



MRC
D'ARGENTEUIL
Authentique. Avec vous.

430, rue Grace
Lachute (Québec)
J8H 1M6
T. 450 562-2474
F. 450 562-1911

mrc@argenteuil.qc.ca
argenteuil.qc.ca

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The MRC d'Argenteuil announces concrete measures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Lachute, March 18, 2020 - The MRC d'Argenteuil wishes to take stock of the current situation and present the actions it is taking to support the population in the present context.

First, the members of the MRC d'Argenteuil council applaud the leadership shown by the Government of Québec and fully and completely endorse the preventive measures that were quickly put in place by government authorities.

As a local government institution, the MRC d'Argenteuil, in line with its powers, its mission and its values, is committed to being proactive. To this end, today it is announcing the introduction of special measures.

Measures to support the local economy

The MRC d'Argenteuil welcomes the financial assistance measures announced in the past few days by the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Québec.

The MRC's economic development department (Service de développement économique or SDE) is responsible for the development and outreach of the businesses in its territory. In this time of crisis, the entire SDE team is concentrating all its efforts on supporting and assisting small businesses, in conjunction with the governments of Québec and Canada.

In an effort to minimize the financial impacts of COVID-19 on the business community, the MRC invites local businesses to contact the SDE at sde@argenteuil.qc.ca to inform the department of their specific needs and find out about special measures available to them.

These measures include:

- Possibility of loans from the Fonds Local d'Investissement (FLI) to provide emergency working capital for businesses with an immediate need for cash;
- Moratorium on payments (principal and interest) for the month of April 2020 for outstanding loans from the Fonds Local d'investissement (FLI) and the Fonds local de solidarité (FLS);
- Possibility, if necessary, of extending the said moratorium on payments (principal and interest) for a maximum of 5 months, for outstanding loans from the Fonds Local d'investissement (FLI).

Please note that these measures are subject to change as the situation evolves.

Deputy Warden and President of the Economic Development Committee, Carl Péloquin, strongly encourages the business community not to hesitate to call upon the MRC d'Argenteuil's SDE team. He emphasizes that the MRC is committed to lobbying government authorities to ensure that the voice of the Argenteuil business community is heard and that adequate and appropriate assistance programs are put in place as quickly as possible.

For further informations, please consult the MRC's economic development department's Facebook page or the website at www.industrielargenteuil.com

In addition, the MRC d'Argenteuil and the Argenteuil Chamber of Commerce and Industry strongly encourage the population to buy locally in order to help our businesses get through this difficult period.

Mobilization of community partners

At the initiative of the MRC d'Argenteuil, a committee of partners was formed on March 16, 2020 to coordinate community actions and interventions. Some twenty representatives from the institutional, community and business sectors eagerly accepted the invitation with a view to ensuring support for the population in these difficult times. Food security issues were quickly identified as a priority.

In this regard, a dedicated telephone line will soon be set up to collect offers to volunteer from people aged 60 or under who wish to help seniors aged 70 or over and vulnerable people targeted by the Quebec government's recommendations on isolation. This line will be set up very soon and details will be provided shortly. In addition, a daily friendly phone call service will be put in place by community partners for people who are alone and in need.

Maintenance of services

As a preventive measure, the MRC d'Argenteuil announced on March 17, 2020 the closure to the public of the centennial building at 430 Grace Street and the historic train station at 540 Berry Street in Lachute. Most services are maintained, and some are available online or by phone.

Public transit and paratransit

The MRC d'Argenteuil's Transportation Department is maintaining its services throughout its territory. Please note that preventive measures are in effect in order to limit the spread of the coronavirus. For example, the MRC and its carriers have increased hygiene measures in vehicles (buses and taxis). Drivers have also been made aware of the importance of good hygiene practices. The MRC joins its voice to that of public health officials in reminding users that the best solution is to employ regular hygiene practices. In order to comply with the social distancing measures necessary to control the spread of the virus, the MRC is limiting the maximum number of passengers allowed on board minibuses to 7, and in taxis, to 1. In addition, the MRC urges clients not to use its services if they have a cough, a fever or difficulty breathing.

The MRC is asking users to limit their movements and to use transportation only for reasons deemed essential, such as grocery shopping, work and health.

Since the offices of the Transportation Department are now closed to the public, the MRC asks clients to call 450 562-5797 for information.

Council meetings

In accordance with the directives issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAMH), until further notice, the public will not be allowed to attend council meetings of the MRC d'Argenteuil.

Social solidarity and citizen's duties

The president of the public safety committee, Marc-Olivier Labelle, points out the singular context of Argenteuil, whose population includes a large number—almost 5,000—of people aged 70 and over, a proportion that is over the provincial average.

"It is therefore imperative that our seniors, in the face of this COVID-19 pandemic, comply with isolation measures and remain in their homes in accordance with government directives. The MRC is following the situation very closely and is making every effort to follow the government's instructions to the letter".

MRC Warden Scott Pearce wishes to highlight the sense of duty shown by workers in the health and social services sector and other essential services, and the commitment and dedication of the local municipalities and community partners.

Mr. Pearce affirms the full commitment of the MRC d'Argenteuil to its nine local municipalities and the population: "The values of solidarity, mutual aid and empathy that guide our local government take on their full meaning in the face of this exceptional situation. Together with our valuable partners in the community, we are and will continue to be present and proactive as long as the situation requires it".

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Source: MRC d'Argenteuil

Information:

Lucie Lafleur, Communications Advisor

MRC d'Argenteuil

450 562-2474, ext. 2306 | llafleur@argenteuil.qc.ca