



# **French-language Services Plan**

**2025–2026**

*Department of  
Municipal Affairs*

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Department of Municipal Affairs

April 2025

ISBN: 978-1-77448-745-7

# Department of Municipal Affairs

Bonjour!

I am pleased to share the 2025–2026 French-language Services (FLS) Plan for the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA).

DMA supports municipalities, towns, and villages across Nova Scotia through programs, grants, and guidance in areas such as safety, finance, and policy development. DMA is also responsible for the Office of the Fire Marshal.

We recognize the vital contributions of the Acadian and francophone community to Nova Scotia's cultural fabric. In collaboration with other designated public institutions, we are committed to improving access to French-language services across the province.

At DMA, we promote and offer services in French wherever possible. We encourage FLS to be considered in the development of new programs, and we support municipalities in identifying opportunities to enhance services in French.

We are proud of our ongoing work to improve access to services in French and to raise awareness of FLS within the department. Beyond meeting our obligations under the French-language Services Act, we remain dedicated to strengthening our capacity to serve Nova Scotians in both official languages.

Paul LaFleche  
Executive Deputy Minister  
Department of Municipal Affairs

## How we contribute to the growth of the community

Our French-language services coordinator helps staff assess communication needs and leads the development of our French-language services plan, ensuring support for the Acadian and francophone community.

When needed, the coordinator works with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie to better understand the unique needs of the Acadian and francophone community. Staff are encouraged to plan for translations early to allow enough time for implementation.

We welcome your feedback as we continue to improve our services. For comments or questions, contact our coordinator. For formal complaints, please reach out to the Office of the Ombudsman.

If you have questions or comments, please contact our French-language services coordinator:

Michelle Saulnier  
FLS Coordinator



## What we achieved in 2024–2025\*

\*As of April 1, 2025, the Emergency Management Office (Department of Emergency Management), Housing (the Department of Growth and Development), and the Department of Municipal Affairs are all separate entities. As such, this plan focuses solely on the achievements of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

### Inform the Public about Services in French

From our newsfeed: <https://news.novascotia.ca>

- [New, Widened Sidewalks in Meteghan; Water, Wastewater Upgrades in Digby, Bear River](#)
- [Accessibility Upgrades, New Sidewalk for Richmond County](#)

### 2024/25 Key Efforts

- Provided the following support during the 2024 Municipal and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) elections:
  - Published the Candidate's Guide to Municipal and CSAP elections in French and English ahead of the Municipal Election.
  - Translated seven required forms for key election processes including nomination, into French to make them more accessible for the Acadian and Francophone community.
  - Shared a voter information poster in French to electors on remand in correctional facilities to promote voter engagement.
  - Published the Guide for New Municipal Councillors in French to supplement training for new council members.
- Displayed *Bonjour! Services en Français* signs in offices offering French services.
- Maintained the level of French services offered by phone, in person, online, and through public inquiries.
- Published program and service information in French on NovaScotia.ca.
- Encouraged bilingual forms, affidavits, and services across all channels.
- Increased the number of translated words in 2024/25 by 121%.
  - DMA/OFM: 27,332 words (compared to 12,337 in 2023/24)

## Continue to work to strengthen the Bonjour! Program

- Shared information with staff about cultural and French-learning opportunities available to them that helps celebrate language diversity and inclusion including:
  - National Acadian day (August 15)
  - Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie March 1 to 31, 2024 ; et la Journée internationale de la Francophonie (20 mars),
  - La fete de la musique (June 21)
  - Acadie at a Glance and French-language training
  - 12 Oui Chef! French at Lunch – Learn French while learning about cooking
  - A series of blogs on Acadian history, cuisine, festivals, and language;
    - Acadian Heritage Month
    - The Ships of the Acadian Expulsion | Navires de la deportation
    - Rendez-vous de la Francophonie (RVF) 2025



## Public Engagement

- Continued to provide advice, assistance, and support to include options for members of the Acadian and francophone community to participate in French in public consultations and engagements.

## What we are planning for 2025/26

During 2025–2026, we will continue to explore ways to enhance French-language services across DMA. This will include:

- **Translation and Interpretation:** To provide accurate and timely translations of documents, websites, forms, and public communications, as well as interpretation services for meetings and events.
- **Training:** To provide French-language training to employees, supporting frontline and program staff to actively offer services in French.
- **Public Engagement:** To develop and deliver outreach and engagement activities with Acadian and francophone communities in their language as required, fostering stronger relationships.
- **Technology and Tools:** As required, implement bilingual platforms, signage, forms, and other service delivery tools that support access in both official languages.
- **Program Development:** To integrate French-language considerations into the planning and design of new municipal support programs or funding initiatives.
- **Support for Municipalities:** To help municipalities build their own capacity to offer services in French, including through grants, guidance, or joint initiatives.

Nova Scotia is home to thousands of French-speaking residents and welcomes many French-speaking visitors, students, and workers from across Canada and around the world. These individuals contribute to the province's social, cultural, linguistic, and economic vitality. We recognize the valuable contributions of past, present, and future French-speaking communities to Nova Scotia's development and prosperity. Ensuring access to quality government services in French supports the Acadian and francophone community's well-being and promotes its continued growth and success.

## APPENDIX A: How we decide when to translate

### **How we decide what information to translate and when to publish it:**

What kind of information: Any printed or digital information intended for use by Nova Scotians.

When do we publish simultaneously in French and English we give priority to information material to which one or more of the following apply:

We translate information and materials in French that meets one or more of the following requirements:

- a) failure to provide the information in French may compromise the health, safety, or security of members of the public.
- b) the information is of particular relevance to the Acadian and francophone community.
- c) Pertains to French-language services we deliver.

We also translate when:

- a) Information has broad applications (justice, health, immigration, education, community interests, etc.)
- b) It is educational material (e.g. fun fact sheets intended for young children or students, general facts about Nova Scotia, etc.)
- c) It pertains to a service we currently provide, or updates information that was previously available in English and French

\* There are instances when simultaneous publication is not possible, for example when critical information is changing rapidly and needs to get out quickly. French will always follow as soon as possible.

### **Translations beyond the minimum requirements of the regulations**

On occasion, we may choose to translate beyond the minimum requirements. Translating content that is not within the regulations is a decision made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with our department's French-language services coordinator, program owner(s) and the department's Executive Leadership. Consideration is given to whether a program or service, for example, is delivered in French from start to finish or by using a planned iterative approach.

### **We ensure that when communicating with the public:**

- a) all written correspondence in French that is received by our department is replied to in French.
- b) all information material issued to the public simultaneously in French and English displays a bilingual provincial logo. In some instances when simultaneous publication is not possible, for example when critical information is changing very rapidly and needs to get out quickly, French will always follow as soon as possible.
- c) we take reasonable and appropriate steps to make members of the public aware of the services available in French and English through various means including social media, print advertising, online, etc.

## **Translation Services**

Acadian Affairs and Francophonie manages our translation requests and ensures that our news releases are translated when they meet any of the requirements listed above or upon request.

**Advertising** - Making sure Nova Scotians are aware that our services are available in French. Our department promotes services offered in French in the same manner as they are promoted in English, to encourage usage/uptake in French. Our Advertising, whether traditional print or digital, is translated and issued in French when it meets any of the requirements listed above. The bilingual (English-French) Government of Nova Scotia logo is used in our French-language advertising and any web addresses (URLs) point to French content.

## **Web Content and Digital Channels**

Our department decides which aspects of our web content will be provided in French. We are guided by the priority list in this document. These decisions are made in consultation with our FLS coordinator, program owner(s) and the department's Executive Leadership.

## **Consultations**

We plan and coordinate our public consultations according to the French-language Services Regulations and include options for members of the Acadian and francophone community to participate in French.

## **Agencies, Boards and Commissions**

Acadians and francophones are encouraged to become active participants of our agencies, boards, and commissions which impact their business, their community or way of life. As we all have a part to play to help preserve and grow awareness of the Acadian and Francophone culture in Nova Scotia.

## **Human Resources**

Public servants shall not be required or expected to provide translation services – even if the position they occupy is a French-English bilingual required position – unless they are a certified translator.

During recruitment activities, directors and hiring managers in consultation with our FLS Coordinator should identify positions where oral and/or written proficiency in French would be required or an asset.

Where applicable, identifying when a position is deemed a bilingual (French-English) required position, should be considered if it will allow for more effective provision of French-language services.

## APPENDIX B: Inventory of Services

The following is a detailed inventory of French-language services and information provided by DMA as of March 31, 2024.

### Communications with the Public and Information Materials: Printed or Electronic

Continued to promote the availability of French-language services to the public through radio, print, social media, online advertising and by word of mouth.

Examples of services included:

- In collaboration with the Halifax Regional Municipality, we facilitated access to translation for information related to the Office of the Municipal Clerk.
- Displayed the Bonjour! Services en Français signage in offices where French Services are available to the public.
- Maintained the level of French-language Services currently offered by phone, in-person, through our website and through “Ask Us” public enquiries.
- Issued French-language advertisements and materials in advertising, marketing campaigns and info graphics whenever possible.

### Office of the Fire Marshal

Information was made available in French to help reduce the risk of fire and to help people know what to do if a fire happens. Examples include:

An educational campaign to inform Nova Scotians on safety precautions they can take to protect themselves from fire leading up to Fire Safety Week in October each year. Topics included:

- ‘Some Heroes Wear Capes’ ad and video, fire safety checklist, evacuation plans, wood stoves, chimneys, phones, space heaters, fire safety, put a lid on it! when cooking.
- Keep your cooking area clutter-free! Turn pot and pan handles inward; Be smart use a timer; Never leave pots unattended; Keep kids safe in the kitchen; Install smoke alarms and smoke alarms save lives. Change the batteries in your smoke detectors.
- Is your BBQ ready? Fire will not wait. Plan your escape. Keep fire safety in mind during the holidays.
- Published information on proposed Building Code changes via the Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Issued a number of fire hazard Recall / Notices related to consumer goods.



### **Department of Municipal Affairs website:**

A portion of the online information about DMA programs and services has been available in French since March 2022.

### **Public Engagement**

We consulted municipalities on a variety of topics that impacted them, including:

- Code of Conduct.
- New Service Exchange Agreement.

### **Community Development and Growth**

- Kept an ongoing dialogue with Acadian and francophone community organizations at business and community events.
- Encouraged Acadians and francophones to find out about and participate in local government.
- Land use planning process charts available in French:
  - Chart 1 – Planning Documents Approval Process
  - Chart 2 – Land Use Bylaw and Development Agreement Approval Process

Acadian and Francophone communities also received help from other DMA programs such as:

- Provincial Capital Assistance Program for water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste projects [Grant Supports Municipal Infrastructure Projects](#).
- The Municipal Financial Capacity Grant, which is an unconditional grant to support municipalities in providing services to Nova Scotians.
- Volunteer fire departments, ground search and rescue organizations, and First Nations fire departments' grants to help address the impacts of rising operational costs.