

# Welcome to Greater Montréal's World-Leading Video Game Hub



# A world leading economic development agency



2<sup>nd</sup>  
BEST INVESTMENT  
PROMOTION AGENCY 2021

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# Top reasons to develop video games in Greater Montréal



## A leading edge ecosystem

- **200+ studios**
- **A complete ecosystem with key players** in tool development and service providers (e.g. audio services, quality assurance, publishing, localization, etc.)
- **Ubisoft, EA, WB Games, Eidos, Epic Games, Gameloft, Take-Two, Behaviour Interactive, Rovio and many more** chose Montréal to develop globally successful games



## A very creative & specialized workforce

- **18,000 workers with skills in video game**
- **Close to 18,000 university students enrolled in IT related programs** and more than **2,200 in arts related programs**
- **3,400+ college students** enrolled in technical programs related to **video game**



## Competitive costs & tailor-made incentives

- **28% cost advantage** compared to the average of the 20 largest metropolitan areas in Canada and the U.S. for video game development
- **Advantageous salaries for companies**
- **Up to 37.5% tax credit** of eligible expenses and salaries



## A great quality of life

- **Best city in Canada and 6<sup>th</sup> in the world** (TimeOut, 2019)
- **Most affordable major city** in Canada and the U.S. (UBS, 2018)
- **Best Student City** in the Americas tied with Boston (QS, 2022)



# 01

## A World-Leading Video Game Hub



# Among the top five largest video game development hubs in the world



200+

studios

18 000

workers

A complete ecosystem with key players in tool development and service providers (e.g. audio services, quality assurance, publishing, localization, etc.)

Ubisoft, EA, WB Games, Eidos, Epic Games, Gameloft, Take-Two, Behaviour Interactive, Rovio and many more chose Montréal to develop globally successful games:

- Assassin's Creed Origins (Ubisoft)
- Batman Origins (Warner Bros Games)
- Deus Ex and Rise of the Tomb Raider (Eidos)
- *Dead by Daylight* (Behaviour Interactive)

Winner of the Creative Industries Specialism Award from the *Financial Times' fDi Strategy Awards 2021*



# Birth and growth of the video game industry in Montréal

Over the past 25 years, Greater Montréal became Canada's most important video game hub and the 5<sup>th</sup> in the world

## Three waves of development

### 1 – Birth of the industry

- Before Ubisoft and Autodesk became influential players in Montréal's industry, locally owned **Behaviour Interactive** (BHVR) and **Kaydara** anchored the local development scene
- Thanks to the implementation of the **Multimedia Titles tax credit**, in 1997, **Ubisoft** committed to Montréal and took the industry to the next level
- As a result, **Ubisoft, EA, Eidos, Gameloft, WB Games** and **Behaviour Interactive** grew large studios in Montréal



### 2 – Emergence of Montréal content

- The wave of handheld games created a paradigm shift in the development scene
- Thanks to cheaper tools, a mature talent base and the opportunity to self-publish, along with the demand for smaller and more addictive games, the stage was set for the emergence of a local, independent development scene
- Studios such as **Outerminds, Riposte Games, Compulsion Games, Red Barrels, Panache Digital Games** are at the vanguard of this trend

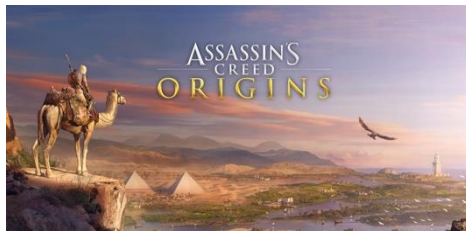


### 3 – The future of the industry

- Montréal has emerged as a global leader in **new video game niches, such as VR/AR and gamification in fields such as health care and education**
- Montréal is also making a name for itself as a world **AI and deep learning** hub, which will revolutionize the video game development



# Many major successes developed in Greater Montréal





# Montréal's ecosystem: some of the major players

Full-service industry made up of academia, tool developers, animation, sound, production and post-production studios, etc.



# Successful tech, services and game developers to create great games

## Technologies



Montréal's office is at the core of Unity's animation systems and emerging AI technology



Creation of a 3D creation platform by the technical and development teams of Unreal Engine



Software services for the architecture, engineering, construction, manufacturing, media, and entertainment industries



Cross-platform audio middleware solutions for the interactive media and gaming industries



Development of haptic technology in video game by the R&D team based in Montréal

## Services



Postproduction services like localization, quality assurance and live operations for games



Specialized in audio and motion capture services



Quality assurance, localization, live operations support, data analytics, test automation and consulting services



Customer experience, quality assurance, localization, engineering and audio production services

## Developers



The world's biggest game development studio with a rich portfolio of globally renowned brands



Two studios in Montréal: Eidos Montréal and Square Enix known for titles such as Lara Croft GO and Deus Ex GO



Creates and distributes cross-platform digital games with mass consumer appeal



Canada's largest independent video game publisher and developer

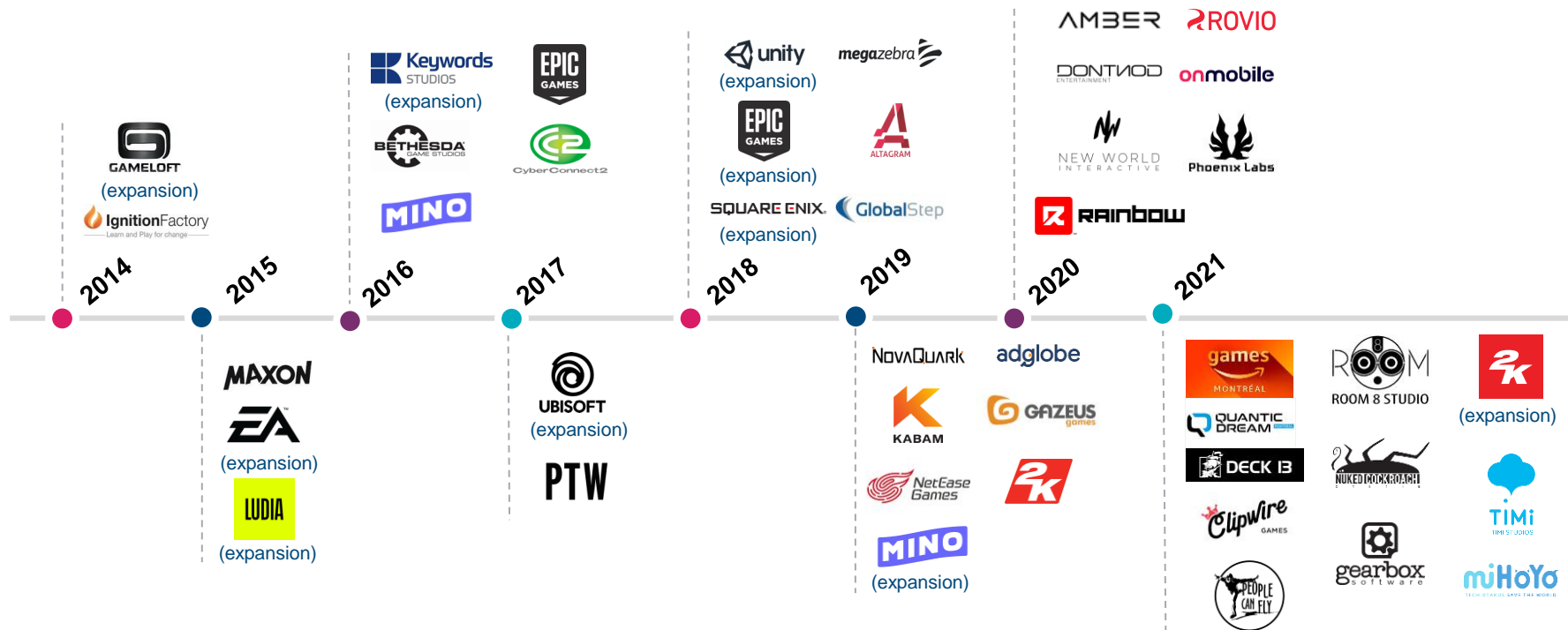


Developer known for *Contrast* and *We Happy Few*

... and more  
than 200 others!

# Major global players have recently chosen Montréal

Montréal's video game industry has experienced phenomenal growth in recent years, through the expansion and setting up of international subsidiaries of companies from around the world



# A collaborative, diversified and inclusive video game ecosystem

## Organizations and Initiatives supporting the video game industry and digital creation



With its 245 member studios, La Guilde's mission is to promote the Québec video game industry. It is the largest association of its kind in the world



Initiative committed to helping more women make and change games. It offers monthly workshops, mentoring program and *game jams*



Initiative of Québec Ministry of Education and Higher Education to support the growth and training of cutting-edge expertise in the digital sector and create better synergy between the various players

## Workspaces, incubators and accelerators dedicated to digital creation startups and independent video game studios

- Workspaces



- Incubators and accelerators





# Video game stands on a strong information technologies ecosystem

- **160,000+ IT workers** and **7,000 companies** in Greater Montréal
- **Lowest operating costs in North America** for software development
- **Broadly diversified industries related to video game:**



**1<sup>st</sup>**

city in Canada and a world leader in digital creativity



**Top 3**

Best places to invest in AI in North America



**Top 5**

Highest concentrations of tech jobs among Canadian and U.S. metropolitan areas

And at the leading edge of mobile technologies, VR/AR, data analytics and FinTech

## Sample of major companies located in Greater Montréal

Google

Microsoft

IBM

aws

Morgan Stanley

SAP

AUTODESK

technicolor

DIGITAL DIMENSION

DASSAULT SYSTEMES

MATHEMATIC

REEL FX

Mobee**wave**

BUF

lightspeed

FELIX & PAUL STUDIOS

FRAMESTORE **VR** STUDIO

CINE**SITE** STUDIOS

R O D E O  
*Visual Effects Company*

Meta

FRAMESTORE

# Montréal welcomes international annual events focused on video game



## Fall

**MEGA + MIGS** is a B2B2C event that brings together over 3,000 developers, publishers and other major players in the video game industry



Montréal's edition of the world's largest digital festival



## Winter

Event where studios have the chance to show off their work-in-progress games to the Montréal development community



# 02

## A Deep and Growing Pool of Highly Qualified Talent





# Montréal, where creativity and technical expertise meet

## Greater Montréal's video game industry counts close to 18,000 workers

That number is increasing fast thanks to the large number of graduates the region's colleges and universities provide every year, combining expertise in the digital arts and tech

## Also, Montréal's Mile End neighborhood is known for hosting the greatest concentration of artists in Canada and is a major culture and arts hub in North America

Mile End is also home to a growing number of video game studios and visual effects firms, including Ubisoft, Framestore, Behaviour Interactive, Gameloft and Atelier Animation





# There are close to 18,000 workers with video game skills in Montréal

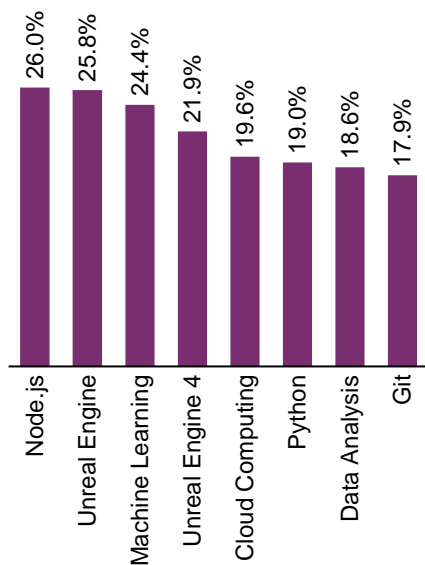
Sample of the 54 key skills taken into account to define video game workers\*



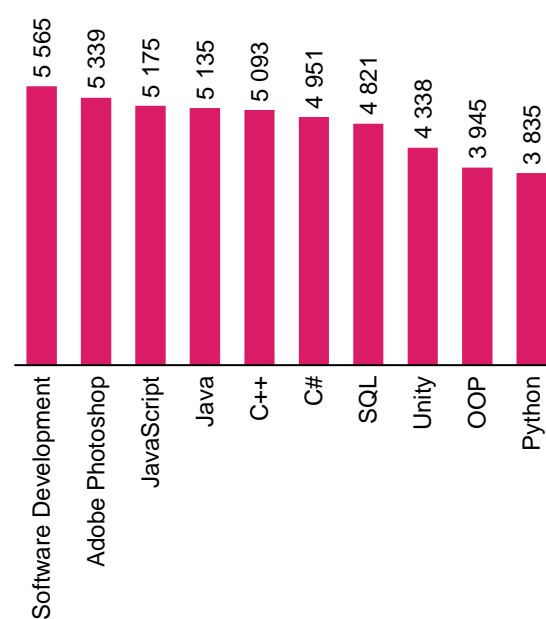
Number of LinkedIn profiles\*\* in Montréal with the identified skills:

**17,995**

Fastest-growing skills among video game workers over the past 12 months



Number of video game workers who have the skills below



\*Key skills identified using LinkedIn's Talent Insights tool are not cumulative or exclusive.  
 \*\*Excluding profiles for the following titles: "founder", "co-founder", "CEO" and "president".  
 Source: LinkedIn, Talent Insights, November 2021.

# Many specialized programs in video game development

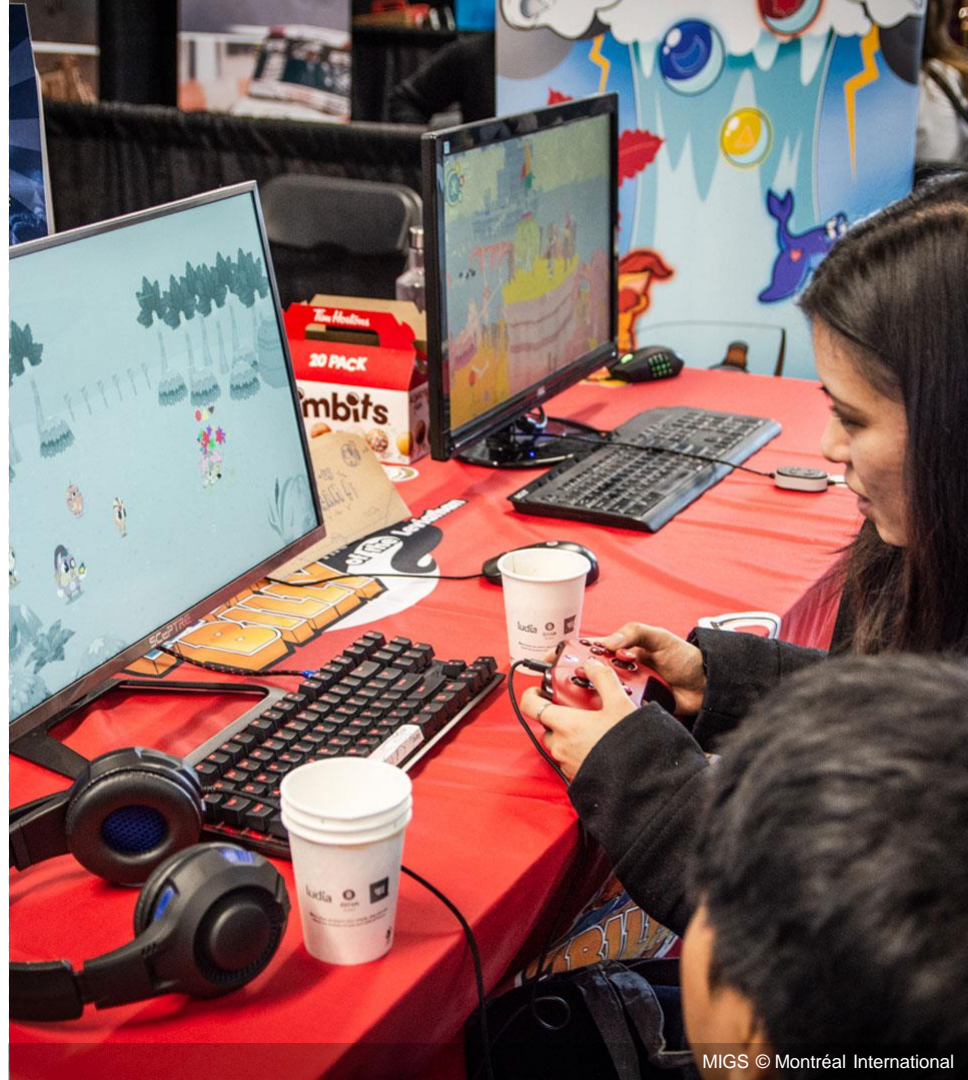
Graduate, undergraduate programs and postgraduate (BA to Master)



Career/technical programs (DEC)



Professional training (AEC)



# A rich pool of technical college students with specific expertise in video game

Technical college programs related to video game	Students enrolled 2019-2020	Collegial graduates 2018
Game Design and Animation 2D/3D	1,241	408
Visual Arts	1,124	208
Graphic Arts	1,115	374
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,480</b>	<b>990</b>

Greater Montréal boasts **3,400+ college students** enrolled in technical programs related to video game, animation and visual effects

The depth of Montréal's talent pool has allowed the region to remain at the forefront of the gaming industry, such as virtual and augmented reality

# A pool of students that combines creativity and technical knowledge

University programs related to arts	Students enrolled in 2019-2020	University graduates in 2019
Graphic Arts	683	170
Fine Arts	900	175
Plastic Arts	544	159
Arts (pluridisciplinary)	144	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,271</b>	<b>539</b>

University programs related to IT	Students enrolled in 2019-2020	University graduates in 2019
Computer Sciences	10,181	2,061
Electric and Electronic Engineering	3,613	842
Computer Engineering and Computer Science	2,328	464
Mathematics	1,416	313
Applied Mathematics	168	33
Probabilities and Statistics	203	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,909</b>	<b>3 763</b>

Greater Montréal is home to **15 university institutions**, including some of the most prestigious in the world for video game, such as:



Yearly, these universities enroll close to **18,000 university students** enrolled in IT related programs and more than **2,200 in Arts** related programs  
A large contingent of new university graduates in arts and IT joins the video game workforce every year



# Multiple international mobility programs to attract the best international talents

Temporary immigration programs*		1 – Obtain a LMIA** and CAQ***	Processing time****	2 – Submission of the work permit application****	Processing time****
LMIA exempt	<a href="#">Intra-company transferees</a>	N/A (LMIA exempt program)	-	Online or at Canada Customs if the candidate is exempt from the temporary resident visa requirements	0 to 2 weeks*****
	<a href="#">Free trade agreements - ex. : CUSMA, Colombia, Chile, Peru</a>	N/A (LMIA exempt program)	-	Online or at Canada Customs if the candidate is exempt from the temporary resident visa requirements	0 to 2 weeks*****
	<a href="#">International Experience Canada</a>	N/A (LMIA exempt program)	-	Online	Up to 8 weeks
With LMIA	<a href="#">Global Talent Stream</a>	Exemption from the obligation to make efforts to hire and recruit locally. 12 eligible professions	Approximately 2 weeks	Online or at Canada Customs if the candidate is exempt from the temporary resident visa requirements	0 to 2 weeks*****
	<a href="#">Québec Simplified Process</a>	Process offered exclusively to businesses in Quebec. Exemption from the requirement to demonstrate that efforts to hire locally were unsuccessful. 200+ professions are on the list of <a href="#">eligible professions</a>	Approximately 12 weeks	Online or at Canada Customs if the candidate is exempt from the temporary resident visa requirements	Canadian Visa Office (BVC) timelines
	<a href="#">Regular process</a>	Demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to hire locally	Approximately 15 weeks	Online or at Canada Customs if the candidate is exempt from the temporary resident visa requirements	Canadian Visa Office (BVC) timelines

\* Examples of programs: the eligibility conditions specific to each program must be met

\*\* LMIA: Labour Market Impact Assessment

\*\*\* CAQ: Québec Acceptance Certificate

\*\*\*\* **Pre-COVID-19 deadlines. During the pandemic**, with some exceptions, work permit applications must be submitted online to the visa office abroad and it is **impossible to assess processing times**

\*\*\*\*\* Priority treatment in 14 days (in 80% of cases) only for a qualified position at level 0 or A according to the National Occupational Classification

“Over 20 years, Ubisoft has created more than 3,600 jobs, invested more than \$3.5 billion and developed some of the greatest brands in the industry here in Québec. Today, videogames are the most dynamic segment of the entertainment industry, and are at the heart of technological revolution. As a result, we have a unique opportunity to build tomorrow’s Québec, together.”

– Yves Guillemot, Co-Founder and CEO, Ubisoft



“There are many very interesting aspects in Montreal: a multicultural aspect that is very very strong. Montreal is a city that is centered on art in various forms and there are also amazing universities. Finally, there is all this support for the creation of companies, especially in the technological field.”

– David Anfossi, Studio Head, EIDOS-Montréal



“Since 2000, Gameloft has never stopped reinventing itself. Our Montréal studio is one of the few capable of producing an entire game locally, thanks to support teams. Thus, our team plays a key role in the launch of new projects. The know-how here allows us to have a competitive advantage in the gaming industry and to impact the trends of tomorrow.”

– Mario Poulin, General Manager, Gameloft Canada



“Amber has been rapidly growing with an international team across Europe and North America, and we wanted to continue this global expansion with a multi-disciplinary game development studio in Canada. Montréal is the perfect place for this, as it’s one of the most cosmopolitan cities in North America, with a rich mixture of cultures from all over the world.”

– Mihai Pohontu, CEO, Amber



“Montréal’s rich vein of creative talent will be a valuable asset as we continue building our development and publishing teams. The highly skilled and experienced team at our new Montréal studio shares our commitment to creating best-in-class online games, and brings with them a wealth of knowledge and passion for building deep, community-focused multiplayer experiences.”

– Christoph Hartmann, VP, Amazon Games



“We also intend to draw on the new talent pool offered by Montréal to quickly extend our team of game designers to also include software developers, artists and business intelligence experts.”

– Mark Gazecki, MegaZebra’s Co-Founder



# 03

## Attractive Operating Costs and Incentives



# Operating a business costs less in Greater Montréal than in any other major metropolitan area in Canada and the U.S.

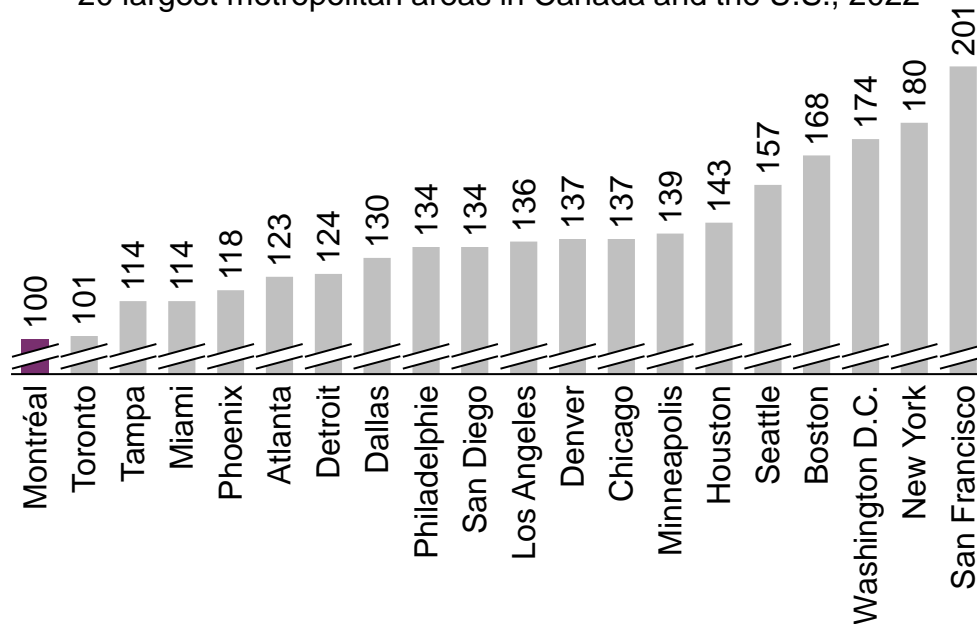


**28% cost advantage**

compared to the average 20 largest metropolitan areas in Canada and the U.S.

The cost advantage is even greater when factoring in **Québec's video game tax credit**

**Total operating costs Index for a Video Game Design Centre**  
20 largest metropolitan areas in Canada and the U.S., 2022





# Advantageous salaries for employers

Even before factoring in the video game tax credit (up to 37.5%), salaries in Montréal are more competitive compared to Toronto and Vancouver

Median annual salaries\* (US\$) for 5 typical profession  
Five major North American cities, 2022

	Montréal	Montréal with tax credit (37.5%**)	Toronto	Vancouver	Austin	San Francisco
<b>3D Animator</b>	<b>\$62,916</b>	<b>\$39,323</b>	\$67,015	\$67,195	\$79,689	\$100,379
<b>Video Game Programmer</b>	<b>\$73,953</b>	<b>\$46,221</b>	\$78,077	\$79,415	\$93,340	\$122,541
<b>Programmer Analyst</b>	<b>\$79,789</b>	<b>\$49,868</b>	\$84,061	\$85,566	\$101,036	\$131,864
<b>Database Architect</b>	<b>\$80,960</b>	<b>\$50,600</b>	\$85,260	\$86,797	\$104,236	\$135,737
<b>Project Manager Systems</b>	<b>\$102,613</b>	<b>\$39,213</b>	\$106,895	\$110,011	\$134,853	\$175,902

Note: \*Salaries based on five years of experience, Computer Systems Design and Related Services (NAICS 5415).

\*\* If your title is available in French, you can save up to 37.5% on eligible salaries and expenses.

Currency exchange: CA\$1.00 = US\$0.80

Source: Economic Research Institute Inc., January 2022.

# Video game tax credit: one of the most advantageous in the world

- The tax credit could cover **up to 37.5%** of your qualifying labour expenditures, if the multimedia title is available in French. If it is not available in French, the tax credit rate is **up to 30%**.
- **Eligible labour expenditures\***:
  - **Salaries and wages** paid to eligible employees (including bonus)
  - **The portion of amounts paid to a subcontractor** not dealing at arm's length with the multimedia producer for the execution of eligible production work in an establishment in Québec
  - **50% of amounts paid to a subcontractor** dealing at arm's length with the Multimedia producer for the execution of eligible production work in Québec



# Multimedia titles tax credit simulation for a video game studio with 15 full-time employees\*

You could save up to \$512,153 on expenditures of \$2,043,500 if you qualify for the 37.5% tax credit, including a refundable amount of \$512,153

Position and salary details			Annual expenditures and tax credits	
Position	Number of employees	Average salary		
Game Designer	4	\$89,000	Salaries	\$1,495,000
Senior Game Designer	1	\$95,000	Bonuses (10%)	\$149,500
3D Artist	3	\$73,000	Benefits (20%)	\$299,000
Programmer	2	\$89,000	Subcontractors	\$100,000
Senior Programmer	2	\$108,000	<b>Total before tax credit</b>	<b>\$2,043,500</b>
Creative Director	1	\$137,000	Amount for the 37.5% tax credit	\$512,153
Production Manager	1	\$110,000	<b>Tax credits as % of investment</b>	<b>25.06 %</b>
Studio Manager	1	\$184,000	<b>Total expenditures after tax credit</b>	<b>\$1,531,348</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$1,495,000</b>		

\* For a Foreign controlled enterprise, whose title is available in French from its first release and with no R&D activity. The refundable tax credit could cover up to 37.5% of your qualifying labour expenditures, if the multimedia title is available in French from its first release. If it is not available in French, the tax credit rate is up to 30%.

Source: PWC, 2021; fDi Benchmark, 2020.

# Multimedia titles tax credit simulation for a video game studio with 100 full-time employees\*

You could save up to \$3,676,748 on expenditures of \$12,220,400 if you qualify for the 37.5% tax credit, including a refundable amount of \$3,676,748

## Position and salary details

Position	Number of employees	Average salary
Game Designer	30	\$89,000
Senior Game Designer	6	\$95,000
3D Artist	20	\$73,000
Programmer	20	\$89,000
Senior Programmer	20	\$108,000
Creative Director	2	\$137,000
Production Manager	1	\$110,000
Studio Manager	1	\$184,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$9,208,000</b>

## Annual expenditures and tax credits

Salaries	\$9,208,000
Bonuses (10%)	\$920,800
Benefits (20%)	\$1,841,600
Subcontractors	\$250,000
<b>Total before tax credit</b>	<b>\$12,220,400</b>
Amount for the 37.5% tax credit	\$3,676,748
<b>Tax credits as % of investment</b>	<b>30.09 %</b>
<b>Total expenditures after tax credit</b>	<b>\$8,543,653</b>

\* For a Foreign controlled enterprise, whose title is available in French from its first release and with no R&D activity. The refundable tax credit could cover up to 37.5% of your qualifying labour expenditures, if the multimedia title is available in French from its first release. If it is not available in French, the tax credit rate is up to 30%.

Source: PWC, 2021; fDi Benchmark, 2020.



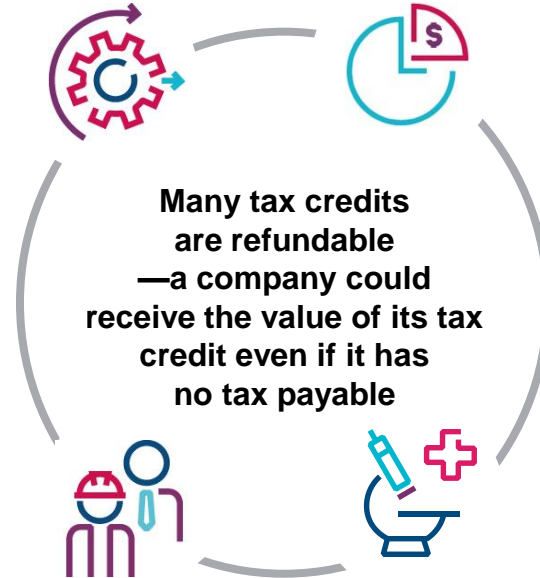
# Easy access to highly advantageous incentives

## Major projects and innovations

Grants, interest-free loans and other supports available, including competitive electricity rates of **CAc4.04/kWh** for large power\*

## Labour development

*Example of grant:*  
**Up to 50% of eligible costs\*\*** to support HR management and training



## Sector tax credits

*Equivalent to eligible salaries and expenses:*

- **Up to 43%** for film and video production
- **Up to 37.5%** for multimedia production
- **Up to 30%** for e-business development
- **24%** for international financial centres

## Research and development

- **Up to 30%** tax credit on R&D expenses
- **Tax holiday** for foreign researchers and experts

Note:

Rate LG: large power with minimum billing demand of 5,000 kW, transmission and distribution included, for 120-kV supply with 95% load factor, and including the Economic Development Rate reduction (if eligible).

\*\* and **up to 85%** on the first \$117,647 for certain sectors such as IT.

# 04

## Montréal International's Personalized, Free and Confidential Services



# Montréal International, a single point of access to a series of personalized, free and confidential services



**Long-term  
strategic support**



**Economic data  
and communication  
services**



**Government  
relations facilitation**



**Incentive programs  
assistance**



**Foreign workers  
immigration  
assistance**



**International  
recruiting solutions**



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