



REGROUPEMENT
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC



Cégep de Sept-Îles

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

The Community Living Pilot Project for Indigenous Students to Be Built on the Cégep de Sept-Îles Campus

Sept-Îles, February 19, 2020 - The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) and the Cégep de Sept-Îles are pleased to announce that a community living pilot project for Indigenous students will be built on the Cégep de Sept-Îles campus.

After several months of discussion, the Cégep de Sept-Îles, the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) and its Housing Corporation have decided to build the community living pilot project for Indigenous students directly on the educational establishment's grounds. Given the proximity of study areas and the desire to fully develop the educational services the Cégep offers to the community, this project will be carried out in harmony with existing Cégep facilities and student housing.

"This project increases the current 108-student capacity of our dorms. It meets specific and long-identified needs and proposes an innovative concept that fits into our master development plan."

- Luc Dion, Chair of the Cégep de Sept-Îles board of directors

Meeting the needs of Indigenous people and Sept-Îles residents

The 32 units will house many Indigenous students and their families from remote communities on the Côte-Nord and other regions of Quebec.

Seventy-five percent of the Indigenous students arriving in Sept-Îles are women in their late twenties with children. These students are not only looking for housing, but also for a community environment that is safe and quiet, and that fosters mutual aid, sharing and support.

"This living environment will not only be student housing. It will also be a true community, an environment where different peoples can dialogue and overcome differences. There will be community rooms where collective kitchens, cultural activities and academic support services in partnership with educational establishments will be held. To ensure accessibility to quality childcare for young children, we will also create an Indigenous early childhood centre on the premises. Workers will also be on site to lead community activities and provide guidance."

- Tanya Sirois, Executive Director, RCAAQ

"The establishment of a community living environment on the grounds of Cégep de Sept-Îles is excellent news for the project. This location, near several educational institutions, increases the attractiveness of higher education for a clientele that is often far away and makes their accessibility easier. Community integration and educational success are within reach for these adult and other students. This promising and innovative project is being carried out thanks to collaboration between Indigenous partners, the school system and universities, and municipal and government actors. I firmly believe that it will support the development of the full potential of adult and Indigenous students and that all educational establishments in Sept-Îles will reap significant long-term benefits."

- Jean-François Roberge, Minister of Education and Higher Education

The project will facilitate Indigenous students' transition to the city, reduce the barriers to their educational success and narrow the socio-economic gaps between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

"I am very proud that our government is providing funding for a project that will encourage educational success and allow many Indigenous students in more remote communities to continue their education, all the while staying with their families in their region. This important project will provide them with a safe, quiet and culturally appropriate community living environment where they can thrive and develop a sense of belonging."

- Sylvie D'Amours, Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs
and Minister Responsible for the Laurentides Region

An innovative project for the Sept-Îles region

As part of the *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022*, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MÉES) supports the development of two pilot projects for Indigenous and adult students in Trois-Rivières and Sept-Îles. The Ministry granted some \$2 million in financing to the Sept-Îles project. The living environment pilot project can also count on several other contributions to complete its financial package.

The implementation of a pilot project of this scale, and in collaboration with a local deployment committee of various partners in Sept-Îles, is unique in Quebec and elsewhere in the country. In addition to highlighting the Sept-Îles region for the services it provides to Indigenous people, this living environment will make it possible to respond quite tangibly to the needs of the region's Indigenous and adult students and to provide a qualified workforce throughout the various stages of the project (architecture, construction, operation, etc.).

A press conference featuring all the partners will be held in the coming months in Sept-Îles to announce the implementation details and the project progress.

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