

**For immediate release**

## **QCGN Welcomes Promises of New Investments in Official Language Programming**

**Montreal – February 27, 2018** – The Quebec Community Groups Network welcomes today’s federal budget that will add \$400 million in new funding over five years to support official language programs critical to the vitality of English-speaking Quebec.

“English-speaking Quebecers have reason to be optimistic about the hints dropped in this budget concerning the upcoming federal Action Plan for Official Languages,” said QCGN President James Shea, adding there is good news for our community’s arts, culture, and heritage sectors and our minority language newspapers. “We now await details of the Action Plan for Official Languages to find out how the governments of Canada and Quebec can work together to fulfill these promises.”

Finance Minister Bill Morneau’s third federal budget announced money for improved access to services for English-speaking communities in Quebec in their official language, and funding for French and English-language minority community radio stations and newspapers. Also in this budget is new money for cultural, artistic and heritage activities, including community theatre, art workshops, and activities showcasing local heritage or history.

Morneau also announced an interactive application to make it easy for Canadians to learn English or French as a second language and measures to ensure the recruitment and retention of teachers who speak French and English as a second language. Minority language schools will also receive \$20 million for a variety of early learning and child care initiatives. There is also new money for community organizations to ensure they can continue to provide services for individuals in their communities, to welcome newcomers, and to foster early childhood development.

“The degree to which English-speaking Quebecers will benefit from the initiatives contained in the federal budget rests on the Government of Quebec’s willingness and commitment to ensure our communities can access them,” noted QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin Laforge, explaining that a number of federal investments reach Canadians through bilateral arrangements with the provinces. “We will work closely with the province to ensure that English-speaking Quebecers receive equitable access to initiatives in the budget related to early childhood development, employment and skills development.”

“We are very fortunate that the Government of Quebec chose this year to establish a Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers,” said QCGN Vice-president Geoffrey Chambers. “English-speaking Quebecers will only benefit from an equitable portion of the initiatives contained within this budget, with the deliberate and focused involvement of the Government of Quebec.”

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 53 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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