

PRESS RELEASE

English-Speaking Workers Could Boost Québec Economy by \$1.5 Billion

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Press Release

Montreal, December 4, 2025 – Persistent employment and income gaps between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers are costing the province an estimated \$1.5 billion in lost income annually.

That is the alarming conclusion of a new report commissioned by the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT). The report analyzes income and employment outcomes among English- and French-speaking Quebecers while comparing for demographic and labour market differences.

“By not having a clear and targeted strategy to help English speakers enter the workforce, Quebec is holding back its own economic potential at a time when keeping the economy strong is more important than ever,” said Nicholas Salter, PERT’s executive director. “Ensuring that English-speaking Quebecers have the skills and opportunities they need is not just a social imperative—it is essential for the province’s economic prosperity.”

The report, authored by the Social Research Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), arrives at a pivotal moment, as American tariffs buffet the Canadian economy and Quebec moves to lower barriers to interprovincial trade and worker mobility.

Labour shortages are already acute in health care, social services and technology, and better-supported English-speakers – who account for 15.8 percent of the province’s labour force – could help fill those gaps.



PERT stresses that tapping this talent is more than a matter of fairness. Strengthening French language training, improving employment services targeted to English-speakers, and crafting an inclusive workforce strategy will contribute to easing shortages, broadening the labour pool, and strengthening Quebec's competitiveness on the global stage.

Addressing these disparities would also boost tax revenues and ease acute labour shortages in key sectors like healthcare, technology, and social services.

The study offers a clearer picture of these disparities and how they affect provincial economic performance.

Key Findings:

- Disparities Exist: English-speaking Quebecers earn less and face higher unemployment — even after accounting for age, education, immigration status, and other labour-market factors.
- Economic Impact: Closing employment and income disparities could generate \$1.5 billion in additional income annually.
- Persistent Gaps: Disparities remain even when adjusting for education, age, location, and immigration status. In particular, English speakers experience higher unemployment rates than their French-speaking peers at all education levels.
- Future Outlook: Without changes to reduce historical inequities, labour-market gaps are projected to persist under all projected growth scenarios through 2028.
- Methodological innovations: To address policy-relevant data gaps, modelling methods can be used to generate up-to-date labour market outcomes, project trends between census years, and assess persistent employment and earnings gaps.

To close these gaps, the Provincial Employment Roundtable urges the Québec government to:

- Implement a targeted strategy to close the employment and income disparities between English and French speakers.
- Implement and promote policies to attract, employ, and retain English speakers in Québec.

“English-speaking Quebecers represent untapped talent that can help the province navigate economic uncertainty and drive growth,” concluded Nicholas Salter. “Investing in their skills and opportunities isn’t just fair—it’s smart economic policy that will fuel Quebec’s economy and benefit everyone in the province.”

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.

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