



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Tēnā koe

On 17 September 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information regarding:

COVID-19 Wage Subsidy since the first level 4 lockdown in March 2020:

- 1. The number of applications made within the required time frame for each subsidy.*
- 2. The number of applications declined because they were attempted outside of the required time frame for each subsidy.*
- 3. The number of applications declined because they should have been applied for as Short-Term Absence Payment or Leave Support Scheme subsidies.*

COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme since the first level 4 lockdown in March 2020:

- 4. The number of applications made within the required time frame for each subsidy.*
- 5. The number of applications declined because they were attempted outside of the required time frame for each subsidy.*
- 6. The number of applications declined because they should have been applied for as COVID-19 Wage Subsidy.*

The Wage Subsidy Scheme and Leave Support Scheme has enabled rapid support for thousands of New Zealand businesses during this time of uncertainty and has ensured that employees are able to remain connected with their employers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme has been set up on a high-trust model in order to quickly deliver funds to support workers, families and businesses.

For question one, please refer to **Table One** overturn, which shows the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy applications received as at 24 September 2021.

For question two, please refer to **Table Two** overturn, which shows the COVID-19 Leave Subsidy applications received as at 24 September 2021.

Table One: COVID-19 Wage Subsidy applications received as at 24 September 2021

Subsidy type	Number of applications
Wage Subsidy original	558,473
Wage Subsidy extension	280,255
Wage Subsidy resurgence	104,381
Wage Subsidy March 2021	60,976
Wage Subsidy August 2021 #1	340,816
Wage Subsidy August 2021 #2	264,412
Wage Subsidy August 2021 #3	139,743
Total	1,749,056

Table Two: COVID-19 Leave Subsidy applications received as at 24 September 2021

Subsidy type	Number of applications
Leave Payment	26,142
Essential Worker	4,517
Leave Support	19,440
Short Term Absence Payment	19,737
Total	69,836

For questions two and five, applicants were not able to submit COVID-19 Wage Subsidy and/or Leave Subsidy applications once the online portal was closed. Therefore, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

For questions three and six, due to the way the information is held the Ministry is not able to easily identify which applications were declined due to applying for the wrong subsidy. In order to provide you with this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of individual applications. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,

- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding the Wage Subsidy Scheme and Leave Support Scheme, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Saunders

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