

Press Release: Vocational and technical training programs offer pathways to French-language acquisition for Québec's English speakers

Montreal, September 6th, 2022 – The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) has just released a [report](#) inventorying the vocational education programs available to English speakers. This report takes account of the existing English-language vocational and technical training (VTT) programs in Quebec. The report brings to light some of the structural and individual elements of the VTT sphere that impact the access to and availability of English-language VTT programming.

PERT's report asserts that English-language VTT programs are generally successful in helping students to acquire the skills, including French-language proficiency skills, necessary for long-term success in the labour market. However, the report highlights that despite the presence of English-language programs that correspond to provincial economic priorities, distance and regional disparities remain a barrier for many students seeking out these programs.

“Flexibility to respond to labour market demands is essential in order to develop functional and effective VTT programming. Additional programs are needed to improve regional coverage, particularly in rural and remote regions,” says Nicholas Salter, Executive Director of PERT. The report also identifies that inadequate distribution of VTT services offered throughout the province, lack of promotion and perception issues related to vocational training act as obstacles to driving more interest in these programs among English speakers. The report highlights that as a result of these barriers, French speakers pursue vocational education at double the rate of English-speakers.

“Diverse and effective English-language VTT programming is important in Québec because the province is currently experiencing labour shortages, and English-speakers are an underexplored target demographic,” Salter concludes.

The reports key findings include:

- 6.2% of English speakers in Québec have a vocational education diploma, compared to 13.2% of French speakers. French speakers thus pursue vocational education at double the rate of English-speakers.
- More than half of all English-language VTT programs offered in Québec (approximately 54%) are located on the island of Montréal.
- Further, English-language vocational programming is tethered to French-language learning opportunities, and often prepares English speakers to enter bilingual or predominantly French workspaces.
- English-language VTT is important for English speakers themselves because it helps to mitigate unemployment, which English speakers experience at higher rates than French speakers.
- Flexibility to respond to labour market demands is essential to functional and effective VTT programming. As such, vocational centres need to be empowered to respond more efficiently and organically to fluctuations in the labour market.

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 : www.pertquebec.ca

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