

# HIGHLIGHTS

## Rémunération des salariés État et évolution comparés 2021

The report *Rémunération des salariés – État et évolution comparés* by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) compares the salaries and total compensation of unionized Québec government employees with those of other employees in the Québec labour market (businesses with 200 or more employees). The 2021 full report is available on the [ISQ's website](#).

### Comparison of total compensation and salaries: general findings

#### Comparison of total compensation

- ▶ In terms of total compensation, which takes into account salaries, non-wage benefits and hours at work, Québec government employees lag behind all other Québec employees (OQEs) by 9.4%.
- ▶ Québec government employees are on a par with both the private sector and all non-unionized OQEs.
- ▶ Québec government employees lag behind employees in the “other public” sector (–27.5%) and all its components, as well as all unionized OQEs and unionized private sector employees.
- ▶ Québec government employees are ahead of non-unionized private sector employees by 2.4%.

#### Comparison of salaries

- ▶ The average salary (\$51,719) of Québec government employees is lower than that of all OQEs and private sector employees, by 17.6% and 14.9% respectively.
- ▶ Québec government employees are more than 20% behind unionized employees and employees in the “other public” sector and three of its components (municipal and federal governments and government enterprises). The largest gap is observed in comparison with municipal government employees (–29.1%), while the smallest gaps are observed in comparison with all non-unionized OQEs and non-unionized private sector employees (–12.0% and –11.7%, respectively).

Table 1

Compensation differentials between Québec government employees and the labour market sectors compared in 2021

|                                      | Salary | Total compensation |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|
|                                      | %      |                    |
| <b>Other Québec employees</b>        | –17.6  | –9.4               |
| Other unionized Québec employees     | –22.9  | –22.4              |
| Other non-unionized Québec employees | –12.0  | =                  |
| <b>Private sector</b>                | –14.9  | =                  |
| Unionized private sector             | –20.8  | –14.9              |
| Non-unionized private sector         | –11.7  | 2.4                |
| <b>“Other public” sector</b>         | –24.5  | –27.5              |
| Municipal governments                | –29.1  | –39.9              |
| Government enterprises               | –23.3  | –25.3              |
| University sector                    | –16.4  | –19.9              |
| Federal government                   | –25.0  | –20.9              |

■ Compensation higher for Québec government employees  
■ Equivalent compensation (Québec government and sector compared)  
■ Compensation lower for Québec government employees

## Some important benchmarks

### Sectors compared

The compensation of Québec government employees is compared with that of employees working in businesses with 200 or more employees in Québec. This choice is based on the notion of comparability between market jobs and Québec government jobs. The smaller a business, the less likely it is to have jobs similar to those in a large organization such as the Québec government. Unionization status is also taken into account in the comparison with OQEs and the private sector. For the comparison with municipal governments, only municipalities with populations of 25,000 or more, which generally have at least 200 employees, are included.

### Québec labour market and major sectors compared

| Québec government                                                 | Other Québec employees (OQEs) <sup>1</sup> |                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                   | Private sector <sup>2</sup>                | "Other public" sector                                                     |
| Public service                                                    | Mines                                      | Provincial enterprises (government enterprises and others)                |
| Departments                                                       | Manufacturing                              | Federal government in Québec                                              |
| Government bodies <sup>3</sup>                                    | Transportation and warehousing             | Federal enterprises in Québec                                             |
| Special funds                                                     | Communications                             | Universities                                                              |
| Education                                                         | Wholesale and retail trade                 | Municipal governments (municipalities with populations of 25,000 or more) |
| School service centres                                            | Finance, insurance and real estate         | Local businesses                                                          |
| English-language school boards                                    | Business services                          |                                                                           |
| CEGEPs                                                            | Accommodation and food services            |                                                                           |
| Health and social services                                        | Other services                             |                                                                           |
| Integrated health and social services centres (CISSS)             |                                            |                                                                           |
| Integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS) |                                            |                                                                           |
| Hospitals                                                         |                                            |                                                                           |
| Residential and long-term care centre (CHSLDs)                    |                                            |                                                                           |
| Rehabilitation centres                                            |                                            |                                                                           |
| Local community service centres (CLSCs)                           |                                            |                                                                           |
| Child and youth protection centres                                |                                            |                                                                           |

1. In the comparison, the compensation of OQEs and private sector employees is also analyzed by employee unionization status.
2. The following sectors are excluded: agriculture and related services, logging and forestry services, fishing and trapping, and construction.
3. Excluding government bodies of an industrial and commercial nature.

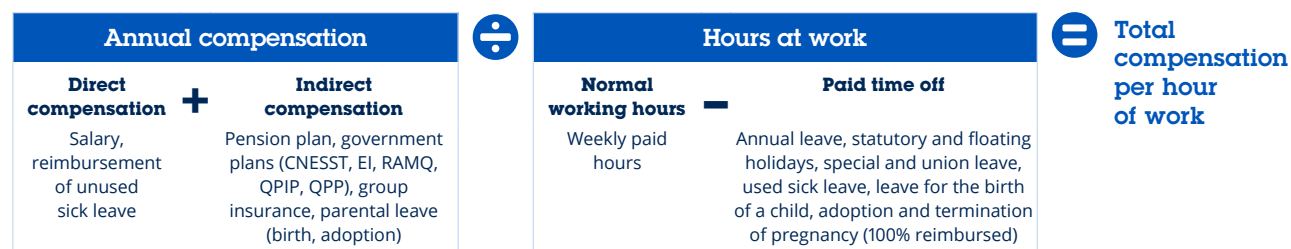
### Reference period

The reference period for salary data for all sectors reflects the situation as of April 1, 2021.

*Continued on page 3*

## Calculating total compensation

Total compensation includes three main components: salaries, non-wage benefits, and hours at work (normal working hours minus paid time off). The comparison results are obtained using the employer-costs method, which takes into account the employer's costs for a given year. Job security is also a component of total compensation; however, including it in the equation remains a challenge, which is why it is not taken into account. Neither is variable pay, although it is very common in private sector organizations. However, there is no variable pay in the Québec government.



## Jobs compared

In its comparison, the ISQ uses 74 benchmark jobs spread across five job categories: professionals, technicians, office employees, service employees, and manual workers. Studying these 74 benchmark jobs means that nearly one in three regular full-time Québec government employees are taken into account. Jobs where most employees work for the government and jobs not readily identifiable were excluded from the benchmark jobs selected. As a result, nursing and teaching jobs are not included in the comparison. When only the truly comparable jobs are taken into account, coverage of the jobs compared increases to nearly 100%.

## Special considerations regarding Québec government employees in 2021

Québec government collective agreements expired on March 31, 2020. In 2021, some negotiations resulted in agreements-in-principle. However, at the time this report was produced, some of these agreements had not yet led to the signing of collective agreements, which means that salary increases had not yet been paid. Consequently, the 2021 results do not reflect the new salary structures set out in these agreements. The salary scales used in the comparison are those in effect on the expiry date of the collective agreements, i.e., March 31, 2020. The salaries used are the ones in effect on April 1, 2021. As a result, the salary data reflect the progression of employees in their salary scales.

## Comparison based on the 74 benchmark jobs

### Comparison of total compensation

- ▶ Compared to all OQEs, Québec government employees are behind for total compensation in about two thirds of the benchmark jobs, comprising 69% of employees.
- ▶ Québec government and private sector employees are on par for 38% of these jobs, which represent 35% of employees. This is because the 18 jobs that are ahead in the Québec government are offset by the 27 that are behind.

### Comparison of salaries

- ▶ Compared to all OQEs, Québec government employees are behind for salaries in 8 out of 10 jobs, comprising 82% of employees.
- ▶ Compared with private sector employees, Québec government employees are behind for nearly three quarters of jobs, which account for 78% of employees.

Table 2

**Distribution of jobs by comparative position of Québec government employees for salaries and total compensation in 2021**

|                | Salary         |            |       | Total compensation |            |       |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------|--------------------|------------|-------|
|                | Higher         | Equivalent | Lower | Higher             | Equivalent | Lower |
|                | number of jobs |            |       |                    |            |       |
| OQEs           | 2              | 12         | 60    | 9                  | 16         | 49    |
| Private sector | 4              | 15         | 53    | 18                 | 27         | 27    |

- Compensation higher for Québec government employees
- Equivalent compensation (Québec government and sector compared)
- Compensation lower for Québec government employees

## Comparison according to five main job categories

### Comparison of total compensation

- ▶ In the office employee and manual worker categories, Québec government employees are behind all OQEs and private sector employees in terms of total compensation.
- ▶ In the professional and technician categories, Québec government employees are behind all OQEs, but are on par with private sector employees.
- ▶ Lastly, in the service employee category, Québec government employees are on par with all OQEs and ahead of private sector employees.

### Comparison of salaries

- ▶ For four of the five job categories, Québec government employees are behind all OQEs and private sector employees in terms of salaries.
- ▶ However, service employees in the Québec government are on par with service employees in both of these groups.

Table 3

**Compensation differentials by job category in 2021**

|                   | OQEs   |                    | Private sector |                    |
|-------------------|--------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                   | Salary | Total compensation | Salary         | Total compensation |
|                   | %      |                    |                |                    |
| Professionals     | -14.6  | -6.5               | -11.9          | =                  |
| Technicians       | -19.6  | -9.0               | -16.8          | =                  |
| Office employees  | -21.7  | -13.6              | -18.1          | -3.2               |
| Service employees | =      | =                  | =              | 8.5                |
| Manual workers    | -36.4  | -35.3              | -36.3          | -29.3              |

- Compensation higher for Québec government employees
- Equivalent compensation (Québec government and sector compared)
- Compensation lower for Québec government employees

## Comparison of salary scales

- ▶ The normal maximums on the salary scales of Québec government employees are lower than those on the salary scales of all other sectors in two of the three job categories used in the comparison (technicians and office employees). In the third category used for the salary scale comparisons (professionals), the normal maximums are lower for Québec government employees in 10 of the 11 sectors compared (listed in Table 1).
- ▶ Compared to all other Québec professionals, Québec government professionals are further behind for salaries (-14.6%) than for normal maximums (-12.2%). This holds true in comparison to all the other sectors, except the university sector where the gap is similar for salaries and normal maximums. Québec government professionals are in a better position in terms of normal maximums than salaries because, on average, they are not positioned as high in their salary scales as their counterparts from the other sectors.
- ▶ The opposite is generally observed for Québec government office employees. They are further behind for normal maximums than for salaries compared with most of their counterparts from the other sectors.
- ▶ For their part, Québec government technicians are lower in their salary scales than their counterparts from five sectors, but are on par with technicians from five other sectors.
- ▶ Four out of ten technicians and nearly half of office employees in the private sector who are paid according to a salary scale benefit from merit maximums. About 64% of professionals in the private sector also benefit from merit maximums. Québec government salary scales have no merit maximums.

Table 4

Comparison of salary scales in 2021

|                  | Québec government           |                                    | Other Québec employees      |                                    |                                    | Private sector              |                                    |                                    |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                  | Normal maximum <sup>1</sup> | Position in the scale <sup>2</sup> | Normal maximum <sup>1</sup> | Difference between normal maximums | Position in the scale <sup>2</sup> | Normal maximum <sup>1</sup> | Difference between normal maximums | Position in the scale <sup>2</sup> |
|                  | \$                          | %                                  | \$                          | %                                  | %                                  | \$                          | %                                  | %                                  |
| Professionals    | 86,076                      | 71.7                               | 96,598                      | -12.2                              | 78.8                               | 93,617                      | -8.8                               | 77.3                               |
| Technicians      | 55,867                      | 81.7                               | 67,615                      | -21.0                              | 81.9 *                             | 66,880                      | -19.7                              | 80.0 *                             |
| Office employees | 42,825                      | 87.7                               | 53,692                      | -25.4                              | 86.2 *                             | 52,576                      | -22.8                              | 86.1 *                             |

\* Means that both sectors are on a par.

1. The normal maximum is the average of the normal maximums for the jobs included in the comparison between Québec government employees and OQEs.

2. This percentage indicates how far employees have progressed on average in their scale. It is obtained using the following formula:  $((\text{Average salary} - \text{Minimum}) / (\text{Normal maximum} - \text{Minimum})) \times 100$ .

## Comparison of costs for non-wage benefits and paid time off

- ▶ The Québec government spends more on non-wage benefits and paid time off (42.3% of the salary) for its employees than the employers of all other Québec employees (OQEs), private sector employees, unionized private sector employees, all non-unionized OQEs, and non-unionized private sector employees.
- ▶ However, spending on non-wage benefits and paid time off for Québec government employees is lower than that for all unionized OQEs as well as for the “other public” sector and its four components.
- ▶ The findings remain the same when non-wage benefit costs are excluded and only paid time off costs are considered.
- ▶ Pension plans cost the Québec government less (7.7% of the salary) than the employers of all unionized OQEs and those of workers in the “other public” sector and its components, but they cost the Québec government more than the employers of private sector employees, all non-unionized OQEs and non-unionized private sector employees.

Table 5

**Costs for pension plans, non-wage benefits and paid time off in 2021 (as a % of the salary)**

|                                      | Pension plans | Non-wage benefits | Paid time off | Total costs |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                                      | %             |                   |               |             |
| <b>Québec government</b>             | 7.7           | 26.7              | 15.7          | 42.3        |
| <b>Other Québec employees</b>        | 7.7           | 25.0              | 14.6          | 39.5        |
| Other unionized Québec employees     | 10.4          | 28.0              | 16.4          | 44.4        |
| Other non-unionized Québec employees | 5.1           | 21.8              | 12.7          | 34.5        |
| <b>Private sector</b>                | 5.6           | 22.7              | 13.2          | 35.9        |
| Unionized private sector             | 8.0           | 26.3              | 14.7          | 41.0        |
| Non-unionized private sector         | 4.9           | 21.6              | 12.6          | 34.2        |
| <b>“Other public” sector</b>         | 12.0          | 29.8              | 17.1          | 46.9        |
| Municipal governments                | 15.6          | 35.0              | 16.5          | 51.5        |
| Government enterprises               | 10.4          | 27.3              | 17.0          | 44.3        |
| University sector                    | 11.2          | 27.3              | 17.2          | 44.5        |
| Federal government                   | 9.4           | 27.3              | 17.5          | 44.8        |

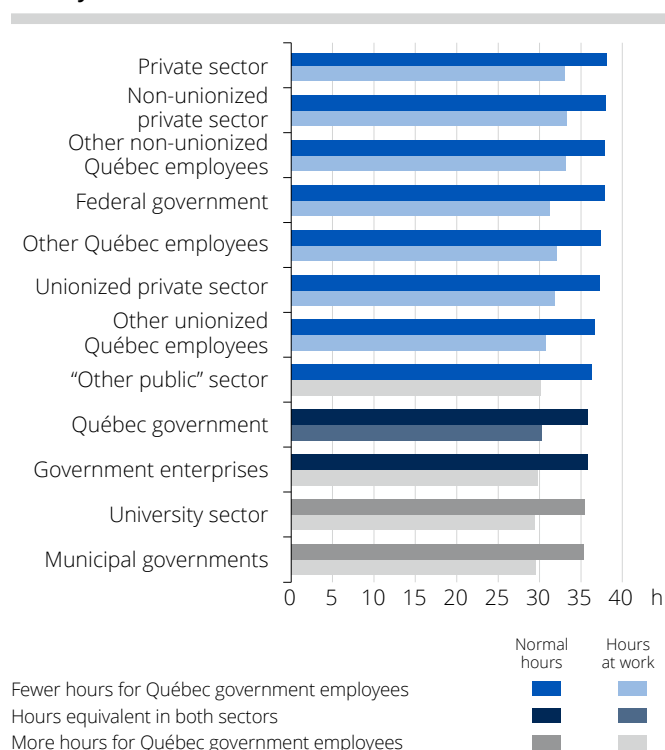
- Costs higher for the Québec government
- Equivalent costs (Québec government and sector compared)
- Costs lower for the Québec government

## Comparison of hours of work

- ▶ The normal work week of Québec government employees (35.8 hours) is shorter than that in the majority of the other sectors. However, this work week is longer than that in municipal governments (35.3 h) and the university sector (35.5 h), and similar to that in government enterprises (35.8 h).
- ▶ Québec government employees spend fewer hours at work than employees in most of the other sectors. The opposite is true when Québec government employees are compared to the “other public” sector and three of its components (municipal governments, the university sector and government enterprises).
- ▶ Private sector employees and non-unionized employees in this sector have the highest number of normal working hours (38.1 h and 38.0 h respectively), while municipal government and university sector employees have the lowest.

Figure 1

**Weekly hours of work in 2021**



## Evolution of total compensation

- ▶ Between 2020 and 2021, the position of Québec government employees in terms of salaries weakened compared to that of other Québec employees (OQEs), private sector and federal government employees, and non-unionized employees (OQEs and the private sector); it remained stable compared to that of employees in the other sectors.
- ▶ With regard to total compensation, the comparative position of Québec government employees in relation to all OQEs and employees in six other sectors remained stable. It weakened compared with non-unionized employees (OQEs and the private sector), but improved compared with employees in the “other public” sector and the federal government.
- ▶ Between 2012 and 2021, the position of Québec government employees in terms of salaries weakened compared with employees from all the other sectors. With regard to total compensation, the comparative position of Québec government employees in relation to employees from the other sectors varied depending on the sector. It weakened compared with employees from six sectors. It remained stable in comparison to “other public” and unionized employees, but improved compared to government enterprise and federal government employees.

Table 6

**Compensation differentials between Québec government employees and other labour market sectors, 2021 and 2020, and 2021 and 2012**

|                                      | Salary differentials |       |                     |       |       |                     | Total compensation differentials |        |                     |        |       |                     |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|-------|---------------------|
|                                      | 2021                 | 2020  | Statut <sup>1</sup> | 2021  | 2012  | Statut <sup>1</sup> | 2021                             | 2020   | Statut <sup>1</sup> | 2021   | 2012  | Statut <sup>1</sup> |
|                                      | %                    | %     |                     | %     | %     |                     | %                                | %      |                     | %      | %     |                     |
| <b>Other Québec employees (OQEs)</b> | -17.6                | -16.5 | Weakened            | -17.6 | -11.2 | Weakened            | -9.4                             | -9.2   | Stable              | -9.4   | -6.1  | Weakened            |
| Private sector                       | -14.9                | -13.3 | Weakened            | -14.9 | -7.8  | Weakened            | -1.6 *                           | -0.3 * | Stable              | -1.6 * | 3.3   | Weakened            |
| “Other public” sector                | -24.5                | -23.5 | Stable              | -24.5 | -19.6 | Weakened            | -27.5                            | -28.3  | Improved            | -27.5  | -26.2 | Stable              |
| Municipal governments                | -29.1                | -27.9 | Stable              | -29.1 | -18.6 | Weakened            | -39.9                            | -39.4  | Stable              | -39.9  | -33.6 | Weakened            |
| Government enterprises               | -23.3                | -22.3 | Stable              | -23.3 | -22.7 | Weakened            | -25.3                            | -25.8  | Stable              | -25.3  | -33.1 | Improved            |
| University sector                    | -16.4                | -15.6 | Stable              | -16.4 | -8.9  | Weakened            | -19.9                            | -20.4  | Stable              | -19.9  | -9.2  | Weakened            |
| Federal government                   | -25.0                | -23.0 | Weakened            | -25.0 | -20.9 | Weakened            | -20.9                            | -22.5  | Improved            | -20.9  | -21.2 | Improved            |
| <b>Sector and unionization</b>       |                      |       |                     |       |       |                     |                                  |        |                     |        |       |                     |
| Unionized OQEs                       | -22.9                | -22.3 | Stable              | -22.9 | -17.8 | Weakened            | -22.4                            | -23.7  | Stable              | -22.4  | -21.5 | Stable              |
| Non-unionized OQEs                   | -12.0                | -9.6  | Weakened            | -12.0 | -4.3  | Weakened            | 1.5 *                            | 4.1    | Weakened            | 1.5 *  | 7.3   | Weakened            |
| Unionized private sector             | -20.8                | -20.5 | Stable              | -20.8 | -16.4 | Weakened            | -14.9                            | -16.8  | Stable              | -14.9  | -13.0 | Stable              |
| Non-unionized private sector         | -11.7                | -9.0  | Weakened            | -11.7 | -3.4  | Weakened            | 2.4                              | 5.2    | Weakened            | 2.4    | 9.5   | Weakened            |

\* Means that both sectors are on a par.

1. Although the differentials for both years are different, the ISQ can conclude that the situation is stable if the difference is not deemed to be statistically significant. Moreover, the ISQ can only determine whether the comparative situation has improved, has remained stable or has weakened, since the extent of the difference is subject to a margin of error.

## Salary trends

This section presents findings on employee compensation that are not based solely on the jobs included in the comparison between the Québec government and 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 (MTESS) du Québec and from salary planning surveys (covering non-unionized employees).

Québec government collective agreements expired on March 31, 2020. Agreements providing for the renewal of working conditions have been reached and ratified, but no new collective agreements had been registered with MTESS at the time of the report. As a result, 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 2021

#### Nominal and real salary growth

- ▶ In the first six months of 2021, 83% of unionized Québec employees other than those in the Québec government received a salary increase lower than consumer price index (CPI) growth.
- ▶ Average salary-scale growth for unionized Québec employees led to a 0.4% loss in purchasing power<sup>1</sup> in 2021.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Negative real salary growth was observed in all the sectors analyzed. The loss in purchasing power ranges from 1.1% in the federal sector to 0.3% in the municipal and private sectors.
- ▶ CPI growth for the first six months of 2020 was 2.6%.

#### Salary growth according to agreements signed in 2020 and 2021

- ▶ The most recent agreements signed provide an indication of how salaries will evolve. The 2021 analysis focuses on unionized Québec employees other than those working in the Québec government. Overall, these agreements grant the same salary growth rate in 2021 as was observed in 2020 (2.6%). The rates reach at least 2% in 2021, as in 2020, except for the Québec "government enterprise" sector. Salary growth increased in the municipal (2.4% in 2021 vs. 2.1% in 2020) and private sectors (2.9% in 2021 vs. 2.7% in 2020).
- ▶ However, between 2020 and 2021, salary growth declined in Québec government enterprises (2.3% vs. 1.8%). No agreements were signed or filed for the university sector in 2020. In that sector, the growth rate was 2.3% in 2021.
- ▶ In the 2021 agreements, 84% of unionized Québec employees received average annual salary increases of 1.5% or more. This proportion is lower than what was observed in 2020 (96%).

#### Salary projections for 2021 and 2022: 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 2.0% in 2021 and 2.1% in 2022.
- ▶ In 2021, unionized Québec employees other than those in the Québec government should see a growth rate of 2.2%, as is also expected in 2022.
- ▶ The growth rate in the municipal sector should be 0.2 percentage points higher in 2021 than in 2022. The opposite should be true for Québec government enterprises (1.9% vs. 2.5%) and non-unionized employees (1.8% vs. 2.1%).
- ▶ Average salary-scale increases should be lower for non-unionized employees than for unionized employees in 2021 (1.8% vs. 2.2%), but are expected to be similar for both groups in 2022.
- ▶ All salary projection results for non-unionized employees presented in this section take into account salary freezes.
- ▶ Québec employees overall should see their salaries increase at a slower pace than the CPI in Québec, which is expected to increase by 3.4% in 2021 and 2.8% in 2022.<sup>3</sup> Unionized employees in the sectors presented are expected to lose purchasing power in both years. However, the loss should be greater in 2021 than in 2022 in all sectors.
- ▶ For non-unionized employees, real growth is expected to be negative in both 2021 (-1.6%) and 2022 (-0.7%).

1. The loss of purchasing power results from the difference between nominal wage growth and CPI growth.

2. In several sectors, the proportion of the workforce covered by a collective agreement currently in effect is less than 60%.

3. CPI forecasts come from five agencies. Depending on the agency, the reference month is either August, September or October 2021.

### Suggested citation

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