



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



Quebec Community Newspapers Association  
 226 rue Papineau  
 Gatineau, QC J8X 1W6  
[info@qcna.qc.ca](mailto:info@qcna.qc.ca)



## A NOTE FROM BRENDA O'FARRELL

*President, QCNA*

### **QCNA President's Report 2026**

I want to talk about history – what we know, what we have lived and what we still have to record.

The well-known phrase – news is “the first rough-draft of history” — has come to be used widely to describe what we do as journalists.

This phrase has often been attributed to Philip Graham, the once president and publisher of the *Washington Post*. But there is some debate as to whether Graham was, in fact, the first to coin the phrase. Although he has often been cited as its author, there are sources that have found earlier references to others having used it.

Graham's widow, Katherine Graham — who succeeded him as *Post* publisher, and helmed the paper through the famed Pentagon Papers and Watergate sagas — in her 1997 autobiography, *Personal History*, chronicles how he used the phrase in a speech in 1963 without specifically claiming he was the first to use it.

I like to think Katherine Graham, unable to confirm a fact, knew how to accurately thread a needle to ensure that her reporting stuck to what she knew to be true.

The bottom line is: truth matters. Accuracy matters. And as we continue to cobble together the first rough-draft of history today, what we do — each one of us, in each and every community we work in — matters.

It matters because when the algorithms look back and scrape around in a search for the truth, they will pillage and plunder from us, without mention of whether we were the first to report it. But in many cases, we will be cited because we were the *only* ones to report it.

This is where we stand today.

And this is QCNA's message: At this point in history's timeline — the truth and the stories of our communities — if they are to be recorded accurately, completely and in context — community media has to remain strong.

This is the message your organization is articulating on your behalf. QCNA is standing front and centre in all the debates, discussions and consultations making sure this message is not only heard, but understood. And understood in its full context, with its full sense of urgency, and informed by the full implications of how the changes and challenges we are experiencing today will be viewed through the lens of history if we fail.

And that is why I am optimistic.

Because what comes next is in our hands. We just have to make the case.

So let me leave you with one more quote from history. This quote is from Robert F. Kennedy: "The future is not a gift. It's an achievement."

Be assured, QCNA knows this.

So, on behalf of the organization's board of directors and its dedicated staff and with our colleagues at the Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media, I say: "Buckle up."

And you can quote me.

Buckle up, because in the year ahead, QCNA aims to build on our achievements of the last few years. We aim to continue to deliver for you so that our future – the future of local media – is where the first-draft of history will continue to be written – one headline and one byline at a time, in each and every one of our communities.

**Brenda O'Farrell**

## QCNA BOARD MEMBERS

Brenda O'Farrell  
*President*

Nikki Mantell  
*Vice President*

Lily Ryan  
*Treasurer*

Michael Sochaczewski  
*Board Member*

Ruby Pratka  
*Board Member*

Julia Roberts  
*Board Member*

Vacant Seat  
*Board Member*

## QCNA STAFF

Ilka de Laat  
*General Manager*

Danel Velazquez  
*Marketing & Outreach Coordinator*

Amanda Hansen  
*Program Coordinator*



# INDEPENDANT AUDIT REPORT

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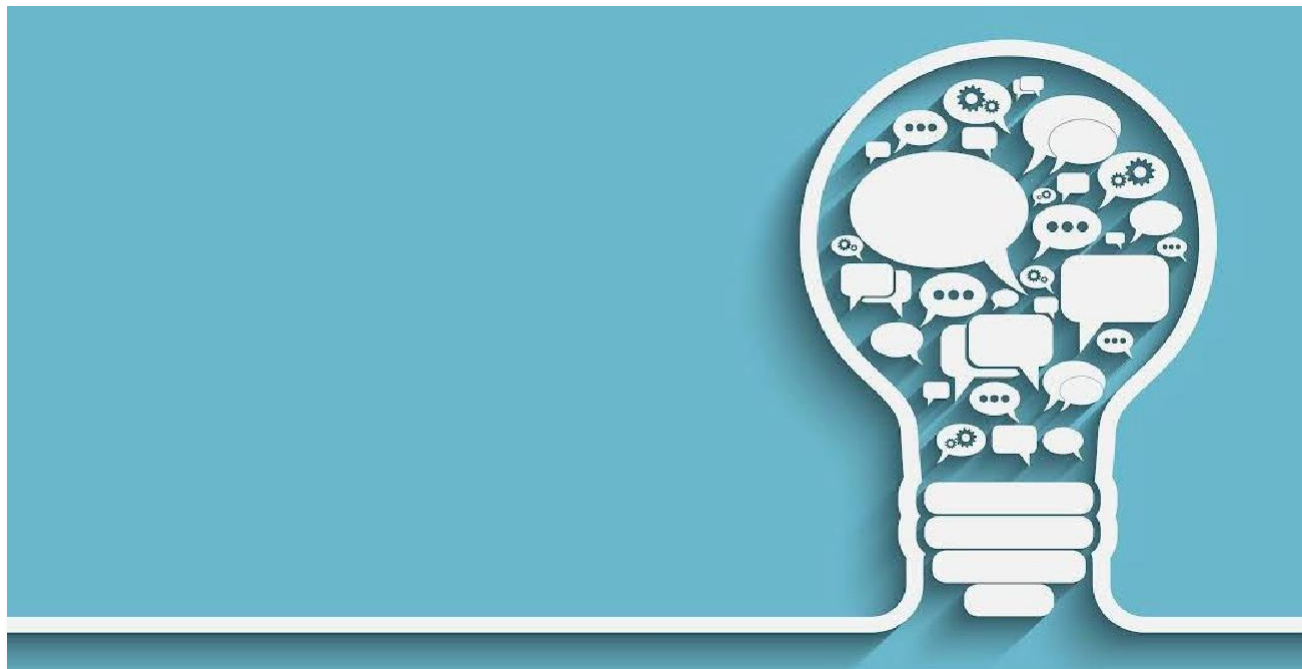
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QUEBEC COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS ASSOCIATION  
**YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025**

	<b>2025-2026</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>	768,409	1,369,209
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	762,553	1,372,564
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses from Operations</b>	5,856	(3,355)
Other items	12,681	10,608
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses</b>	18,537	7,253
<b>CHANGES IN NET ASSETS</b>		
Balance, beginning of year	326,844	319,590
Balance, end of year	345,381	326,843

# THE GREAT IDEA EXCHANGE

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**What began as a promising concept has proven to be a lasting success.**

Since its launch in September 2022, QCNA's webinar series, *THE GREAT IDEA EXCHANGE*, has continued to serve as a dynamic forum for dialogue between member publications. All through 2025 and into 2026, these virtual gatherings remained a meaningful space for exchanging insights and collecting constructive input. They offered participants a chance to share industry perspectives, raise concerns, and suggest fresh, forward-thinking approaches. The aim has consistently been to strengthen the local community news sector in the official language minority context—and to identify how QCNA can be part of the solution. This year's series had a special focus on shifting grant and revenue opportunities.

Topics we've explored include:

***Ethical Issues of Local Journalism – presented by Melanie Tremblay of the Consortium of OL Community Media***

***Canada Post Strike Panel Discussion on Alternative Distribution Models – hosted by Gordon Cameron, OCNA***

***How to Price and Package Digital Ads – presented by Kenny Katzgrau of Broadstreet***

***CMSSF Round 9 information session webinar – presented by Linda Lauzon of the Consortium***

***Summer Sip & Share – Hosted by QCNA for QCNA members to socialize and share industry stories***

***CJC (Google Funds) information session webinar – hosted by the CJC***

***Journalism Futures Fund webinar – hosted by the Inspirit Foundation***

***Dedicated Fund for the English-Speaking Communities of Quebec of the Development of Official-Language Communities Program, Project Fund Information Session – hosted by PCH staff***

***Special Measures for Journalism Information Session – hosted by PCH staff***

***Better Newspaper Contest Information session – hosted by QCNA for QCNA full members***

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# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2025-2026 QCNA CALENDAR

CALENDAR	<b>APRIL 2025</b>	<b>MAY 2025</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consortium post-election executive meeting</li> <li>• Strategic planning year 2 meeting</li> <li>• QCNA staff attend National Newspaper Awards in Montreal</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Quebec Press Council (QCNA becomes an associate member of the council)</li> <li>• Bylaws &amp; Membership committee meeting</li> <li>• AGM Planning committee meeting</li> <li>• Core funding contribution agreement received</li> <li>• Spring Connector published</li> <li>• Board Meeting</li> </ul>
	<b>JUNE 2025</b>	<b>JULY 2025</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-person AGM and BNC Awards Gala at Chateau Montebello in celebrating QCNA's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary</li> <li>• In-person strategic planning meeting to finalize action plan for year 2</li> <li>• Budget meeting with accountant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consortium board meeting</li> <li>• LJI transition planning meeting</li> <li>• Meeting with Concordia School of Journalism</li> <li>• QCNA visits Nunatsiq News</li> <li>• Summer Connector Newsletter</li> </ul>
	<b>AUGUST 2025</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LJI Transition begins (QCNA will cease being an AO at the end of September and the Consortium takes over)</li> <li>• Editorial &amp; Awards committee meeting</li> <li>• LJI call of applications opens</li> <li>• Quebec Relations committee meeting</li> <li>• AGM Planning committee meeting</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TALQ sponsorship/partnership conversations begin</li> <li>• QCNA meets with Le Droit to share office space</li> <li>• Journalism Futures Fund info session (new revenue opportunity)</li> <li>• CJC (Google funds) publisher info session</li> <li>• 2-day in-person Local Voices Forum in Ottawa</li> <li>• CMSSF deadline</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>
	<b>OCTOBER 2025</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 2025</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards and Editorial Committee meeting</li> <li>• Special Measures for Journalism info session</li> <li>• Chateau Cartier site visit</li> <li>• Quebec Relations committee meeting</li> <li>• Community media associations meet to discuss federal advertising</li> <li>• Fall Connector Newsletter</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget update meeting</li> <li>• Quebec Relations committee meeting</li> <li>• Editorial &amp; Awards committee meeting</li> <li>• Panel discussion on alternative methods of distribution other than Canada Post</li> <li>• CJC AGM</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>
	<b>DECEMBER 2025</b>	<b>JANUARY 2026</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better Newspaper Competition launches</li> <li>• BNC webinar for members</li> <li>• Meeting with SRQEA</li> <li>• AGM Planning committee meeting</li> <li>• Changing Narratives Fund info session</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consortium in-person meeting</li> <li>• YES Community Support Fund application submitted</li> <li>• Launch of 2026-2027 OL Media Internship program</li> <li>• Budget update</li> <li>• Winter Connector Newsletter published</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>
	<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>	<b>MARCH 2026</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BNC closes and judging begins</li> <li>• Site visit at Chateau Vaudreuil</li> <li>• Canada Periodical Fund GM interview</li> <li>• CJC publisher info session</li> <li>• QCNA visits Montreal Community Contact to support with Changing Narrative Fund</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QCNA MOVES! To 226 rue Papineau, Gatineau</li> <li>• AGM Planning committee meeting</li> <li>• Editorial &amp; Awards committee meeting</li> <li>• Membership &amp; Bylaws committee meeting</li> <li>• BNC finalists announced</li> <li>• Board meeting</li> </ul>

# 2026 BETTER NEWSPAPERS CONTEST

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We had 514 entries

Our 46th annual BNC competition was another great showcase!

We received an array of outstanding entries and our panel of 27 judges were thoroughly impressed by the exceptional work submitted throughout 2025.

The list of nominees was published on our website, and the winners will be revealed at the Awards Gala on June 12, 2026, at the Chateau Cartier Hotel in Aylmer, QC.

**Congratulations to all our nominees and winners!**

## BNC 2026 By the Numbers

**514**

**Submissions**

**27**

**Judges**

**18**

**Member Publications**



## BNC Platform

The QCNA Better Newspapers Competition opened for entries on December 1, 2025.

Once again, QCNA opted to use *Small Town Papers*, an online contest provider, to facilitate this annual contest through the Better Newspapers Competition Portal.

## Panel of Judges

This year's exceptional panel of 27 judges is highlighted in the awards booklet. They represent a vast array of journalistic excellence.

# LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

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As we conclude another successful year of the Local Journalism Initiative (LJI) program, we would like to acknowledge an important transition for our organization and the communities we serve.

For the past five years, QCNA has had the privilege of serving as the Administrative Organization for the Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) component of the Local Journalism Initiative in Quebec, funded through Canadian Heritage. During that time, we worked closely with publishers, journalists, community partners, and funding stakeholders to support local journalism that informs, connects, and strengthens English-speaking communities across the province.

Following a review of the program's administrative structure, responsibility for administering the OLMC component of the LJI program has transitioned to the Consortium of Official Language Community Media. While this marks the conclusion of QCNA's role as an Administrative Organization, we are pleased that the program will continue to provide support to eligible community media organizations and journalists serving Quebec's English-speaking communities through to 2027.

We extend our sincere thanks to our member publishers, participating journalists, community partners, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and all those who contributed to the program's success during QCNA's tenure as Administrative Organization. We are proud of what was accomplished over the past five years and look forward to seeing the continued impact of local journalism in Official Language Minority Communities across Quebec.

- Amanda Hansen, LJI Program Officer

- **LJI 2024-2025 + Extension Period**

**(period covering April 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025)**

- **Target of at least 45 journalist positions filled.**

- **Number of journalist positions filled: 67 journalists were employed during the extension period (including freelancers).**

<b>Number of applications received by your organization</b>	23	Applications renewed only for extension - no new applications.
<b>Number of applications funded</b>	19	extension period only – some refused extension funding.
<b>Number of journalist positions supported (Full time, part-time and freelance)</b>	67	as of September 30, 2025. Decreased from 84 in November 2024, mostly due to not being able to renew FT and/or PT contract prior to the new LJI Program Launch for 2025-2026.
<b>Number of communities covered by funded journalists</b>	160+	
<b>Number of articles produced</b>	**1509	over 1500 articles produced and uploaded within 6 month extension. Stats account for only the amount required under the contribution agreements.
<b>Number hours produced</b>	n/a	

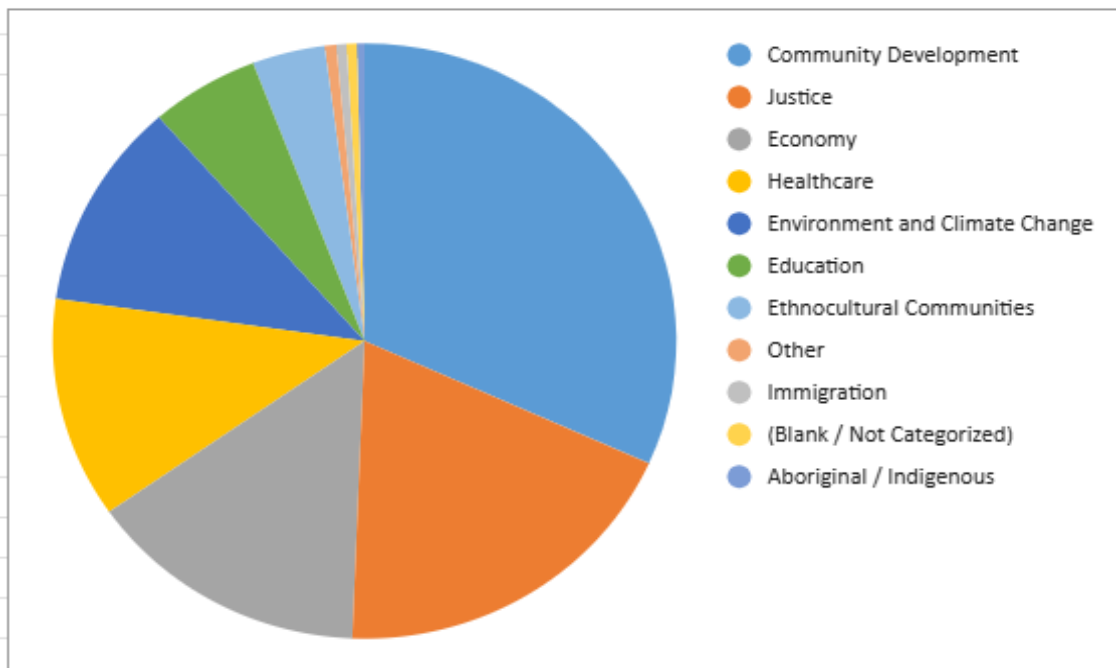
## What is the LJI Program?

The Local Journalism Initiative (LJI) supports the creation of original civic journalism that covers the diverse needs of underserved communities across Canada. QCNA, which represents official language publications in Quebec, is one of 3 not-for-profit organizations that currently administers the program.

**News Deserts:** The LJI program serves news needs in underserved communities known as news deserts.

**Civic Journalism:** Civic journalism refers to coverage of activities carried out by the country’s civic institutions. For example, these institutions include courthouses, city halls, band councils, school boards, the federal parliament and provincial legislatures.

## CIVIC PRIORITY OF COVERAGE for English-language LJI recipient newspapers in Quebec



Civic Priority Category	# of Articles	Description / Focus
Community Development	479	Local projects, social programs, housing, public services, municipal initiatives, and efforts to strengthen community life and engagement.
Justice	285	Legal affairs, policing, court cases, crime prevention, public safety, and issues of equity, fairness, and access to justice.
Economy	221	Economic growth, business development, employment, taxation, local industries, and municipal or regional economic policy.
Healthcare	181	Public health systems, hospitals, clinics, mental health, senior care, accessibility of healthcare services, and local health policy.
Environment and Climate Change	170	Environmental protection, sustainability efforts, green initiatives, climate policy, conservation, and local impacts of environmental issues.
Education	85	School boards, funding, curriculum, post-secondary institutions, student access, and educational reform.
Ethnocultural Communities	57	Coverage focused on multicultural issues, minority representation, cultural inclusion, and challenges or achievements within diverse communities.
Other	9	Miscellaneous topics not fitting major civic priorities but relevant to community life or governance.
Immigration	8	Immigration policy, newcomer integration, settlement services, and local impacts of immigration trends.
(Blank / Not Categorized)	8	Articles with missing or unassigned category labels.
Aboriginal / Indigenous	6	Indigenous communities, self-governance, reconciliation, rights, and culturally specific issues.

**1509 TOTAL**

# OUR QCNA FAMILY



## QCNA PARTNERS:



### CONSORTIUM

des médias communautaires  
de langues officielles  
en situation minoritaire

of Official Language Minority  
Community Media



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Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

