Pros and cons

- + Rent pays down your mortgage over time
- + Property has risen in value over long periods
- + A legal second unit can help pay for your own home
- New rentals in most cities lose money each month
- Needs tens of thousands of dollars up front
- Rent caps and tribunal delays limit what you can do

Good to know

The 365 day line

Sell a home within 365 days of buying it and, unless a listed life event applies, the whole profit is taxed as business income. Wait past the line and a rental's gain is usually taxed on only half.

New buildings escape Ontario rent control

In Ontario, units first lived in after November 15, 2018 are not covered by the yearly rent increase guideline, so landlords can raise those rents by any amount with proper notice.

Optional boosts

Underwriting. Knowing what is legal to rent. Basic repairs. Tenant screening.

Where these numbers come from

Financial Consumer Agency of Canada: minimum down payment
Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions: minimum qualifying rate for uninsured mortgages
Income Tax Act, section 12: flipped property (subsections 12(12) and 12(13))
Bank of Canada: 5-year conventional mortgage rate (series V80691335)

Numbers checked October 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/real-estate-investor>



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