



Press Release: English speakers in the Laurentides face growing economic challenges, new report shows

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Outreach

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Saint-Eustache, October 3rd, 2024 – The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) has [released a new report](#) highlighting the economic challenges faced by English speakers in the Laurentides region. The data reveals growing unemployment and income gaps between English and French speakers.

PERT's findings highlight a troubling trend. Between the 2016 and 2021 census, the unemployment rate of English speakers in the Laurentides region rose by 2.1 percentage points to 10.5%, while the rate for French speakers remained stable at 6.8%. This represents a 3.7 percentage point gap between the two linguistic communities.

Additionally, the gap in median after-tax income between the two groups widened significantly, increasing by 69%, with English speakers earning \$2,000 less than French speakers. Moreover, the most recent census data show an employment income gap of \$5,000 less for English speakers.

PERT and its local regional partner, 4Korners, point to these statistics as evidence of the need for targeted interventions to reverse these trends.

Barriers Rooted in Language Proficiency and Access to French-language Training



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One of the report's key findings is that limited French language proficiency is a significant barrier for English speakers looking to secure employment in the region. While 77.6% of the Laurentides' English-speaking population report being able to hold a conversation in French, the report's data confirms many still face employability challenges.

Older generations and individuals living in more rural areas outside the region's tourism centres, where bilingualism is often less valued, face additional challenges. Often, these individuals lack access to French language training that could help them compete in the job market.

"With over 2 million visitors a year, the tourism industry needs more bilingual speakers, but in the current labour market, talented individuals are being overlooked because of potential weak language proficiency," said Hugo Bissonnet, Executive Director at 4Korners. "Improving language training support and strengthening language skills will help individuals secure employment and enable employers in key sectors to tap into a broader pool of talent. This is also true for the new high technologies sectors like aeronautics."

A Call for Solutions

The report calls for the expansion of targeted employment supports for English speakers as a way to improve the community's employability.

PERT and 4Korners are urging the government to develop targeted employment services and expand access to French language training. They argue that these measures are necessary to help English speakers overcome language barriers and participate fully in the local labour market.

Nicholas Salter, Executive Director of PERT, emphasized the urgency: "The statistics show us that the employment situation for the English-speaking community in the Laurentides is worsening. It will not improve unless the government works with local stakeholders and targets the needs of the English-speaking community when delivering employment services. These services also need to be paired with an expanded offer of French language training for the workforce. The development of a regional employment plan for the English-speaking community is a crucial missing piece. Action is needed now."

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About PERT The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative focused on addressing the employment and employability challenges facing Québec's English-speaking community. For more information about the Provincial Employment Roundtable, visit www.pertquebec.ca.

About 4Korners 4Korners is a community-based organization which connects individuals within the Laurentides with programs and services designed to meet their needs in a secure and inclusive environment. To learn more, visit www.4korners.org.

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