

What's this job all about?

Do you enjoy making sure numbers add up just right? Are you the kind of person who has to know exactly where every penny of your money goes? If so, you just might be interested in a job as a bookkeeping or accounting clerk. They manage the financial records of companies or clients. They are essential workers at most companies because they keep track of financial data. This information is used for reports, research, financial statements, and payroll use. An accounting clerk is an entry-level position for most companies. In smaller offices bookkeepers usually handle all the financial transactions. In larger companies, bookkeeping and accounting clerks help the company's bookkeeper, controller or finance director with a wide range of tasks. As a bookkeeping or accounting clerk, you'll enter details of a transaction – like the amount of a check and the check number – into a computer program. You might also make sure payments are up-to-date and you might prepare payroll checks. If you start out as an accounting clerk in many Alaskan businesses, you may have the chance to move up into jobs within the finance department with more responsibility and more pay. If you decide you want to work in this field you need to be detail oriented and you need to be exacting. A company doesn't want to know it has "about" \$10,000 in an account, it wants to know it has "exactly" \$9,950 to spend when their bills come due! You should also enjoy working with computers and working at a desk indoors. An important part of being a bookkeeping or accounting clerk is being honest. You're working with other people's money, so integrity is a key factor.

Here's what Bookkeeping and Accounting Clerks do:

- Record money taken in or spent.
- Help summarize spending habits and prepare reports for managers and supervisors.
- Help prepare bank deposits by collecting cash and checks.
- Enter the details of transactions, like the amount of the check and check number.
- Find totals for accounts and compute interest charges.
- Monitor loans, accounts payables and accounts receivable.
- Make sure payments are up-to-date.
- Prepare payrolls and pay bills.
- Create and file vouchers and invoices.
- Help make sure your company complies with federal and state laws.
- Verify the records that other workers enter.
- Correct or note errors for accountants or other workers to fix.
- Use accounting software and computers to track and compute accounting records.
- Use computer spreadsheets to organize data.
- Code documents and post transactions.
- Review invoices, bank statements and check reports.
- Use word processing programs to write letters to customers.

How much money can I make?

Median Wage: \$17.18 per hour.

In Alaska, the median wage for bookkeeping and accounting clerks is \$2,978 per month (\$17.18 per hour). Half of all bookkeeping and accounting clerks earn between \$2,468 and \$3,564 per month (\$14.24 and \$20.56 per hour). Nationally, the median wage for bookkeeping and accounting clerks is \$2,458 per month (\$14.18 per hour). Half of all bookkeeping and accounting clerks earn between \$1,967 and \$3,030 per month (\$11.35 and \$17.48 per hour). Pay varies by area of the country,

HELPFUL HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

A high school degree is almost always required to work as a bookkeeping and accounting clerk. You should take courses in high school that prepare you to earn a high school diploma. Here is a list of high school courses that will help prepare you. Don't worry if some of these classes aren't available at your school. Take as many as you can. Many of these courses are also available at the technical school or college level.

Business

- Exploration of Business and Office Careers
- Office Procedures, Office Services
- Keyboarding, Word Processing
- Recordkeeping, Accounting
- Office Machines
- Business Work Experience

Computer and Information Sciences

- Business Computer Applications

English Language and Literature

- English and Language Arts
- English Composition
- Business and Applied English

Marketing

- Marketing
- Marketing Management

Mathematics

- General Math
- Applied Math
- Pre-Algebra, Algebra
- Probability and Statistics
- Business Math, Advanced Business Math

Social Sciences and History

- Consumer Law
- Business Law

size of the city, and type and size of the employer.

Bookkeeping and accounting clerks who work full time usually receive benefits including sick leave, health insurance, and paid vacation. Some employers also provide a retirement plan.

How long does it take to receive training?

To work as a bookkeeping or accounting clerk, you must have a high school diploma or GED, complete training in bookkeeping and accounting procedures, have keyboarding and computer skills, and be comfortable with detailed work. Many bookkeeping and accounting clerks have completed some college courses or an associate degree. You can learn bookkeeping and accounting skills at high schools, business schools, or two-year colleges. Employers usually provide on-the-job training for new bookkeeping and accounting clerks. For example, you learn office procedures from experienced workers. You may also attend some formal classes to learn the company's computer software.

When I'm ready to work, will there be job openings?

Nationally, the number of jobs for bookkeeping and accounting clerks is expected to grow more slowly than average through the year 2014. A growing economy should result in more demand for accounting services. The majority of new jobs will be created in small, rapidly growing organizations. If Alaska builds a gas pipeline, large companies in a variety of industries may need to expand the number of jobs in this field. Many opportunities for temporary and part-time work should be available.

Please see the Training Programs section of this booklet to find out more about training in these career fields in Alaska.

