



Mr. Yves Giroux  
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**RE: Information Request IR0500**

Dear Mr. Giroux:

I am pleased to provide you with our response to your request of June 5, 2020, for data regarding “Other Paid Leave” and COVID-19 tracking in the federal public service.

The government had to move quickly to respond to the unprecedented circumstances brought on by the onset of the pandemic, and took exceptional measures to curb the spread of the virus and protect the health and safety of employees and the broader population. The vast majority of public service employees quickly made the shift to working from home, many adjusting their work schedules to cover their health, family or work situations, while others delivered services and programs from the federal worksites.

“Other Paid Leave”, coded 699 in enterprise systems, is provided for situations where employees are unable to report to work for reasons beyond their control, when those situations are not already covered by other types of leave under existent terms and conditions of employment.

This type of leave has provided important support for federal public servants across the country in times of need, such as when they have been unable to work due to natural disasters. In each case, employees have accessed leave on the basis of need, and then returned to regular working status as soon as they were able.

The pandemic has generated the same early access to leave when the need was most urgent. We have observed a steady and systematic reduction over the reporting period toward a return to regular working status, reflecting both sustained investments in telework productivity tools and the reopening of services such as childcare. Specifically, the number hours in the week ending May 31, 2020 represented a 61% reduction from the peak usage of Other Paid Leave, based on data received to date. You may be interested in comparative data for the month of June, which should become available at the end of July, to confirm this trend.

A smaller number of employees are currently using this leave only when all options have been exhausted, for example in cases where no childcare arrangements can be made or for individuals fighting COVID-19, for periods that can vary from a few hours up to full-time hours, depending on individual circumstances.

Accordingly, you will find enclosed:

a) cumulative expenditures and employee counts associated with “Other Paid Leave”, or pay entitlement code 699, used to account for COVID-19-related leave reasons. The data provided covers the period from 15 March to 31 May 2020, as no data is available for the first fortnight in March.

b) the number of reported cases of COVID-19, in addition to the number of work refusals and office closures due to COVID-19. The data provided is broken down by region and covers the period from 23 March (as no data was tracked prior to that date) to 31 May 2020. Departmental data was withheld to protect the privacy of individuals.

In both cases, we draw your attention to data limitations derived from occasionally limited access to systems and ongoing capture of information. Should this information change for the requested reporting period, we commit to providing your office with updated reports as soon as that information stabilizes.

Moreover, please note that the reporting of leave code 699, when linked to an identifiable individual, is considered personal information. Where institutions have less than 10 employees, the data has been aggregated to prevent the identification of specific individuals. As departments and agencies report aggregate or anonymized leave usage data for privacy considerations, the expenditure calculations are based on an average daily rate.

We remain available to answer your questions or provide complementary information as you may require.

Sincerely,

[ORIGINAL SIGNED BY]

Nancy Chahwan  
Chief Human Resources Officer

c.c. Antoine Brunelle-Côté, Privy Council Office, Assistant Secretary to the  
Cabinet, Liaison Secretariat for Macroeconomic Policy  
Peter Wallace, Secretary of the Treasury Board

Enclosures:

Reply Form IR0500

Annex A – 699 Leave Summary

Annex B – COVID-19 Tracking System Data