

OPEQ – Computers for Schools in Québec

Bell and OPEQ: partners for more than 20 years!

In 1993, Industry Canada and the Telephone Pioneers created the Computers for Schools (CFS) program to give to schools obsolete computers from the federal government.

The program has evolved and is now called Computers for Schools Plus (CFS+). CFS+ provides a wider range of IT equipment to a growing number of beneficiaries. CFS+ provides refurbished computers and other electronic equipment to elementary and high schools, various non-profit organizations, and eligible low-income Canadians.

For the last 21 years, Bell has been actively involved in the program across Canada. As such, Bell has chaired the organization for 20 years. To this day, a Bell employee is still responsible for the overall management.

In 1997, Bell took over the leadership of the program in Québec and became a founding member of Computers for Schools in Québec (**OPEQ**). A Bell employee, within the Corporate responsibility and environment group, serves as the Executive director of OPEQ, and it is under OPEQ that the CFS+ program is being managed in that province, and that it has grown into the largest contributor in repurposing electronic equipment in Québec. Bell is also home to the administrative team at the Nun's Island campus and one of 6 refurbishment workshops.



In the last 20 years, OPEQ has

- sorted millions of pieces of equipment (computers, servers, cell phones, printers, mice, keyboards, projectors, etc.)
- recovered more than 50,000 computers per year
- recycled over 18,000 tons of material in an eco-friendly manner
- upgraded and distributed more than 270,000 refurbished computers and laptops
- provided more than 50,000 hours of training per year
- helped more than 1,500 young people gain work experience through the OPE internship program and helped several thousand trainees to acquire skills in the field of IT
- worked with dozens of young people with physical or intellectual limitations in our sorting centers and workshops

Through OPEQ, Bell benefits from a secure, efficient, and environmentally sound management of its electronic equipment surplus. OPEQ produces tax receipts for the market value of the donated equipment, with Bell's donations valuing nearly half a million dollars a year.

In 2019, Bell and its subsidiaries donated 8,465 used computers, 1,127 monitors and 82 printers for reuse or recycling to OPEQ. Since the beginning of our involvement with CFS in 1997, Bell donations totaled more than 114,000 computers, 19,200 monitors and 4,830 printers.

Donations of used equipment for reuse or recycling by Bell and its subsidiaries GRI 306-2

(number of units collected)

| | COMPUTERS | MONITORS | PRINTERS |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 2017 | 7,692 | 833 | 106 |
| 2018 | 8,802 | 1,022 | 152 |
| 2019 | 8,465 | 1,127 | 82 |
| Cumulative total (since 1997) | 114,000 | 19,200 | 4,830 |

Connecting Families

Launched in November 2018, this initiative is designed to connect low-income Canadian families to the Internet. Funded by participating Internet service providers, including Bell, the initiative is administered through Computers for Success Canada and offers \$10 per month Internet access to eligible families and is done in partnership with the Government of Canada's Computers for Schools program, which provides computers. In Quebec, this program is managed by the OPEQ team. In 2019, OPEQ delivered 9,062 computers to eligible families in Quebec.

More information about the program and eligibility is available [here](#).



More than just computers

OPEQ does more than just recover computers. It has been mandated to recover equipment from provincial and federal ministries as well as para-governmental and municipal agencies. Quebec's major companies in various areas such as technology, communications, pharmaceuticals, finance, and others donate such equipment.

Without exception, the data is wiped clean from any device with a software that meets the standards of the Recycler Qualification Office (RQO) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). All reused equipment is also stripped of any identification, stickers, and anything that would identify the donor.

OPEQ is regularly audited by various organizations.

Reusing before recycling

OPEQ believes that minimizing the negative environmental impacts of electronic devices is the responsibility of every company, therefore OPEQ prioritizes reusing before recycling. Thanks to the companies that have chosen OPEQ for the management of their equipment at the end of their useful life, more than a quarter of a million computers and laptops have been refurbished over the last 20 years. Computers that would otherwise have been discarded or recycled were given new lives.

When equipment cannot be reused, it gets recycled by audited certified recyclers who meet the highest standards of recycling and proper handling of materials.

Giving back to the community

Since the program's inception, hundreds of thousands of computers and laptops have been refurbished and redistributed to schools, libraries, day-care centers, non-profit organizations to help them better meet their customers' needs, and to individuals, via targeted programs that help low-income families or newcomers break their technological isolation.

Training young people from all over Québec

The OPE internship program provides youth with hands-on experience in information technology (IT) to help them join the job market. Several instructors or managers in our sorting centers and our workshops came from this internship program.

THIS PROGRAM ENCOURAGES

- Reuse of electronic equipment
- Social inclusion for young adults through integration into the workplace
- Developing digital skills with graduates in technology
- Eco-responsible recycling of obsolete equipment
- Diversity, equity and inclusion are also at the heart of the organization's values.



OPEQ also partners with professional training centers. We offer them a work environment that complements the classroom training and motivation against dropping out of school.

OPEQ also aims for inclusion. This is a chance for young people trying to overcome their physical or intellectual limitations to gain work experience. We are present everywhere in Québec, with 2 sorting centers (Montreal and Québec) and 6 workshops (Bellechasse, Gatineau, Montreal, Québec, Saguenay, Sherbrooke).

Certifications

OPEQ is among the organizations certified by the Recyclers Qualification Board as an Electronic Products Reuse and Rehabilitation Program (EPRRP). This certification allows us to work with the Electronic Products Recycling Association (EPRA-Quebec).

OPEQ is also certified ISO 14001: 2015. This environmental standard certifies that the organization acts proactively in controlling its environmental risks.

OPEQ is recognized by “ICI on recycle”, a program from RECYC-QUEBEC, as a certified grade 3 gold organization, the highest level.

Please visit us at www.opeq.qc.ca