

2009-2010 BUDGET
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ENSURING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING TO INVEST IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Québec, March 19, 2009 – In tabling the 2009-2010 Budget, the Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Monique Jérôme-Forget, announced a series of measures to increase support for families, improve the living condition of seniors and further develop more quality, affordable housing.

The Minister also announced that the government would continue to invest in health and education while providing greater support to Québec creators and artists. “Health and education are essential missions of the government,” stated the Minister. “We will not do as others before us, who slashed these budgets at the first sign of a problem.”

Increased support for families

“Social development begins with support for families. Since 2003, Québec financial assistance for families has increased almost 60%, to \$6.5 billion in 2009. To choose families also means adopting policies that will encourage them to have children. There were 72 478 births in Québec in 2002. Since then, the number of births has climbed steadily, reaching 87 600 in 2008,” declared the Minister, who invited Quebecers to consult the accompanying paper to the budget entitled *Status Report on Québec’s Family Policy*.

This budget continues to improve the support provided to families and announces:

- an improvement to the tax credit for child care expenses, which will benefit 100 000 families. As a result of the improvement, the cost of childcare services will be the same for both subsidized day care centres and unsubsidized private day care centres, up to a family income of \$125 000;
- an increase in the amount eligible for the tax credit for child care expenses from \$7 000 to \$9 000 for children under 7 years of age;
- attainment of the target of 220 000 \$7-a-day childcare spaces by the end of 2010.

Quality affordable housing for families

The government is sensitive to the problems experienced by many families in finding affordable housing. It is therefore also announcing:

- the construction of 3 000 additional social housing units;
- \$170 million in investments for home improvement and renovation.

“Overall, the government will have provided for 27 000 new social housing starts through investments of \$1.3 billion. Québec’s performance in this regard is the best in Canada,” the Minister said.

Improvement of seniors’ living conditions

Our aging population requires special attention. The Minister pointed out that the last two budgets allocated \$2.3 billion over five years for the improvement of seniors’ living conditions. The 2009-2010 Budget provides:

- new initiatives aimed at countering abuse and breaking the cycle of isolation among the most vulnerable seniors;
- support for the “Age-Friendly Municipalities” program to fund local projects aimed at improving the safety and quality of life of seniors.

Investing in health and education

In 2009-2010, the government will continue to invest in these essential missions and is therefore announcing:

- a 5.7% increase, or \$1.5 billion, in health spending to better meet the rising needs due to population aging and to address various social issues;
- a 3.5% increase, or \$490 million, in education spending, in particular to step up efforts to reduce the school drop-out rate.

Supporting the cultural sector

Québec has a vibrant cultural industry teeming with ideas and creators boasting an international reputation. The wide visibility of our artists can contribute to economic recovery. To that end, the government is announcing the following support measures:

- \$5 million in additional funding for Placements Culture, which will support nearly 40 cultural organizations with private-sector fundraising objectives;
- enhancement of the tax credit for businesses that work in the sound recording and show production sectors;
- funding of \$3 million a year to enable our creators and artists to showcase their talent and shine on the world stage.

“This measure will make up for the funding cuts by the federal government to programs that helped our artists reach international audiences,” noted Minister Jérôme-Forget.

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