## **ESDC Dialogue Day with Representatives of the**

## **English-speaking minority Communities**

## **November 13, 2025**

**Objective:**

Discuss the evolving needs and priorities of English-speaking Communities of Quebec (ESCQ) and positive measures to better address their needs.

**Discussion Topics:**

1. Opportunities and challenges for the labour market integration of members of ESCQ
   * Reskilling/upskilling for mid-career, transitioning and older workers
   * Training and youth employment
2. Economic development
3. Interdepartmental initiatives and collaboration related to OLMCs

**Participants and Observers:**

The lists of [OLMC participants](#_POTENTIAL_PARTICIPANTS) and [other government participants](#_POTENTIAL_OBSERVERS) can be found below the draft agenda.

**Format:** Virtual

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| **Agenda** | | | |
| 8:30 – 9:00 | **Virtual Registration** | OLCE Part VII | Plenary Room |
| 9:00 – 9:05 | **Welcome and Overview of Day**  Territorial acknowledgement, Dialogue Day agenda and event logistics | Facilitator  Firmin Andzama  Director, Part VII Centre of Expertise | Plenary Room |
| 9:05 – 9:15 | **Opening Remarks – Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Services Policy Branch**  Recognition of the importance of OLMC engagement  Recognition of participants, such as acknowledging the expertise and mix of perspectives at the event.  Set tone for the day emphasizing openness, collaboration, and the importance of hearing directly from OLMC representatives.  Strategic framing and overview of the theme, i.e., labour market integration, economic development of English-speaking Communities of Quebec.  Share key achievements and priorities, such as key ESDC successes and positive measures taken in 2024-2025. | Speaker  Elisha Ram  Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Service Policy Branch | Plenary Room |
| 9:15 – 9:30 | **Participant Introductions**  ESDC Participants  OLMC Representatives  OGD Participants and Observers | Facilitator  Firmin Andzama, Director, Part VII Centre of Expertise | Plenary Room |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | **Morning Plenary Session** | | |
| **Panel Discussion**  Panel discussion featuring ESCQ representatives addressing key issues facing their members, including a discussion on key ESDC initiatives. The roundtable will be followed by a Q&A period.  Format:  Moderated panel discussion (25 minutes) followed by Q&A segment (35 minutes)  Discussion topics:  How federal programs can better address the needs of ESCQs and more effectively integrate the Part VII/OLMC lens across the policies to service delivery continuum, particularly in relation to employability within ESCQs. | Moderator  Elisha Ram  Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Service Policy Branch  Panellists  Catherine Demers  Associate Assistant Deputy Minister,  Skills and Employment Branch  Sylvia Martin-Laforge  Director General, [TALQ](https://talq.ca/)  Cathy Brown  Executive Director, [Regional Development Network](https://regdevnet.ca/) (RDN)  John Buck  President and CEO, [Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation](https://cedec.ca/) (CEDEC) | Plenary Room |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | **Health Break** | | |
| 10:45 – 11:45 | **Breakout Sessions** Sessions run concurrently | | |
| **Breakout 1**  *Employment and Employability*  Format:  Moderated discussion (25 minutes) followed by Q&A segment (35 minutes)  Discussion topics:  Access to French-language learning, English-language employment services, and wraparound services; improving training and skills development initiatives; and partnerships with educational institutions | Moderator  Lori Brooks  Director General, Workforce and Skills Development Policy Directorate, Skills and Employment Branch  Panellists  Raeanne Francis  Managing Director, [Black Community Resource Centre](https://bcrcmontreal.com/) (BCRC)  Jessica Synnott,  Executive Director, [Vision Gaspe Perce Now (VGPN)](https://vgpn.ca/)  Denis Kotsoros Executive Director, [Townshippers’ Association](https://townshippers.org/) | Breakout Room #1 |
| **Breakout 2**  *Economic development*  Format:  Moderated discussion (25 minutes) followed by Q&A segment (35 minutes)  Discussion topics:  Addressing lower regional labour market participation rates and higher unemployment rates; remote training to improve training; and skills development access in remote regions | Moderator  Elizabeth Casuga, Director General, Early Learning and Childcare, Income Security and Social Development Branch  Panellists  John Buck  President and CEO, [Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation](https://cedec.ca/) (CEDEC)  Cornella Maurice Executive Director  [The Coasters Association](https://coastersassociation.com/)  Mario Clarke  Director of Community Granting,  [YES Employment + Entrepreneurship](https://yesmontreal.ca/) | Breakout Room #2 |
|  | **Breakout 3**  *Labour Market Integration – Mid-career, transitioning, and older workers*  Format:  Moderated discussion (25 minutes) followed by Q&A segment (35 minutes)  Discussion topics:  Reskilling and upskilling for mid-career, transitioning and older workers. | Moderator  Elisha Ram  Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Service Policy Branch  Panellists  Paul London  Manager, Enabling Fund for OLMCs, Skills and Employment Branch  Nicholas Salter  Executive Director, [Provincial Employment Roundtable](https://pertquebec.ca/) (PERT)  Wendy Seys  President, [Literacy Quebec](https://literacyquebec.org/)  Leslie Acs  Executive Director  [La Passerelle](https://lapasserelle.ca/) | Breakout Room #3 |
| 11:45 – 12:15 | **Synthesis of the Morning**  Summary of Discussions  Takeaways  Next Steps  Brief roundtable discussion allowing key ESCQ representatives and each ADM to briefly reflect (2 to 3 minutes each) on the takeaways (what they heard, what surprised them, and what they will report to their teams) and next steps. | Moderator  Elisha Ram  Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Service Policy Branch  Panellists  Elizabeth Casuga  Director General, Early Learning and Child Care, Income Security and Social Development Branch  Paul London  Manager, Enabling Fund for OLMCs, Skills and Employment Branch  Sylvia Martin-Laforge  Director General, [TALQ](https://talq.ca/)  Cathy Brown  Executive Director, [Regional Development Network](https://regdevnet.ca/) (RDN)  John Buck  President and CEO, [Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation](https://cedec.ca/) (CEDEC) | Plenary Room |
| 12:15 – 13:00 | **Lunch** | | |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | **Afternoon Session** | | |
| **Interdepartmental Coordination in Support of OLMC Priorities**  *Exploring opportunities for alignment and joint action in support of OLMCs*  Format:  Interdepartmental roundtable. Moderator welcomes, provides overview of the session, and introduces speakers (10 minutes). Three to four representatives from different departments present short, concise updates on current OLMC-related initiatives, lessons learned and opportunities for collaboration (5 minutes each). Moderator guides open discussion with all participants (20 minutes). Moderator summarizes the discussion (10 minutes).  Discussion Topics: Topics include updates such as interdepartmental mapping exercise, PCH consultation calendar, and Part VII Regulations. | Moderator  Jennifer Allen  Manager, Canadian Heritage  Speakers  Daniel Cadieux  Manager, Treasury Board Secretariat  Karim Adam  Director, Treasury Board Secretariat  Patrick Cyr  Manager, Canadian Heritage  Jalila Bendarhou  Director, Canadian Heritage  Melanie Kolaj  Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada  Julie L’Allier  Manager, Enabling Fund for OLMCs, Skills and Employment Branch,  Employment and Social Development Canada | Plenary Room |
| 14:00 – 14:15 | Closing Remarks | Facilitator  Firmin Andzama, Director, Part VII Centre of Expertise | Plenary Room |

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| **OLMC Participants** | |
| Organization | Scope |
| Talking. Advocating. Living in Québec. (TALQ) | sectoral |
| Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC) | sectoral |
| Regional Development Network (RDN) | sectoral |
| YES Employment + Entrepreneurship (formerly YES Montreal) | sectoral |
| Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ) | sectoral |
| Literacy Quebec | sectoral |
| Black Community Resource Centre | community |
| Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) | sectoral |
| Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) | sectoral |
| Regional Association of West Quebecers | community |
| Community for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) | community |
| Townshippers’ Association | regional/ generalist |
| North Shore Community Association (NSCA) | regional/ generalist |
| Coasters Association | regional/ generalist |
| Voice of English Québec (VEQ) | regional/ generalist |
| Montérégie West Community Network (MWCN) | regional/ generalist |
| La Passerelle | community |
| Agence Omertz | community |

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| **Other Government Participants** |
| Organization |
| Canadian Heritage |
| Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada |
| Treasury Board Secretariat |
| Health Canada |
| Global Affairs Canada |