



Rémunération des salariés – État et évolution comparés 2020

Main findings

Salaries and total compensation

All other Québec employees

In 2020, the salaries of Québec government employees are 16.5% lower than those of other Québec employees. More specifically, they are lower in 62 of the 74 benchmark jobs, representing 83% of employees. In addition, every occupational category in the Québec government has lower salaries, apart from service employees who are on par. The differentials range from -15.0% for professionals to -34.0% for manual workers.

The total compensation of Québec government employees is behind that of other Québec employees by 9.2% overall. This holds true for 45 of the 74 benchmark jobs, which represent 67% of employees, and for four of the five occupational categories studied. In the service employee category, total compensation for Québec government employees is on par with that of other Québec employees.

In the benchmark jobs overall and in the case of professionals, technicians and office employees, Québec government employees are further behind for salaries than for total compensation because they have fewer hours at work than their counterparts in the rest of the labour market.

Private sector

The salaries of Québec government employees are behind those of their private sector counterparts by 13.3% overall. More specifically, they are behind for 51 out of 72 benchmark jobs, which represent 78% of employees. Québec government employees in four occupational categories have lower salaries, with differentials ranging from -12.2% to -36.0%. Service employees in the two sectors are on a par.

Overall, Québec government employees are on par with their private sector counterparts in terms of total compensation. Parity is observed in 24 of 72 benchmark jobs, accounting for 29% of employees, while Québec government employees are ahead in 22 jobs (45% of employees) and behind in 26 jobs (26% of employees). Québec government employees are on par with private sector employees because the 22 jobs that are ahead are offset by the 26 jobs that are behind. Every occupational category in the Québec government is on par with the private sector in terms of total compensation, except for manual workers, who are behind by 29.3%.

In the benchmark jobs overall and in the case of technicians and office employees, Québec government employees are in a better comparative position for total compensation than for salaries because they have fewer hours at work than their counterparts in the private sector and benefit costs are higher in the Québec government.

“Other public” sector

The salaries of Québec government employees are 23.5% lower overall than those of their counterparts in the “other public” sector. Québec government employees are even further behind in terms of total compensation (-28.3%). It has been observed that 72 out of 73 benchmark jobs, accounting for nearly all Québec government employees, are behind in terms of both salary and total compensation. Salary differentials range from -18.7% for service employees to -33.5% for manual workers, while total compensation differentials range from -21.2% for professionals to -46.3% for manual workers.

In the benchmark jobs overall and every occupational category apart from service employees, Québec government employees are further behind in terms of total compensation than salaries on account of the lower costs of benefits paid by the Québec government. In the jobs overall and in the case of office employees and manual workers, Québec government employees also spend more hours at work than their counterparts in the “other public” sector.

Municipal government sector

Overall, the salaries and total compensation of Québec government employees are behind those of municipal employees by 27.9% and 39.4%, respectively. With regard to salaries, Québec government employees are behind in 63 out of 64 benchmark jobs, accounting for nearly all employees. They are also behind for total compensation in all benchmark jobs. Québec government employees are also behind in every occupational category. Salary differentials range from -19.5% to -32.7%, while total compensation differentials range from -26.2% to -53.6%.

In the benchmark jobs overall and every occupational category apart from professionals, Québec government employees are further behind for total compensation than salaries because they spend more hours at work than their municipal government sector counterparts. In addition, benefit costs are lower for Québec government employees in the benchmark jobs overall and in every occupational category except service employees.

“Government enterprise” sector

Overall, the salaries of Québec government employees are 22.3% lower than those of “government enterprise” employees. This has been observed for all occupational categories and for 61 out of 64 benchmark jobs, which represent 95% of employees. The differentials range from -11.9% for service employees to -40.9% for manual workers.

In terms of total compensation, Québec government employees are behind by 25.8% compared with employees in the “government enterprise” sector. This holds true for 58 of 64 benchmark jobs, which represent 96% of employees. All five occupational categories are behind, with differentials ranging from -17.8% to -47.5%.

In the benchmark jobs overall and every occupational category apart from professionals and technicians, Québec government employees are further behind for total compensation than salaries because they spend more hours at work than their counterparts in the “government enterprise” sector. In addition, benefit costs are lower for Québec government employees in the benchmark jobs overall and in every occupational category except service employees.

University sector

The salaries of Québec government employees are 15.6% lower than those of their university sector counterparts overall. More specifically, they are lower for 57 out of 63 benchmark jobs, comprising 91% of employees. All occupational categories in the Québec government are behind, with differentials ranging from -8.2% among service employees to -21.7% among office employees.

Total compensation for Québec government employees is 20.4% less than that of university sector employees overall. In all, Québec government employees are behind for 60 of the 63 benchmark jobs, which represent 97% of employees. In addition, all five occupational categories are behind, with differentials ranging from -14.7% to -28.8%.

In the benchmark jobs overall and every occupational category, Québec government employees are further behind for total compensation than salaries because they spend more hours at work than their university sector counterparts. Benefit costs are also lower for Québec government employees in the benchmark jobs overall and for professionals and manual workers.

Federal government

Overall, Québec government employees are behind those in the federal government in terms of both salary (-23.0%) and total compensation (-22.5%). This has been observed for all occupational categories and all benchmark jobs compared. Salary differentials range from -18.1% for service employees to -34.7% for manual workers, while total compensation differentials range from -19.0% to -35.5%, respectively.

In the benchmark jobs overall and in the case of technicians and office employees, Québec government employees are in a better comparative position for total compensation than for salaries, despite lower benefit costs in the Québec government, because they have fewer hours at work than their counterparts in the federal government.

Other unionized Québec employees

The salaries of Québec government employees are 22.3% lower overall than those of other unionized Québec employees. More specifically, their salaries are behind for 65 of 73 benchmark jobs, comprising 87% of employees. In addition, every occupational category in the Québec government has lower salaries. The differentials range from -10.6% for service employees to -37.4% for manual workers.

The total compensation of Québec government employees is 23.7% lower than that of other unionized Québec employees. In fact, total compensation is lower in 62 of 73 benchmark jobs, accounting for 84% of employees. Every occupational category in the Québec government is behind (by 19.8% to 39.7%), apart from service employees who are on par.

In the benchmark jobs overall and in the case of professionals and office employees, Québec government employees are further behind for total compensation than for salaries due to lower benefit costs in the Québec government, despite the fact that in the benchmark jobs overall and in the case of professionals, Québec government employees spend fewer hours at work than other unionized Québec employees.

Other non-unionized Québec employees

The salaries paid to Québec government employees are 9.6% lower overall than those paid to other non-unionized Québec employees. Their salaries are lower for 40 of 71 benchmark jobs, comprising 70% of employees. In addition, Québec government employees are behind in four of the five occupational categories, with differentials ranging from -12.3% to -14.1%. For their part, service employees are ahead by 10.9%.

As for the total compensation of Québec government employees, overall, it is 4.1% higher than that of other non-unionized Québec employees. This has been observed for 30 out of 71 benchmark jobs, which represent 58% of employees. In addition, employees are on a par in both sectors in four of the five occupational categories. Service employees are ahead by 22.9%.

In the benchmark jobs overall and every occupational category, Québec government employees are in a better comparative position for total compensation than for salaries because they spend fewer hours at work than other non-unionized Québec employees. The better position of Québec government employees in terms of total compensation is also due to the higher costs of benefits paid by the Québec government in the benchmark jobs overall and in every occupational category, except professionals.

Unionized private sector

The salaries of Québec government employees are 20.5% lower than those of unionized private sector employees overall. They are lower for 47 out of 63 benchmark jobs, comprising 76% of employees. In addition, Québec government employees in every occupational category have lower salaries, with differentials ranging from -10.0% to -42.6%.

The total compensation of Québec government employees is 16.8% lower than that of unionized private sector employees. This holds true for 40 out of 63 benchmark jobs, comprising 60% of employees. Four of the five occupational categories are behind, with differentials ranging from -12.8% to -37.4%. Service employees are on par in both sectors.

In the benchmark jobs overall and in the case of technicians, Québec government employees are further behind for salaries than for total compensation because they have fewer hours at work than their counterparts in the unionized private sector.

Non-unionized private sector

Overall, the salaries of Québec government employees are 9.0% lower than those paid to non-unionized private sector employees. They are behind for 38 out of 70 benchmark jobs, representing 69% of employees. Salaries are behind in four of the five occupational categories, with differentials ranging from -11.7% to -13.2%. As for the salaries of service employees, they are 10.9% higher in the Québec government than in the non-unionized private sector.

In terms of total compensation, Québec government employees are ahead by 5.2% compared with non-unionized private sector employees. More specifically, they are ahead for 32 out of 70 benchmark jobs, which account for 60% of employees. Furthermore, three out of five occupational categories are ahead, with differentials ranging from 4.2% to 22.9%. Professionals and manual workers are on par in both sectors.

In the benchmark jobs overall and every occupational category except professionals, Québec government employees are in a better comparative position for total compensation than for salaries because they have fewer hours at work and benefits costs paid by the Québec government for its employees are higher. Professionals are in a better position for total compensation than for salaries only on account of the fewer hours they spend at work.

Salary scales

The job rates at the top of the salary scales (normal maximums) of Québec government professionals, technicians and office employees are in general lower than those of other Québec employees as a whole. Likewise, the salaries of Québec government employees in these three occupational categories are lower than those of other Québec employees. Québec government professionals are further behind other professionals in Québec for salaries than for normal maximums because they are not positioned as high in their salary scales. Québec government technicians are equally behind other Québec employees for both normal maximums and salaries. Lastly, office employees in the Québec government are in a better position in terms of salaries than normal maximums.

The normal maximums of Québec government professionals, technicians and office employees are lower than those of their counterparts from each of the other sectors studied. Québec government professionals are in a better situation in terms of normal maximums than for salaries compared to every other sector, indicating that professionals in the Québec government are not positioned as high in their salary scales as their counterparts.

Québec government technicians are in a more favourable position for normal maximums than for salaries in comparison with most sectors. Office employees in the Québec government are equally behind for both normal maximums and salaries in comparison with four sectors.

In the private sector, approximately 71% of professionals, 47% of technicians and 47% of office employees who are paid according to a salary scale benefit from merit maximums. These proportions rise to 74%, 55% and 53%, respectively, among non-unionized private sector employees. Québec government salary scales have no merit maximums.

Benefits and paid time off

The total costs of benefits and paid time off for Québec government employees (42.3% of the salary) are higher than those observed for other Québec employees overall, the private sector, and non-unionized employees (all other Québec employees and the private sector). However, these costs are lower than those noted for other unionized Québec employees and employees in the “other public” sector and its components (municipal and federal governments in Québec, universities, and “government enterprises”). These costs represent between 45.3% and 51.5% of the salary. Lastly, the total costs for Québec government employees are similar to those observed for unionized private sector employees.

When only benefits are taken into account, the costs for Québec government employees (26.3%) are higher than for other Québec employees overall, private sector employees, and non-unionized employees (all other Québec employees and the private sector). However, they are lower than those observed in every other sector compared, except for unionized private sector employees. Benefit costs represent 27.7% to 34.6% of the salary in those sectors. The Québec government pays less for benefits compared with those sectors due to lower pension plan costs.

Paid time off costs for Québec government employees (16.0% of the salary) are higher than those paid for other Québec employees, other non-unionized Québec employees, and private sector employees (unionized and non-unionized). However, paid time off costs for Québec government employees are lower than those for other unionized Québec employees and employees in the “other public” sector and its components.

Hours of work

Québec government employees have a normal workweek of nearly 36 hours (35.8 hours). Their workweek is about one and a half hours shorter than that of other Québec employees as a whole. It is also shorter than that of unionized employees, non-unionized employees, private sector employees (whether unionized or not), “other public” sector employees, and federal government employees. However, it is longer than that of municipal government employees, university sector employees, and “government enterprise” employees.

Québec government employees spend 30.1 hours a week at work. This is more than in the “other public” sector and three of its components (university sector, municipal governments and the “government enterprise” sector), but less than in all the other sectors compared. The greatest differences in the number of hours at work is observed in comparison with non-unionized employees: -3.3 hours (other Québec employees) and -3.5 hours (private sector).

Changes in the comparative position

Between 2011 and 2020, the comparative position of Québec government employees has weakened in terms of salaries compared to employees in all the other sectors in the benchmark jobs overall. In terms of total compensation, the position of Québec government employees has remained stable compared to private sector employees and non-unionized employees (all other Québec employees and the private sector). It has weakened compared to that of employees in all the other sectors compared, except in relation to the “government enterprise” sector, where it has improved.

Salary trends

This section presents findings on employee compensation that are not based solely on the jobs selected to compare the Québec government with the other sectors. The data were obtained from the collective agreements filed with the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale du Québec and from salary planning surveys (covering non-unionized employees).

Since the collective agreements of Québec government employees expired on March 31, 2020, the salary trends analysis covers unionized Québec employees other than those working in the Québec government.

Salary growth among unionized employees in the first six months of 2020

Nominal and real salary growth

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have delayed or postponed the negotiation process or even prevented certain organizations from filing their collective agreements in the databank of the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale du Québec in the second quarter of 2020, the representativeness rate is lower than 60% for several sectors.

Average salary-scale increases for other unionized Québec employees show a 1.0% gain in purchasing power¹ in 2020.

Positive real salary growth is observed in all the sectors analyzed. Gains in purchasing power range from 0.3% for Québec government enterprises and the federal sector to 1.1% in the private sector.

In 2020, 94.2% of other unionized Québec employees received a salary increase greater than or equal to the growth in the consumer price index (CPI).

CPI growth for the first six months of 2020 was 1.1%.

Salary growth according to agreements signed in 2019 and 2020

The latest agreements signed provide an indication of how salaries will evolve. The 2020 analysis focuses on unionized Québec employees other than those working in the Québec government. Overall, these agreements provide for a salary growth rate in 2020 that is similar to that in 2019 (2.6% and 2.5%, respectively). This rate also remained stable between 2019 and 2020 in the municipal sector (2.2% in 2020 and 2.1% in 2019) and the private sector (2.7% for both years).

However, between 2019 and 2020, the salary growth rate declined in Québec government enterprises (2.0% versus 1.2%). No agreement was signed or filed in the university sector in 2020. In that sector, the growth rate was 2.3% in 2019.

According to the 2020 agreements, 90.9% of other unionized Québec employees received average annual increases of 1.5% or more. This proportion is similar to that observed in 2019 (93.4%).

1. The gain in purchasing power is the difference between nominal salary growth and the increase in the consumer price index (CPI).

Salary projections for 2020 and 2021: unionized and non-unionized employees

According to the ISQ's salary projections, Québec employees as a whole (unionized and non-unionized) are expected to receive average salary-scale increases of 1.7% in 2020 and 1.8% in 2021.

For 2020, the projected growth rate for unionized Québec employees is 2.1%. Due to the low representativeness rate, salary projections cannot be made for all unionized employees in 2021.

The growth rate in the university sector should be higher in 2020 than in 2021 (1.6% versus 1.4%). The opposite should be true for Québec government enterprises (1.4% versus 2.0%) and non-unionized employees (1.4% versus 1.6%). In the municipal and federal sectors, the increase is expected to be similar in both 2020 and 2021.

In the private sector, employees should see the same growth in 2021 as in 2020 (2.2%).

Average salary-scale increases for non-unionized employees should be lower than for unionized employees in 2020 (1.4% versus 2.1%).