



# Federal Pre-budget Submission 2025

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THE PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE

**SUBMITTED AUGUST 18, 2025**

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** That the federal government allocate funding to improve the availability and quality of linguistic labour market data through the Labour Force Survey and Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, with a particular focus on underrepresented communities between census years.

**Recommendation 2:** That the federal government increase investments in community-based research capacity to support organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers in identifying and responding to regional labour market needs.

**Recommendation 3:** That the federal government adopt a holistic and intersectional approach to employability programming, acknowledging the importance of tailored programming that is responsive to the needs of both the population and labour market in question.

**Recommendation 4:** That the federal government enhance communication and coordination with the Government of Québec to ensure the delivery of employment services, including supports to bridge into the Francophone labour market, within a for-us-by-us framework for English-speaking Quebecers.

**Recommendation 5:** That the government develop and invest in a national framework to replicate and scale community-driven employability models that reflect regional realities, mobilize hidden talent pools, and foster collaboration across sectors.

## Context and Alignment with Federal Priorities

Prime Minister Mark Carney's [2025 federal mandate letter](#) underscores a renewed commitment to building a more productive economy and ultimately a stronger Canada. Addressed to his cabinet ministers, it outlines seven priorities for support and change across the country, ranging in focus from the experiences of everyday Canadians to federal institutions and international ties. This encompasses ensuring that Canadians have access to affordable essentials, strengthening skills training, investing in infrastructure, maximizing cross-provincial communication and trade, and fostering international trade.

PERT's work directly supports this federal vision. As a provincial leader in employment research and programming for Québec's Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), we understand how local employment support and intervention can drive significant economic contributions and productivity gains. Since its founding in 2020, PERT has worked to identify and develop innovative, community-based solutions to enhance labour market outcomes for English-speaking workers facing systemic barriers. Such groups often represent hidden talent pools and require tailored interventions to thrive. When these interventions are combined with multisectoral collaboration and strong policy advocacy, they drive measurable progress – not only for our communities, but for a more inclusive and productive economy overall.

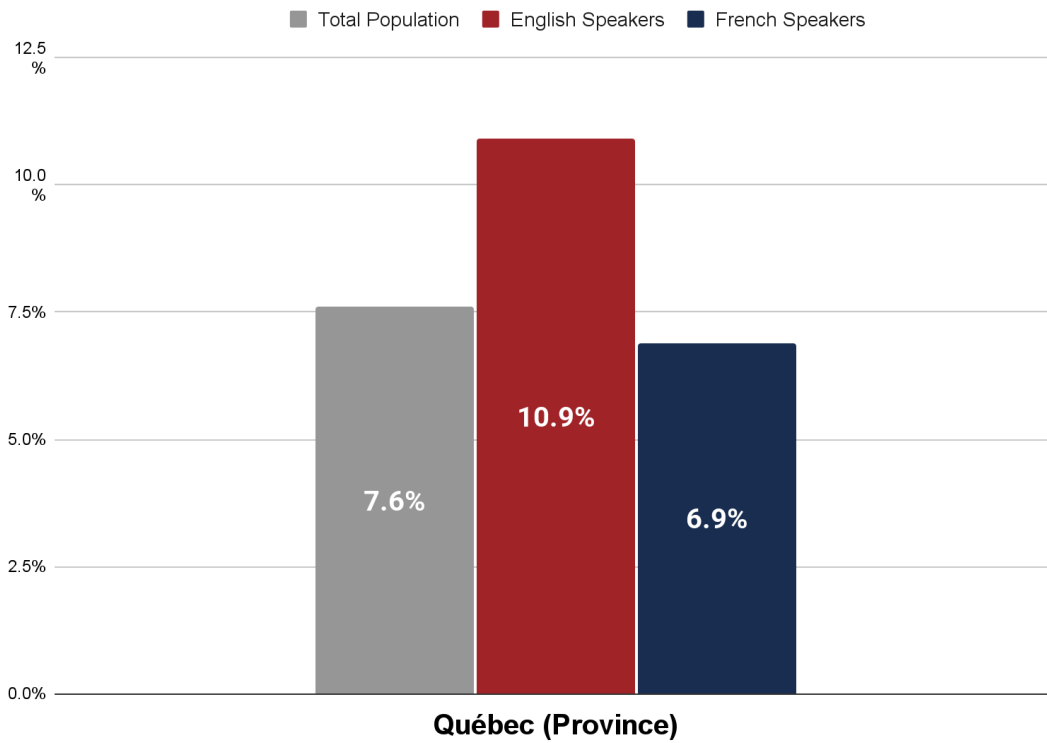
### Why English-speaking Quebecers?

English-speaking Quebecers occupy a vulnerable position in Québec's labour market. We represent 14.9% of the province's total population, but 22.7% of its unemployed and 23% of all individuals living in poverty.<sup>1</sup> In comparison to the province's French-speaking majority, English speakers experience higher unemployment and poverty rates as compared to the Francophone majority, and earn lower median incomes.

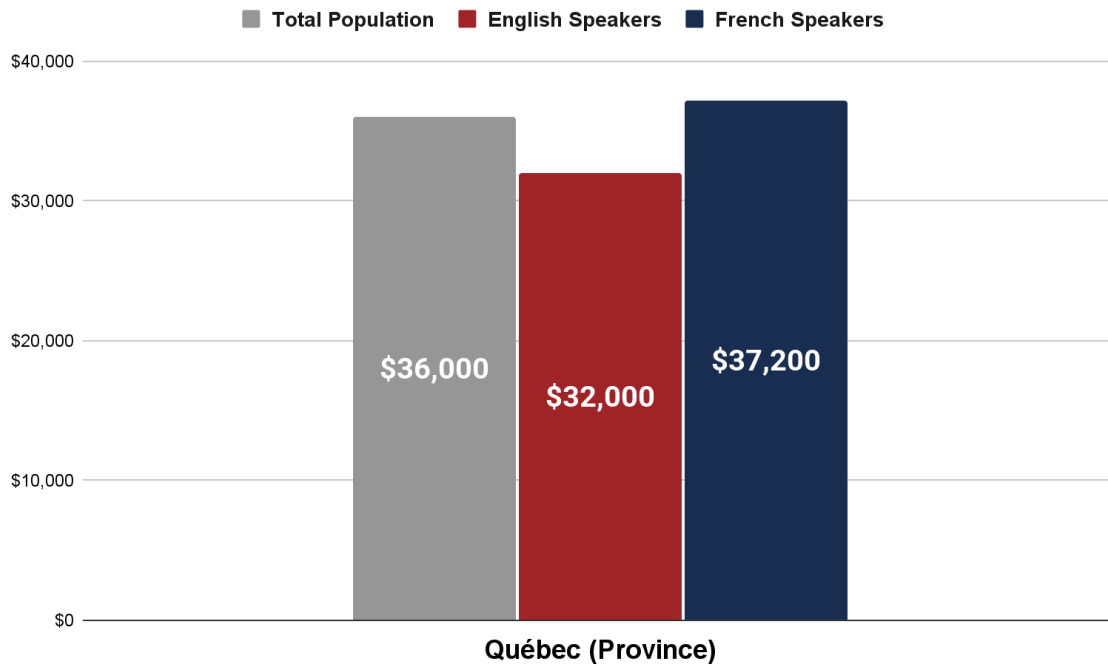
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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Statistics Canada. (2021). 2021 Census - 25% Sample Data, [custom table]. All statistics in this report are based on calculations derived from Statistics Canada data tables, unless otherwise indicated.

## Unemployment Rate of Linguistic Communities in Quebec

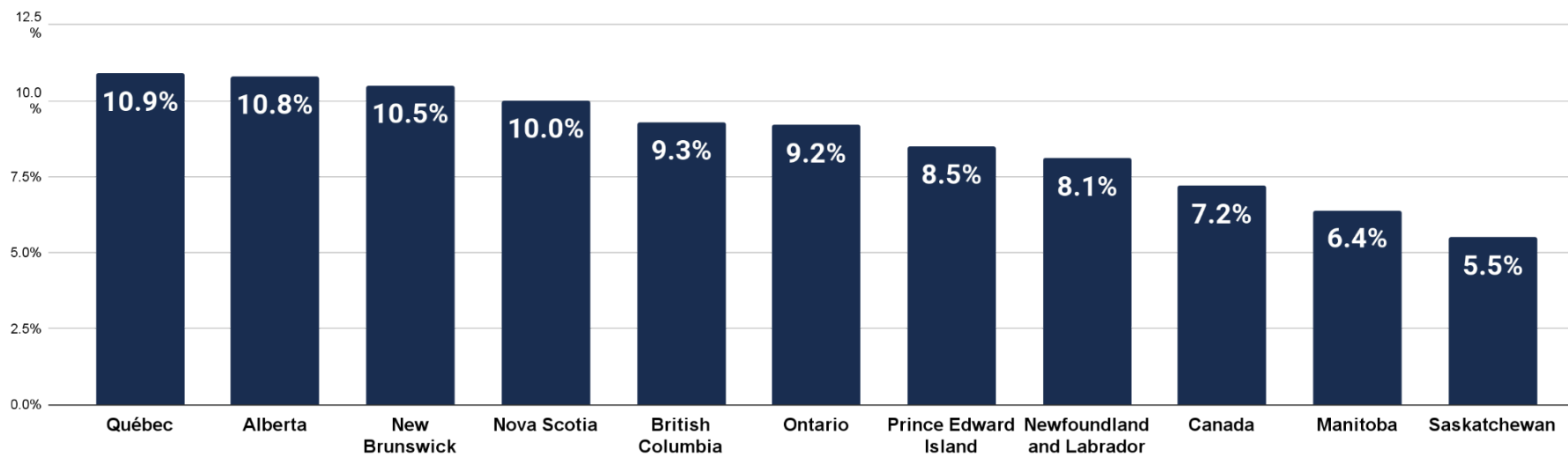


## Median Employment Income of Linguistic Communities in Quebec

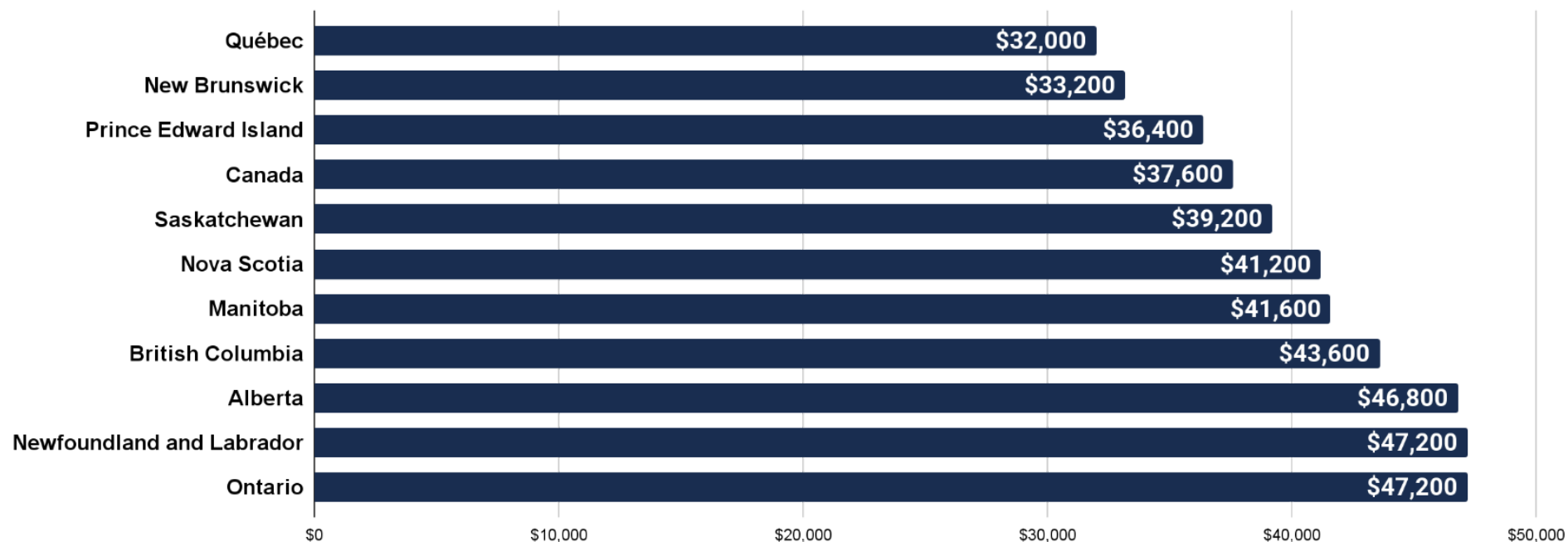


At the national level, English speakers experience similar disparities in comparison to other OLMCs, reporting the highest unemployment rate and lowest median income.

**Unemployment Rate of OLMCs in Canada**



### Median Employment Income of OLMCs in Canada



Tellingly, English speakers tend to be highly educated and experience high rates of overqualification. This suggests that educational or skills gaps are not the primary barrier to labour market entry and promotion, but rather linguistic identity and proficiency. PERT’s research in recent years, alongside that of other stakeholders, has confirmed this. Both English speakers and employers indicate that language, access to French language learning resources, and access to English language services are at the center of these disparities, as well as their solutions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Provincial Employment Roundtable, “2021 Employment Survey of English-speaking Quebecers and Organizations,” 2022, [https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/PERT\\_MC\\_Design\\_SRQEA\\_CORE\\_EINR\\_D5R02\\_20220823\\_EN\\_Web.pdf](https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/PERT_MC_Design_SRQEA_CORE_EINR_D5R02_20220823_EN_Web.pdf).; Provincial Employment Roundtable, “Need to Know, Want to Know: Regional Québec English Speakers’ French Language Learning Experiences,” [Forthcoming].

# Unlocking Potential

Unlocking the potential of Québec's English speakers represents a powerful opportunity to (1) concretely improve provincial and national economic productivity, as well as (2) create a framework by which to recognize and mobilize the capacities of other hidden talent pools in the country. In this brief, we advance three key axes, accompanied by recommendations, to accomplish these two goals.

## 1. Strengthen the National Data Landscape

A robust labour market strategy aimed at improving Canada's productivity begins with access to high-quality data. Utilizing labour market information (LMI), we can identify trends and needs within communities and industries, and better tailor our career guidance and skills training initiatives. For Québec's English-speaking communities, the lack of regular and linguistically disaggregated LMI continues to hinder both government and community efforts to target programs effectively. Currently, we must rely on the Census of Canada, which, while robust in the scope of data it collects, is only administered every five years. It cannot capture developments in the intervening years, such as the imposition of American tariffs and the overall transformation of the global trading system throughout the spring and summer of 2025. These limitations constrain evidence-based policy as well as the timely implementation of responsive programming.

As the federal government increases its focus on strengthening the economy, supporting individual Canadians, and measuring progress in these areas, improving the quality and accessibility of LMI is a critical step. Expanding the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey and Labour Force Survey to include language-based data, mirroring the updates made to include visible minority identity in 2022, will help to identify the unique barriers facing English speakers and enable the development of tailored interventions.

Complementary investments are needed in community-based research infrastructure to ensure local organizations are empowered to identify and respond to labour market dynamics while these overarching data gaps persist. As trusted service providers and partners in workforce development, community organizations require long-term and flexible research funding to assess local labour trends, evaluate programs, and inform public policy.

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**Recommendation 2:** That the federal government increase investments in community-based research capacity to support organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers in identifying and responding to regional labour market needs.

## 2. Enhance Workforce Development Strategies

The mandate letter also reaffirms the strength that Canada draws from its diversity. This strength comes from different communities and individuals, industries and professionals, coming together to offer their unique perspectives and experiences. When harnessed effectively, these contribute to creative problem-solving and help to mitigate issues and gaps in the labour market. In practice, however, certain communities occupy a vulnerable position in the labour market, and our current ecosystem is ill-equipped to address their particular needs. Better policy frameworks and service delivery models are often required to mitigate systemic disparities and ensure inclusive, effective labour market integration.

Québec is no exception. The province's OLMC is the largest and most diverse in the country: one-third of our population is comprised of visible minorities, and one-third are immigrants. Additionally, about a quarter of all First Nations and Inuit in the province speak English as their first official language. Our communities are geographically dispersed, with pockets of English speakers residing in each of the province's 17 regions. Collectively, our community is distinguished by the disparities we face in economic and employment outcomes, which are exacerbated among specific demographic and geographic groups.

English speakers are highly educated and deeply motivated to pursue the training, language learning, and employment supports that would allow them to fully contribute to Québec's Francophone labour market.<sup>3</sup> However, due to a lack of targeted programs, English speakers often struggle to access these crucial services. Investing in targeted programming for English speakers is not only a matter of equity; it is a clear economic strategy. If English speakers had the same (lower) unemployment rate as French speakers, an additional 27,680 workers would join the provincial labour force. This would significantly increase the number of skilled bilingual professionals active in Québec, creating effective liaisons and motors for interprovincial exchange and trade, ultimately enhancing national productivity.

Despite these clear benefits, the Government of Québec continues to overlook English speakers in its skills development and employment strategies. Québec's 2024 *Plan pour la langue française* has no plan for Québec's English speakers, even though they number almost 600,000 – 37.9% of adult language learners in the province. Similarly, for the last three years, English speakers have not been targeted in the government's *Plan d'action des services publics d'emploi* despite a demonstrated decline in the community's economic standing across the last two censuses. Québec continues to have no plan for nearly a quarter of its unemployed population, casting doubt on the efficacy of the \$1 billion it spends annually on employment, while simultaneously perpetuating unemployment and losing out on the potential and skills of English speakers.

Given these glaring omissions, English speakers continue to require tailored French language training and employment support – two needs that are closely intertwined. There is, in particular, a pressing need for a “for-us-by-us” employment service model, designed and delivered by English-speaking Quebecers, to provide holistic employment supports –

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<sup>3</sup> Provincial Employment Roundtable, “2021 Employment Survey.”; Provincial Employment Roundtable, “Need to Know, Want to Know.”

including bridging programs and language learning – that respond to the community’s needs. This approach would address persistent service gaps and guard against exclusion from provincial labour market strategies.

Advancing such a model will require stronger intergovernmental collaboration to ensure services are delivered equitably across the province. Federal leadership can play a pivotal role in cultivating the partnerships and frameworks that make this possible, ensuring that all Canadians, regardless of language, have access to the tools they need to contribute meaningfully to the economy. This approach will yield concrete benefits: improved labour market integration, increased productivity, and stronger interprovincial connectivity.

**Recommendation 3:** That the federal government adopt a holistic and intersectional approach to employability programming, acknowledging the importance of tailored programming that is responsive to the needs of both the population and labour market in question.

**Recommendation 4:** That the federal government enhance communication and coordination with the Government of Québec to ensure the delivery of employment services, including supports to bridge into the Francophone labour market, within a for-us-by-us framework for English-speaking Quebecers.

### 3. Establish National Framework Model

The mandate letter additionally calls for intersectional partnerships to advance the priorities it outlines and ultimately build a stronger Canada. Across the country, examples of these types of partnerships are already being tested. In Québec, PERT’s multisectoral model builds partnerships across community organizations, employers, education and training providers, and governments. In this way, it facilitates the design and implementation of evidence-based programming grounded in the lived realities of job seekers and responsive to labour market dynamics. This model is informed by stakeholder and service user consultation and reflects the intersectional nature of the barriers individuals face, including geographic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors.

PERT’s work provides early evidence of how intersectoral, community-based initiatives – when coordinated within a provincial framework – can deliver measurable, locally relevant outcomes that simultaneously support provincial economic goals. Our model has successfully identified gaps, aligned services across sectors, and supported the co-design of responsive programming rooted in community realities. This approach has shown strong potential for scalability, demonstrating how flexible, partnership-driven strategies can be adapted to support a wide range of equity-seeking groups.

To unlock the full economic potential of hidden talent pools across the country—including OLMCs, newcomers, racialized groups, and Indigenous communities—Canada needs a coordinated national strategy. This strategy should invest in adaptable, community-driven models like PERT’s, tailored to regional contexts and responsive to changing labour market

needs. A national framework would enable the exchange of tools, data, and best practices, while creating the conditions for local innovation, accountability, and long-term impact.

**Recommendation 5:** That the government develop and invest in a national framework to replicate and scale community-driven employability models that reflect regional realities, mobilize hidden talent pools, and foster collaboration across sectors.

## About PERT

Founded in 2020, PERT is a non-profit organization focused on addressing the employment and employability issues faced by Québec's English-speaking communities. PERT's work is critical as the employment situation of English-speaking Quebecers continues to worsen. English speakers are overrepresented among Québec's economically vulnerable and unemployed, comprising 14.9% of the province's total population but 23% of all individuals living in poverty and 22.7% of all unemployed individuals. Critical policy interventions, alongside evidence-based programming, are necessary to enhance English speakers' labour market integration and mobilize their potential contributions to the provincial economy.



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