

For immediate release

QCGN Welcomes New Federal Investments in English-speaking Quebec

Ottawa – March 28, 2018 – The Quebec Community Groups Network is looking forward to greater support from the federal government following the release of the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in our Future*.

The plan, which includes \$500 million in new spending for Official Language Minority Communities, was unveiled in Ottawa Wednesday by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly. These measures bring the total investment to \$2.7 billion – the largest-ever commitment to official languages.

“Over the past several years, English-speaking Quebec has invested a great deal of time communicating its needs to the federal government,” said QCGN President James Shea. “With the release of the Government of Canada’s *Action Plan*, it is clear we have been listened to.”

“The Government of Canada has increased its investment in official languages by \$500 million – a remarkable increase – and it has put English-speaking Quebec front and centre,” Shea added.

“We are particularly pleased with the frequent level and depth of consultation and personal commitment to developing this plan shown by Minister Joly,” said Geoffrey Chambers, Vice-President of the QCGN. “She has proven herself a true champion of official languages.”

For the first time, improving access to services and enhancing the vitality of English-speaking Quebec is a central objective of the plan; the necessary resources have now been assured to meet this objective. A specific development fund for our community is being established with over \$5 million. There is money for arts and heritage, especially to help English-speaking children understand and identify with our unique community. The reach of health networks in rural Quebec will be extended. Much-needed relief for community media is on its way.

“There are also exciting opportunities in sectors like access to justice, as core funding returns to community sector organizations working in the field,” said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. “And our community’s post-secondary institutions will certainly benefit from a scholarship program established to help significantly more Canadian youth learn French.

“Another exciting aspect of the plan is the creation of an infrastructure fund that communities will be able to access directly to build or improve community meeting places,” she added. As well, she noted, the QCGN and its member organizations that are currently funded by Canadian Heritage will receive boosts to their core funding. There is also money for under-developed sectors.

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:

Rita Legault, Director of Communications and Public Relations | rita.legault@qcgn.ca

Telephone: 514-868-9044, ext. 223, cellular: 514-912-6555