

Winter 2020

## Report on Youth Employability in the Greater Quebec City Region



Image from Pixabay

**VEQ**  
Voice of English-speaking Québec

Presented by Voice of English-speaking Québec

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# \\ Introduction

In the winter of 2019-2020, we conducted a survey of English-speaking youth aged 15 to 29 as well as six focus groups at the English high schools in the region to support two projects related to youth employability. Through our needs analysis, we sought to evaluate youth knowledge and/or use of the services offered by the Carrefour jeunesse-emploi centres as well as to gain some insights into the postsecondary education and career plans of the students at the local English high schools.

These results are meant to provide a snapshot of the perspectives of English-speaking youth on employment in the Greater Quebec City region at this time. Though small in scope and sample size (53 survey participants, 32 focus group participants), this study captures the very real hopes and frustrations of our minority population. At the same time, it also proposes some very concrete and achievable outcomes.

We hope that this document can serve as a springboard for employers and service providers to work with us, and members of our community, to increase the employability of English-speaking youth in the Greater Quebec City region.

Let's build a better future for all Québécois.

# \\ Language as a Barrier to Employment

*“ Because everything is in French and they don't accommodate for the English speakers.”*

-Survey participant



When asked to select all of the barriers to employment they have personally encountered, a great majority of English-speaking youth predominantly chose French. Many feel that their insufficient level of French has limited their job options or made them less attractive to employers. 29% also emphasized the lack of bilingual or English-only jobs in the area, while 37% indicated a lack of employment services in English.

## Comments

- The level of French required by most positions
- Many of us don't have the best French so we're at a disadvantage
- Not being passably bilingual despite working towards that
- Jobs are limited. If it is not a bilingual job with a lot of English needs, we are often bypassed because of the quality of our written French
- Lack of English speaking jobs or jobs where you don't need to be fully fluent in French
- They will always choose the French over English person
- Employers want only French speaking employees
- Making friends and getting good connections. A lot of us English are left out, ignored.

# \\ Connecting Youth to Job Search Resources

*“ Any resource as long as it can be in the English language.”*

-Survey participant

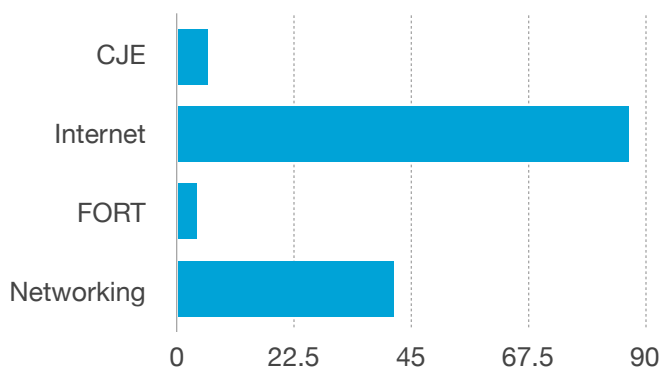
We asked a series of direct questions to determine what job search resources or services English-speaking youth are using.

**Are you aware of the services offered by the Carrefour jeunesse-emploi?**

83% NO

Of those that answered **yes**, only **three** of the survey participants had accessed services at a Carrefour jeunesse-emploi.

**What resources do you use when looking for a job?**



The graph on the left confirms that English-speaking youth are underutilizing the help available to them at service providers such as the Carrefour jeunesse-emploi or FORT.

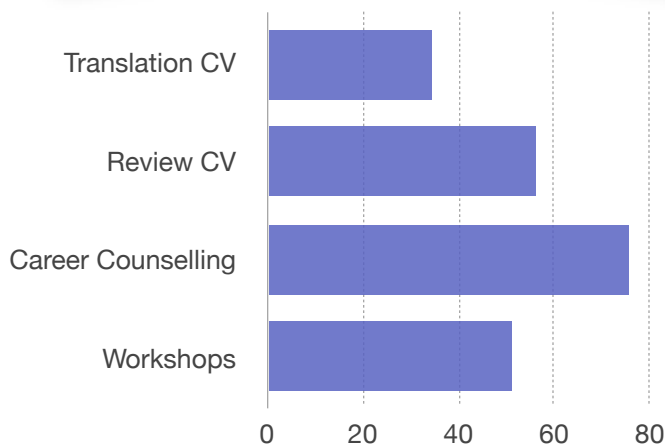
Note: For this question, respondents were permitted to select all the answers that were applicable to their case.

The Internet was the top choice with respondents highlighting these web sites in particular: the VEQ job bank, LinkedIn, Jobillico and Indeed.

# \\ Connecting Youth to Job Search Resources

We also wanted to know which job search services would be most beneficial for English-speaking youth.

## What services would help with your job search?



Over 75% of survey respondents indicated that they would like to receive professional career counselling and job search advice.

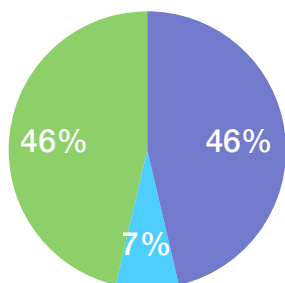
Respondents were about equally interested in attending career development workshops and having their resume critiqued. 34% of respondents also chose the option to have their resume translated.

Other services that were mentioned by respondents included mock interviews in French and immigration help.

Note: For this question, respondents were permitted to select all the answers that were applicable to their case.

## What language(s) would you prefer to receive these services in?

● English    ● French  
● Both

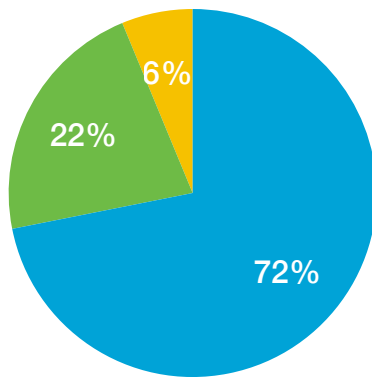


In the previous section, 37% of respondents identified a lack of employment services in English as a barrier to employment. Here the results show that almost half of the respondents would prefer to receive services in English while another 46% would be fine with receiving services in either language.

# \\ Youth Retention in the Region

To study the future retention of English-speaking youth in the region, we asked the students in our focus groups two questions.

● YES   ● NO   ● N/A



**Question 1: In the future, is it important to you to find a job that requires you to speak in English?**

Clearly most of the students want to work in English, but their motivations for doing so were varied and personal.

Here is a sampling of what they said:

- I feel the need to have a job in English because it will open more doors.
- I feel like I don't want to lose my English and I want my kids to learn English.
- I would rather speak English because I learned everything in English. French doesn't feel natural to me.
- Yes, it is important because I was born and raised in this language, so I would like to carry it on in my life.
- I know more English than French and I am more comfortable with it. It's just easier in English.

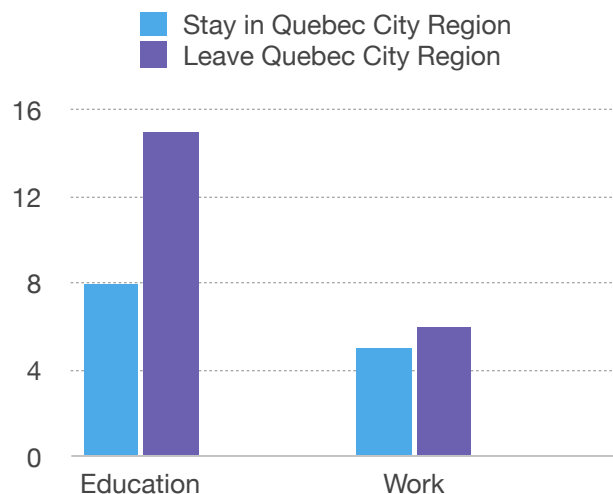
Those who said **no** were either more confident in their bilingualism, felt that English was less a factor in their job or identified more as Francophone.

# \\ Youth Retention in the Region

*“ I would prefer to move outside of Quebec to study and work because there are just more opportunities in other places compared to here, especially for English speakers. ”*

-Focus group participant

**Question 2: Are you hoping to study and work in the Quebec City region after you graduate from high school?**



From the results above, we can see that a greater proportion of these students wish to study **outside** of Quebec City mainly because they want to continue their studies in English and that is not possible with so few English programs and institutions here. Additionally, those who want to work elsewhere spoke about a desire to travel or to live in an entirely English speaking community.

Notably, those who wish to stay in the Quebec City region for studies or work cited staying close to family and friends as the primary reason.



## \\ How Employers Can Help



Image by Matthew Henry on Burst

*“Everyone talks about building a relationship with your customer. I think you build one with your employees first.”*

*-Angela Ahrendts  
Former Senior VP,  
Apple*

We asked survey respondents to provide their own suggestions for how employers can better accommodate English speakers in their organizations. Their responses can best be summarized as a call to action for employers to create a more welcoming work environment for English speakers. They want employers to build more rapport with their English-speaking employees by revising their hiring practices and increasing their frequency and tools of communication. They encourage employers to simply “give them a chance” and help them adapt by providing French classes and more job opportunities especially when the positions require English.

### **Comments**

- Make an effort to get face-to-face with Anglophones at job fairs, interview, etc.
- Post job postings in both languages to make it clear that both languages are accepted at the job. Sometimes I’m discouraged or nervous about applying to a place that is only posted in French because I think I may not have strong enough language skills.

## \\ How Employers Can Help

- Have ability to have important documents to be translated
- Being able to give documents in English also
- Software should be available in English at work
- An employer should try to speak with an English speaker even if it's hard to communicate
- Facilitate on-the-job French training
- They can offer software (i.e. Antidote) allowing the employee to review and correct their documents (or understand that there will be mistakes and that is okay).
- Work/study programs to start working in French as part of the 'francisation' rather than waiting to finish learning French before working
- If there are some tasks that require English, they can give priority to us
- If the job has an English-speaking phone centre, it should be given as a priority to English-speaking people
- Capitalize on the employee's English knowledge (explore Anglophone markets and the increased business and partnership opportunities that a native English-speaking employee can offer the company)

# \\ Now What? Implications and Opportunities

## Barriers to Employment

**English-speaking youth see their language proficiency in French as the biggest barrier to employment.**

### ***Implication:***

- English speaking-youth may be underemployed due to their language skills

### ***Opportunities:***

- With partner organizations, VEQ can provide targeted French practice - business French, mock interviews, Québécois expressions, etc.
- CJE's and other service providers can assist youth in marketing themselves to employers
- VEQ can help promote assets of English-speaking community to employers

**English-speaking youth believe that there are a lack of jobs that require a high level of English in the Greater Quebec City region.**

### ***Implication:***

- These job positions exist, but are not necessarily widely advertised

### ***Opportunities:***

- Continue to grow VEQ job bank
- VEQ will post a list of employers that have job positions requiring intermediate to advanced English
- VEQ can create networking opportunities connecting employers to English-speaking youth (i.e. Career day events)

## Service Gaps

**English-speaking youth are either unaware or not taking advantage of existing job search services.**

### ***Implication:***

- Demonstrates need to promote available services to youth

# \\ Now What? Implications and Opportunities

## ***Opportunities:***

- VEQ can refer youth to the Carrefour jeunesse-emploi (CJE) as well as to existing partners: YES Montreal and Valcartier Family Services (FORT)
- VEQ can help service providers understand the needs of English-speaking youth

**English-speaking youth want help with their job search in either English or French.**

## ***Implications:***

- Validates that English-speaking youth are interested and require such services
- Shows that only a subset of the population requires these services in English

## ***Opportunities:***

- VEQ to work with CJEs to create an action plan to address service gaps
- The CJEs can work towards increasing their capacity to provide services in English (possibly with the help of VEQ and other organizations)
- The CJEs can deliver these services in French to bilingual English speakers

## Youth Retention

**English-speaking youth would be more likely to stay in the region if they could work in English.**

## ***Implications:***

- Youth feel that their ability to express themselves in a professional context is better in English

## ***Opportunities:***

- Host career day events bringing students together with potential future employers to show that there are jobs requiring English in the region
- VEQ or CJEs to collaborate with schools to build student confidence in their French skills at work

# \\ Now What? Implications and Opportunities

**English-speaking youth would be more likely to study in the region if their program of study were available in English.**

***Implications:***

- A lack of an English university and fewer program offerings at the English CEGEP and vocational school often leads to students studying outside of Quebec City

***Opportunities:***

- Examine and advocate for an expansion of program offerings in English in Quebec City at all levels (vocational , CEGEP, university) as this would benefit the English-speaking community here and in the surrounding regions

## Employers

**Employers need to hire English speakers, but English speakers feel like they are not being considered for jobs**

***Implications:***

- Encourage employers to adapt their hiring practices to better target English-speaking youth

***Opportunities:***

- Employers can post job advertisements in both languages
- Employers can speak in English to build rapport during recruitment events
- Employers can invite more English speakers for interviews to better assess their French language skills

**Employers can do more to help their English-speaking staff integrate into the workplace.**

***Opportunity:***

- Suggestions from the survey respondents include: providing French classes, sharing important documents in English, purchasing specialized software (Antidote for French writing and grammar), having conversations in English, and valuing their English skills by assigning them work in English

