

**For immediate release**

Provincial Budget Prioritizes Health, Education, and Economic Recovery

## **QCGN Pleased with New Spending to Support English-speaking Minority**

**Montreal, March 25, 2021** – The Quebec Community Groups Network is pleased that Quebec’s budget will strengthen the capacity of community organizations to serve Quebec’s English-speaking minority community by, notably, maintaining and enhancing the network of wellness centres and implementing an employability strategy. The 2021-2022 expenditure budget for the program to strengthen the vitality for English-speaking communities is set at \$10.5 million – an increase of \$4.0 million from the projected expenditure for 2020-2021.

Along with funding to continue to implement programs for organizations serving our communities, the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers has been allocated resources needed to compile statistics that will provide a better understanding of the situation faced by English-speaking Quebecers; undertake a feasibility analysis regarding the production of a comprehensive evidence-based document on English-speaking Quebec; and inventory policies, programs, laws, and regulations that impact English-speaking Quebecers.

“This will give the community and the Secretariat the evidence base it needs to advocate across government ministries for the policies and programs needed to support our linguistic minority community,” QCGN President Marlene Jennings says: “We expect to be part of government consultations to ensure nothing about us is decided without us.”

The budget also pledges to optimize the government's capacity to listen to and support English-speaking communities across all 70 regional county municipalities (MRCs). This will strengthen the ability of public bodies that work with English speakers, improving their access to public services.

One year of pandemic has carved a huge hole in public finances. Quebec's 2021-2022 “resilience” budget focuses on economic recovery as well as services to the population such as health and education. The government will spend nearly \$9 billion by the end of next year combatting coronavirus and forecasts a further \$3 billion over five years to assist Quebec’s rapidly growing population of seniors hit hard by the pandemic.

“This is excellent news for our community, given that our population is aging at a much faster rate than francophones,” Jennings says, adding that QCGN looks forward to understanding how the new monies will benefit English-speaking Quebecers.

“While we welcome investments in our community and our vitality, we continue to be wary of this government which in recent weeks has threatened to cap enrolment at our CEGEPs and downplayed the importance of our judges being fluent in both English and French,” Jennings concludes.

The Quebec Community Groups Network 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:**

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