

For immediate release

QCGN Welcomes New Budget Measures for English-speaking Quebecers

Montreal – March 27, 2018 – The Quebec Community Groups Network is pleased that the government is investing many millions toward supporting the vitality of Quebec’s English-speaking minority community.

QCGN had high expectations for today's budget, following a first-ever pre-budget consultation with Quebec’s English-speaking community and a comment from Finance Minister Carlos Leitão following that meeting that his budget “would address some specific needs of a very important component of our society.”

Organizations representing Quebec’s English-speaking minority told Leitão that more money should go to the newly created Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, so it can be more muscular and effective in ensuring that services to which we are entitled are delivered and that our rights are respected.

And he delivered.

The minister's budget set aside \$24.5 million over six years to support the Secretariat and its work with the English-speaking community. The budget tables indicate an additional \$46 million has been earmarked to support community organizations operating outside the Health and Social Services sector, including English-speaking community organizations.

“The scale of the commitment is what we had hoped for,” commented QCGN Vice-President Geoffrey Chambers, noting that it’s always difficult to analyze budgets which put money in big buckets and do not break down expenditures as line items. “We are encouraged by the budget's additional general commitment for community support in Health and Social Services,” he added. “We are also hopeful that a very significant portion of the additional \$46 million from the minister will go to meet further very pressing needs in our community, of which the government has been made very well aware: Youth, Seniors, Employment as well as the particular challenges faced by our regional communities.”

The budget documents indicate funding for the Secretariat will be used: to support non-profit organizations and institutions in areas of activity related to the Secretariat's mission; to disseminate data and research that supports the vitality of English-speaking communities; and to help keep young English-speaking Quebecers in the province by ensuring they have jobs.

"We are extremely pleased to see a solid investment in the vitality of our communities over the next six years," said QCGN President James Shea. He noted that the budget for the Secretariat will increase to \$5.4 million in 2020-2021. The budget allocates an immediate \$1.9 million for 2017-2018. This will rise to \$2 million in 2018-2019 and to \$4.4 million in 2019-2020.

"There is a clear need for credible research and data on our community so as to ensure proper policies that meet the real needs of English-speaking Quebecers," said Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General of the QCGN. "Despite clear evidence from the Canadian census that English-speaking Quebecers are burdened with higher levels of unemployment and poverty than our Francophone counterparts, provincial politicians and policymakers haven't always believed us. Perhaps, when the numbers come from a provincial government source, they will fully grasp our situation."

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 56 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

For further information:

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