

Press Release – Lack of French-Language training opportunities for professional orders contributes to labour market shortage

Montreal, July 18th, 2022 – The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) has released a report on the role of French language policies in Québec's professional orders. The report highlights the shortcomings in the current state of French-language training support offered to members of professional orders in Québec.

“French-language proficiency is a requirement for membership in Québec's professional orders. Our report shows that there is currently no comprehensive approach in place to support Quebecers who are professionally qualified to practise their respective professions but need to improve their French-language proficiency. We fear this will further exacerbate the current labour shortage,” says Nicholas Salter, Executive Director, Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT).

The province is currently in the midst of a labour shortage, with 37,120 vacant positions in the fields of healthcare and social assistance. [A recent report published by the Ministère du Travail de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale \(MTESS\)](#) shows that this situation could worsen over the next few years. The MTESS report shows that almost half of the professions that are expected suffer from severe labour shortages, including healthcare and social assistance, are regulated by professional orders, and that these shortages will be felt across 16 of the province's 17 regions.

“The new requirements under Bill 96 regarding French language proficiency will likely add an additional barrier to non-native French speakers who are looking to remain in or enter a regulated profession. Furthermore, institutional stakeholders such as professional orders are not mandated to provide French-language support to their members or communicate in another language than French.” adds Salter.

PERT's findings, in this latest report, are consistent with findings in previous reports, in identifying the lack of French proficiency as a barrier to entry into professional orders for English speakers in Québec.

“We need to ensure we are including all Québécois in the work of rebuilding our economy and addressing the current labour shortage. This is why PERT is recommending the government invest in more support for French-second-language learners in order to better support their ability to obtain and keep their professional certifications. We believe this will help to mitigate the projected labour shortages in key professional fields” explained Mr. Salter.

The report's key findings include:

- French-language proficiency can pose a barrier to a qualified professional's ability to enter a professional order.
- There is a lack of transitional programs that allow professionals to work in their profession while they simultaneously receive the French-language training necessary to pass the OQLF French-language exam.
- There are accessibility issues, such as financial constraints, for professionals looking to enter French-language training programs.
- There is a desire within professional orders for more organizational capacity and funding to improve their training programs and provide French-language support.
- Data on linguistic minorities in Québec's professional orders is not widely available thus making it challenging to determine the extent of language support needed for French-language learners in Québec.

About the French-language Support for Québec's English-speaking Professionals report

This report examines the status of French-language support for English speakers and other linguistic minorities in professions regulated by professional orders and identifies the support measures available to prospective and current members of professional orders in Québec, as well as the areas where improvements can be made.

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 : <https://pertquebec.ca/>

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