

REGIONAL PROFILE OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING POPULATION OF THE CÔTE-NORD



Photo Credit: Koren Wellman

October 2023

**North Shore Community Association (NSCA)
Coasters Association Inc.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This profile presents key aspects of the English-speaking* communities in the Côte-Nord region and highlights some of their main characteristics. By providing a combined overview of the region, the North Shore Community Association (NSCA) and the Coasters Association aim to unite the voices of the English-speaking population within the Côte-Nord region and take action to meet their needs.

Shared Approach

In 2019 the Coasters Association and NSCA formed the Regional Anglophone Network (RAN) and identified common themes for collaboration.

Vision: The English-speaking population in the Côte-Nord region has equitable access to programs and services to enhance their quality of life.

Mission: To unite our efforts to enhance the vitality and support the development of the English-speaking communities of the North Shore and Lower North Shore.

Objectives:

- Represent the interests of English-speaking communities by communicating a clear and common message
- Increase access to services and information for English-speaking community members
- Share information, develop knowledge and identify best practices related to regional realities to support evidence-based action
- Increase collaboration and communication between our organizations, including professional development opportunities, shared planning, and joint action with relevant stakeholders
- Involve community members and develop their community leadership interests and capacity

*This profile uses the First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) which refers to the first official language (English or French) spoken by the person.

Our Values

The Coasters Association and the North Shore Community Association emphasize the following values

Identity - Community vitality is rooted in preserving and building on the unique characteristics of the region's English-speaking communities. A strong sense of identity and community cohesion will help to ensure a thriving region.

Inclusion - English-speaking community networks are recognized stakeholders, engaged in influencing priorities and resources offered by institutions, government and service providers. We embrace opportunities to contribute to the social and economic sustainability of the English-speaking population of the Côte Nord.

Collaboration - Organizations representing the English-speaking communities of the Côte-Nord recognize the challenges facing our communities. We have a common vision and are engaged in shared planning and development with community and government partners, working to develop shared solutions.



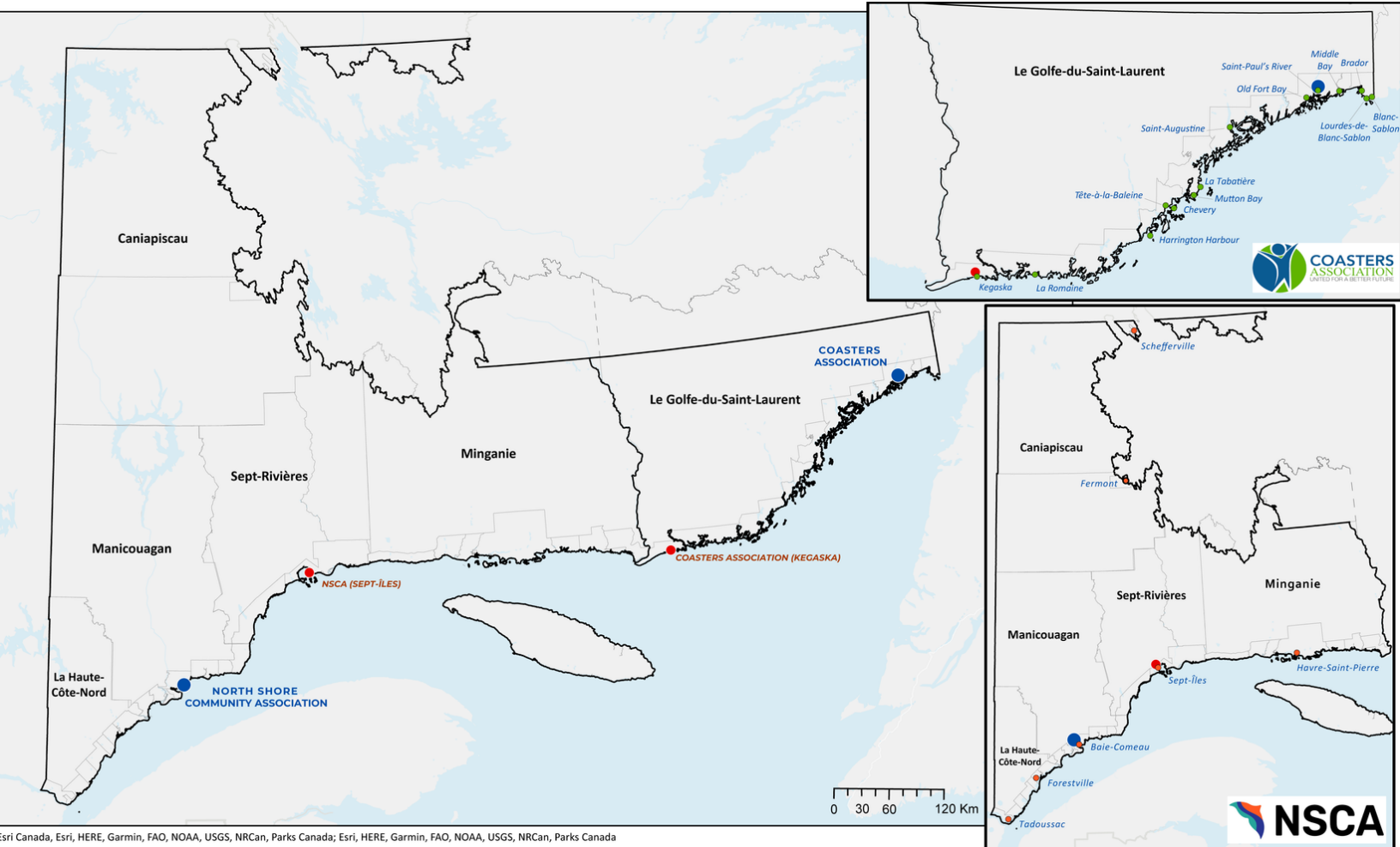
Photo Credit: NSCA Collection



Photo Credit: Coasters Association

INTRODUCTION TO THE REGION

Geography



As Quebec's second largest administrative region, the Côte-Nord stretches eastward over 1,280 kilometers along the north shore of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to the Labrador border, including Anticosti Island. To the north it borders the Nord-du-Québec administrative region and to the west, the Lac-Saint-Jean region.

English-Speaking Population

While the surface area of Côte-Nord is large, it has one of the lowest population densities in Quebec, with most of its population concentrated in Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles. It has a significant English-speaking population of 5,300, making up a little over six percent of the total population (Pocock, 2023).

The North Shore Community Association (NSCA) is mandated to represent and serve the English-language communities in Quebec’s North Shore, a constituent territory composed of five MRCs (municipalités régionales de comté – regional county municipalities), from Tadoussac to Havre-Saint-Pierre and including Fermont and Schefferville. While there are roads between most towns, transportation to Schefferville from the rest of the region is available only by train or by plane. The region’s population of 2,460 English speakers also includes the Naskapi Nation, whose members use English as their first official language. The majority of the English-speaking population is found in the following 3 MRCs: Manicouagan, Sept-Rivières and Caniapiscau.

The Coasters Association Inc., often known simply as “Coasters,” represents and serves the English-speaking communities of one very large MRC: Le Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent. This territory includes five municipalities: Blanc Sablon, Bonne Espérance, Saint-Augustin, Gros Mécatina and Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent. Unlike the rest of Québec, most of the population (85%) is English-speaking, making up a total of 2,840 English-speakers (Pocock, 2023). Its western border begins at the Natashquan River and ends at the border of Labrador to the east. There is a highway (138) from the west that ends in Kegaska, and picks up again in Old Fort Bay. However, the communities in between are not connected by road, so residents rely on airplanes, boats and snowmobiles to travel from one village to the next.

The following table shows the communities that make up the five municipalities of MRC of Le Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent:

MRC GOLFE-DU-SAINT-LAURENT				
Blanc Sablon	Bonne Espérance	Saint Augustin	Gros Mécatina	Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent
Blanc Sablon	Middle Bay	Saint Augustin	La Tabatière	Kegaska
Lourdes de Blanc Sablon	St. Paul’s River		Mutton Bay	La Romaine
Brador	Old Fort Bay			Chevery
				Harrington Harbour
				Tête-à-la-Baleine

Economy

The region of Côte-Nord has a diverse economy, as it encompasses such a large geographic area, and different sectors are predominant in different areas. There is considerable investment in natural resource extraction, specifically mining, lumber, fisheries as well as hydroelectric power.

The industries representing the main employers in the region are:

1. Health care and social assistance - 16% of the total population
2. Retail trade - 11.6%
3. Manufacturing - 9.3 %
4. Public administration - 9.0%
5. Educational services - 7.8%

(PERT, 2023)

The top industries for English speakers by MRC

La Haute-Côte-Nord	Accommodation and food services	100%
Manicouagan	Retail trade	13.8%
Sept-Rivières	Educational services	14.8%
Caniapiscau	Public administration	25.9%
Minganie	Retail trade	42.9%
Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent	Health care and social assistance	17.7%

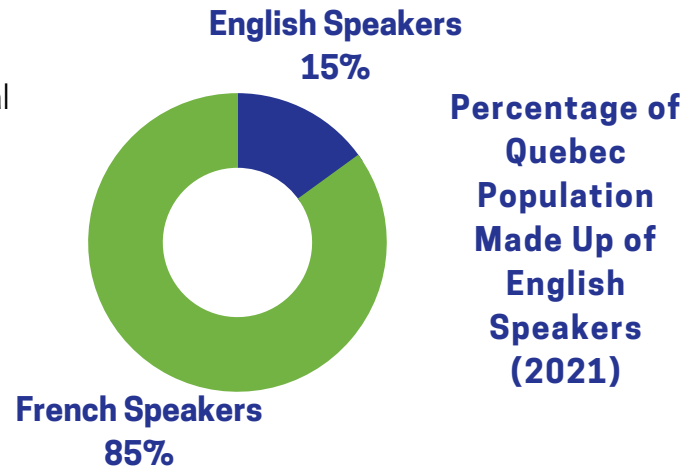
(PERT, 2023)

Many residents of the Lower North Shore must rely on seasonal work for employment. This includes the fishery in the spring and summer months on the territory, and construction, fishing and hunting camps off territory.

ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN QUEBEC

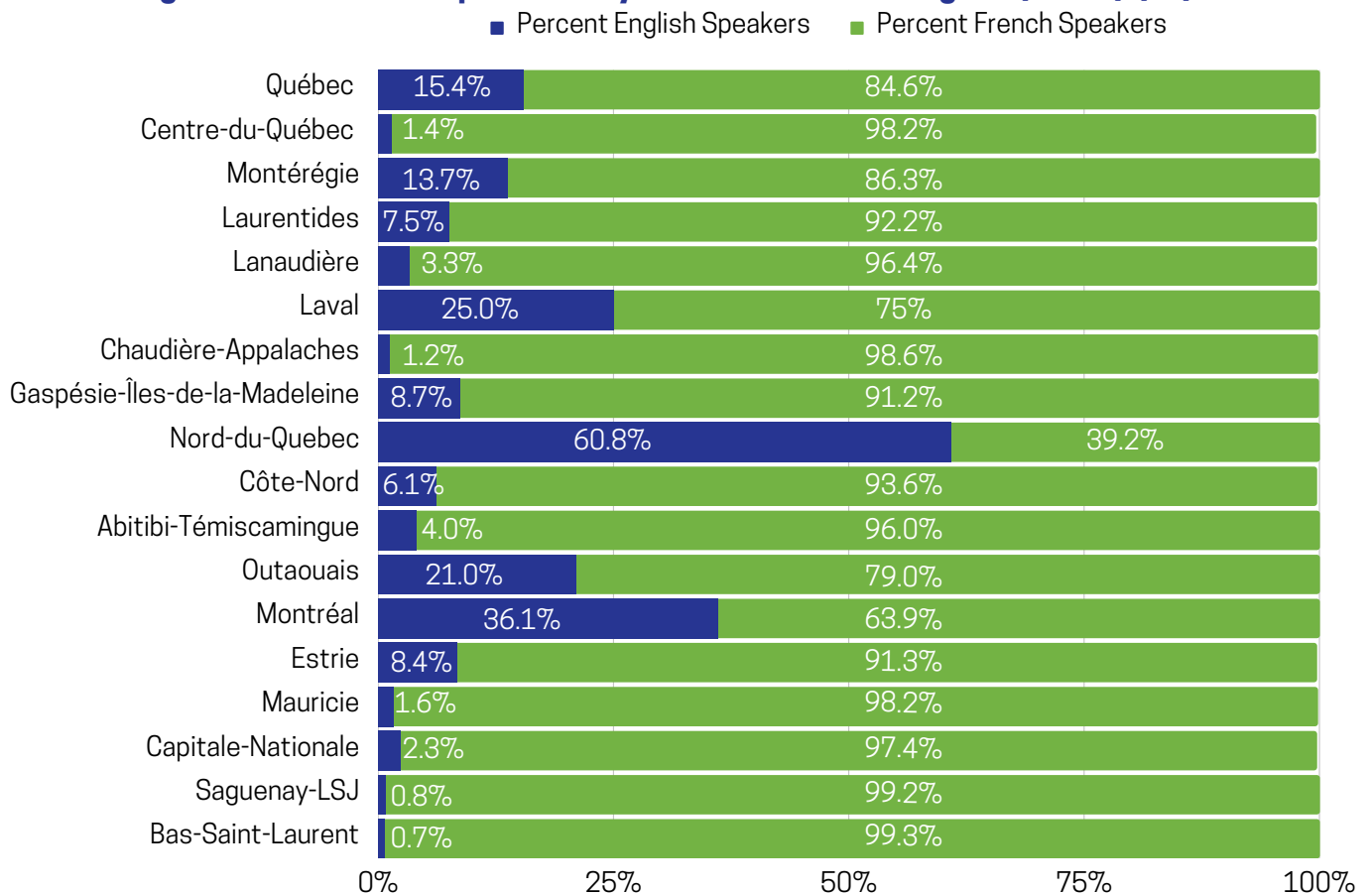
There are over one million (1,253,580) individuals living in Quebec whose first official language is English (an increase of 155,655 since 2016).

Quebec's English-speaking communities comprise 14.9 % of the Quebec population (almost one percent more than in 2016).



Regional populations vary greatly, as does the proportion of the population made up of English speakers, from 35.0% in Montreal to 0.7% in the Lower Saint-Lawrence. (PERT, 2023)

English and French Speakers by Administrative Region (2021) (%)



In the Côte-Nord region, the English-speaking community is comprised of 5,300 individuals which represents 6.1% of the total population, an increase of 128 from 2016 (5,172).

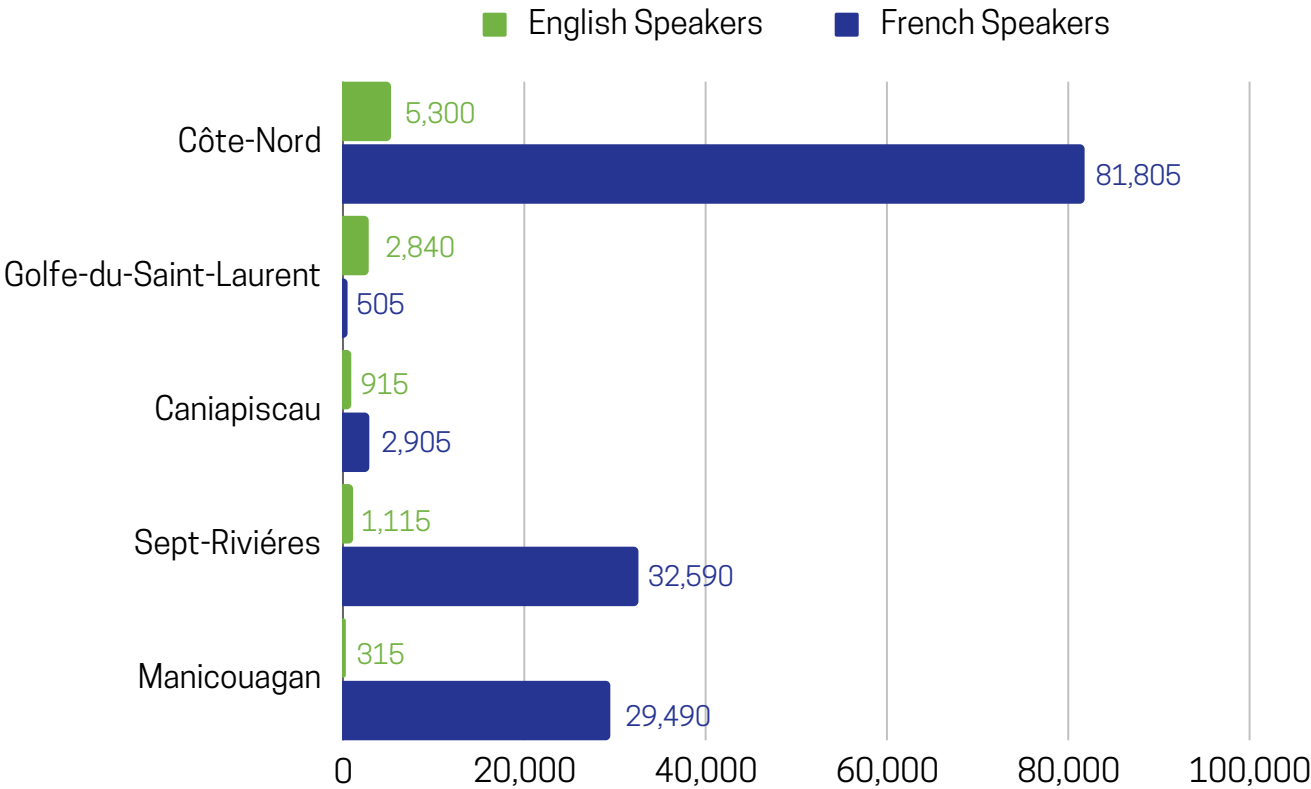
(Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT), 2023)

ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN CÔTE-NORD

English Speakers by MRC

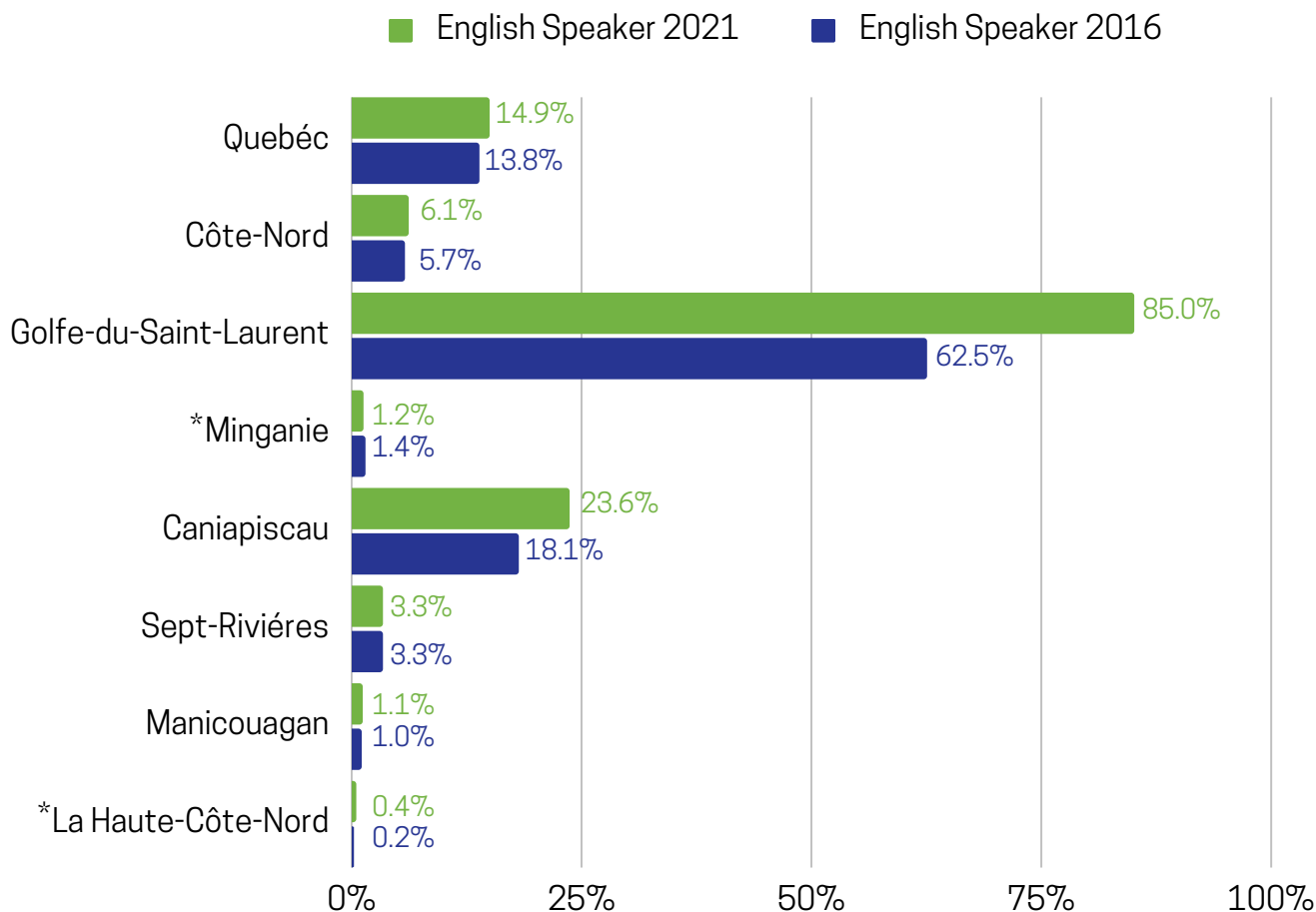
The Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent is the only MRC in the region that has substantially more English speakers (2,840) than French speakers (505).

English and French Speakers on the Côte-Nord by MRC (FOLS) 2021



The percentage of the population has increased in the MRC of Caniapiscou and Manicouagan. While the MRC Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent has had an increase in the proportion of its English speakers, its total population has decreased.

Changes in Proportions of English Speakers 2016-2021



(Pocock, 2023; Pocock, 2018)

*While there are some English speakers in La Haute-Côte-Nord and Minganie, the numbers are too low to be addressed in this document. For this reason, these MRCs will not be represented in the rest of the profile.



Photo Credit: Sandra Vatcher

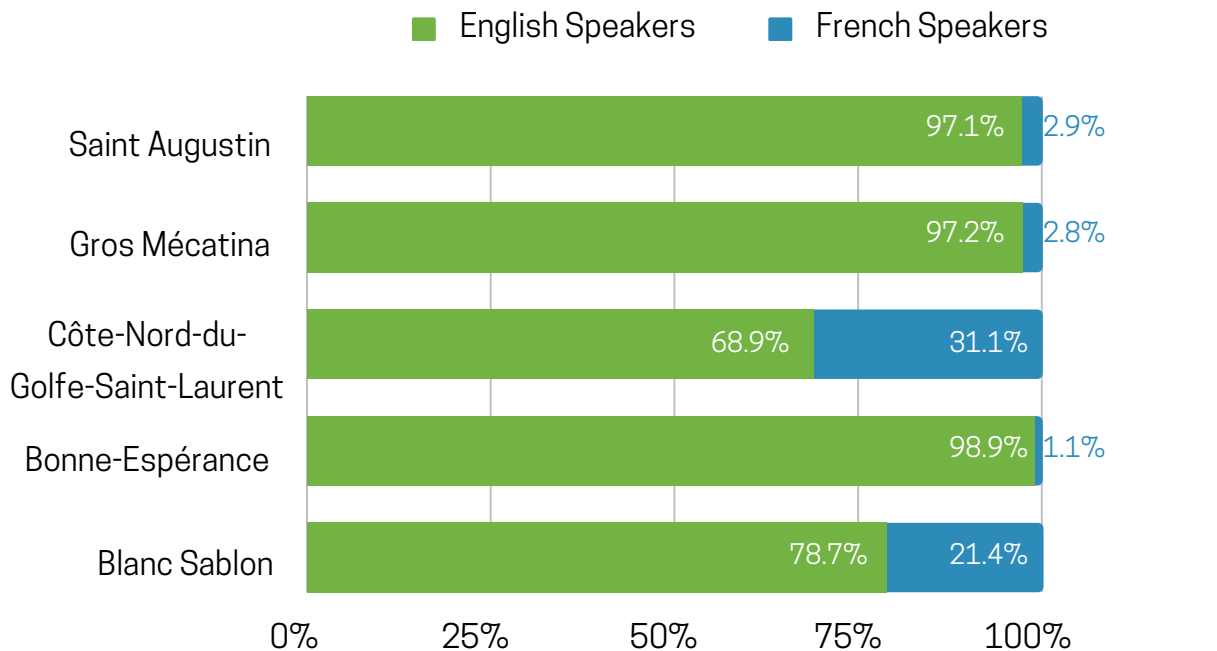


Photo Credit: Coasters Association

Population distribution by municipality in the Lower North Shore (LNS)

On the Lower North Shore (MRC Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent) there are five municipalities, the majority of which includes more than one community. All have a majority of English speakers. Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent has the highest level of French speakers at 31.4% of the population.

Distribution of First Official Language Spoken in the Lower North Shore (2021)



(Statistics Canada, 2021)

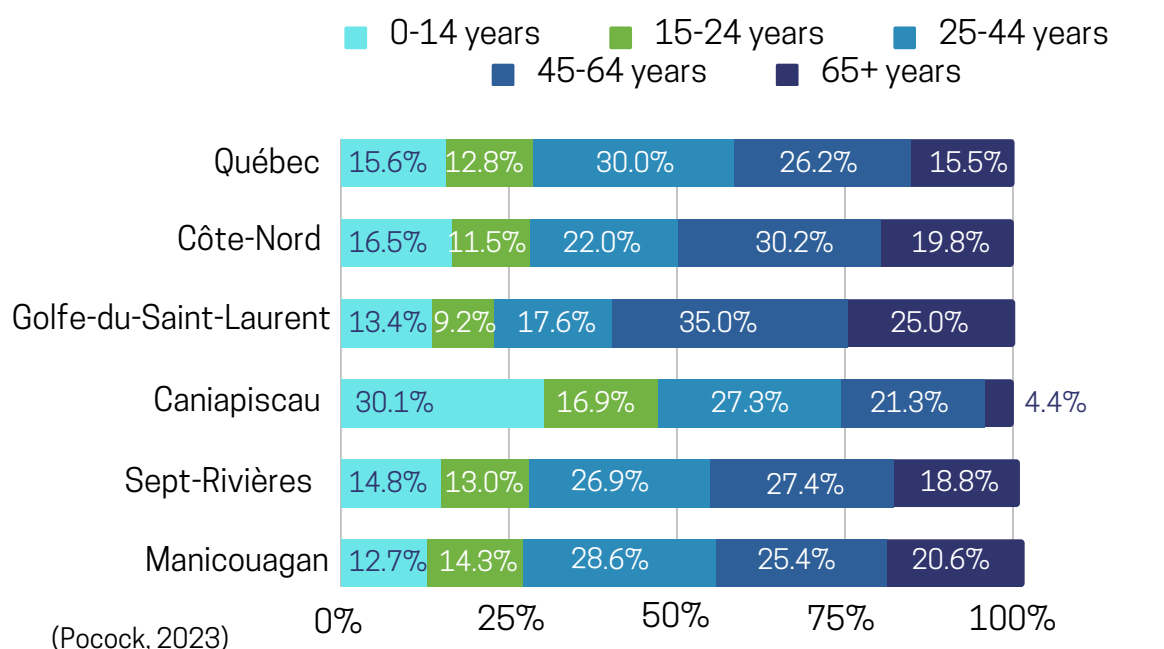
As seen above, all of the municipalities in the Lower North Shore have a majority of English speakers. Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-Saint-Laurent has the highest proportion of French speakers at 31.1% of the population

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Age distribution

A larger proportion of the English-speaking population in the Côte-Nord is 45 years of age or over, compared to the rest of Quebec. The situation varies greatly by MRC. For example, the Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent has the lowest proportion of the younger generation, with 60% of the population 45 years or over, and just 22.6% of the population from 0-24 years of age. Caniapiscau has a large proportion of children between 0-14 years at 30.1% of the population, or 275 individuals. This is double the proportion of the same age range in the province.

Age Distribution of English Speakers in the Côte-Nord (2021)



Priorities for Action

The Coasters Association and the North Shore Community Association have identified five priority areas for the English-speaking communities of the region, with the following objectives:

0-5 age group - Ensure sustainability and growth of early childhood and family programming.

6- 14 age group - Build profile for 6-14 age demographic with age gap analysis.

15-35 age group - Develop strategy to increase youth engagement in responsible leadership and the decision-making process.

36 – 54 age group - Develop, implement and support social and economic opportunities for adults.

55 + age group - Ensure equitable access to senior programs and services through long-term sustainable funding

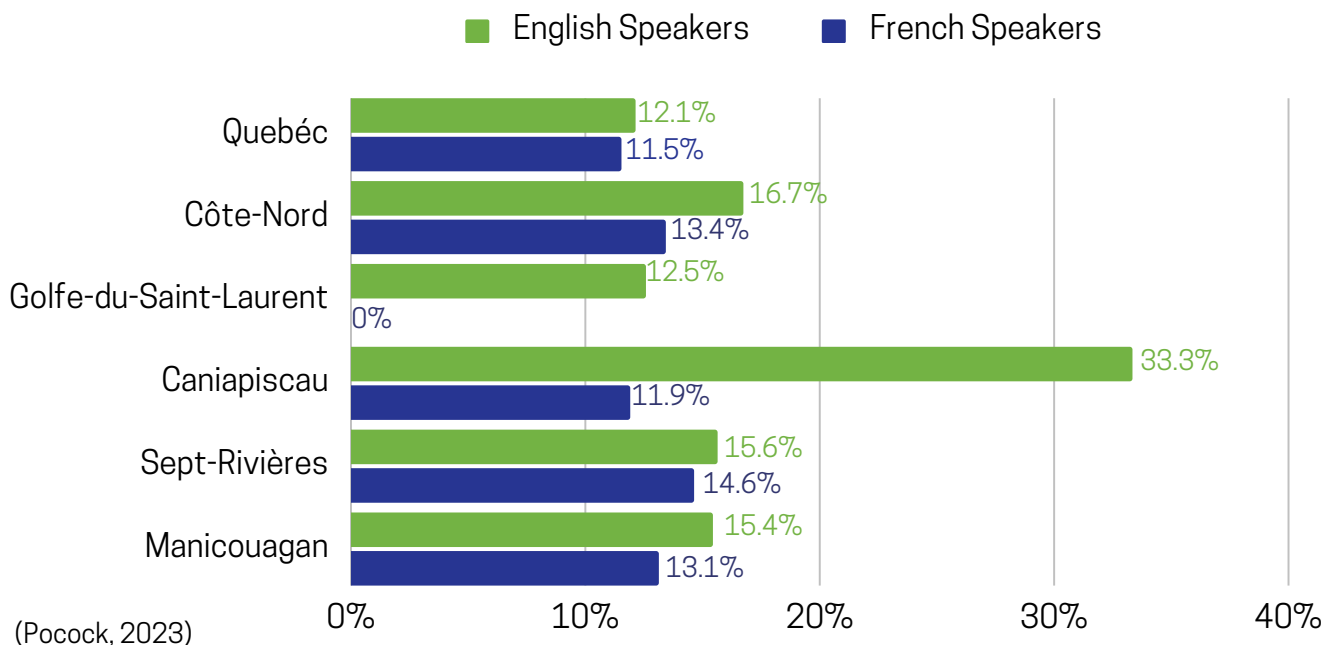
In order to address the needs of children aged 0-5 and their families, both organizations developed programs to support early childhood development. Coasters has developed Little Coasters in Muddy Boots, and NSCA has developed a Bright Beginnings program.

Household Living Arrangements

Single-parent households

Single-parent households are more likely to report food insecurity, high levels of psychological distress and more than one health problem compared to parents with other household arrangements.

Distribution of English and French Speakers in Single-Parent Households (2021)



In the province of Quebec, the proportion of single parent households is about the same for English and French speakers. In the Côte-Nord region however, there are more English speakers living in single-parent households than French speakers. In the region of Caniapiscou alone, there are three times as many English speakers in a single-parent household than French speakers.



Photo Credit: C.J. Moleski



Photo Credit: NSCA Collection

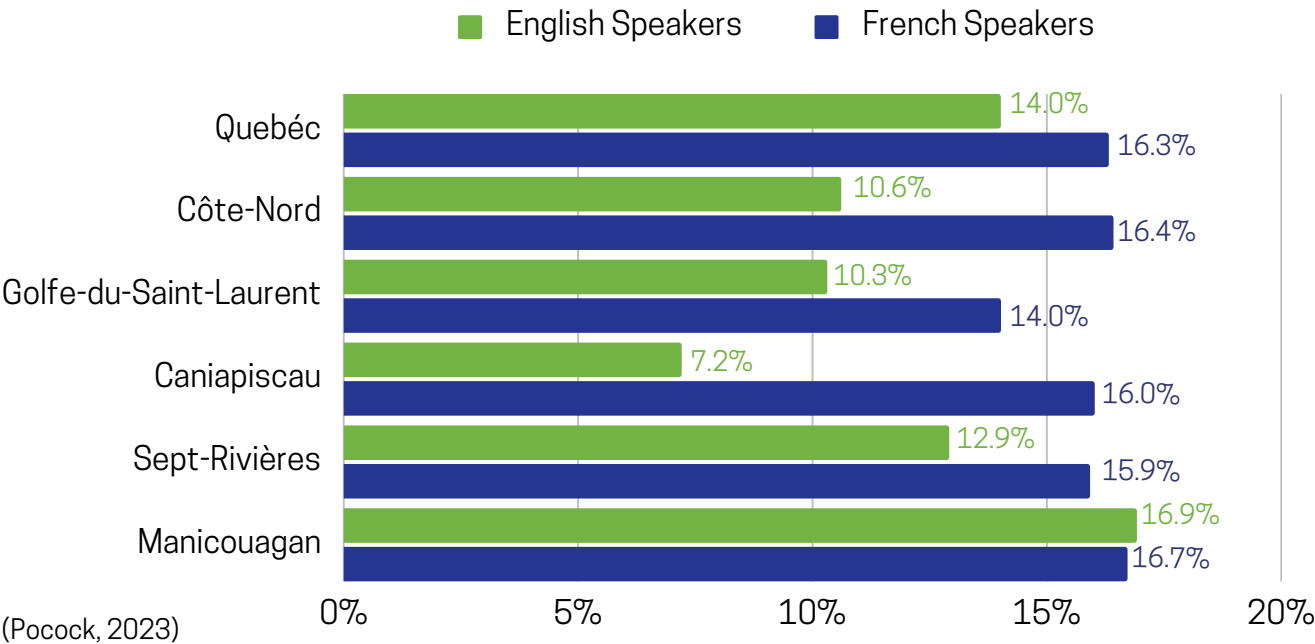


Photo Credit: Coasters Association

Living Alone

People living alone are more vulnerable as they lack the social support that is sometimes needed for certain activities because of disability, illness or aging (Pocock, 2023). When there are seniors living alone in Côte-Nord, they rely heavily on community support for outreach services as they are more isolated than other regions and there is a general lack of service providers in the region.

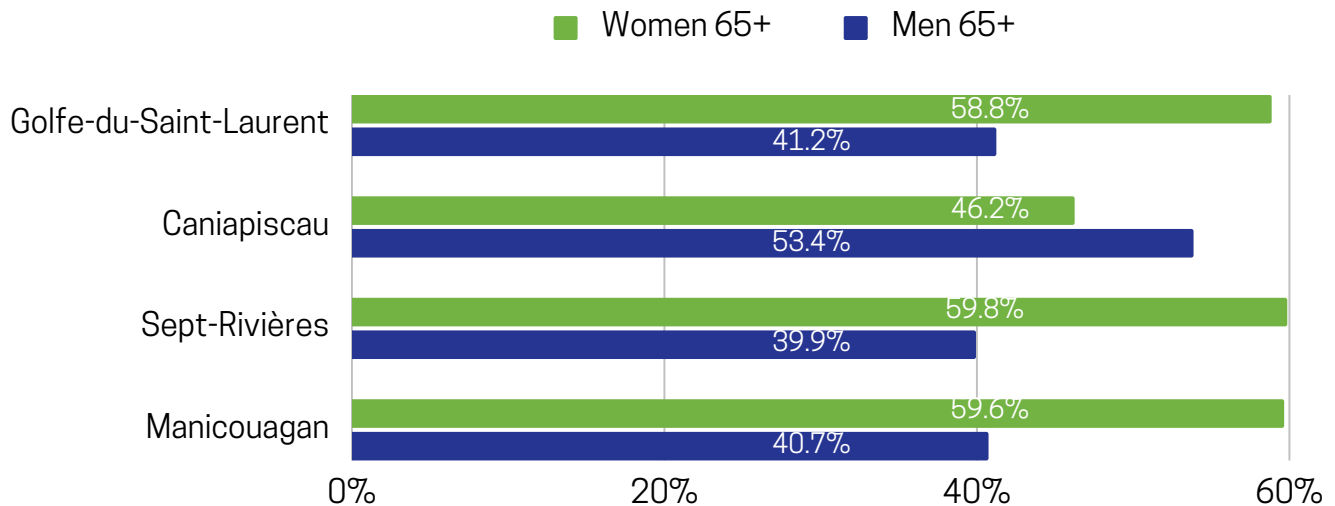
Distribution of English and French Speakers Living Alone (2021)



While Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent does not have the highest proportion of English speakers living alone at 295 individuals, it should be noted that of these 295 individuals, 55.9% or 165 individuals are over 65 years of age.

Manicouagan has the highest proportion of English speakers living alone at 16.9% or 55 individuals.

Total population Over 65 Living Alone by Gender (2021)



(Warnke, 2023)

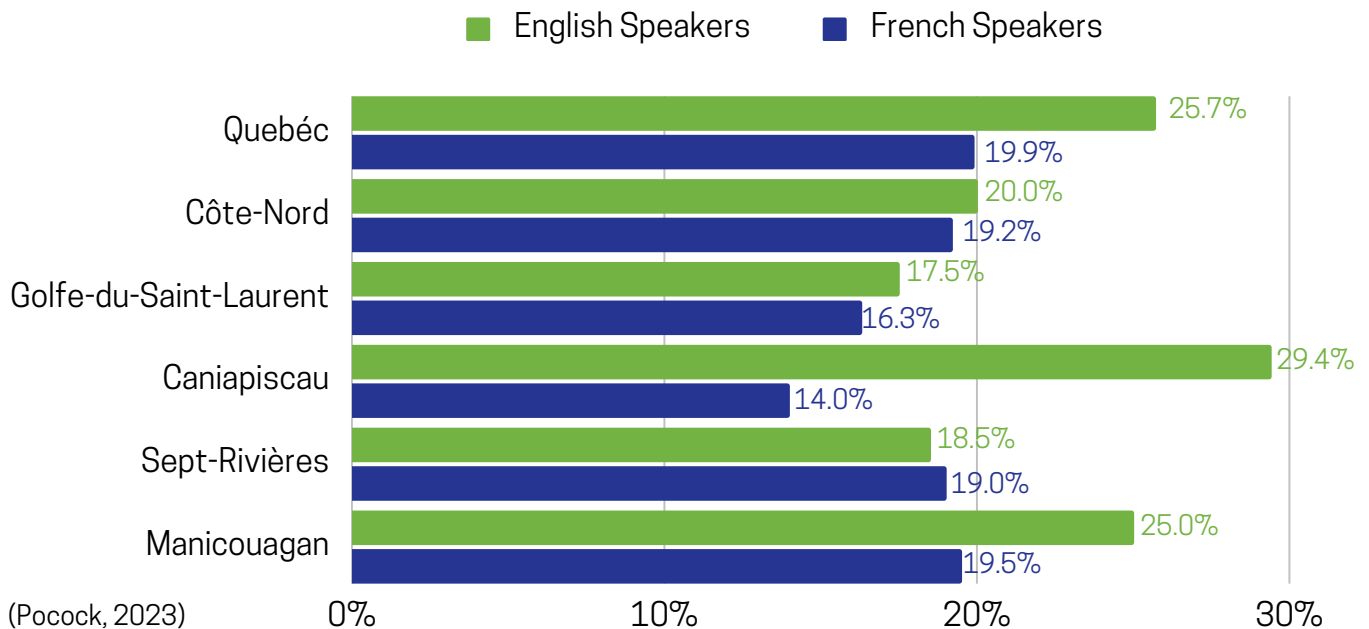
A significant proportion of individuals living alone are women in all regions except for Caniapiscau, where 53.4% are men.

Income

Population with low income (earn \$20,000 or less per year before tax)

Provincially, English speakers have a greater tendency than French speakers to have low income. In the Côte-Nord, the tendency is much higher among English speakers. This is true for all territories with the exception of Sept-Rivières, where English speakers (18.5%) are slightly less likely to have low income than French speakers (19.0%).

Distribution of English and French Speakers Earning Low Income by MRC (2021)

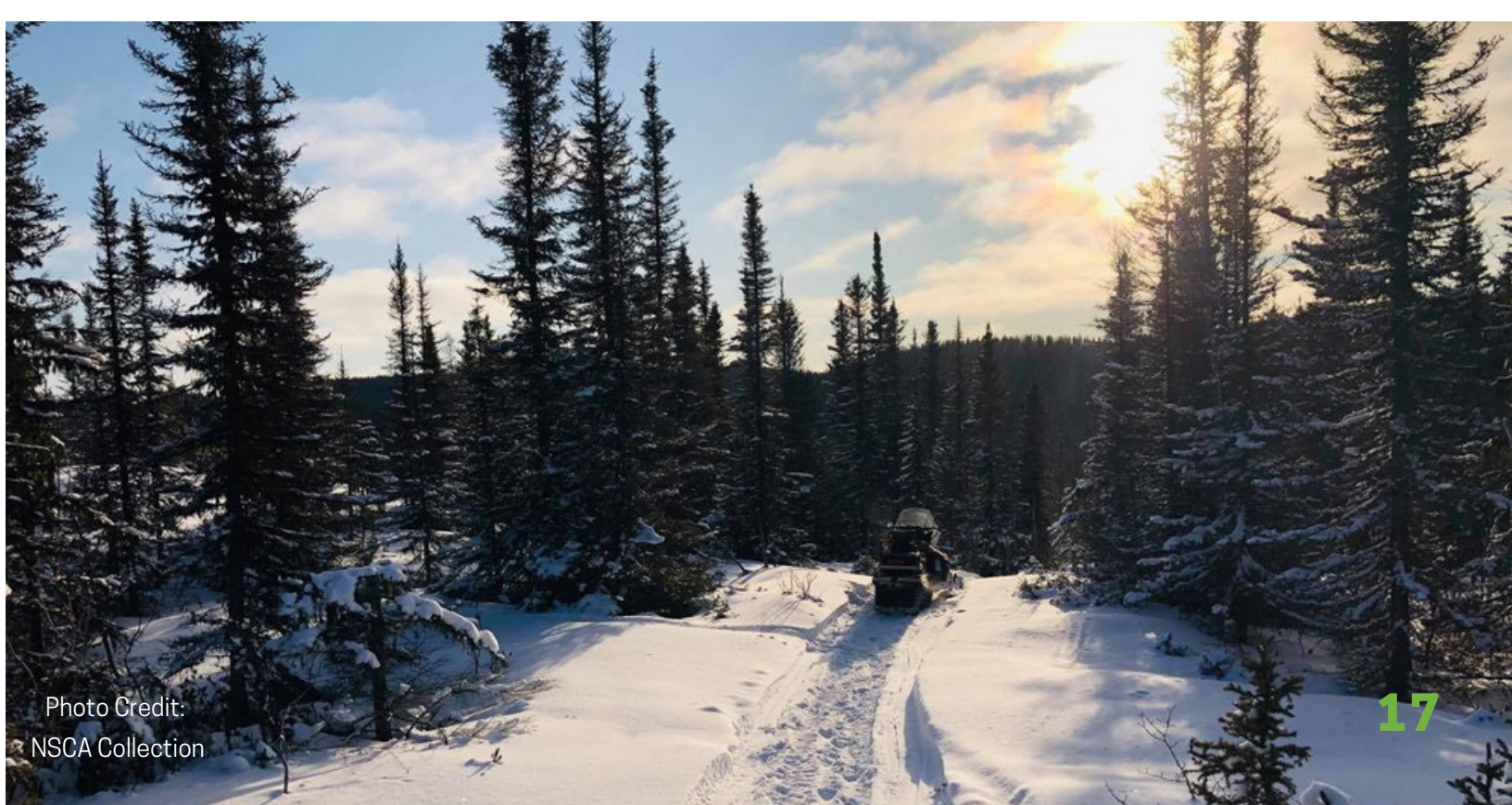
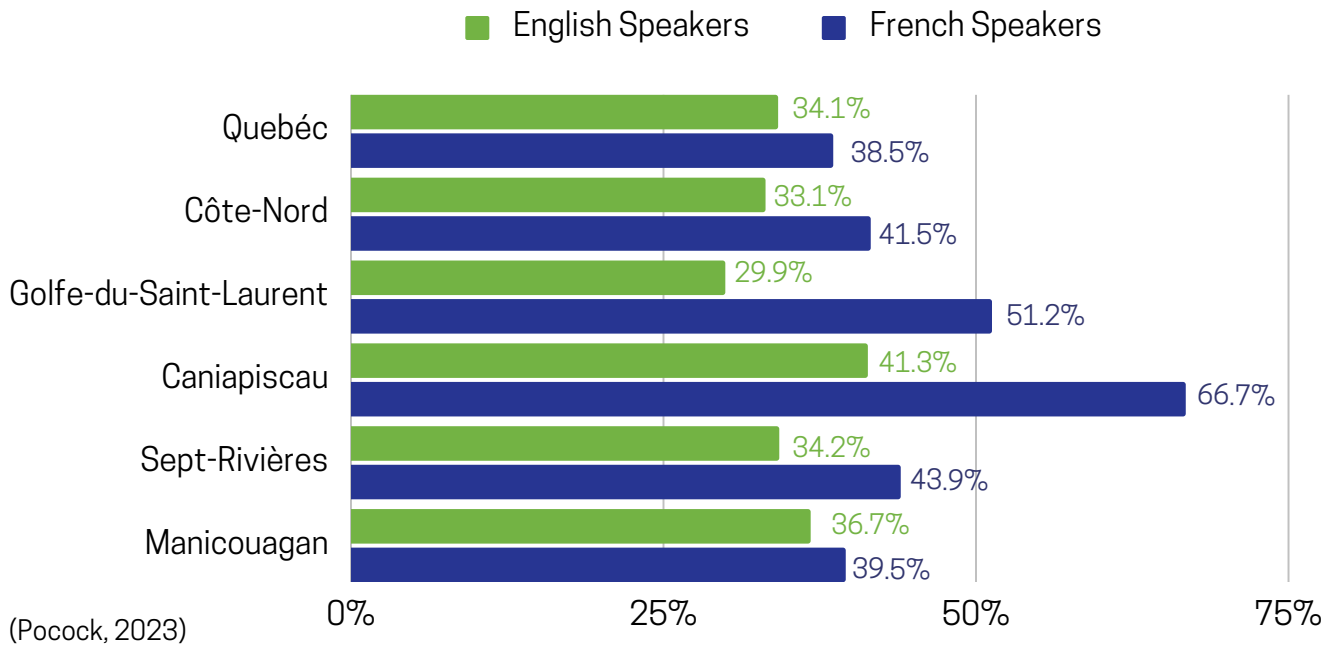


(Pocock, 2023)

Population with high income (earn \$50,000 or above per year before tax)

In the province of Quebec, the tendency to have high income is similar among English speakers and French speakers. In the Côte-Nord, English speakers are much less likely than French speakers to be living with a high income. This is true for all territories with the exception of the MRC of Manicouagan where 36.7% of English speakers make \$50,000 or above, compared to 39.5% among French speakers.

Distribution of English and French Speakers Earning High Income by MRC (2021)

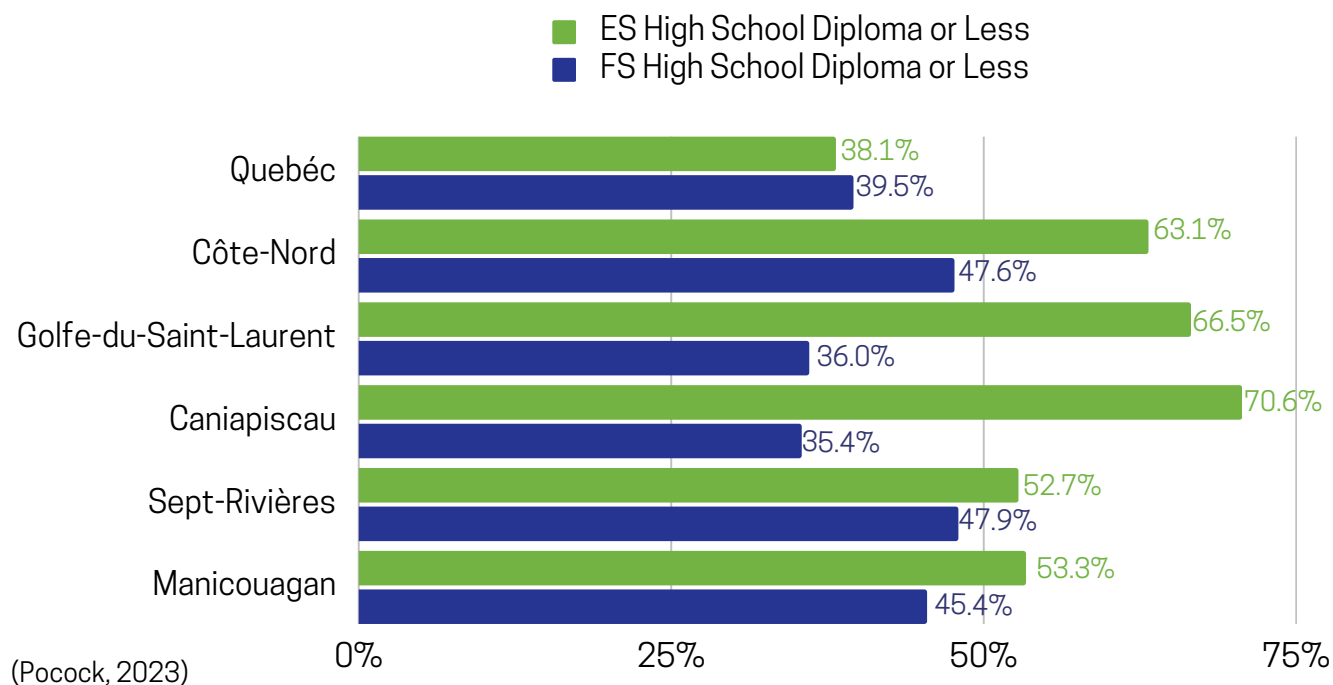


Educational Attainment

Low Educational Attainment

At the provincial level, the proportion of English speakers with a high school diploma or less is similar to the level found in the French-speaking majority population. In the Côte-Nord, English speakers are more likely to have low levels of educational attainment. This is true for all territories.

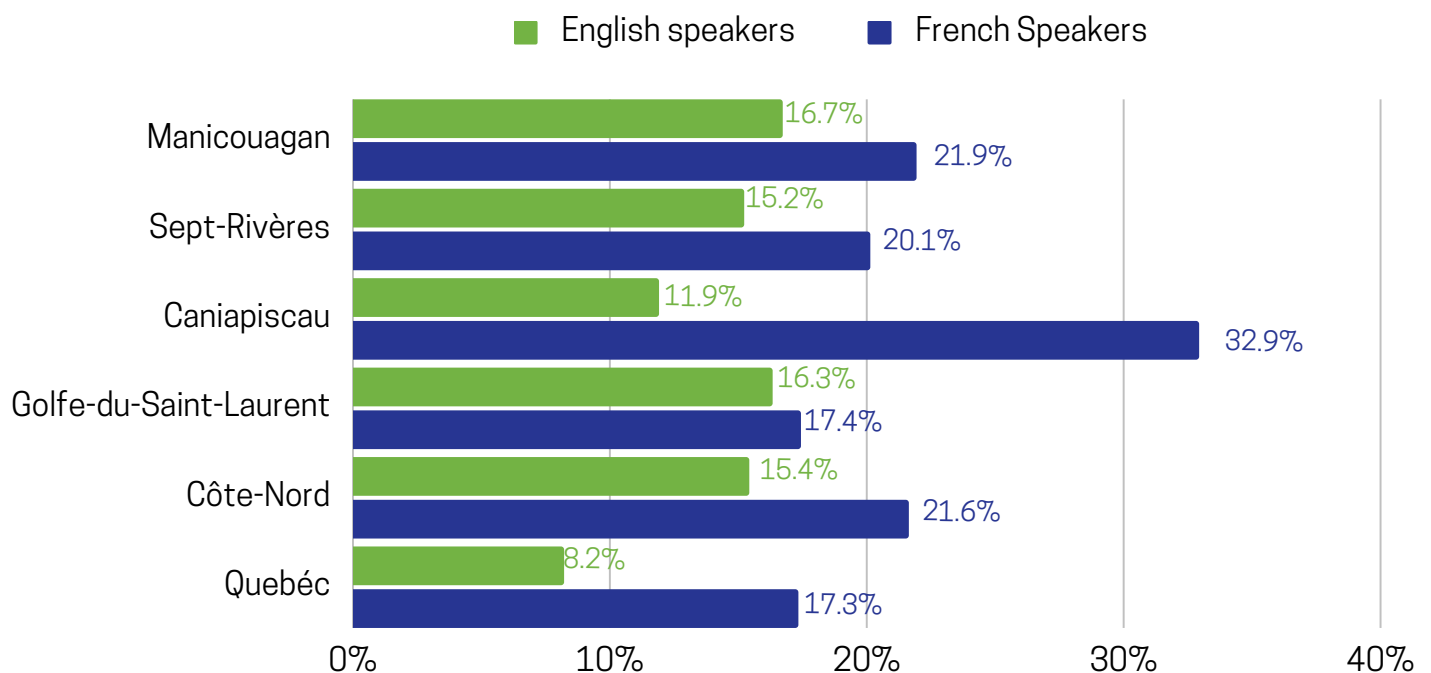
Low Educational Attainment (2021)



Vocational Attainment

At the provincial level, French speakers are more likely to have vocational training than English speakers. The same is true across the different regions of Côte-Nord. A noticeable difference is Caniapiscou where 32.9% of French speakers have an apprenticeship or trade certificate compared to 11.9% of the English-speaking population. There is also a noticeable difference in Caniapiscou for College, CEGEP or other non-university certificates with 19.6% of French speakers and only 7.1% of English speakers.

Vocational Attainment, Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate or Diploma (2021)



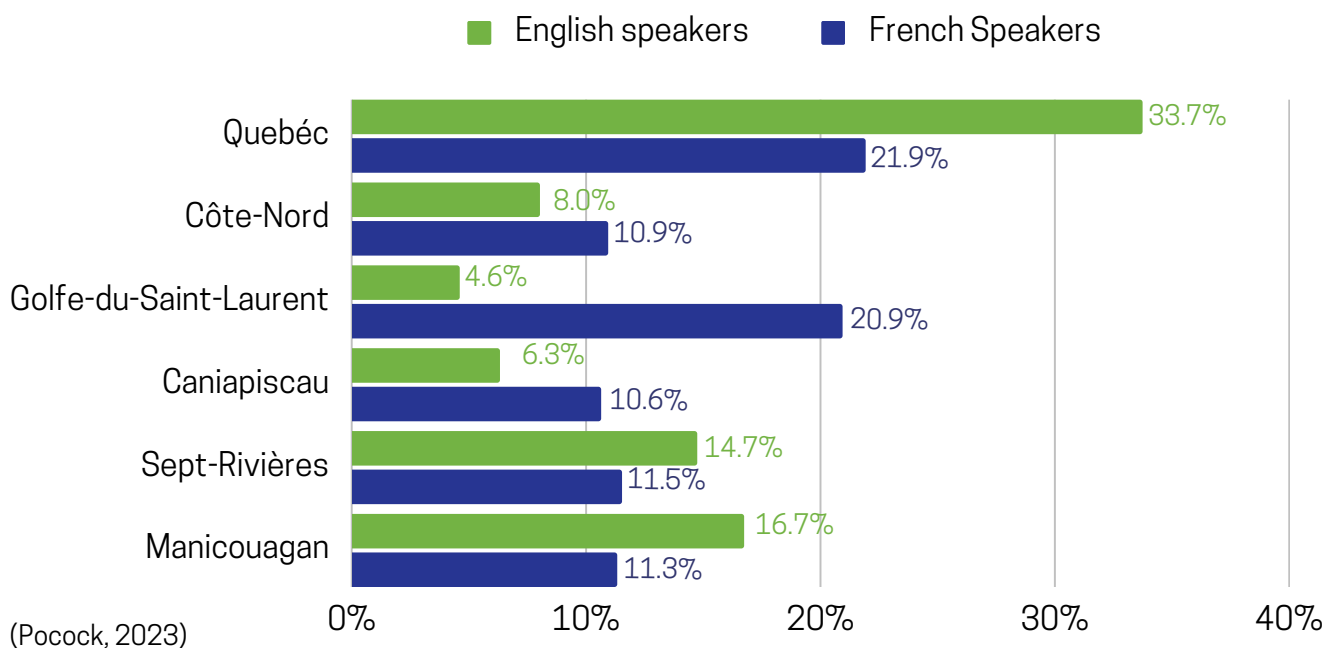
(Pocock, 2023)



High Educational Attainment

Provincially, English speakers are more likely than French speakers to have high educational attainment. In the Côte-Nord, however, English speakers are much less likely to attain higher levels of education. This is true for all territories except Sept-Rivières and Manicouagan. In Sept-Rivières, 14.7% of English speakers have a university certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above, compared to 11.5% of French speakers. In Manicouagan, 16.7% of English speakers have a bachelor's degree or above compared to 11.3% of French speakers.

University Certificate, Diploma or Degree at Bachelor level or above (2021)

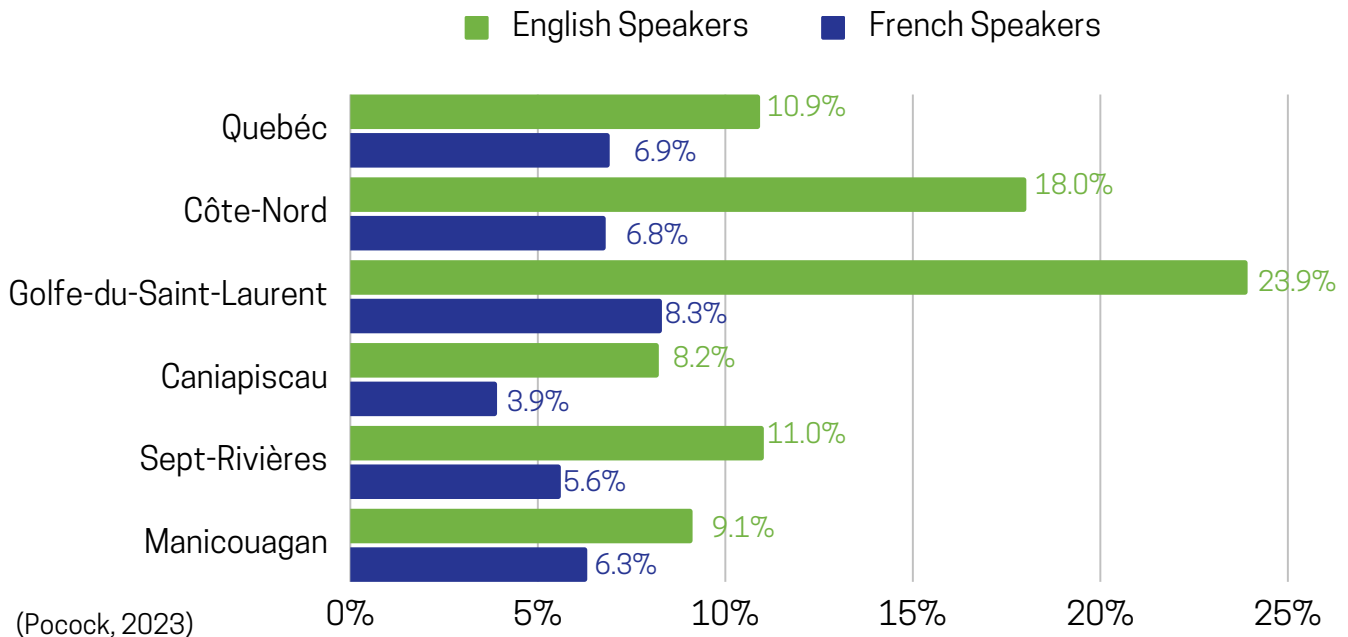


Labour Force Activity

Unemployment

Provincially, English speakers are more likely than French speakers to be unemployed. The same is true for the entire Côte-Nord region, with a total of 18.0% of English speakers being unemployed and 6.8% of French speakers being unemployed. The rates presented below reflect the reality of seasonal work.

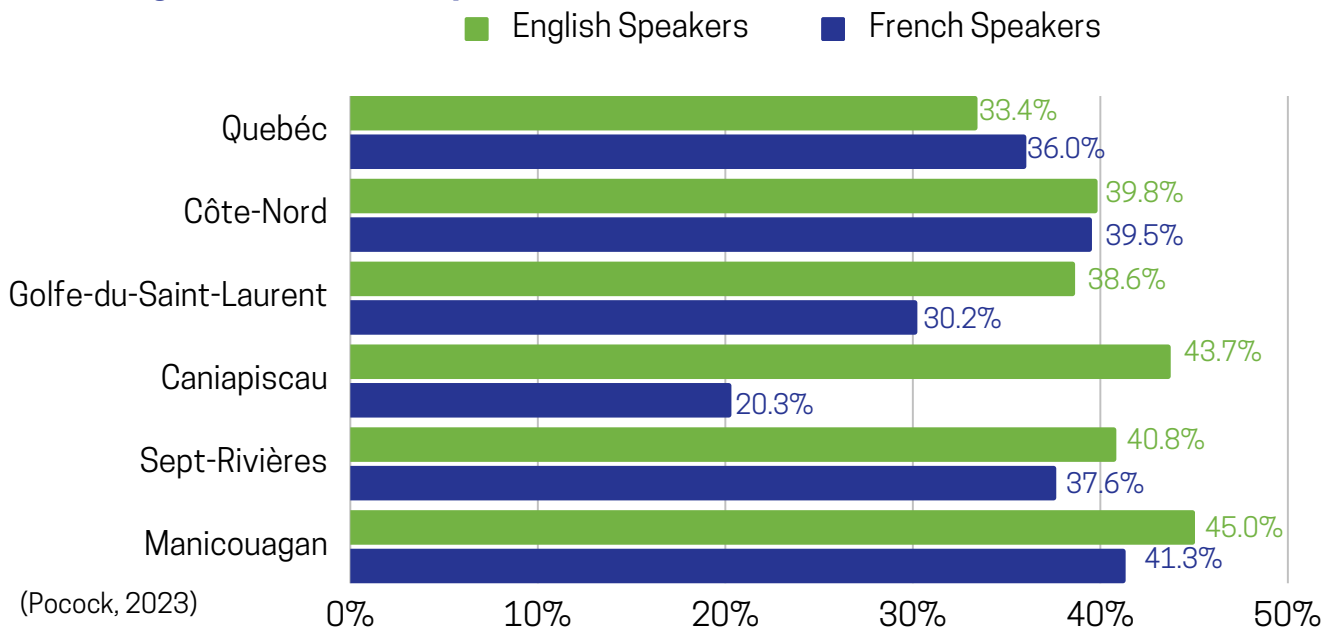
Unemployment Rate for English and French Speakers (2021)



Out of the Labour Force

Provincially, English speakers are less likely than French speakers to be out of the labour force. In the Côte-Nord region however, the percentage of English speakers that are out of the labour force is similar to that of French speakers. The proportion of French speakers in Caniapiscau at 20.3% is about half that of English speakers at 43.7%.

English and French Speakers that are out of the Labour Force (2021)



SUMMARY

The Côte-Nord Region is a vast and sparsely populated area. Many towns and villages do not have roads connecting them to other parts of the region or province, isolating some communities throughout the region. The English-speaking community is also spread across this territory and is a significant part of the population. Community organizations such as Coasters Association Inc. and the North Shore Community Association have close ties to these English-speaking communities and are often a main source for connection and support. Together, they need to remain resilient and creative to ensure their vitality.

A large portion of the English-speaking community in the Côte-Nord region is more vulnerable as they are more likely to be in single-parent households and the average population is getting older. Half the English-speaking population is over 45 years of age and one in five people are over the age of 65. Among the English-speaking people that are living alone, nearly half (235 people) are 65 or older. This number is even more significant in a region like Côte-Nord, as there are huge distances between communities and in the case of the Lower North Shore, some of these have no road connecting them.

When comparing English and French speakers, English speakers have a significantly lower educational attainment and higher unemployment rates than French speakers. English speakers are also more likely to be earning lower incomes than French speakers. This would indicate a need for more educational and employment services available for the English-speaking population across Côte-Nord. Vocational training is lacking in some areas and youth often need to leave the area to obtain post-secondary education. A more diverse economy would also help reduce unemployment.

Rural and regional community organizations serving English speakers must be multi-sectoral as populations are too small to have one organization per sector. As multi sectoral organizations, Coasters and NSCA are often not eligible for certain core program funding and rely heavily on project-based, short-term funding. Significant efforts are spent on securing many small pockets of short-term funds, resulting in inefficiencies. Planning and implementing programs that could contribute towards long-term changes is difficult as there is a lack of long-term, sustainable core funding.

The Coasters and NSCA are a key resource for the vitality of these communities, and have the following priorities to work on with their stakeholders to improve their efficiency and capacity:

Priorities:

- 1. Increase core funding to improve efficiency.**
- 2. Improve employment and educational services.**
- 3. Increase outreach programs for more vulnerable populations.**
- 4. Improve communication between the different government entities and levels of government in the region and their knowledge about the English-speaking population of Côte-Nord.**

Our shared vision is one of equitable access to programs and services for English speakers in the region, in order to enhance their quality of life. Government, institutional and community partners can play an important role in supporting our work, rooted in an understanding of our unique needs, and helping to develop policies and programs that specifically aim to address them. As representatives of the region's English-speaking communities, we are committed to sharing information, developing a sound knowledge base, collaborating with each other and with relevant organizations, and involving community members in building our future.



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