

For immediate release

QCGN Welcomes Positive Measures for English-speaking Seniors

Montreal – March 10, 2020 – The Quebec Community Groups Network welcomes the injection of an additional \$18.8 million into the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers over the next five years. This commitment promises to assist a sizeable number of English-speaking Quebecers, but other community needs remain unanswered.

In particular, the QCGN applauds new measures to sustain existing wellness centres for English-speaking seniors and create 25 additional centres. We look forward as well to details of a pledge to establish and support an employment strategy for English-speaking Quebecers; those details have yet to be released.

“Today’s budget contains measures to support French-language training to assist in the integration of immigrants,” says QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers. “We hope the government will also address the strong desire for such language training for English-speaking Quebecers – a longstanding need that was reiterated on several occasions during recent consultations by the Secretariat.”

During those consultations, Christopher Skeete, Parliamentary Assistant to Premier François Legault for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, specified that he was receptive to our community’s request for enhanced access to such training for English-speaking Quebecers. We await such a plan.

Spending has been boosted in Education, Health and Social Services as well as support programs for community organizations. However, the extent to which these increases would fulfil specific needs across the English-speaking community is not yet known.

The devil lies in the details. Currently, groups supporting English-speaking Quebecers benefit from only three per cent of Quebec funding for community organizations. “Our share of the population is 13 per cent,” Chambers points out: “This is far from equitable. This government must provide appropriate support to ensure fair treatment of our linguistic minority community.”

With regard to equity, the budget provides no indication of any specific measures which would increase the presence of English-speaking Quebecers in the provincial public service. That figure remains stalled at less than one per cent.

In addition, “We would have liked the government to have committed the necessary funds to support the creation of long-delayed and critical Access Programs that spell out what health and social services English-speaking Quebecers have access to in our own language,” says Chambers. “We have repeatedly pointed out that regional and provincial committees, which advise public institutions and government about our community’s needs, do not have the support they require to carry out their extremely important mandates.”

The QCGN hopes increased funding will help the Secretariat better fulfil its role to serve as a conduit to ensure our community will have full access to government ministries and agencies. Our goal is to ensure that government legislation, regulations and guidelines – and ultimately policies, programs and funding initiatives – are better adapted to the realities facing English-speaking Quebecers.

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: 514-868-9044, ext. 223, cellular: 514-912-6555