

CIViS Named Among 20 Finalists for the 2026 Mérite Ovation Municipale

Quebec's integrated sexual violence services hub — serving survivors of all ages and genders — selected from more than a hundred submissions to the Union des municipalités du Québec.

Saint-Lambert, March 6, 2026 — The Centre de services intégrés en violence sexuelle (CIViS), a collaborative initiative led by La Traversée, the CAVAC de la Montérégie, and the Service de police de l'agglomération de Longueuil (SPAL), has been named a finalist in the public safety category of the 2026 Mérite Ovation Municipale, awarded by the Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ). Selected from over a hundred nominations province-wide, CIViS stands as proof that meaningful, systemic change in how survivors access mental health care, justice, and public safety services is not only possible — it is already happening.

Ending the Fragmentation

For too long, survivors of sexual violence have been forced to navigate a fractured system alone — disclosing their trauma, seeking psychosocial support, engaging with the justice system, cooperating with police investigations, and accessing therapy, all through separate doors, all requiring them to relive painful events over and over again.

CIViS offers a fundamentally different model. Launched in 2023 at La Traversée's premises in Saint-Lambert, it brings together specialized psychosocial workers and psychotherapists, CAVAC de la Montérégie advocates, and dedicated SPAL investigators under one roof. Beyond its three founding organizations, CIViS draws on a network of roughly forty partner organizations — including Équijustice and Rebâtir — each integrated into a survivor's journey according to their individual needs. The goal is simple: allow survivors to focus on what matters most — their recovery.

Results That Speak for Themselves

Sexual assault remains one of the most underreported crimes in Canada. CIViS is changing that. Fifty-four percent of the survivors supported through the model have chosen to file a complaint — roughly ten times the national average. This is the result of a trauma-informed approach, a deliberately non-intimidating environment, and an accompaniment model that ensures no one faces the hardest moments alone.

Police investigative interviews take place at La Traversée's facilities, in a safe and welcoming setting, with officers who attend without uniforms or firearms. This past year, 65 percent of those interviews involved minors. Psychosocial or psychotherapeutic support is available before or after the police interview, because re-entering traumatic memories is, in itself, an ordeal that no one should endure without support.

Communiqué de presse

"What makes this project unique is its foundation. Everything rests on the mental health of the people we accompany. It is through that care that a person can become strong enough to pursue other steps. This year, more than 85 percent of those supported by CIViS required psychotherapy or psychosocial intervention services — offered entirely free of charge, regardless of whether or not the person chooses to pursue legal action."

— Christine Vilcocq, Executive Director, La Traversée

"We cannot afford to work in silos. That lack of continuity loses people along the way — people who genuinely need support. CIViS creates a continuous thread: the person stays at the centre, and the services orbit around them. Instead of telling someone 'here is what you need to do,' we ask: 'what can I do for you?' They no longer have to tell their story a hundred times. They reclaim control of their journey — and their dignity."

— Audrée-Jade Carignan, CIViS Intervention Coordinator, CAVAC de la Montérégie

A Model With Province-Wide Reach

The impact of CIViS has already extended well beyond the Montérégie region. A documentary on the project — [Briser les murs — une réponse collective à la violence sexuelle](#), produced by Savoir Média — was viewed more than 2.7 million times in just four months, sparking interest from practitioners and institutions across Quebec. Knowledge-transfer processes are now underway with a range of partners, contributing to a broader evolution of practices at the provincial level. CIViS was never conceived as a single location. It is a way of working — transferable, documented, and rooted in the real needs of survivors.

Awards to Be Presented at the 2026 UMQ Assises

Finalists will be showcased at the Pavillon de l'innovation municipale during the UMQ's 2026 Assises, held May 13–15 at the Centre des congrès de Québec. The 12 Mérite Ovation Municipale awards — including the Prix Joseph-Beaubien, the Prix Coup de cœur du jury, and the Prix Avenir Climat — will be presented at that time.

This recognition belongs to every team member who carries CIViS forward with dedication, to the partners who believed in this model from the start, and to the survivors whose needs continue to guide every decision we make. CIViS is made possible through the financial support of the ministère de la Justice du Québec.

About La Traversée

Founded in 1984, La Traversée is a psychosocial support and psychotherapy centre serving residents of the Montérégie region living with mental health impacts related to sexual violence. All services are provided free of charge, regardless of age or gender, and extend to the loved ones of survivors.



Communiqué de presse

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