

Portrait of the English-Speaking population of

Saint-Michel



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Québec 

REISA

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Introduction

The following profile provides insight into employment, economic development, and community vitality within Saint-Michel's English-speaking community. REISA – The East Island Network for English Services, has produced the following portrait. REISA is a community-based organization working to increase access to health and social services in English for residents of Montreal's East and North end, through collaboration with public, private and community stakeholders. Established in 2005, REISA has assisted partnership development in three main areas: expansion of local-level services, outreach to new services and community capacitybuilding. Keeping the English-speaking communities' needs in mind, REISA has identified four priority development sectors: Youth, Seniors, Special needs and Mental Health. By working towards achieving these priorities, REISA



Jardins de la rue. Bardaggi-Rem/Max du Cartier G.B. 2025. <https://www.bardagi.com/app/uploads/2021/04/place-de-castelnau.jpeg>



Basketball. Arrondissement Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension. 2025. <https://montreal.ca/apropos/villeray-saint-michel-parc-extension>

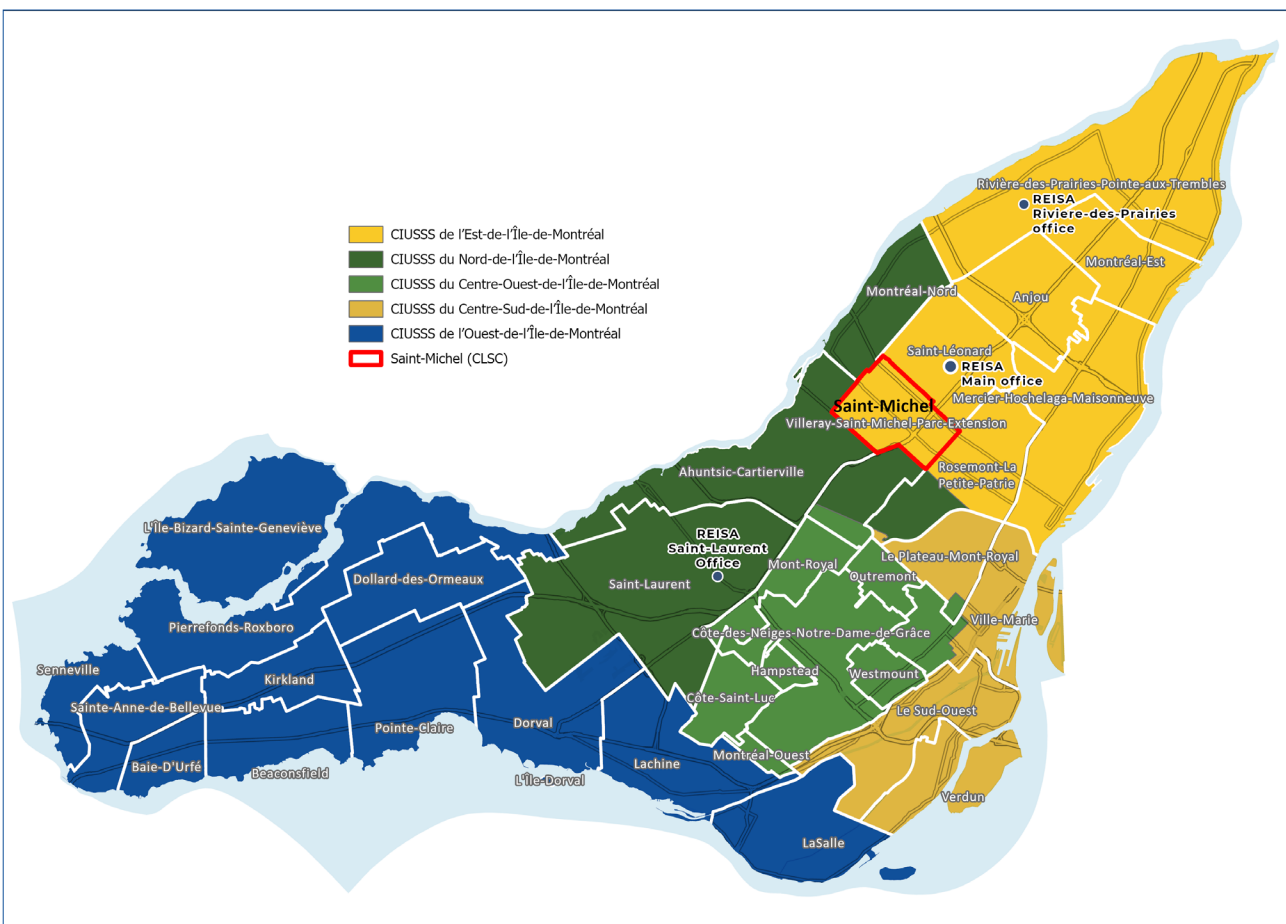
will strengthen and improve the vitality of the English-speaking minority community in the East and North ends of Montreal.

Overview of the region

This portrait presents key statistics that contextualize the English-speaking population of Saint-Michel, whose territory is equivalent to the CLSC Saint-Michel. Where relevant, comparisons are made with the French-speaking population, as well as within different segments of the English-speaking community. The data is derived from the latest 2021 Statistics Canada results.

Understanding Montréal's boroughs and CIUSSS regions

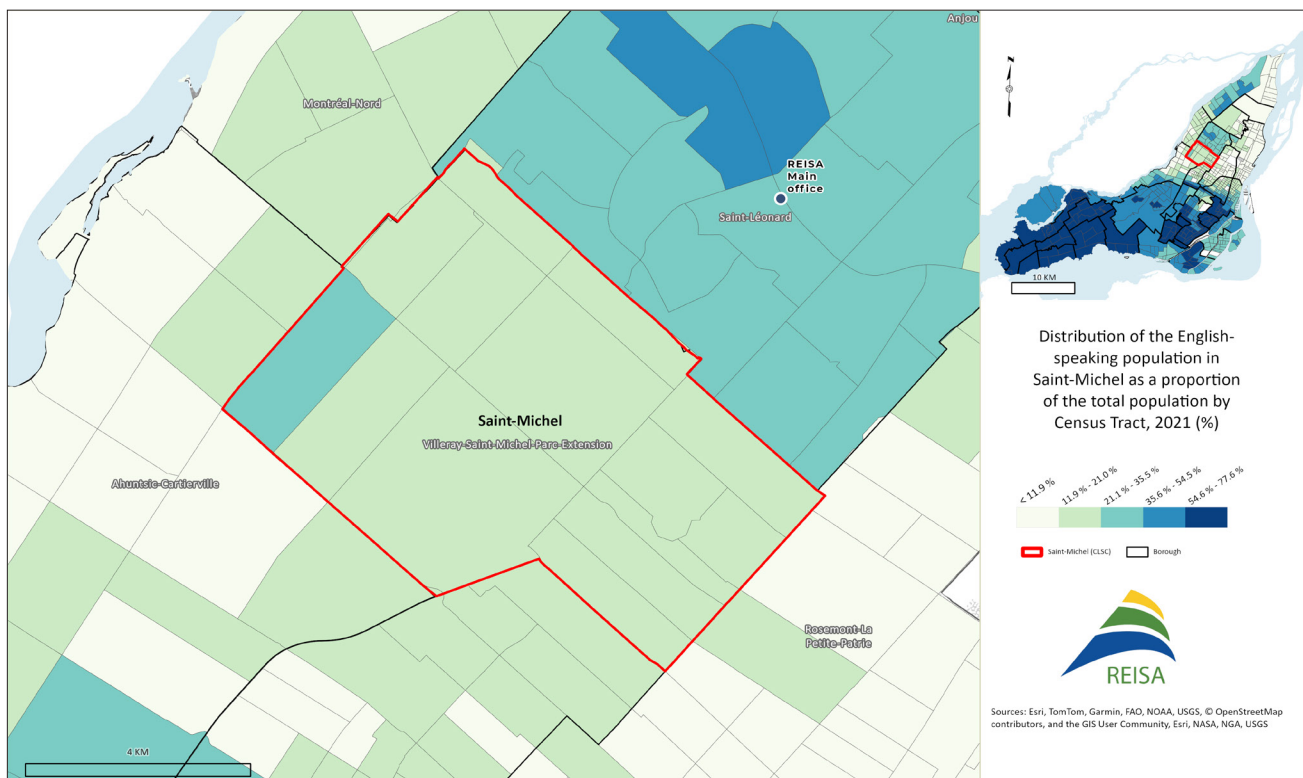
Saint-Michel is a historic neighbourhood that is part of the borough of Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension and is served by the East CIUSSS (Integrated University Health and Social Services Centre). The total Saint-Michel population of 57,075 is spread over an area of 9.2 square kilometers.

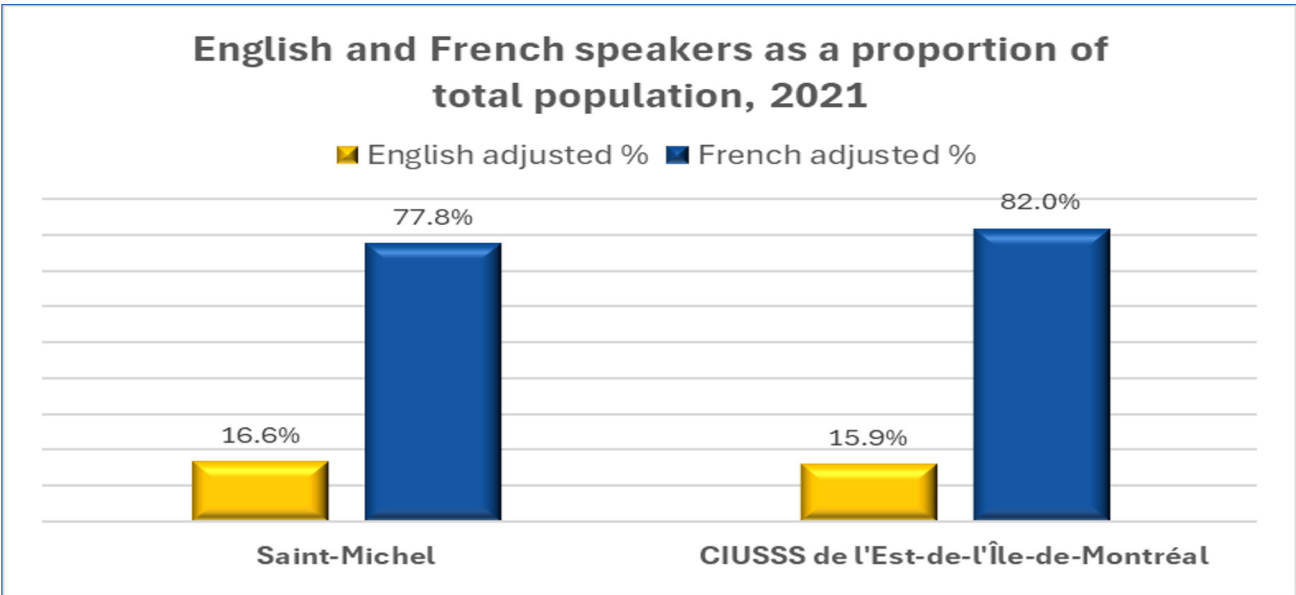


English speakers in Montréal

There are approximately one million (**1,009,700**) individuals living in metropolitan Montreal whose first official language spoken (FOLS) is English. Montreal's English-speaking communities comprise **23.8%** of the population of metro Montréal. However, these communities vary widely in size and weight across boroughs. The **9,645** English speakers in Saint-Michel, represent approximately **16.9%** of the total population, and are distributed across **14** small neighbourhoods (census tracts). The proportion of English speakers in these small neighbourhoods varies considerably from **14.1%** to **21.5%** of the total population. There is also a notable variation of **2.9%** to **7.9%** of the total population speaking neither English nor French.

The variation in the proportion of the population and its geographic distribution across small neighbourhoods is an important factor to consider when evaluating gaps in service demand, service delivery and the optimization of the active service offer to the English-speaking population. The variation in proportions also has an important social impact on social support networks and social connectivity. All three factors: the English speaker's population numbers, their weight or proportion in the total population and the variation in geographic distribution need to be considered when designing policies and programs.

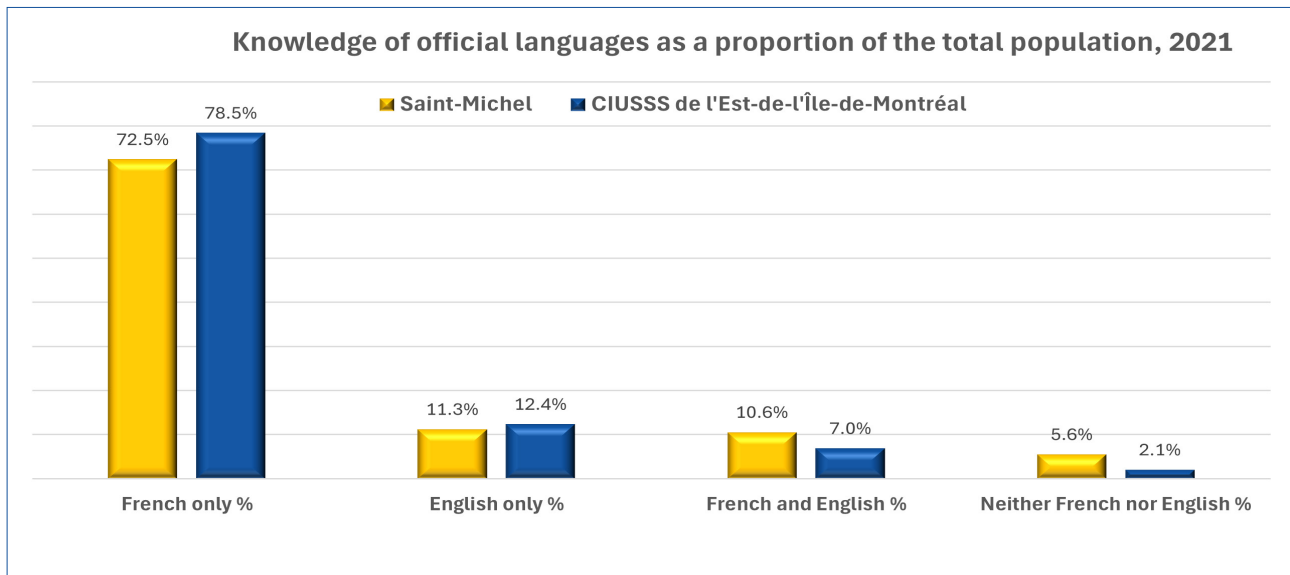




In 2021, the linguistic profile of Saint-Michel shows a strong predominance of French speakers, with **77.8%** of the population reporting knowledge of French, compared to **16.6%** for English. When compared to the broader territory of the CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, Saint-Michel presents a slightly higher proportion of English speakers (16.6% vs. 15.9%) and a slightly lower proportion of French speakers (77.8% vs. 82.0%).

This indicates that while French remains the dominant language in Saint-Michel, the area has a relatively more significant English-speaking presence than the overall East CIUSSS territory. This linguistic diversity may reflect Saint-Michel's multicultural composition and suggests a continued need for accessible services in both official languages.

Knowledge of official languages



In 2021, the distribution of knowledge of official languages in Saint-Michel highlights a predominantly French-speaking population, with **72.5%** of residents reporting knowledge of French only. This proportion is slightly lower than that of the CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (**78.5%**).

At the same time, **11.3%** of Saint-Michel residents report knowledge of English only, compared to **12.4%** in the broader CIUSSS territory. Notably, a higher proportion of residents in Saint-Michel (**10.6%**) report being bilingual in both French and English, compared to **7.0%** in the CIUSSS.

Additionally, **5.6%** of the population in Saint-Michel report speaking neither official language, which is significantly higher than the **2.1%** observed across the CIUSSS territory.

These figures suggest that while French remains the dominant language, Saint-Michel is characterized by greater linguistic diversity, including a higher proportion of bilingual individuals and residents who may face language barriers. This suggests that tailored approaches may be required to effectively reach and support all residents.

While statistical data highlights a linguistically diverse population with a notable proportion of bilingual individuals, qualitative findings suggest that this diversity does not translate into equal access to services in practice.

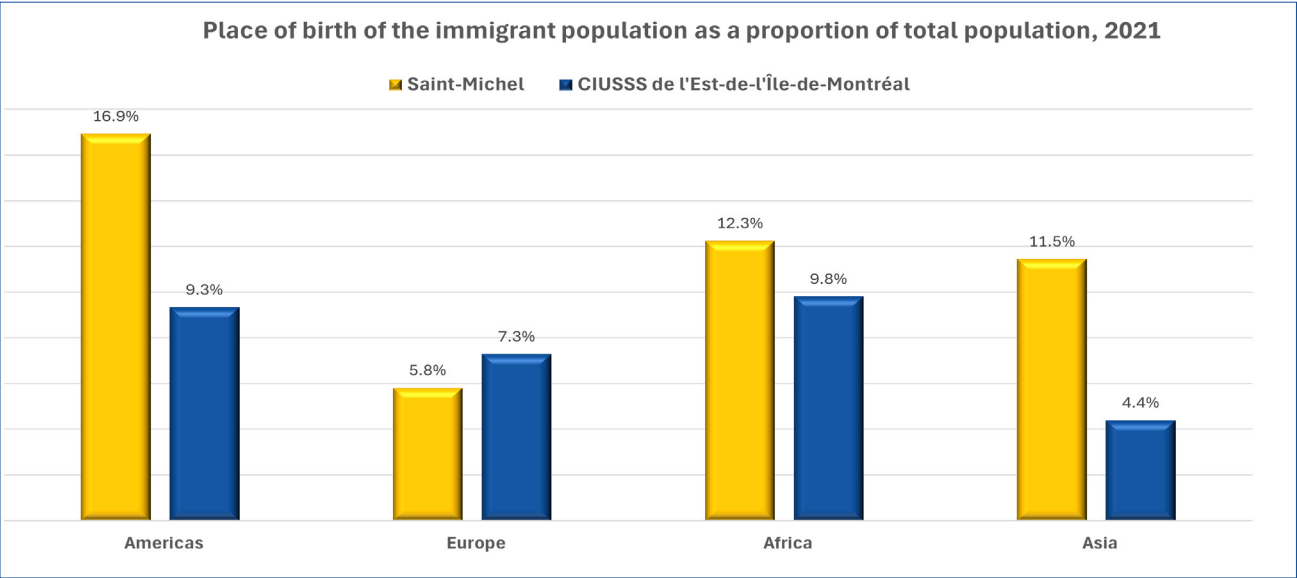
Many participants reported that, despite the presence of English speakers, services are predominantly delivered in French, and access in English is inconsistent or limited.

“All services are offered in French”

“I can only get help if I speak French.”

This indicates that linguistic diversity in Saint-Michel is accompanied by persistent barriers to accessing services in English, particularly for individuals who are less fluent in French.

Origins of the immigrant population



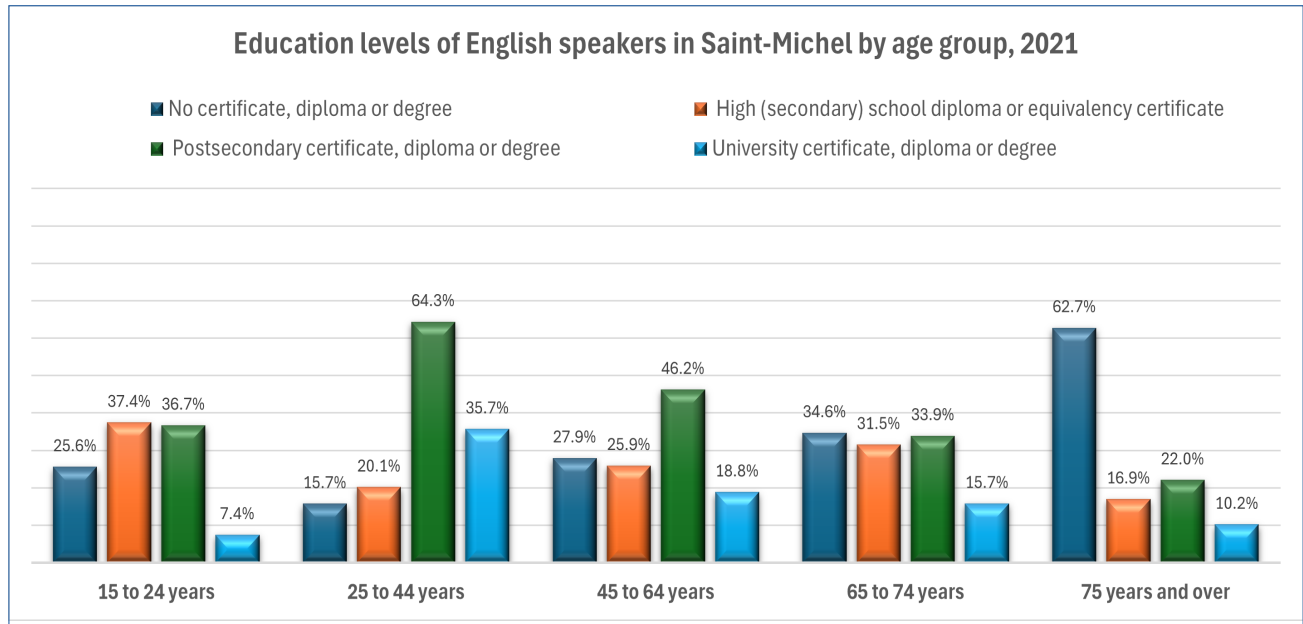
In 2021, the place of birth of the immigrant population in Saint-Michel reveals a distinct composition compared to the broader territory of the CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. A significantly higher proportion of immigrants in Saint-Michel originate from the Americas (**16.9%**), compared to **9.3%** in the CIUSSS. Similarly, immigrants from Africa represent **12.3%** of the population in Saint-Michel, exceeding the **9.8%** observed in the CIUSSS.

In contrast, a smaller proportion of immigrants in Saint-Michel come from Europe (**5.8%**), compared to **7.3%** in the broader territory. Notably, the proportion of immigrants from Asia is considerably higher in Saint-Michel (**11.5%**) than in the CIUSSS (**4.4%**).

These figures illustrate a diverse immigrant population in Saint-Michel, with stronger representation from the Americas, Africa, and Asia. This distribution reflects Saint-Michel's multicultural character and suggests varying cultural, linguistic, and settlement needs within the community.

Education

“ I was expected to learn French in just a couple of weeks”



In 2021, the education levels of English speakers in Saint-Michel vary significantly across age groups, reflecting generational differences in access to and attainment of education. Among younger adults aged **25 to 44**, a notably high proportion (**64.3%**) have completed postsecondary education, along with **35.7%** holding a university degree, indicating strong educational attainment within this group.

In contrast, older age groups show lower levels of formal education. Among those aged **75 years and over**, a majority (**62.7%**) report having no certificate, diploma, or degree, while only **10.2%** hold a university credential. Similarly, individuals aged **65 to 74** display more balanced distributions, though still with lower postsecondary attainment compared to younger cohorts.

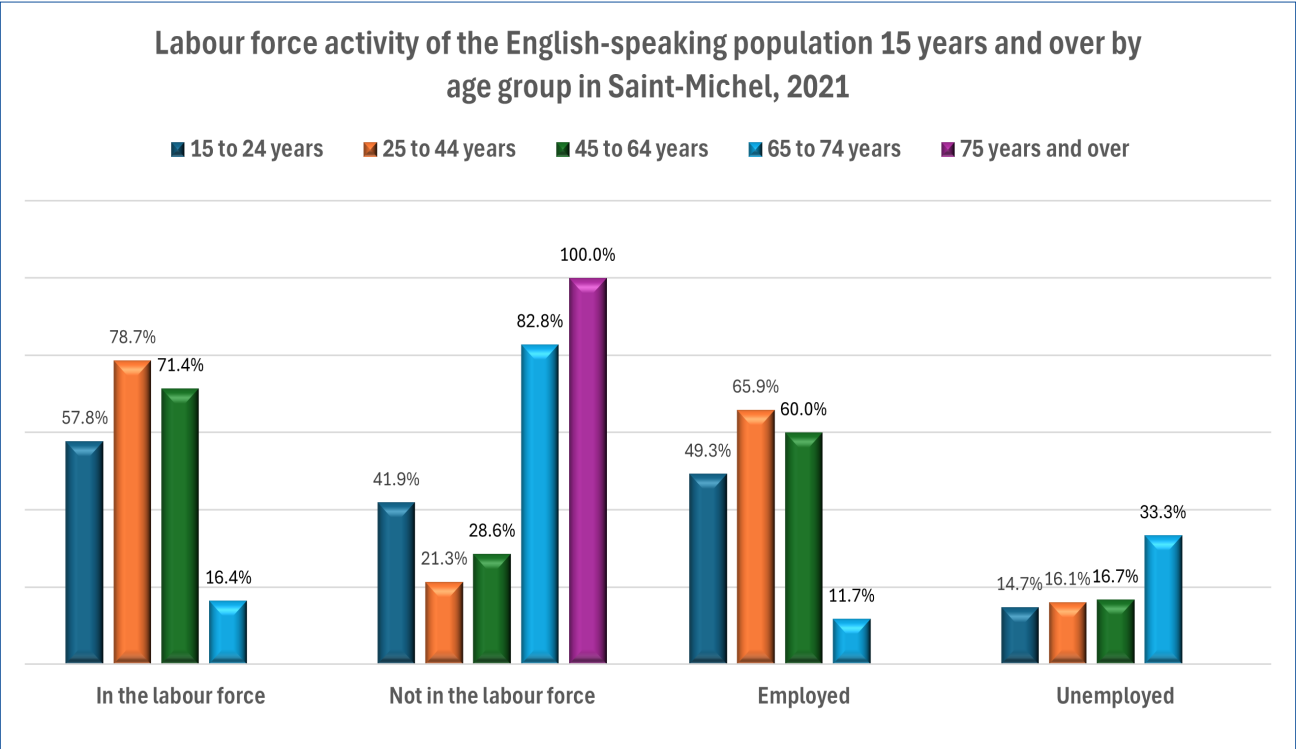
The 15 to 24 age group presents a different profile, with a higher proportion holding a high school diploma (37.4%) or currently transitioning into postsecondary education.

These patterns suggest a generational shift toward higher educational attainment among English speakers in Saint-Michel. They also point to the need for differentiated approaches, including support for younger populations entering higher education and targeted outreach for older adults who may face barriers related to lower levels of formal education.

While educational attainment shows a positive trend among younger generations, qualitative findings highlight challenges related to language barriers within the educational experience. Some individuals reported difficulties adapting to French-dominant environments, particularly when expectations to learn French quickly were not matched with adequate support.

These experiences suggest that, beyond access to education, there are challenges related to linguistic adaptation and support, particularly for students navigating transitions between language systems. This highlights the importance of providing adequate support mechanisms to ensure equitable educational experiences for English-speaking learners.

Employment

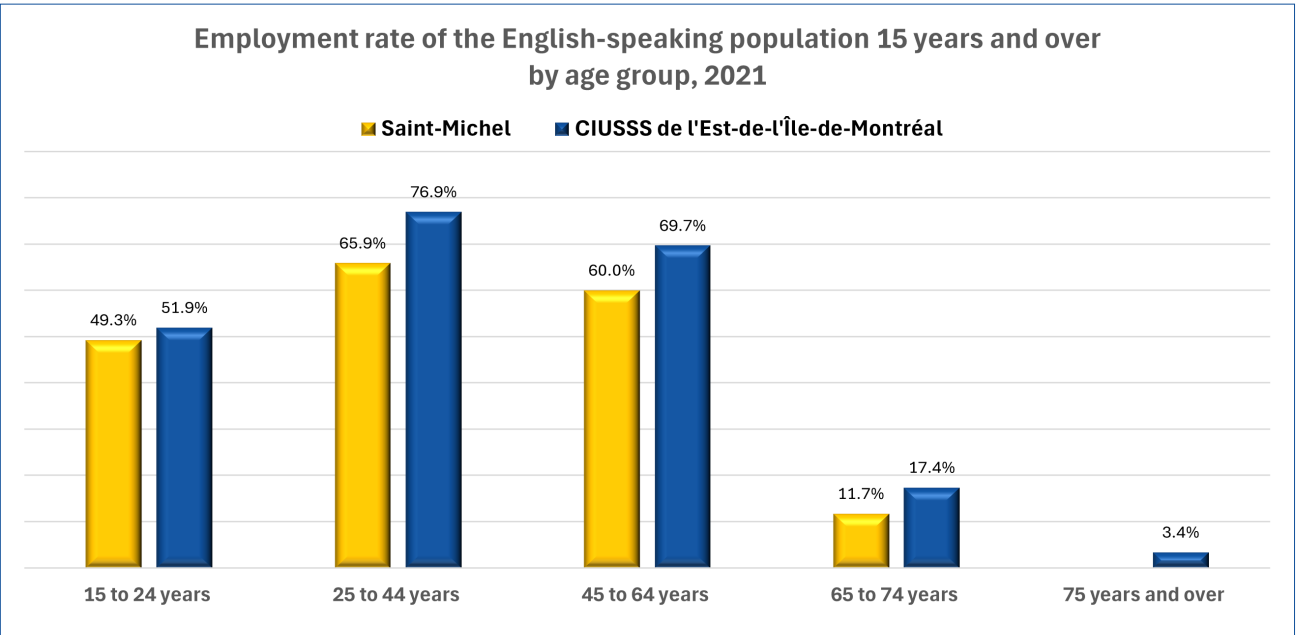


In 2021, labour force activity among English-speaking individuals in Saint-Michel varies significantly by age group. Participation in the labour force is highest among those aged 25 to 44 (78.7%) and 45 to 64 (71.4%), reflecting strong engagement during prime working years. In contrast, participation drops considerably among older adults, with only 16.4% of individuals aged 65 to 74 remaining in the labour force, and virtually none among those aged 75 and over.

Younger individuals aged 15 to 24 show moderate participation (57.8%), likely reflecting a combination of employment and ongoing education. This is further supported by the relatively high proportion (41.9%) of this group not participating in the labour force.

Employment rates follow a similar pattern, with the highest levels observed among those aged 25 to 44 (65.9%) and 45 to 64 (60.0%), while unemployment rates are notably higher among younger (14.7%) and older groups (33.3% for 65 to 74), suggesting potential barriers to stable employment for these populations.

These trends highlight the importance of targeted employment support initiatives, particularly for youth entering the labour market and older adults who may face challenges related to re-employment, skills adaptation, or age-related barriers.



In 2021, the employment rate of the English-speaking population in Saint-Michel is consistently lower across all age groups compared to the CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. Among individuals aged **25 to 44**, the employment rate reaches **65.9%** in Saint-Michel, compared to **76.9%** in the broader territory. A similar gap is observed among those aged **45 to 64**, with **60.0%** employed in Saint-Michel versus **69.7%** in the CIUSSS.

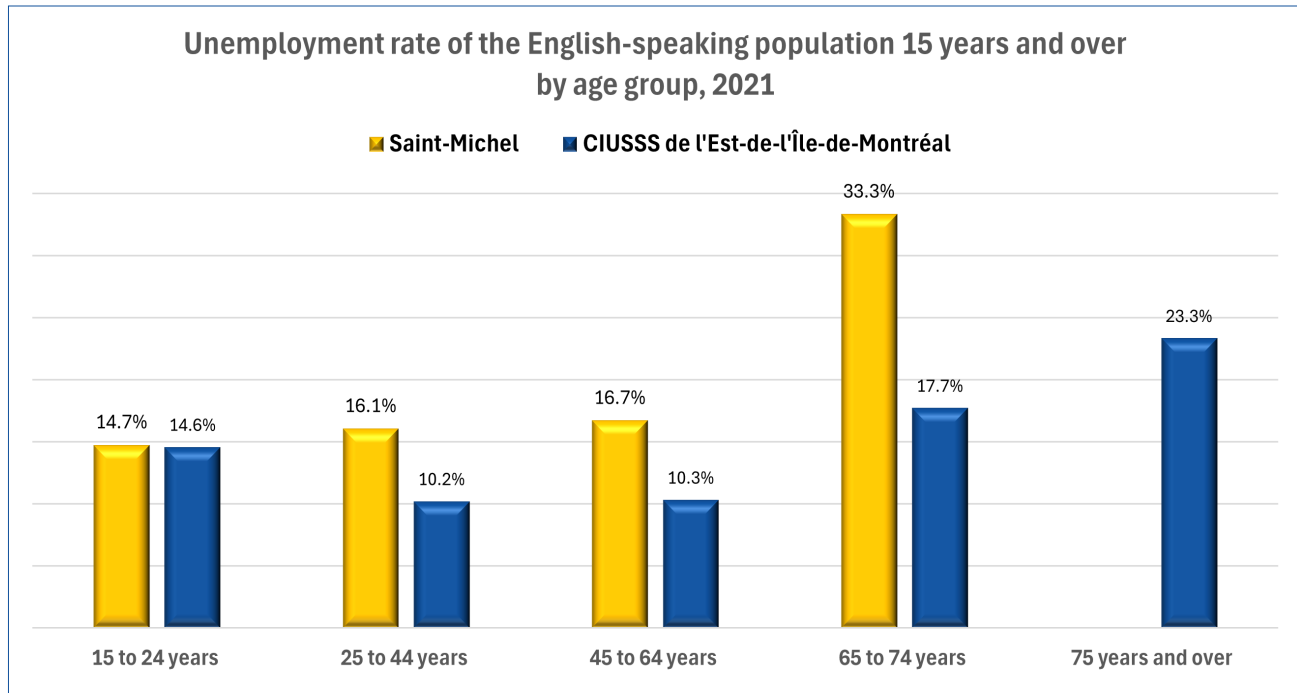
Younger individuals aged **15 to 24** also show slightly lower employment levels (**49.3%**) compared to **51.9%** in the CIUSSS, reflecting potential challenges in entering the labour market. Among older adults aged **65 to 74**, employment remains limited (**11.7%**), again lower than the **17.4%** observed in the broader territory. For those aged **75 and over**, employment is nearly non-existent in Saint-Michel.

These disparities suggest that English-speaking residents in Saint-Michel may face additional barriers to employment across the life course. This points to a need for targeted support measures, including job readiness programs, skills development, and employment services that are accessible and tailored to the realities of the local population.

The disparities observed in employment outcomes are further reinforced by qualitative findings, which point to language as a key barrier to labour market access. Several participants indicated that French proficiency is often a prerequisite for employment, affecting both hiring opportunities and workplace integration.

For some, this results in direct barriers during hiring processes, including job interviews conducted primarily in French or expectations of high-level fluency. These findings suggest that the lower employment rates observed in Saint-Michel are not solely related to economic conditions, but also reflect structural language barriers that limit access to opportunities.

Unemployment

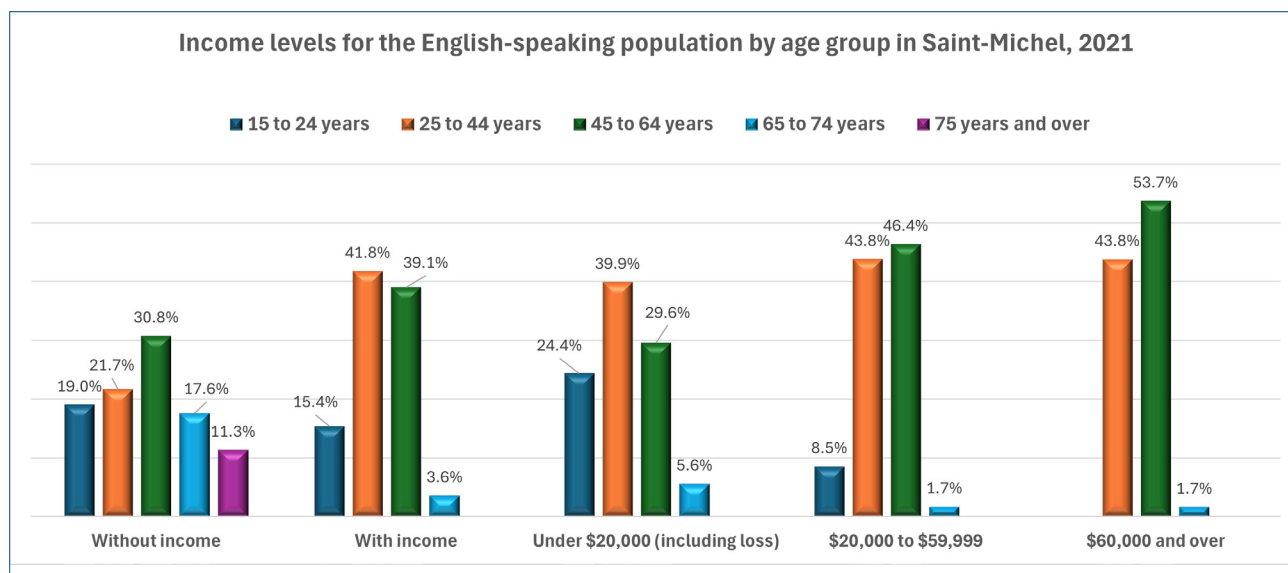


In 2021, unemployment rates among the English-speaking population in Saint-Michel are generally higher across most age groups compared to the CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. Among individuals aged **25 to 44**, the unemployment rate reaches **16.1%** in Saint-Michel, significantly higher than the **10.2%** observed in the broader territory. A similar pattern is seen among those aged **45 to 64**, with **16.7%** unemployed in Saint-Michel compared to **10.3%** in the CIUSSS.

The most pronounced disparity appears among individuals aged **65 to 74**, where unemployment reaches **33.3%** in Saint-Michel, nearly double the **17.7%** recorded in the CIUSSS. Among youth aged **15 to 24**, unemployment rates are relatively similar between Saint-Michel (**14.7%**) and the broader territory (**14.6%**).

These figures indicate that English-speaking residents in Saint-Michel face more significant challenges in accessing employment, particularly among working-age and older populations. This suggests a need for strengthened employment support, including targeted interventions for mid-career individuals and older adults who may encounter barriers related to re-entry into the labour market or job retention.

Income



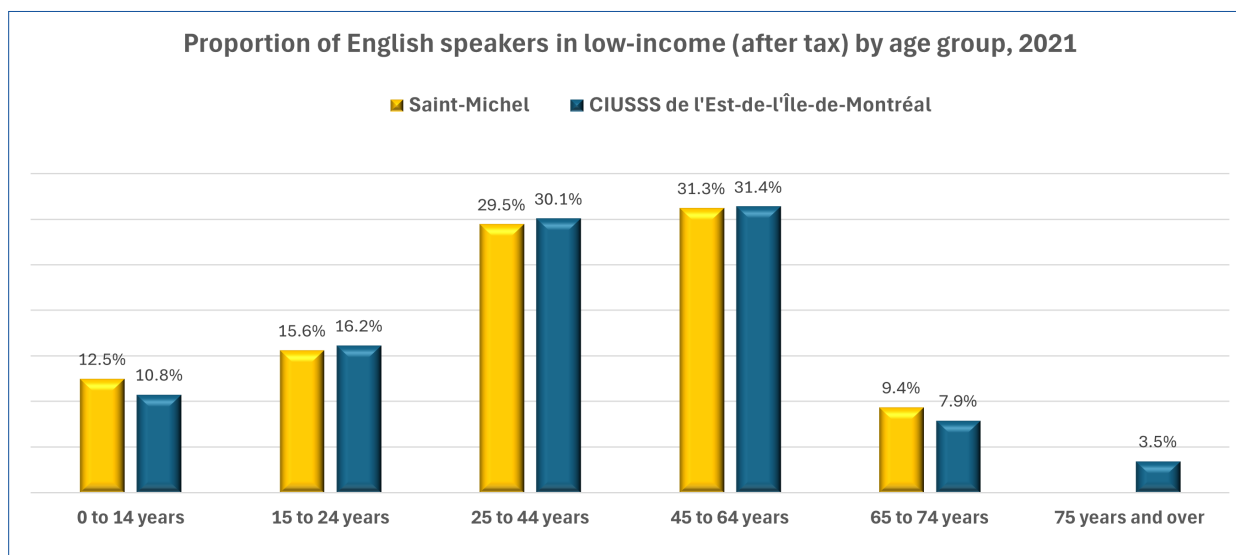
In 2021, income levels among the English-speaking population in Saint-Michel vary significantly across age groups, reflecting different stages of economic integration and life course. Younger individuals aged **15 to 24** are more likely to report lower income levels, with **24.4%** earning under \$20,000 and **19.0%** reporting no income, which may be linked to ongoing education or limited labour market attachment.

Among those aged **25 to 44**, a larger proportion report having an income (**41.8%**), with many concentrated in the **\$20,000 to \$59,999 (43.8%)** and **\$60,000 and over (43.8%)** categories, indicating stronger economic participation. Similarly, individuals aged **45 to 64** show higher income levels overall, with **53.7%** earning **\$60,000 and over**, suggesting greater financial stability in mid-career stages.

In contrast, older adults aged **65 to 74** and **75 years and over** are more likely to have lower or fixed incomes, with smaller proportions in higher income brackets and some reporting no income.

These patterns highlight important differences in financial well-being across age groups. They suggest a need for targeted supports, including income stability measures for seniors and employment and financial integration strategies for younger populations transitioning into the workforce.

Low-income measure (after tax)



In 2021, the proportion of English speakers living in low income (after tax) in Saint-Michel varies across age groups but generally follows trends similar to those observed in the CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. Among children aged **0 to 14**, **12.5%** are living in low-income households, slightly higher than the **10.8%** observed in the broader territory.

Youth aged **15 to 24** also experience notable levels of low income (**15.6%**), although slightly lower than the CIUSSS (**16.2%**). The highest proportions are observed among working-age adults, with **29.5%** of those aged **25 to 44** and **31.3%** of those aged **45 to 64** living in low-income situations, closely aligning with the CIUSSS averages (**30.1%** and **31.4%**, respectively).

Among older adults aged **65 to 74**, **9.4%** are in low income, compared to **7.9%** in the broader territory. Data for those aged **75 and over** appears limited for Saint-Michel, though the CIUSSS reports a proportion of **3.5%**.

Overall, these figures indicate that low income affects a significant portion of the English-speaking population in Saint-Michel, particularly among working-age adults. This suggests the importance of strengthening economic support measures and improving access to stable employment opportunities to reduce financial vulnerability within the community.

Access to services and community inclusion

Qualitative findings reveal significant challenges in accessing services and participating in community life among English-speaking residents in Saint-Michel. While services and activities may be available, they are largely offered in French, limiting accessibility for those who are less comfortable in that language.

These barriers are particularly evident in essential services, including healthcare and public services. Some participants reported difficulty accessing medical care in English, with one noting that

“CLSC services are almost impossible to get in English.”

Language barriers also affect participation in community activities, especially for families. Parents reported that their children may feel uncomfortable or excluded in French-dominant environments, sometimes leading to disengagement. As one parent explained,

“My son was less comfortable... he had no interest in continuing.”

These dynamics contribute to broader patterns of reduced participation and, in some cases, social withdrawal. Some families indicated that they limit their engagement to English-speaking networks due to these barriers.

Overall, these findings suggest that in Saint-Michel, the primary challenge is not the absence of services, but rather the lack of linguistic accessibility and inclusivity, which affects both individual well-being and community cohesion.

Conclusion

Overall, the profile of the English-speaking population in Saint-Michel reveals a community characterized by significant diversity, but also by notable socio-economic challenges. While French remains the dominant language, Saint-Michel presents a relatively higher proportion of English speakers and a more multilingual population compared to the broader CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. This linguistic diversity is further shaped by a highly multicultural immigrant population, with strong representation from the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

Educational attainment among English speakers reflects a clear generational divide. Younger and mid-career individuals tend to have higher levels of postsecondary and university education, while older populations are more likely to have limited formal education. This suggests ongoing progress in access to education, but also highlights the need to support older adults who may face barriers linked to lower educational attainment.

Labour market indicators point to structural challenges affecting the English-speaking population in Saint-Michel. Employment rates are consistently lower and unemployment rates higher than those observed across the CIUSSS territory, particularly among individuals aged 25 to 64 and older adults. These trends indicate potential barriers to labour market integration, including limited access to opportunities, skills mismatches, or systemic factors impacting employability.

Income data further reinforces these disparities. While middle-aged groups show relatively stronger financial stability, younger individuals are more likely to have low or no income, and seniors often rely on fixed or limited resources. Additionally, a significant proportion of working-age adults live in low-income situations, suggesting that employment alone does not necessarily guarantee financial security.

Taken together, these findings highlight the complexity of needs within the English-speaking population of Saint-Michel. They point toward the importance of coordinated, inclusive approaches that address linguistic diversity, support access to education and employment, and strengthen economic stability across all age groups. Tailored outreach and service delivery strategies will be essential to effectively respond to the realities of this community.

While quantitative data highlights important socio-economic challenges within the English-speaking population of Saint-Michel, qualitative insights reveal the underlying mechanisms that contribute to these disparities. Language barriers emerge as a central factor shaping access to employment, services, and community participation.

These barriers not only affect practical access to resources, but also have broader social implications, including reduced participation, increased reliance on informal support systems, and, in some cases, feelings of exclusion. This underscores the need for approaches that go beyond service availability and focus on ensuring equitable and meaningful access in both official languages, particularly for populations that may be more vulnerable to linguistic barriers.

References

Ville de Montréal en statistiques: <https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/>

Sources:

Custom table J W Comm/VEQ/Jeffery-Hale Community Partners

CO-2459 Table 1 - Total population, excluding institutional residents, by selected sociodemographic characteristics (36), first official language spoken (7) and age (16) for selected geographies, 2021 Census - 100% Data

CO-2459 Table 4 - Population in private households by selected sociodemographic characteristics (161) first official language spoken (7) and age (16) for selected geographies, 2021 Census - 25% Sample data

Resource guide

REISA'S Resource Guide: <https://reisa.ca/document-center/resources/>

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