Solidarity: A PRECIOUS ASSET FOR QUÉBEC

Helping individuals
Supporting persons and organizations that provide assistance
Preparing for the future

UN QUÉBEC POUR TOUS

Québec
Solidarity:
A PRECIOUS ASSET FOR QUÉBEC

Helping individuals
Supporting persons and organizations that provide assistance
Preparing for the future
MESSAGE
FROM THE PREMIER

With Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec, the government is making public a set of guidelines and initiatives, proposing an innovative vision of solidarity to Quebecers, and announcing a number of ambitious measures.

A YEAR OF ACTION: $2.6 BILLION IN INVESTMENTS BY 2017

When Québec’s newly-elected government took office in September 2012, the principle of solidarity was immediately made one of the four pillars of the government’s action program. The path was laid out in the inaugural speech, and we quickly got down to work.

Over the past year, the government has followed through on its commitments to Quebecers, setting in motion a number of initiatives. By 2017, these initiatives will represent investments of $2.6 billion.

This has been achieved during a period in which it was necessary to restore integrity to the management of public affairs, redress public finances, stimulate economic growth, and promote the identity of the people of Québec.

AN INNOVATIVE VISION OF SOLIDARITY

The experience of the past year has led the government to reflect on what the concept of solidarity represents in a rapidly changing world.

With the publication of Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec, the government is presenting the results of its reflections to Quebecers. It is also presenting new developments concerning the measures it has already begun to implement.

The vision the government is proposing to Quebecers is one of sustainable solidarity, in which a balance is struck between solidarity and prosperity, responsibility, and the need to meet today’s needs and take into account the needs of the future.

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS OF $320 MILLION

The government is taking concrete action based on this vision. It is continuing the actions undertaken in the past year and taking new initiatives to improve people’s well-being, give more support to persons and organizations that provide assistance, and prepare for the future.

In the next three years, the government will increase by almost $320 million the investments already announced. By 2017, the additional resources invested in sustainable solidarity will amount to nearly $2.9 billion.

The government is thus channelling substantial resources into fostering solidarity in Québec society, while taking into account today’s requirements and realities.

The publication of Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec confirms, strengthens and further develops the approach that Quebecers have adopted in order to build a society corresponding to their values.

Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec marks an important step along the path chosen by Québec society to guarantee, for all its members, a way of life that is more equitable, more just and more in keeping with the ideals it is pursuing collectively.

PAULINE MAROIS
MESSAGE
FROM THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY, MINISTER OF LABOUR AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN

QUÉBEC WAS BUILT ON SOLIDARITY AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

Since the Quiet Revolution, Québec has adopted many bold social policies. Cited as an example throughout the world, Québec is a forward-looking society founded on a strong and generous system of social protection.

Solidarity is an essential part of the history of Québec. It is also one of the pillars on which the Québec of the future will be built. If we are to remain at the forefront, it is crucial that we address the demographic challenges of an ageing population and safeguard our social gains. This is why the government has adopted an innovative approach to solidarity.

SOLIDARITY IS A COLLECTIVE ASSET

The adoption of solidarity as one of the pillars of the government action program arose out of the desire to focus on solidarity as a collective asset.

The government is proposing to include all public policies in an approach based on sustainable solidarity, which takes into account the interdependence of social, economic, cultural and territorial factors.

As Chair of the Comité ministériel de la solidarité and Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity, I am firmly convinced that the measures implemented in keeping with this approach will make Québec a more just and prosperous society, one in which all Quebecers will be able to achieve their potential and contribute to the development of society.

AGNÈS MALTAIS
INTRODUCTION

Since the Quiet Revolution, the Québec government has gradually constructed a society that is one of the most committed in North America to the principle of solidarity.

The ambitious social policies implemented in Québec have improved the distribution of wealth and given all Quebecers effective support at every stage in their lives.

The results obtained have been spectacular.

- Québec is one of the places in North America where wealth is the most evenly distributed, and its crime rate is one of the lowest in North America.
- For most indicators used to measure quality of life, Québec ranks higher than the average for countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Many of Québec’s initiatives in family policy and the fight against poverty have been very progressive.
- When compared to OECD member countries, Québec ranks third highest in terms of the increase in employment rate between 1997 and 2012.

A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT AND A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE

All Quebecers can be proud of the level of solidarity achieved by Québec society. Solidarity is one of the four pillars of the government action program defined in September 2012.

However, strengthening and developing the solidarity that exists in Québec society constitutes a formidable challenge.

The world is more and more competitive, resources are scarce, and revenues from taxpayers must be carefully managed. It is therefore more and more difficult to mobilize the resources necessary to meet the ever more complex needs of our society.

Yet there is clearly a consensus in Québec regarding the need to base our actions on the solidarity principle and continue to improve the way society functions.

GUIDELINES AND INITIATIVES: A CONSISTENT AND AMBITIOUS APPROACH

To meet the challenge, the government is proposing a set of guidelines and initiatives organized around the theme of Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec.

This innovative vision of solidarity—sustainable solidarity—takes into account the new requirements to be met as well as current and future realities.

This vision is being put into practice through a number of ambitious actions. Some of these actions have been undertaken in recent months. Other, new initiatives are being implemented as of now. Still other plans and intentions have been announced for the future.

The government is therefore making public the guidelines it will focus on in order to ensure sustainable solidarity for all.

- First, these guidelines include the innovative vision of solidarity proposed to all Quebecers, that is, a sustainable solidarity based on a new balance between solidarity, prosperity, responsibility, and current and future needs.
- Second, the government is taking concrete action to help individuals, support persons and organizations that provide assistance, and prepare for the future.
SOLIDARITY THAT HAS HAD RESULTS: 
QUÉBEC’S PERFORMANCE IN DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH, 
CRIME RATE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Among North American societies, Québec is one of the most committed to the principle of solidarity. 
The advantages derived from this commitment to solidarity can be measured in concrete terms by comparing Québec to 
other developed countries with respect to the distribution of wealth, the crime rate, and the quality of life.

A more equitable society
In 2011, according to the most commonly used indicator, wealth was more evenly distributed in Québec than in Ontario, 
Alberta, British Columbia, and Canada as a whole. Québec's performance was similar to that of Germany, Denmark and
Switzerland.

Crime rate
Québec has one of the lowest crime rates in North America. In 2011, Québec’s rate of violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants 
was the second-lowest in Canada.

Quality of life
The OECD now uses a new index, the Better Life Index, to measure people’s well-being. In the publication Le Québec 
économique 2011, researchers Luc Godbout and Marcelin Joanis used this index to measure well-being for Québec.
The results obtained were spectacular. For 18 of the 20 indicators defined in the Better Life Index, Québec ranked higher 
than the average for the 34 OECD member countries. Québec’s strengths included the quality of housing, reading ability, 
and health. The researchers then did three types of classification by varying the weighting. In all three cases, Québec ranked 
first or second.

Growth in employment rate
In Québec, according to data from the OECD and Statistics Canada, the employment rate of persons aged 15 to 64 
increased by 8.9 percentage points between 1996 and 2012.
When compared to OECD member countries, Québec had the highest increase in employment rate except for Israel and 
the Netherlands. Québec ranked higher than Germany in this respect, and twice as high as Canada as a whole.

1. The Gini coefficient.
1. SUSTAINABLE SOLIDARITY: A QUESTION OF BALANCE

Solidarity is a precious asset for Québec. If solidarity is to be fully attained, the concept of solidarity must encompass the requirements and realities of Québec society.

This is why the government is proposing an innovative vision of solidarity. Sustainable solidarity (based on an analogy with sustainable development) must take into account the interdependence of social, economic, cultural and territorial factors.

Sustainable solidarity entails balancing different factors. Three types of balance must be maintained:

- a balance between solidarity and prosperity
- a balance between solidarity and responsibility
- a balance between solidarity today and solidarity to be ensured in the future

Through this innovative vision, we can take full account of the various factors it is increasingly important to consider if we are to continue, in a sustainable way, to build a society based on solidarity.

MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS OF QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES ARE RELATED TO FOSTERING SOLIDARITY: $49 BILLION IN 2013-2014

In 2013-2014, close to 77% of the expenditures of the Québec government—$49 billion—were made by five departments whose mission is to foster solidarity. These departments are the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the Ministère de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Ministère de la Famille, and the Ministère de la Justice.

Other government bodies whose mission is related to fostering solidarity include the Ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, the Ministère de la Sécurité publique, and the Société d’habitation du Québec.

FIGURE 1
EXPENDITURE BUDGET OF THE MAIN DEPARTMENTS WHOSE MISSION IS TO FOSTER SOLIDARITY
(as a percentage of total program spending)

Sources: 2013-2014 Expenditure Budget and Update on Québec’s Economic and Financial Situation (March 2013).
1.1. SOLIDARITY AND PROSPERITY

The first balance to be maintained is the balance between solidarity and prosperity.

PROSPERITY IS ESSENTIAL TO THE FUNDING OF THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Sustainable solidarity is based on substantial funding of social programs. Sufficient wealth must be created in order to free up the resources necessary to meet this objective. Accordingly, Québec must maintain its prosperity in order to ensure that solidarity is sustainable.

In part, prosperity depends on the ability of the Québec economy to remain competitive. In a world where the mobility of goods, capital and people is a given, competitiveness is essential.

It is therefore necessary to achieve a balance between the various initiatives undertaken to maintain prosperity and the means used—particularly in the field of taxation—to ensure that prosperity is put to the service of sustainable solidarity.

SOLIDARITY DRIVES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In a very real sense, solidarity promotes economic development.

Quality public services

Solidarity makes it possible to provide high-quality public services.

The quality of Québec’s public services has a direct impact on the well-being of its population, and is an important factor in attracting and retaining people who wish to come to Québec and contribute to the creation of wealth.

Better training for the labour force

Solidarity improves the level of training in the labour force.

As for all developed countries, the present and future prosperity of Québec depends in large part on the development of a knowledge-based society and, more generally, on the participation of all in the labour market.

Sustainable solidarity requires skills development in the labour force, which contributes directly to economic development and prosperity.

Better labour market integration

Solidarity implies the existence of programs and initiatives to foster labour market integration for all.

Québec has therefore implemented a large number of employment measures.

Better labour market integration reduces the number of people receiving social assistance and gives more people access to prosperity.

A factor of social cohesion and inclusion

Solidarity is a factor contributing to social cohesion and social inclusion.

Sustainable solidarity is reflected in social policies that ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth, as well as support for people at every stage of their lives.

It thus strengthens social cohesion, which guarantees stability and promotes economic development.
**Solidarity and prosperity go hand in hand**

As we have seen above, solidarity cannot be dissociated from prosperity.

Prosperity creates wealth and, in a society committed to solidarity, the wealth is better distributed. The redistribution of wealth, in turn, creates an environment conducive to prosperity and economic development. Where economic inequalities are too great, the development and growth of individuals and society are hampered.

Solidarity and prosperity thus go hand in hand. A better distribution of wealth helps create a favourable climate for investment and employment and thereby helps create additional wealth.

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**CHANGE IN NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES OF QUÉBEC SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: STEADY DECREASE OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS**

In March 2013, Québec had 463,777 beneficiaries under its social assistance programs, compared to 813,249 beneficiaries in March 1996. This represents a decrease of 43% over slightly less than 20 years.

**Social assistance rate**

As stated above, the number of beneficiaries of social assistance programs in Québec has decreased steadily since the end of the 1990s.

The social assistance rate in Québec was 6.9% in March 2013, as compared to 11.5% in March 1996. This is the lowest rate measured in Québec in the past 35 years.

**FIGURE 2**

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES OF QUÉBEC SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Source: Ministère de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.
1.2. SOLIDARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The second balance to be maintained is the balance between solidarity and responsibility.

**INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Essentially, individuals are responsible for their own well-being.

All individuals must take charge of their own development, just as all businesses must. Citizens, groups and businesses all assume responsibility for their own well-being and contribute to the well-being of the community. This responsibility drives innovation and creativity, and thus contributes to prosperity.

Sustainable solidarity takes this reality into account.

The members of a society that values sustainable solidarity do not hand over responsibility for themselves to others.

Sustainable solidarity implies that policies encourage and support the initiatives and actions taken by individuals and groups to foster their own development. The policies implemented should not take the place of these initiatives and actions.

**COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

In a society that values sustainable solidarity, collective responsibility also exists.

All members of society have a responsibility to people who do not have the same chances in life. Governments, acting on behalf of their citizens, play an important role in giving everyone an equal chance. They do so by providing a social safety net.

The collective engagement of individuals, in organizations and in their milieu, helps establish support networks. In a society based on sustainable solidarity, the government supports civic engagement.

Businesses in the social economy sector, community groups and volunteer associations can also work collectively to help people who are less fortunate. Here, government support is just as essential.

**LOCAL SOLIDARITY**

Sustainable solidarity involves support for individuals, organizations, and social economy businesses that provide assistance, particularly to people who are vulnerable. Sustainable solidarity is thus a form of local solidarity, rooted in community and drawing its strength from community action.

The initiatives taken by individuals, social economy businesses and community groups often constitute the most effective means of responding to people who need assistance.
A STRONG SOCIAL SAFETY NET

In the past few decades, Québec has implemented broad, universal programs that support people at every stage of life.

- The income security system, the basis of Québec’s social safety net, ensures that the basic needs of the poorest members of our society are covered. This represents government support of approximately $3 billion per year. Public services are provided to help individuals integrate the labour market and remain employed; this represents an annual investment of over $880 million.

- Free health care has been available since the beginning of the 1970s. A public prescription drug insurance system also now exists.

- Québec has developed an education system that makes high-quality education available to all. The system ensures the accessibility of higher education, since university tuition fees are low and there is a generous system of financial assistance for students.

- Families are supported through a family policy that includes reduced-contribution educational childcare services, the Québec Parental Insurance Plan, and Child Assistance. Educational childcare services alone represent an annual investment of $2.4 billion.

1.3. SOLIDARITY TODAY AND SOLIDARITY IN THE FUTURE

The third balance to be maintained is the balance between solidarity today and solidarity in the future: we need to safeguard solidarity in the present while taking the steps necessary to ensure that it is safeguarded in the future.

MEETING CURRENT NEEDS

Solidarity entails meeting current needs.

Social problems are more and more difficult to deal with, because of the various dimensions that have to be considered. Factors that are purely social must be considered in conjunction with economic, cultural and territorial factors.

Sustainable solidarity must provide quick and effective responses to needs that are increasingly complex, in an environment that is constantly changing.

NEEDS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Solidarity also entails responding to the needs of future generations.

Sustainable solidarity means that we should be keeping future needs in mind, and that we should start now to prepare for the challenges we expect to face.
IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION

To maintain a balance between solidarity today and solidarity in the future, we must consider future generations and think in terms of prevention.

Through prevention, it is possible to resolve social problems at the source, and thus to build a better society for the future. Prevention is the most effective means of finding real solutions for current and future problems.

By focusing on prevention, sustainable solidarity provides a means of getting to the root of problems and finding long-term solutions. Prevention makes it possible to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion, and to reduce the inequalities in health and education for future generations.

The challenge is to strike a balance between the resources channelled into prevention—in the long term, the most effective means of solving the various problems identified—and the support that must be provided today to persons faced with the same problems.

CONSULTING AND RAISING AWARENESS

A balance between solidarity today and solidarity in the future can also be maintained through consultation and raising awareness.

Consulting the client groups concerned and raising their awareness of certain issues makes it possible to conceive social programs as being part of a long-term plan.

Consultation is required to improve government initiatives and better adjust them to people’s needs, while taking into account various points of view. The main purpose of raising awareness is to combat certain prejudices that lead to discrimination and social exclusion.

Consulting people and raising their awareness of certain issues can contribute to making policies acceptable and increase support for the policies. This is essential if we are to achieve sustainable solidarity.

RESPONSIBLE, HONEST, TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Responsible, honest and transparent management contributes directly to maintaining a balance between solidarity in the present and solidarity in the future. If social programs are to be permanent, they must be administered with integrity and transparency.

This balance can also be maintained through a constant effort to improve performances and results. If social programs are to be part of a long-term plan, the effort to improve them must be ongoing.

Sustainable solidarity thus entails a set of programs and initiatives that are administered with a constant concern for utilizing investments wisely, avoiding duplication, and accounting for the results obtained.
VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The vision proposed by the government is that of an equitable, inclusive and prosperous society, in which the balance between rights and responsibilities contributes to the well-being of present and future generations.

Values

This vision is based on the following values:

- **Justice**: Ensuring that the rights of all persons are respected and the responsibilities of all persons are fulfilled.

- **Equity**: Taking into account the special characteristics of each person, group and generation, adjusting actions as necessary.

- **Equal chances for all**: Ensuring that all persons have a real possibility of achieving their full potential, regardless of their social, cultural, physical or financial characteristics, and regardless of where they live.

- **Inclusion**: Enabling all persons to contribute to society, by working to eradicate marginalization, by facilitating access to services, networks and employment, and by promoting openness to diversity.

- **Responsibility**: Promoting a sense of individual and collective responsibility in all members of society, as well as encouraging all members of society to fulfil their responsibilities.

- **Participatory democracy**: Encouraging citizens to take part in elaborating and implementing public policies.

Principles

On the basis of the proposed vision, the government has determined the principles that will guide its action:

- **Support and development of persons and groups**: Working with persons, especially vulnerable persons, to promote their social inclusion and their development.

- **Sharing of wealth**: Providing a certain level of quality of life for all, in order to guarantee a real equality of chances, while putting in place conditions that are conducive to creating and maintaining wealth.

- **Shared responsibility**: Relying on the contribution of all, since support cannot be substituted for the responsibility of individuals, businesses and communities.

- **Coherent and complementary actions**: Ensuring that government actions are complementary to those of community organizations, and avoiding duplication.

- **Participation, responsiveness, concerted action**: Seeking to adopt better policies further to consultation, in order to facilitate acceptance of and support for these policies.

- **Responsible management of public funds in order to safeguard the future**: Making solidarity part of a long-term plan, by being mindful of the legacy left to future generations and the financial burden for persons and families.

- **Prevention**: Intervening early with regard to certain social problems, thereby increasing the well-being of Québec society.
2. AMBITIOUS MEASURES TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING AND PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Based on the innovative vision it is proposing to Quebecers, the government is undertaking concrete and far-reaching action in three areas.

- The government is helping individuals, in order to improve their living conditions, increase participation in the labour market, promote social inclusion, and provide support to families and children.
- The government intends to increase support for persons and organizations that provide assistance, by supporting them in their activities and contributing to the improvement of the conditions under which these persons, groups and businesses carry out their work.
- The government is preparing for the future, by raising people’s awareness of certain crucial issues, intervening early, and promoting consultation and participation.

MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES: CLOSE TO $2.9 BILLION BY 2017

Since September 2012, the government has undertaken strategic initiatives in all three of these areas. By 2017, these initiatives will represent investments of close to $2.6 billion.

Over the course of the same period, the government will also invest additional resources of almost $320 million in these initiatives.

By 2017, the additional resources invested in sustainable solidarity will thus amount to close to $2.9 billion.
### TABLE 1
SOLIDARITY: A PRECIOUS ASSET FOR QUÉBEC
GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS (in millions of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL COSTS</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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#### GUIDELINE 1: HELPING INDIVIDUALS

#### Improving living conditions

**New initiatives**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increased financial assistance for independent adults who receive social assistance</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>23.30</td>
<td>29.70</td>
<td>71.40</td>
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**Initiatives already underway**

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<tr>
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<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in legal aid eligibility thresholds</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>58.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction of 3,000 new affordable housing units</td>
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<td>36.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
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<td>Assistance for victims of Lac-Mégantic</td>
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<td>Special Rent Supplement Program</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>9.70</td>
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<td>Shelter Allowance Program: lowering of eligibility age and annual adjustment of eligibility criteria</td>
<td>5.70</td>
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<td>10.30</td>
<td>11.40</td>
<td>35.40</td>
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<td>Committee on Dying with Dignity</td>
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<td>3.50</td>
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#### Labour market participation

**New initiatives**

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<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Action plan: Un Québec fort de son immigration</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>16.60</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>57.00</td>
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<td>Regulating the working conditions of domestic workers</td>
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<td>New rules for temporary help agencies</td>
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**Initiatives already underway**

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<tr>
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<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tous pour l’emploi</td>
<td>76.50</td>
<td>53.80</td>
<td>44.20</td>
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<td>174.50</td>
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<td>Increase in minimum wage</td>
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#### Social inclusion

**New initiatives**

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<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Launch of a public awareness campaign to counter prejudice against the poor and other vulnerable persons</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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**Initiatives already underway**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Support for persons with an intellectual disability or a pervasive developmental disorder</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
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<td>Consolidation of lodging services for the mentally ill</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to schooling for children whose immigration status is precarious</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>6.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved support services for refugee students and their families</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.70</td>
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### Support for families and children

#### New initiatives

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More support for the integration of disabled children in childcare services</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
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<td>Improvement of services provided by community drop-in day care centres</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for community-based educational initiatives to promote good nutrition</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
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#### Initiatives already underway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation of 28,000 reduced-contribution day care spaces, including 3,500 in disadvantaged areas</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>109.00</td>
<td>239.00</td>
<td>393.00</td>
<td>772.00</td>
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<td>Full-time kindergarten for four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>29.37</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>95.59</td>
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<td>Government action plan to counter conjugal violence</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>10.50</td>
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### GUIDELINE 2: SUPPORTING PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE

#### New initiatives

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased government funding for community organizations</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>162.00</td>
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<td>Launch of consultations on the government action plan regarding community and volunteer action</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation of a program of acquisition and renovation of buildings for collective use</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>10.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improvement of working conditions in the community sector (group insurance, pension plan, prevention mutual)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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#### Initiatives already underway

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage of the Social Economy Act</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure program for collective entrepreneurship</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>6.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding of community organizations that help seniors live independently²</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
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<td>Funding of community groups working in food safety</td>
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<td>6.60</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>26.40</td>
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### GUIDELINE 3: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

#### Initiatives already underway

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of autonomy insurance (total of $1.1 billion with specific measures)²</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td>310.00</td>
<td>420.00</td>
<td>1,020.00</td>
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<td>National Policy on Rurality</td>
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<td>Voluntary retirement savings plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal – New initiatives</td>
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<td>103.15</td>
<td>108.85</td>
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<td>Subtotal – Initiatives already underway</td>
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<td>481.36</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>334.12</td>
<td>574.97</td>
<td>845.85</td>
<td>1,123.18</td>
<td>2,878.10</td>
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</tbody>
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1. The amounts shown represent the total investments made by the Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Fund. This is in addition to the over $880 million allocated each year to public employment services. The amount for persons from groups that are under-represented in employment will be increased from $438 million to $463 million in 2015-2016.
2. These amounts are included in the funding of the Québec policy on autonomy insurance.
3. Idem.
4. A total of $1.1 billion has been earmarked for funding autonomy insurance. Of this total, $10 million per year will be allocated to supporting persons with an intellectual disability or a pervasive developmental disorder ($40 million from 2013-2014 through 2016-2017), and $10 million per year will be allocated to the funding of community groups that help seniors live independently ($40 million from 2013-2014 through 2016-2017). These measures are indicated as “Initiatives already underway” under Guidelines 1 and 2.
2.1. HELPING INDIVIDUALS

Individuals and families are at the heart of all government actions to foster greater solidarity. This is why the government wishes to prioritize improving the well-being of individuals and families, especially those who are most vulnerable.

In keeping with its vision of sustainable solidarity, the government has targeted the following objectives:

- improving living conditions
- facilitating labour market participation
- fostering social inclusion
- supporting families with children

IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING CONDITIONS

In our efforts to improve living conditions, it is possible to act collectively on several fronts, namely, health, education, income, housing, and access to justice.

- **$71.4 million in assistance for persons living alone**

  The government has announced that it will increase financial assistance for persons living alone who are social assistance beneficiaries. By 2017, this will represent an investment of **$71.4 million**.

  By taking this measure, the government is acting on the recommendation of the Centre d’étude sur la pauvreté et l’exclusion to improve the living conditions of persons living alone.¹

  The government is significantly increasing the assistance provided to persons living alone who receive social assistance and whose capacity for employment is not limited. These persons are the poorest members of our society. Rising rents make their situation even more precarious.

  In 2013, these persons receive a benefit of $604 per month, that is, $7,248 per year. Their disposable income covers only 49% of their basic needs.²

  Over a period of three years, the government will increase the benefit by **$50 per month**, or **$600 per year**. By January 1, 2017, the benefit will thus be at least **$654 per month**, or **$7,848 per year**. Following the increase, disposable income will cover **52.5%** of basic needs.

  An initial increase of $20 per month will take effect on February 1, 2014. Further increases of $10 per month will be paid as of January 1, 2015, January 1, 2016, and January 1, 2017.

  This measure will benefit nearly 60,000 persons. It will apply only to persons living alone who have been beneficiaries of social assistance continuously for at least six months and who do not receive housing assistance.

- **By 2017, investments of $204.9 million for initiatives already underway**

  Since September 2012, the government has implemented a number of important measures to improve living conditions. By 2017, these measures will represent investments of **$204.9 million**.

  The government has announced or implemented the following measures:

  - an increase in legal aid eligibility thresholds
  - the construction of 3,000 new affordable housing units
  - a special rent supplement program
  - continuation of improvements under the Shelter Allowance Program (the eligibility age is being progressively lowered and eligibility criteria are adjusted annually)

¹ Poverty, Inequality and Social Exclusion in Québec: 2012 Progress Report, Centre d’étude sur la pauvreté et l’exclusion sociale.
² According to the Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada, 2013.
government support for the people of Lac-Mégantic
amounts provided for the future commission on end-of-life care (“Dying with Dignity”)

Construction of 3,000 new social housing units: an investment totalling $231 million

The major portion of this investment ($179 million) will be entered on the books during the year in which the housing units are delivered, that is, 2017-2018.

In total, the construction of the 3,000 new social housing units will represent an investment of $231 million.

- Initiatives for the future

The government has announced two other important measures for the coming months.

- As promised, the government will continue to invest in social housing the construction of 3,000 new affordable housing units
- The government will pursue its efforts to pass legislation concerning end-of-life care (Bill 52, commonly referred to as “Dying with Dignity”).

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IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING CONDITIONS:
KEY MEASURES UNDERTAKEN SINCE SEPTEMBER 2012

Increase in legal aid eligibility thresholds

On October 4, 2013, the government made public its decision to raise by 30% the income levels at which people qualify for free legal aid and to adjust the thresholds subsequently on the basis of the indexation of the minimum wage.

This means that people working full time at minimum wage will have access to free legal aid. As of January 1, 2014, the majority of seniors who receive the guaranteed income supplement and live alone will also have access to free legal aid.

The income levels at which people qualify for free legal aid will be raised over an 18-month period. Once fully implemented, this measure will represent an investment of $17 million per year, and over 500,000 more people will become eligible for free legal aid.

Construction of 3,000 affordable social housing units

Many cities in Québec are facing a shortage of rental housing. In some cities, the rental vacancy rate is under 1%, which is of particular concern. People in these cities are having difficulty finding decent housing that they can afford.

It was in this context that the government announced, as part of the 2013-2014 Budget, the construction of 3,000 new social, community and affordable housing units.

This represents a total investment of $231 million between now and 2019. The investment will be made over several fiscal years, as follows: $36 million in 2016-2017; $179 million in 2017-2018, upon delivery of the housing units; and $16 million in 2018-2019.
LAC-MÉGANTIC: SUPPORT FROM ALL QUEBECERS

When catastrophe struck the community of Lac-Mégantic on July 6, 2013, all Quebeckers felt a sense of solidarity with the community. In the days and weeks following, people expressed their solidarity not only in words but also in deeds. Support was provided by both the public sector and the private sector.

Response by the Québec government

The government took quick action to meet the needs of those affected by the catastrophe. It launched a government action plan with an initial budget of $60 million to assist victims. By October 24, 2013, the government had distributed $30 million, as follows: $2.2 million to individuals, including 1,826 cheques of $1,000 to families that had to leave their homes; $0.5 million to businesses; and $27.1 million to municipalities. In all, 18 municipalities are receiving support.

Apart from the question of government assistance, support for the victims of the events in Lac-Mégantic has become a movement of solidarity across Québec.

The Red Cross

Thanks to the generosity of the population and the business sector, the Red Cross had collected $12 million in donations as of September 10, 2013. The Red Cross works in the field to provide the support and material assistance that people need after a natural disaster or similar event. Up to now, over 2,400 persons have received assistance.

New support fund: the Fonds Avenir Lac-Mégantic

The town of Lac-Mégantic has created a support fund to receive the donations made by the public. The purpose of the fund is to ensure the socio-economic recovery of the milieu. As of October 24, 2013, the Fonds Avenir had collected $1.9 million.

Donations of books

The fire that followed the train derailment in July 2013 destroyed the municipal library of Lac-Mégantic. A group of student associations at Université Laval, the Confédération des associations étudiantes de l'université Laval, collected more than 50,000 books to restock the library. This gift was made possible through the generosity of students and the public.

Benefit concert

A huge benefit concert known as “Avenir Lac-Mégantic” was held at the Bell Centre on August 13, 2013. Over 10,000 people attended the concert, and half a million dollars was collected. Gino Chouinard and Peter MacLeod, both of whom are from the Lac-Mégantic area, initiated the project and hosted the concert.

The Montréal Canadiens

The Montréal Canadiens organization participated in a number of initiatives to support the people of Lac-Mégantic. One of their projects was an intra-team hockey game, held at the Bell Centre on September 14, 2013, in which several players from the Canadiens took part. All the profits from this game (estimated at $100,000) were donated to the Fonds Avenir Lac-Mégantic.
**LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION**

The best way to combat poverty is to ensure that all persons who are capable of taking up employment participate in the labour market. People who work full time, even at the minimum wage, have disposable incomes that are higher than the low-income cut-off line.³

It is therefore necessary to increase the labour market participation of groups that are under-represented in employment. These groups include persons who are beneficiaries of social assistance programs and persons with disabilities.

Training, whether in the context of employment or otherwise, remains a government priority. This is particularly true in the case of immigrants. The government intends to foster the socio-professional integration of immigrants in French-speaking environments by helping immigrants learn French.

- **By 2017, $57 million for the action plan Un Québec fort de son immigration**

  The government has announced an action plan concerning immigration, called *Un Québec fort de son immigration.* By 2017, it will have invested **$57.0 million** in this plan.

  The French language is an essential part of Québec’s identity. Since proficiency in French is a key factor in the integration of immigrants, the government is implementing a major initiative to help immigrants improve their French-language skills.

  Between now and 2017, the government will invest close to $60 million in the new action plan concerning immigration. Of this amount, $13 million will be spent on francization measures.

  Under the action plan *Un Québec fort de son immigration,* the number of full-time French-language learning programs will be increased, and existing government services will be promoted. In order to foster the integration of immigrants, the government will establish partnerships with regions and employers. Francization services will be diversified to better meet current and future needs.

- **Initiatives to protect vulnerable workers**

  The government has announced its intention to act in the coming months to regulate temporary help agencies, in order to provide better protection for persons who work for these agencies.

  To afford better protection for domestic workers, new legislation will be drafted with a view to tabling a bill in the National Assembly. The bill will make it possible to redress the inequalities domestic workers have experienced for too long.

- **By 2017, investments of $174.5 million for initiatives already underway**

  Since September 2012, further to the *Tous pour l’emploi* strategy, the government and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail have introduced several major measures to improve labour market participation and workforce skills development.

  By 2017, these measures will represent investments of **$174.5 million,** paid out of the Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Fund.⁴

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³ According to the Market Basket Measure (Statistics Canada), which is based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a basic standard of living.

⁴ In addition to the over $880 million spent each year on public employment services. The amount earmarked for groups that are under-represented in employment will be increased from $438 million to $463 million in 2015-2016.
Increase in the minimum wage

On May 1, 2013, the government increased the minimum wage by 2.52%. This increase exceeds the growth rate of the consumer price index.

LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION:
KEY MEASURE UNDERTAKEN IN FEBRUARY 2013

Tous pour l'emploi: joint initiative of the government and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail

The Gouvernement du Québec and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail have adopted a joint strategy designed to promote skills development in the work force and greater labour market participation by groups that are currently under-represented. These groups include social assistance beneficiaries, immigrants and, in particular, young people.

Emploi-Québec

So that Emploi-Québec can step up its programs for these target groups, the amounts from the Labour Market Development Fund which are reserved for persons from groups that are under-represented on the labour market will be increased from $438 million to $463 million.

Special support for social assistance applicants who are under 25

A personalized and ongoing support service, designed for first-time social assistance applicants who are under 25 and do not have limitations on their capacity for employment, is currently being implemented in five regions of Québec.

As as soon as they file an application for financial assistance, persons under 25 will be interviewed systematically so that their employability profile can be assessed. This procedure will make it possible to act quickly and in a targeted way to reduce the number of persons who become social assistance beneficiaries and to reduce the length of time for which they receive social assistance.

This new procedure will be instituted gradually between 2013 and 2016.

Contribution of the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail

The Commission des partenaires du marché du travail expects to invest a total of $175 million over three years. These amounts will be paid out of the Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Fund.

One of the initiatives of the Commission implemented under the Tous pour l'emploi strategy has been to broaden access to its subsidy programs for businesses.

An important training project for workers covered by the Tous pour l'emploi strategy has also been announced.

Training project for workers in residences for the elderly

This skills development and recognition project will enable 6,000 workers in private seniors’ residences to acquire or consolidate the skills they need to carry out their duties and thereby keep their jobs.

A total of up to $19 million will be allocated to this project, scheduled to begin in October 2013 and to last three years.

The project will be realized by the training mutual ForMArEZ.
SOCIAL INCLUSION
The social inclusion of marginalized groups is of concern to the government. For persons from these groups, life often improves if they participate more actively in society. Our vision of sustainable solidarity implies that there is a place for everyone in Québec society.

The government intends to promote the social inclusion of the most vulnerable members of Québec society and of persons who experience exclusion because of their social, cultural, physical or financial characteristics.

In particular, the government will act by improving the services offered with regard to mental health and homelessness. It will also provide support for the integration of immigrants.

- **New initiatives**

The government has announced the launching of an awareness campaign to counter prejudices against the poor and other vulnerable persons.

- **By 2017, investments of $52.1 million for initiatives already underway**

Since September 2012, the government has set in motion a number of significant initiatives to foster social inclusion. By 2017, these initiatives will represent investments of $52.1 million.

The following initiatives are already underway:

- increased support for persons with an intellectual disability or a pervasive developmental disorder
- consolidation of lodging services for the mentally ill
- facilitation of access to schooling for children whose immigration status is precarious
- improved support services for refugee students and their families

- **Initiatives for the future**

The government is working to elaborate a policy on homelessness.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN
Solidarity is first learned within the family. It is important to support families and children for many reasons, including those outlined below:

- The youth of today will be the adults of tomorrow. Sustainable solidarity requires us to support families and children.
- Particular attention must be paid to children who are disadvantaged because of their origins, their socio-economic milieu or their personal characteristics. An equal chance must be given to everyone.
- Families often see to the needs of their ageing parents. The government deems it essential to provide support to the family support network.
- Québec’s family policy has a direct impact on the birth rate and on the participation of women in the labour market.

Low-income families and families requiring specific support are given particular attention, in the form of greater financial assistance and programs that are tailored to their needs.

The government will be pursuing efforts that have already had beneficial results. It thus intends to support children and parents, and foster work and family balance.

- **New initiatives representing investments of $16.9 million by 2017**

The government is announcing three new initiatives that will represent total investments of $16.9 million by 2017.
More support for the integration of disabled children in childcare services:
$6.0 million by 2017

The government is increasing the financial assistance paid to childcare services that integrate disabled children. The total amount allocated to these childcare services will increase by $2 million per year.

- The additional amounts will allow the number of children benefiting from these childcare services to be doubled.
- The additional amounts will increase the number of hours of support provided to disabled children and their parents.

Currently, financial assistance of $1.1 million is provided. In 2012-2013, this covered up to three hours of accompaniment per day, and 249 children received the services.

Improvement of services provided by community drop-in day care services:
$2.9 million by 2017

Community drop-in day care services (“haltes-garderies communautaires”) provide short-term day care services to parents with specific needs. These drop-in day care centres give important support to parents participating in social or professional integration activities, and to immigrant parents registered for activities to improve their proficiency in French.

Currently, there are 248 community drop-in day care services; each week, on average, they provide day care services for over 2,800 children. The financial assistance paid by the government is $3.85 million per year.

The needs in this area are significant. By 2017, the government will therefore raise the amount of financial assistance by $2.9 million.

This additional investment will make it possible to increase the number of hours of attendance currently funded for each child. It will also enable 20 additional community organizations to offer the program.

Support for community-based educational initiatives that promote good nutrition:
$8.0 million by 2017

Good nutrition is crucial for everyone, particularly children, but for families with limited resources the challenge can be daunting.

By 2017, the government will invest $8.0 million to support the organizations concerned. $2.0 million will be invested in 2014-2015 and $3.0 million in each of the two subsequent years.

This funding is aimed at helping the largest possible number of low-income families to prepare healthy meals and snacks at a reasonable cost. The Direction de la santé publique, in collaboration with organizations in the community, will provide professional support for the realization of activities designed to provide nutrition education and promote healthy eating.

- Initiatives already underway: investments of $910.7 million by 2017

Since September 2012, the government has undertaken extremely significant and far-reaching initiatives to support families and children. By 2017, these initiatives will represent investments of $910.7 million.

The following initiatives are underway:

- the creation of 28,000 new reduced-contribution day care spaces (including 3,500 in disadvantaged areas), representing an investment of $772.0 million over three years
- the introduction of full-time kindergarten for four-year-olds from disadvantaged areas
- the implementation of a government action plan to counter conjugal violence
**Plans for the future**

In the coming months, the government will announce its intention to provide additional funding for the Programme d'intervention de crise et de suivi intensif dans le milieu, a crisis intervention and assertive community treatment program for families with children in difficulty.

| SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN: KEY MEASURES UNDERTAKEN SINCE SEPTEMBER 2012 |
| Creation of 28,000 new reduced-contribution day care spaces, including 3,500 in disadvantaged areas |

The government quickly followed through on its commitment to supporting young families in Québec. In November 2012, it authorized the creation of 13,000 new day care spaces, including 1,500 reserved for children from disadvantaged areas.

Next, the government launched a call for projects for the creation of 15,000 new spaces, including 2,000 for children from disadvantaged areas.

One child, one space is the long-term commitment to make available, within the next four years, 250,000 reduced-contribution day care spaces, in all regions of Québec. With the addition of these 28,000 new spaces, this objective will be attained.

**Kindergarten for four-year-olds living in disadvantaged areas**

At the beginning of the new school term in September 2013, full-time kindergarten classes were introduced for four-year-olds from disadvantaged areas.

By offering this new service, the government is honouring its pledge to ensure that all children have quality services from an early age so as to increase their chances of success.

In 2013-2014, the government will invest $7.5 million in this measure, and more than 1,200 children will have access to full-time four-year-old kindergarten. Once fully implemented, in 2017-2018, this measure will cost $79.5 million per year and will cover 8,000 pupils.
FAMILY POLICY AND THE RISE IN EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR WOMEN

The principal components of the family policy developed in Québec at the end of the 1990s are the reduced-contribution educational childcare services, the Québec Parental Insurance Plan, and Child Assistance. Québec’s family policy has contributed to the increase in the participation of women in the labour market.

The labour force participation rate of women aged 15 to 64 rose from 64.0% in 1997 to 74.7% in 2012, an increase of 10.7 percentage points. The employment rate for women rose from 57.1% in 1997 to 69.4% in 2012. Since 2010, the labour force participation rate of women in Québec has been higher than the Canadian average (which was 69.2% in 2012).

The employment rate of women in Québec has significantly improved in comparison with that of OECD member countries. Québec ranked twelfth in 2001; in 2012, it ranked seventh, ahead of Canada as a whole.

FIGURE 3
CHANGE IN LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE AND EMPLOYMENT RATE
OF WOMEN AGED 15 TO 64 IN QUÉBEC (as a percentage)

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey
2.2. SUPPORTING PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE

Supporting persons and organizations that provide assistance involves supporting them in their activities and improving the conditions in which they carry out their work.

The government cannot act alone. Community groups and the social economy are vigorous; throughout Québec, they exemplify sustainable solidarity in action.

Thanks to the participation of individuals, social economy businesses and community organizations, sustainable solidarity is a question of local solidarity, rooted in the community and drawing its strength from community action. In many cases, community groups and the social economy provide the most effective response to people’s needs.

**EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE COMMUNITY SECTOR**

In 2012, there were 159,000 salaried employees working in community organizations and social economy businesses in Québec. Of the total, 64,000 were employees of community organizations and 95,000 were employees of social economy businesses.

In addition, 2.4 million volunteers donated 310 million hours of their time. Each year, the number of hours donated by volunteers is equivalent to 170,000 full-time positions.

Together, the number of positions represented by volunteers and employees who work in community organizations and social economy businesses is more than twice the number in the civil service (which has 63,500 positions).

Community organizations deal with over 100,000 families per year. They are an essential resource for people at different stages of their lives, and they provide assistance in many situations (marital breakdown, illness, exclusion, poverty, etc.).

**STEPPING UP SUPPORT**

The government already provides substantial support to community organizations and the social economy. In a context in which the needs of the population are constantly evolving, it intends to step up this support.

The government will support both the organizations that provide assistance and the people who work for these organizations. It will help community organizations attract and retain staff, in particular by contributing to the improvement of working conditions.

Consequently, the government has announced the following measures:

- the reinforcement of support provided to community organizations
- support for initiatives that equip community organizations with the tools they need to improve skills related to management and operations
BY 2017, $172.5 MILLION TO SUPPORT PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE

In total, the new initiatives announced by the government will represent investments of **$172.5 million** by 2017.

- **Increase in government funding for community organizations:**
  **$162 million by 2017**

Community organizations play a key role in constructing a society based on solidarity and enabling the society to flourish. Their actions and initiatives must be maintained and developed, as they will be an important factor in attaining the sustainable solidarity envisioned by the government.

In 2011-2012, the government provided support of $882.9 million to 5,076 community organizations. Of the total number of organizations, 3,300 worked in the field of health and social services, helping the most vulnerable people in our society.

Community organizations dedicated to solidarity are active in most areas of people’s lives. Besides working in health and social services, community organizations provide education services, support families, and propose strategies for integrating the labour market. They provide employment assistance, continuing education and literacy programs, and they are involved in projects to encourage young people to stay in school and in various initiatives to improve housing conditions.

Community organizations play an important role in Québec society, and the work they do is impressive. It is therefore a priority of the government to improve the support given to these organizations. This will directly benefit all members of Québec society, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Accordingly, the government will increase the amount allocated to community organizations by **$54 million** per year. The additional credits will be paid as of 2014-2015. **By 2017**, the government will therefore invest **$162 million** to support community organizations that provide assistance.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of community organizations, the government will ensure that the organizations use these funds carefully to meet the needs of their clienteles.

- **Launch of consultations on the government action plan regarding community and volunteer action**

The government has announced that consultations will be launched with a view to adopting a government action plan regarding community and volunteer action. The action plan is to cover the period 2014-2019.

The previous action plan ended in 2009. It is important to adopt a new plan in order to foster solidarity, promote the pooling of resources, and better structure the community sector.

The government will ensure that community organizations and volunteers, through their representatives, participate in the consultations.
Implementation of a program for the acquisition and renovation of buildings for collective use: $10.2 million by 2017

At the beginning of the 2000s, community organizations could receive government support in order to renovate or acquire buildings to carry on their activities. As part of its additional assistance for community organizations, the government has decided to make this type of support available once again.

- The government has announced that it will reintroduce a program providing support for the purchase and renovation of buildings for community purposes.
- The program, called the Programme d’acquisition et de rénovation d’immeubles à vocation collective, will work essentially the same way as the former program (Programme d’achat-rénovation d’immeubles communautaires).

A three-year budget of $10.2 million will be allocated to the new program.

Improvement of working conditions in the community sector through better access to fringe benefits

Assistance will also be provided to persons employed in the community sector.

Only slightly over a third (36%) of community organizations make a group insurance plan available to their employees. And only a very small proportion of community organizations offer a pension plan.

The government has announced a number of initiatives to improve the situation.

- The government will fund a feasibility study concerning the creation of a group insurance program for the benefit of persons employed in the community sector.
- It will contribute to the funding of a regional training and promotion campaign concerning the Régime de retraite des groupes communautaires et de femmes (community and women’s groups member funded pension plan), to provide information about the plan and increase membership.
- It has announced its intention to fund a feasibility study concerning the creation of a prevention mutual group in occupational health and safety for the benefit of community organizations.

BY 2017, INVESTMENTS OF $73.1 MILLION IN INITIATIVES ALREADY UNDERWAY

Since September 2012, the government has taken a number of major initiatives to support persons and organizations that provide assistance. By 2017, these initiatives will represent investments of $73.1 million.

The initiatives already undertaken are as follows:

- the passage of the Social Economy Act
- an infrastructure program for collective entrepreneurship (Programme d’infrastructures en entrepreneuriat collectif)
- funding of community organizations that help seniors live independently
- funding of community organizations working in the area of food safety

Plans for the future

To support persons and organizations that provide assistance, the government will table an action plan in the coming months, as provided in the Social Economy Act.

2.3. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

RAISING AWARENESS, ACTING EARLY, AND WORKING TOGETHER
TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Sustainable solidarity means taking action in the present while thinking of future needs. This entails striving to combat prejudices, focus on prevention, and invest in participation, responsiveness and working together.

By 2017, investments of $1.2 billion for initiatives already underway, including $1.1 billion for autonomy insurance

Since September 2012, the government has invested in a number of initiatives to prepare for the future. By 2017, these initiatives will represent investments of $1.2 billion.

The following initiatives have been announced:

- the National Policy on Rurality
- the introduction of autonomy insurance
- the plan to introduce voluntary retirement savings plans

Acting on its pledges to the public, the government will implement a system of autonomy insurance. This is a major step in building a society even more committed to solidarity.

In 2011, 16% of the population of Québec was aged 65 or over. By 2031, 26% of the population will be 65 or over. With the ageing of the population, the number of people who have at least one chronic health problem will increase. Currently, 82% of persons over 65 who live in their own homes have at least one chronic health problem.

In supporting people who are having difficulty living independently, the government has two main objectives:

- to foster the provision of services where people live
- to protect the funding of the services

Implementation of autonomy insurance

Between now and 2017, the government will invest a total of $1.1 billion in the implementation of this major initiative. Of this amount, $80 million will be spent on two previously described measures, namely, support for persons with an intellectual disability or a pervasive developmental disorder, and funding of community organizations providing support to help older people live independently.

- The government has made a strong commitment to home health care, spending $110 million on home health care in 2013-2014.
- Resources of close to $1 billion have already been earmarked for the implementation of autonomy insurance. $220.0 million will be invested in 2014-2015, $330.0 million in 2015-2016, and $440.0 million in 2016-2017.
- Special consultations on the White Paper Autonomy for All began on October 23, 2013. The consultations will be an opportunity for Quebecers to learn more about the stakes involved in the ageing of the population and to take part in the decision-making process.
- The government intends to table the bill creating an autonomy insurance system within the next few months.

Plans for the future

In order to prepare for the future, the government is currently working on a number of initiatives that will become more concrete in the next few months.

The government is working harder than ever to develop strategies to prevent students from dropping out of school. This is a priority for society as a whole.
It is also working on policies concerning adult education, continuing education, and youth.

In the area of health care, particular attention will be given to prevention.

Over the past few months, in-depth discussions have been held on the protection of pension plans and the improvement of the retirement security of Quebecers. The government is now analyzing the various proposals and positions with a view to future initiatives.

Consultations have begun with regard to the adoption of a Québec policy on sports, leisure and physical activity.
$318 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR NEW INITIATIVES BY 2017

Over the next three years, the government will spend $318 million to fund the new initiatives it has announced with respect to solidarity.

The new investments will necessitate additional expenditures of $263.6 million. This total will be invested over the next three years, with the amount increasing from year to year, as follows:

- $79.9 million in 2014-2015
- $88.6 million in 2015-2016
- $95.2 million in 2016-2017

FUNDING OF NEW INITIATIVES

TABLE 2
SOLIDARITY: A PRECIOUS ASSET FOR QUÉBEC
FINANCIAL IMPACT OF NEW INITIATIVES ANNOUNCED (in millions of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased financial assistance for independent adults who receive social assistance</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action plan: Un Québec fort de son immigration</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating the working conditions of domestic workers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New rules for temporary help agencies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch of a public awareness campaign to counter prejudice against the poor and other vulnerable persons</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More support for the integration of disabled children in childcare services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of services provided by community drop-in day care centres</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for community-based educational initiatives to promote good nutrition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased government funding for community organizations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>162.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch of consultations on the government action plan regarding community and volunteer action</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of a program of acquisition and renovation of buildings for collective use</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of working conditions in the community sector (group insurance, pension plan, prevention mutual)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>103.2</td>
<td>108.9</td>
<td>318.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts already set aside</td>
<td>-12.4</td>
<td>-13.7</td>
<td>-14.6</td>
<td>-13.7</td>
<td>-54.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total financial impacts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>263.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministère des Finances et de l’Économie du Québec.
CONCLUSION

With the publication of *Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec*, the government is presenting its perspective on building a society in which solidarity has a greater place. At the same time, it is pursuing the actions undertaken since September 2012 to build a society in which wealth is better distributed and all Quebecers receive effective support at every stage in their lives.

**AN INNOVATIVE VISION**

The government is proposing an innovative vision of solidarity, in which solidarity takes into account the realities and requirements of the present and the future. Solidarity is balanced with prosperity, responsibility, and current and future needs.

**CONCRETE ACTION**

The government is introducing concrete measures that are in line with this vision, adding new initiatives to the initiatives taken since September 2012.

Over the past year, the government has implemented strategic initiatives that, by 2017, will represent investments of $2.6 billion.

The government will also be investing additional resources of close to $320 million during the same period, so that, by 2017, close to $2.9 billion in additional resources will have been invested in building a society even more committed to solidarity.

Solidarity is a choice made by Québec society, and it has had beneficial results.

*Solidarity: A Precious Asset for Québec* builds on past achievements, strengthening and developing a model of social organization of which all Quebecers can be proud.