

### Feedback on proposed expanded federal leave benefits

From September 6 to October 6, 2018, the Government of Yukon invited feedback from local governments, chambers of commerce, labour organizations and the public on proposed changes to the *Employment Standards Act*. These changes align caregiving leave for parents and families with federal employment insurance benefit programs.

We sent letters with a table outlining current and proposed leave provisions to 64 agencies requesting their feedback by email or regular mail. Those invited included municipalities, First Nations development corporations, chambers of commerce, labour groups and non-government agencies including women's support agencies and those serving vulnerable individuals. We also invited the public to respond with an invitation on EngageYukon.ca, newspaper ads and social media.

We received eleven responses from four stakeholder groups. Most noted that the amendments more accurately reflect current lifestyle and labour models by providing flexibility and support for families at all stages of life. As expected, there are some concerns about potential increased costs, labour shortages, and training. However, none of the respondents raised any issues about new impacts or implications.

Stakeholder	Number of Responses	Feedback
Public	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four respondents supported the proposed changes</li> <li>• One respondent requested clarification of the details concerning parental leave</li> <li>• In addition to support, one respondent requested that expanded parental leave be applied retroactively for all parents currently on leave and wishing to access it at the time the legislation comes into force</li> </ul>
Chambers of Commerce	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to the engagement occurred through the media and outlined the following business concerns:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased costs, both direct and indirect, to employers such as 'top ups', increased corporate taxes, or lower productivity</li> <li>○ Labour shortages, recruitment, and training of staff for all types of extended leave</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Municipalities	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the respondents support the proposed changes and did not identify any concerns</li> </ul>
Unions	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unions fully support the proposed changes</li> <li>• One respondent identified that the proposed changes eliminate a "two caste system where some [those federally regulated employees and industries] would be eligible for the benefits and others would not without jeopardizing their employment"</li> <li>• In addition to creating equal opportunities, the respondent identified that this initiative supports families to build stronger bonds, address stressful life events, and may help decrease the rate of divorce</li> <li>• "...brings family to the forefront, where health of the family is health of the nation, and the benefit will be reaped by everyone."</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One respondent noted that the labour force comprises a significant proportion of the population in Yukon. They said that in addition to the changing demographics of an aging population, workers - often women - need time off to care for family members at all stages of life. The respondent observed that these leave alignments support these changes in the labour market and the population.</li> <li>• Recommended that the leave to care for a critically ill adult family member be extended from 16 to 17 weeks and include individual considered 'like family'</li> <li>• Recommended six other types of leave, fair wage and standardized shift premiums, fair scheduling practices, and a right to non-precarious work</li> </ul>
Total	11	