

For immediate release

QCGN pleased with renewed support for English-speaking Quebecers

Montreal, March 21, 2019 – The Quebec Community Groups Network is pleased that in today’s provincial budget, the Coalition Avenir Québec government has invested more money in our community.

The budget increases funding for the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers from \$3 million to \$5.5 million for the next fiscal year. This includes more than doubling the budget for the Support Program for Organizations and Institutions serving the English-speaking Communities from \$2 million to \$4.4 million.

“It’s too early to see how the new money will be spent, but we hope it will be distributed based on priorities determined by our community, for our community,” said QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers. “Unlike last year, we were not included in pre-budget consultations to express our needs, either with the Secretariat or government ministries that provide vital services to English-speaking Quebecers.”

Chambers added that the QCGN, for instance, would have sought funding to support the creation of long-delayed access plans enabling English-speaking Quebecers to have access to health and social services in their own language. The Provincial Committee for the Provision of Health Services and Social Services in the English Language, which advises the government on our community’s needs, does not have the support it requires, and regional access committees that draft the plans have yet to be created.

“Last year the QCGN completed extensive consultations to determine the priorities of our Community of Communities,” Chambers noted. “Our community has many needs and we are anxious to work with the government to ensure the funds are invested in the most effective ways that meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations.”

The QCGN hopes increased funding will help the Secretariat to fulfil its role better to serve as a conduit for our community to have full access to government ministries and agencies in order to counter unintended negative effects of government legislation, regulations and policies on Quebec's English-speaking community, Chambers said.

The government also noted Thursday that the Secretariat interacts with the federal government on issues, agreements, programs or policies that may have an impact on English-speaking Quebecers. "It is important that neither government treat these matters without a full and proper consultation with our community," Chambers stressed.

"We expect Quebec to work with the QCGN, the community's recognized interlocutor with Ottawa, to secure federal funding earmarked to benefit English-speaking Quebecers," he said, noting that this week's federal budget increased funding available to minority linguistic communities. "This represents major investments for this province that the Quebec government should not be leaving on the table."

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 59 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration.

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