

FIRST FIVE YEARS ESSENTIALS

THE COLLEGE OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
OF CANADA



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MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE
DU CANADA

FIRST FIVE YEARS IN FAMILY PRACTICE COMMITTEE



A Brief Guide to Locuming in Family Medicine

Locum positions offer family physicians interesting opportunities to transition into practice or to experience the broad spectrum of practice settings available in Canada.



Find a job

- Let word of mouth work for you! Ask preceptors and colleagues in clinics where you've worked if they need locum coverage. (Hint: They usually do!)
- Check for opportunities listed by departments of family medicine. Many share practice opportunities with alumni using a listserv.
- Use provincial and territorial agencies (e.g., Health Force Ontario, Health Match BC) and register with job banks and locum advertising services. A list of current resources is available on the First Five Years website (<http://www.firstfiveyears.ca/national-resources/>).
- Read classified ads printed in *Canadian Family Physician* or posted on its website (<https://classified.cfpc.ca/>).
- Check the federal government's Job Bank (<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>).
- Join relevant Facebook groups that focus on family medicine job opportunities (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/familydocjobscanada>).



Have a contract

You should also have a lawyer review your contract for details such as:

- **Dates and times:**
 - Establish clear start and end dates.
 - Clarify clinic hours and after-hours responsibilities.
- **Remuneration:**
 - Specify whether payment is fee-for-service (or split), a stipend, hourly, or blended.
 - Ask who is paying overhead costs.
- **On-call responsibilities:**
 - Ask about telehealth advisory services.
 - Clarify hospital call responsibilities.
 - Understand expectations regarding after-hours communication of abnormal results.
- **Resources:**
 - Get details about office support staff and the responsibilities of clinical administrative assistants and nurses.
 - Clarify what office space will be available to you, such as exam rooms, a dedicated charting area, and clinic areas for treatments and procedures.
 - Ask about electronic medical record and VPN access.
- **Billings:**
 - Confirm if the locum physician or the clinic is responsible for submitting billings.
 - If there is a billing clerk, confirm if you are paying them to submit on your behalf or if this is included in your fees. If your billing number is pending (as a recent graduate), confirm if they will hold your billings and submit them once your number is available.
- **Follow-up responsibilities:**
 - For lab tests and investigations you've ordered, confirm who is responsible for following up on them after hours, while you are away/on vacation, and after your locum contract has ended.



Plan for licensure requirements

- Be proactive when requesting licensure, as it may take three to six months in some jurisdictions to get your licence and billing number.
- Check with each provincial or territorial medical regulatory authority for specific requirements.
- Consider whether you need hospital privileges and budget time for acquiring them, as most medical advisory councils sit quarterly only.
- Have frequently needed documents easily accessible on a USB key or a secure cloud server, such as certified copies of diplomas, letters of reference, your current CV, immunizations, blood-borne virus test results (if applicable), and police background checks.



Clarify policies

Seek clinic- or physician-specific policies regarding:

- Opioids and other controlled substance renewals (and ensure you are comfortable with their policies)
- How long vacations can be and how much notice is required before taking time off
- Who is responsible for covering for you when you are away and how frequently test results will be checked
- Whether you can audit the remittance advice (or billings summary) from the ministry to ensure you are being paid fairly



Seek advice

Whom can you call, email, or text for help?

- Mentors, friends, colleagues
- First Five Years in Family Practice Committee representatives (find your provincial College of Family Physicians of Canada representatives on the First Five Years website at <https://www.cfpc.ca/en/member-services/committees/first-five-years-in-family-practice-committee>)
- The First Five Years in Family Practice Facebook group (<https://facebook.com/groups/FirstFiveYearsinPractice.Canada>)
- Your provincial medical association for legal information (which is often free) or your own lawyer
- Your financial adviser and accountant

For more information and resources, please visit <https://firstfiveyears.ca/>.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)'s First Five Years in Family Practice (FFYFP) Committee developed this guide based on CFPC members' frequently asked questions. The suggested resources provided are those commonly used by members of the FFYFP cohort and are meant to offer helpful tips. Please note that the CFPC does not specifically endorse any one resource or service.

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