

Press Release: The Unemployment Gap between English Speakers and French Speakers in Québec has Doubled, New Census Data Reveals

Outreach

The Unemployment Gap between English Speakers and French Speakers in Québec has Doubled, New Census Data Reveals *Other employment indicators have also significantly worsened since the last census*

[Montréal, May 17th] – The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) has just published a report examining the state of employment for Québec’s English-speaking communities. The report draws on new 2021 census data and shows that English speakers across most regions of Québec experience higher unemployment rates, lower median incomes, and higher rates of poverty compared to the French-speaking majority, despite high rates of labour force participation and high educational attainment.

More specifically, PERT’s research reveals an unemployment rate for English speakers at 10.9%, compared to 6.9% for French speakers. This 4% unemployment gap is double the 2% unemployment gap found in PERT’s prior analysis of 2016 census data.

The income disparity between English and French speakers is also growing. PERT’s report demonstrates that English speakers earn \$5,200 less than French speakers in terms of median employment income and this gap has doubled since the previous census. In addition to lower incomes, English speakers also experience higher rates of poverty compared to their French counterparts. The report shows that the provincial poverty rate for English speakers is 10%, which is almost twice as high as the poverty rate for French speakers (5.8%).

“The findings in this report are shocking,” said Nicholas Salter, Executive Director at the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT). “The situation has gotten worse since the last census and the economic vitality of the English-speaking community in Québec is in decline at a much faster rate than we could have anticipated.”

Facing an ongoing labour shortage, Québec’s economic growth will be impacted by the ability of governments and employers to effectively develop their workforce. This report sheds light on the urgent need for targeted initiatives to address the employment challenges being faced by the English-speaking community and move Québec’s economy forward.

“The worsening unemployment and income trends we are seeing are not new, however, our approaches to addressing them must be. The situation calls for immediate attention and targeted investments to unlock the potential of English-speaking Québécois in Québec’s labour market,” concludes Salter.

Key findings:

The unemployment rate for English speakers in Québec has increased. English speakers face an unemployment rate of 10.9%, 4 percent higher than French speakers’ 6.9%. This difference has doubled since the 2016 Census when the gap was 2%.

English speakers continue to earn lower incomes compared to French speakers across the province: English speakers have an after-tax median income that is \$2,800 lower than French speakers and a median employment income that is \$5,200 less than French speakers. The gap in median employment income between English and French speakers has widened significantly; English speakers have a median employment income that is \$5,200 less than French speakers, previously \$2,648.

The provincial poverty rate for English speakers is 10%, which is almost twice as high as the poverty rate for French speakers (5.8%).

Québec’s English-speaking population has increased since the last census. There are now 1,253,578 individuals who identify as English speakers, representing 14.9% of Québec’s population (previously 13.8% in the last census).

English speakers continue to have high educational attainment levels, and the level of educational attainment among English speakers has increased. As of 2021, approximately 86% of the English-speaking population in Québec have at least a secondary-level education compared to 81.6% for French speakers.

There are 699,015 English speakers in Québec’s labour force. English speakers now make up 15.8% of the total labour force (previously 14.3%). English speakers also have a higher labour force participation rate (66.6%) compared to French speakers (64%).

English speakers face other challenges in the labour market: they are more likely to work a temporary position, work fewer average weeks, and are more likely to work part-time compared to French speakers. These are all lead indicators for labour market precarity.

Regional disparities within the English-speaking community persist – English speakers in the regions of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Côte-Nord, and Nord-du-Québec continue to have the highest unemployment rates and lowest incomes within the English-speaking community. However, the unemployment rates for English speakers living in northern resource-based economies have generally decreased since the last census.

The full report is available [here](#).

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 (PERT) : <https://pertquebec.ca/>

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