

For immediate release

Quebec Budget Must Address Underfunding of Our Community Groups: QCGN

Montreal, January 17, 2023 – Non-profit organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers are seriously underfunded compared with francophone groups and thus often unable to provide important and sometimes essential services.

That is among the messages the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) and other community stakeholders brought to Quebec Finance Minister Eric Girard during a pre-budget consultation this afternoon in Quebec City.

“We asked Minister Girard, who is also the Minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, to boost community-sector funding to meet the increasing demand for services,” said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. “We also asked the government to ensure that funding for community groups serving English-speaking Quebecers more closely reflects our proportion of Quebec’s population.”

“Our groups are hampered in obtaining access to provincial government funding because there is little or no outreach to our communities – and even less in English – that communicates all available funding programs,” said Martin-Laforge. She asked Girard to find ways to provide our community organizations with the necessary support to access funding from all pertinent provincial spending envelopes – and not just access to funding programs through the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers.

Meanwhile, the QCGN also asked the government to increase the Secretariat’s operating budget to ensure more funding programs and to better facilitate policy dialogue between the English-speaking community and all relevant ministries and agencies of the Government of Quebec. In addition, QCGN asked the province to work with the federal government to boost the size and scope of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement on Minority-language Services. This agreement transfers funds to Quebec to pay for a variety of programs and services in important areas including justice and health and social services.

Finally, the QCGN repeated a request that the government consult Quebecers on the wide-ranging and negative economic impacts of Bill 96 *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*.

“We need a real and meaningful dialogue to address the fallout from Bill 96, its effect on Quebec’s reputation, and its harmful consequences on business, foreign investment, and the economy,” Martin-Laforge concluded. She noted that the QCGN has recommended the government hold formal

parliamentary hearings on upcoming regulations to implement important aspects of Bill 96 such as those pertaining to education as well as health and social services.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores, and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions, and leaders.

For further information:

Rita Legault, Director of Communications | rita.legault@qcgn.ca

Telephone: 438-270-0680