



# Press Release: English speakers in Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine experience the highest unemployment rate in Québec, new report finds

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## Outreach

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**Gaspé, October 8th, 2024** – The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) has released a comprehensive report highlighting the employment challenges facing English speakers in Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The report reveals that the English-speaking community in the region experiences an unemployment rate of 18.7%—the highest in the province and nearly double that of their French-speaking counterparts, who have an unemployment rate of 10.7%.

Building on its previous work, PERT’s report also shows English speakers in the area earn \$6,600 less in median employment income than French speakers. Additionally, a higher proportion of English speakers in the region experience higher rates of poverty compared to the French-speaking community.

**F** **rs to higher education and high part-time employment**

The report underscores how limited access to higher education, combined with a reliance on seasonal and part-time employment, has created significant barriers to professional opportunities and labour mobility in the region.

Currently, only 37.7% of English speakers in Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine have a post-secondary degree. Moreover, 62.8% of English speakers in the region are engaged in part-time or seasonal work.

The low levels of educational attainment in the region are largely attributed to a lack of local English-language vocational training and post-secondary education options. As a result, many young English speakers are forced to leave the region to pursue higher education, contributing to outmigration.

### A call for solutions

In collaboration with local partners Vision Gaspé-Percé Now and the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), PERT is urging the government and local stakeholders to tackle the English-speaking community's employment challenges through a comprehensive approach, with a special focus on priority sectors such as healthcare, social assistance, and the trades.

"Increased access to vocational and post-secondary education can improve educational attainment rates and help retain talent in the region. This, combined with enhanced language training and targeted employment services, will pave the way for better integration of English speakers into the regional workforce," said Jessica Synnott, Executive Director of Vision Gaspé-Percé Now.

"We need to consider all factors impacting employability, from training and education to social support. This means supporting job seekers in a holistic way. In addition to employment services, we also need to implement wrap-around programs that tackle issues like lack of childcare, housing, poverty, and transportation," added Allen Richards, Executive Director of CASA.

Nicholas Salter, Executive Director at PERT, emphasized the need for a coordinated effort: "Addressing the employment challenges in the region requires bringing all players to the table—community organizations, government, and employers alike—to ensure initiatives meet the unique needs of English speakers in Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine. We urge all levels of government to collaborate with local stakeholders to develop a regional employability plan and secure a more stable economic future for the region."

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**About PERT** The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) is a non-profit organization working to address the employment challenges and opportunities of the English-speaking communities across Québec. Through policy & research, development, and engagement efforts, we collaborate with diverse partners including regional and community organizations, educational institutions, employment service providers, employers, and government. PERT is dedicated to building and strengthening employment support networks and ensuring inclusion in Québec's labour market for generations to come. For more information, visit [www.pertquebec.ca](http://www.pertquebec.ca).

**Vision Gaspé-Percé Now** Vision Gaspé-Percé Now is a non-profit community organization. Their mandate is to ensure that services are provided for the English-speaking community and to enhance the quality of life for all English-speaking Gaspésians. They accomplish this by making their presence in the community known, preserving

their heritage, and promoting the unique characteristics they have to offer to their Francophone and Aboriginal

to learn more, visit <https://vgpn.ca/>

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**About the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)** CASA works to build and strengthen the vitality of the English-speaking population of the Gaspé Coast by representing the community's interests and designing and delivering programs that respond to its needs. Visit [www.casa-gaspe.com](http://www.casa-gaspe.com) for more information.

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