



French-language Services Plan

2025–2026

Department of Justice

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Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2025-2026 »

Message from the Deputy Minister

It is my pleasure to present the Nova Scotia Department of Justice's French-language Services Plan for 2025-26. This plan, developed in collaboration with Nova Scotia Legal Aid and the Public Prosecution Service, reflects our ongoing commitment to enhancing access to justice for Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone communities.

Building on the progress we have made, we continue to strengthen French-language services through training, policy development, and access to legal resources. This year, we are advancing our work on the translation of key legal materials, expanding opportunities for staff training in French, and improving service delivery within family and criminal justice systems. We are also deepening our engagement with justice system partners and the judiciary to ensure that French-language services are integrated meaningfully and sustainably into our operations.

These efforts are made possible through collaboration—among staff, across government, and with our community and justice partners. We are grateful for the continued federal support that enables us to expand access to justice in both official languages. Most importantly, we recognize that this work would not be possible without the dedication of those who develop, implement, and uphold these commitments every day.

Thank you to everyone contributing to this important work. Your efforts are vital in ensuring that Nova Scotia's justice system is accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our Acadian and francophone communities.

Jennifer Glennie, K.C.

Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

What we're doing to contribute to the growth of the Acadian and francophone community

We recognize the importance of French-language services, and we endeavour to fulfill our responsibilities under the *French-language Services Act* and *Regulations*. We believe Nova Scotians should have access to quality government services in French, and this plan demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our programs, policies, and services address the priorities expressed by the Acadian and francophone community. To achieve this aim, we collaborate with other designated public institutions across government – including the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie – through the French-language Services Coordinating Committee and l'Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse (AJEFNÉ). We greatly value these partnerships, which ensure a continued understanding of the unique needs of our province's Acadian and francophone community.

We encourage Nova Scotians to request services from government in French. We also encourage Acadians and francophones to have their voices heard by participating on Agencies, Boards and Commissions, which are regularly advertised by the Executive Council Office. As we continue to maintain and improve our French-language services, we welcome feedback on our progress, and we invite you to share with us your comments or questions by contacting our French-language Services Coordinator. If you wish to make a formal complaint regarding French-language services, please contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

French-language Services Coordinator

Stephanie Lo, telephone: 902-229-0861

Email: stephanie.lo@novascotia.ca

Services we offer in French

The Department of Justice offers various programs and services in French such as:

- Hearings in court in accordance with the *Criminal Code of Canada*.
- Interpreters in Provincial Court for criminal matters.
- Simultaneous interpreters as required by law at the Supreme Court and Appeal Court for criminal matters.
- Translated print materials in priority subject areas determined within divisions.
- Staff participation in the "Bonjour!" campaign.
- nsfamilylaw.ca available in both official languages.
- Processing of uncontested applications for divorces in French.
- The Parent Information Program in both official languages online.
- Online intake modules (for family law matters) in both official languages.
- Bilingual staff in court administration offices located in designated areas.
- French pre-sentence reports.
- Documents uploaded to the Correctional Services webpage are translated in French and bilingual promotional material is created as needed.
- Educational programs in French are offered to individuals in custody at correctional settings upon request.
- Supervision of individuals in custody and in the community is offered in French, upon request.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid supports French-language services with:

- Information on their website in both official languages.
- A 24-hour telephone duty counsel service providing free and immediate legal advice in French or English to people arrested or detained.
- French-speaking counsel under retainer to represent the accused.

Public Prosecution Service provides the following services in French:

- French-speaking Crown Attorneys available.
- Oral and written communication in French with various agencies (particularly police agencies) and the public (including accused persons, witnesses, and the media).

How we communicate with the public in French

The Department of Justice

Court Services, Correctional Services, Maintenance Enforcement and Victims Services are the divisions within the Department of Justice that have the most public contact. Employees forward French written or oral requests to staff within their workplace who can respond in French. If there is no one within the office who can respond in French, we forward the correspondence to head office for translation and to other staff who can answer questions in French.

Other divisions have staff members participating in the "Bonjour!" campaign to respond to specific inquiries in French. If there is no one at the local level who can manage the request, we communicate with the Department's French-language Services Coordinator.

The installation of 60 licenses for Antidote, a French correction software program, on the computers of staff, Judges, Crown Prosecutors, Court Reporters and Probation Officers also facilitate correspondence with our stakeholders.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NSLA)

While NSLA operates the Commission independently from the Department of Justice, they are part of this French-language services plan.

NSLA full-service offices have the most public contact. If NSLA receives written correspondence in French, the response will be in French. NSLA employees forward French written or oral requests to staff within their workplace who are able to respond in French. Documents are translated in-house or by a service provider. If they require translation, NSLA may contact the Department of Justice French-language coordinator for a referral.

NSLA continues to track requests for French-language services. NSLA responds to French requests, in writing and orally, as capacity permits and has staff fluent in French who can address inquiries. NSLA

participates in the “Bonjour!” campaign to respond to specific inquiries in French. If there is no one at the local level who can manage the request, they refer to staff who can respond in French.

NSLA maintains a list of French-speaking lawyers who are willing to provide telephone duty counsel services in French.

NSLA has subscribed to the use of Language Line which provides all lawyers and support staff with 24-hour access to a live French and/or Canadian French interpreter via telephone or by video.

Public Prosecution Service (PPS)

PPS has members of their staff in each of their four geographic regions who can respond to requests from the public to communicate in French. PPS has 15 Crown Attorneys who can conduct trials in French, meeting communication obligations governed by sections 530.1 of the *Criminal Code*.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2024-25

Strengthen frameworks for French-language services

Department of Justice

Completed Goals

- Collaborated with Nova Scotia Legal Aid and Public Prosecution Service to draft and make public on the Department of Justice website, in both official languages, the 2024-25 French-language Services Accountability Report and the 2025-26 French-language Plan by March 31, 2025.
- Reviewed the French Hearing Protocol to ensure it is up to date.
- Translated Updating your Accessibility Plan toolkit, Accessibility Plan template and related resources, built environment standard information and resources, as well as Recommendations to the Minister of Justice on an Accessibility Standard in Employment and webinars on the Accessibility Act.
- Legal Services assisted the Office Acadian Affairs and Francophonie with amendments to the French-Language Services Act (FLSA), which were made to strengthen language related to the Minister’s responsibilities, evolving diversity in Nova Scotia’s Acadian communities, growth in French language speakers, and long-term commitments to protecting the rights and culture of the Acadian and francophone communities.
- The amendments to the FLSA were passed during the fall session of 2024 and came into effect on royal assent with the exception of section 10(3) of Chapter 26, subject to proclamation.
- There were no amendments to the *Regulations* pursuant to the FLSA, at this time.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Continuing to translate built environment standard information and resources as they are developed.
- Translating education standard public review materials.
- Reviewing the French training policy and its operational needs tables annually to ensure identified training needs are being met.
- Reviewing and updating the French Oath Book.
- Delivering staff training on the Official Languages amendments to the *Divorce Act*.
 - completion of an online information module providing an ‘active offer of service’ (in French) with virtual training for court staff regarding the same;

- development of an 'active offer of service' best practice for family court staff to provide French-language services to clients upon request.
- Continuing to explore/draft internal policies and procedures in relation to the Official Languages amendments to the *Divorce Act* in consultation with the judiciary.
- Working towards adoption of the translated NS Civil Procedure Rules, Forms and Practice Memorandum:
 - review of the currently translated NS Civil Procedure Rules, Forms and Practice Memorandum by the Judiciary for eventual adoption by the Rules Committee;
 - completion of translation of all NS Civil Procedure Rules, Forms and Practice Memorandum.
- All divisions will continue to have a representative on the Department of Justice French-language services committee.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Completed Goals

- Contributed to the 2024-25 French-language Services Accountability Report and the French-language Plan for 2025-26.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Maintaining membership in the Department of Justice French-language Services Advisory Committee by attending and participating in meetings.

Public Prosecution Service

Carried over/Ongoing

- Continuing to have a representative on the Department of Justice French-language services committee.
- Maintaining and updating a list of Crown Attorneys able to conduct trials in the French-language pursuant to section 530.1 of the *Criminal Code*.

Engage the Acadian and francophone community

Department of Justice

Completed Goals

- Attended meetings held in French with AJEFNÉ.
 - Funded part of AJEFNÉ's 30th anniversary event, which took place on November 8th, 2024.
- Attended the French Language Services Coordinating Committee meetings with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.
- Participated in meetings with the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Access to Justice in Both Official Languages.
- A social work class at Université Sainte-Anne received a presentation on the role of a Probation Officer.
- Community Corrections has coordinated with Probation Offices in Quebec on several occasions to facilitate file transfers for other Probation Officers.
- Supported the Accessibility Advisory Board to offer a French consultation session on their draft recommendations for a goods and services standard.
- Planning is underway and engagement with the French services branch at EECD on engaging French communities and CSAP students and families in the public review of the draft education standard.
- The Accessibility Directorate received and responded to one inquiry in French.
- Legal Services throughout the year provided continuing advice and support to the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.
- Legal Services throughout the year participated in consultation with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie to develop ongoing dialogue with the Acadian and francophone community.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Continuing to meet with AJEFNÉ to consult on activities related to the delivery of French language services in family justice (private family law).
 - Regular virtual team meetings are scheduled with members of AJEFNÉ, Court Services and the judiciary.
- Tracking French-language inquiries regarding services provided by Victim Services.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Completed Goals

- Translated and posted French content on NSLA website.
- NSLA Coordinator attended AJEFNÉ 2024 Annual General Meeting, and events held to celebrate the organization's 30-year celebration. The event included a panel discussion on French language services offered within the public sector and an opportunity to discuss and consult with the speakers/stakeholders who were in attendance.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Maintaining membership with AJEFNÉ.
- Translating and posting French content on NSLA website.

Public Prosecution Service

Completed Goals

- Supplied bilingual business cards to one new Crown Attorney.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Maintaining French content on the Public Prosecution Service website.

Develop and deliver programs and services in French

Department of Justice

Completed Goals

- Arranged for translation of the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act* and *Regulations* for the purpose of publishing an unofficial version.
 - Contracted with Centre de traduction et terminologie juridiques (CTTJ) for translation to be completed in 2024-25.
- Contracted with Centre canadien de français juridique (CCFJ) to provide staff with French legal terminology training specific to family law over the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years.
- Completed the year's sessions of French Legal Terminology related to family law, as well as criminal law.
- French at lunch meetings with Family division employees to practice their French skills.
- Provided French services in criminal court in accordance with section 530 of the *Criminal Code*.
 - Held 5 French trials, plus 24 various court proceedings in French.
 - Employed French interpreters in court on 122 occasions totaling 517 hours of interpretation services.
- Offered Department of Justice, Nova Scotia Legal Aid and Public Prosecution Service employees a variety of French training opportunities.
 - 20 employees in the Department of Justice and 2 Crown Attorneys from the Public Prosecution Service participated in various levels of French training at Université Sainte-Anne throughout the year.
 - 20 Justice employees and 5 Crown Attorneys from the Public Prosecution Service participated in French legal terminology training offered online by the CCFJ, some on several occasions.
 - 6 staff members attended online French workshops on Legal Communication in January, February, and March 2025, offered by Université de Saint-Boniface, Manitoba.
- Continued to support provincial judges' French training opportunities.
 - Sponsored 2 provincial court judges for French tutoring offered by l'Université Sainte-Anne.
 - 1 judge received 38 hours of tutoring, while the other received 37 hours of tutoring in French.
 - Supported 5 judges who participated in Juralingo, a legal language education program in French for Provincial Court Judges, available in Caraquet, New Brunswick, during Spring and Fall 2024.
- Filled 5 bilingual positions at 3 courthouses.
- Shared bilingual job postings with external organizations to recruit more bilingual candidates.
- Provided funding for video conferencing equipment to 4 courthouses to enhance French language services.
- Arranged for the translation of materials into French.
- Three clients in Community Corrections were supervised in French.
- The "Bonjour!" program is active across divisions.
- One French pre-sentence report was completed for Quebec Courts.
- The Correctional Services in-custody handbook was updated and translated in French then posted to the Correctional Services website.
- The in-custody phone system FAQ was updated and translated in French, then posted to the Correctional Services website.

- One person in custody asked for materials to support his desire to learn French as a second language. Leisure reading materials were offered.
- Translated press releases: Improving Accessibility in Workplaces, Members Named to Information and Communication Accessibility Committee, Members Named to Accessibility Standard Committee.
- Provided Access Awareness Week posters and social media activities in French.
- Provided Accessibility Foundations training in French, including developing First Voice videos from Francophone persons with disabilities and translating training materials.
- Provided International Day of Persons with Disabilities materials in French.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Continuing activities to support future delivery of French eCourt and to support its launch once completed.
- Continuing to offer bilingual Alternative Dispute Resolution Services in *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act* cases.
- Maintaining ongoing updates to legal information content on nsfamilylaw.ca website in both official languages.
- Continuing to advertise French services in Family Court, such as:
 - the Online Parenting Information Program (PIP), via social media (Twitter, Facebook) and reminding staff to offer the French PIP to clients, including French stakeholders in the social media loop.
 - the French eCourt service, once live, and continuing activities to support its delivery.
- Publishing and delivering updated Parent Information Program Modules in both official languages.
- Continuing with translation of family law materials into French.
- Exploring the upgrading of Family Court Services staff's French language skills to meet operational needs.
- Responding to French-language inquiries in French.
- Continuing to offer French-language services and programs to the public through online and virtual platforms.
 - Publishing and delivering updated Parent Information Program Modules in both official languages.
 - Publishing and delivering updated Intake Modules in both official languages.
 - Maintaining ongoing updates to legal information content on nsfamilylaw.ca website in both official languages.
- Drafting French pre-sentence reports as required.
- Supervising of individuals in custody and in the community in French, upon request.
- Providing French educational programs to individuals in custody at correctional settings, as needed.
 - Tracking the number of programs requested and offered in French.
- Delivering services and informational materials that respond to the priority needs of the Acadian and Francophone community.
 - Participating in the "Bonjour!" program.
 - Ensuring documents uploaded to the Correctional Services webpage are translated in French and promotional materials are provided in French when delivering messaging to the Acadian and Francophone communities.
- Continuing to promote employment opportunities to Acadian Communities.
- Continuing the recruitment of French speaking Independent Legal Advice Lawyers and French speaking Counselors for the Criminal Injuries Counseling Program.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Completed Goals

- Provided bilingual business cards to lawyers who offer services in French.
- Offered French-language training made available to NSLA employees by the provincial government.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Promoting French as a desirable asset in hiring new personnel.
- Providing French-speaking counsel to individuals who requested a French-speaking lawyer.

Public Prosecution Service

Completed Goals

- Promoted the availability of French training available through the provincial government and elsewhere.
 - 5 Crown Attorneys participated in French Legal Terminology training delivered by CCFJ.
 - 2 Crown Attorneys participated in the French sessions offered at Université Sainte-Anne.

Carried over/Ongoing

- Continuing to provide Antidote software licences to bilingual Crown Attorneys.
- Providing French-language *Criminal Codes* to bilingual Crown Attorneys, 12 in current year.

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2025-26

Strengthen frameworks for French-language services

Goals

To champion and support the internal administrative structures by strengthening the policy, legislative and administrative frameworks for the implementation of the *French-language Services Act* and *Regulations*, the Department of Justice, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, and Public Prosecution Service commit to:

- implementing the Nova Scotia *French-language Services Act* and *Regulations*.
- contributing to the provincial government's Annual Plan and Progress Report on French-language services.
- ongoing development and implementation of policies and procedures to support the delivery of French-language services.
- raising awareness of French-language services, supporting employees, and increasing the government's capacity to deliver services in French.

Planned Measures

Department of Justice will

- Draft and advertise, in French and English, on the Department of Justice website, the 2024-25 French-language Services Accountability Report and the French-language Services Plan for 2025-26 by March 31, 2025.
- Translate documents about the *Accessibility Act*, *Regulations*, standards, Prescribed Public Sector Bodies, and the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan.
 - Translate the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan 2025-2028
- The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* speaks to victims of crime having rights, including the right to information and participation. Victim Services will identify and address access to justice issues for victims that require translation/interpretation to access services in a timely way, court proceedings and documents.
- Provide legal advice and drafting in support of legislative amendments to the *French language Services Act* and *Regulations*, as required.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid will

- Maintain membership in the Department of Justice French-language Services Advisory Committee by attending and participating in meetings.
- Contribute to the 2024-25 French-language Services Accountability Report and the French-language Plan for 2025-26.

Public Prosecution Service will

- Continue to have a representative on the Department of Justice French-language services committee.
- Maintain and update a list of Crown Attorneys able to conduct trials in the French-language pursuant to Section 530.1 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

Engage the Acadian and francophone community

Goals

To engage the Acadian and francophone community through communications and consultations in support of its development and growth, the Department of Justice, Nova Scotia Legal Aid and Public Prosecution Service commit to:

- supporting the community in its development, through consultation, collaboration, and partnerships.
- consulting and communicating with the community and gaining input, feedback, and recommendations.

Planned Measures

Department of Justice will

- Provide opportunities to participate in accessibility consultations in French.
- Provide support to the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), the Provincial Acadian School Board, in the development and implementation of their accessibility plan.
 - Engage French-language partners to inform design of capacity building programs and services.
- Respond to and track French-language inquiries about disability and accessibility in French.
- Staff respond to inquiries received in French.
- Continue collaborations with AJEFNÉ.
- Continue attending the French Language Services Coordinating Committee meetings with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.
- Continue to participate in the work of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial working group on Access to Justice in Both Official Languages.
- Outreach to Acadian and francophone community service providers to provide Victim Services program and service information brochures in French.
- Continue to provide legal support and advice to Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid will

- The NSLA coordinator will maintain a membership with AJEFNÉ.
 - Attend social events when feasible and AGM.
- Publish new content or amendments to NSLA's website, with the option to translate content into French.
 - Ensure that all content published on the website in English can be translated on an ongoing basis.

Public Prosecution Service will

- Maintain French information on the Public Prosecution Service website.

Develop and deliver programs and services in French

Goals

In support of French-language services development, planning, and delivery to the public, the Department of Justice, Nova Scotia Legal Aid and Public Prosecution Service commit to:

- delivering services and informational materials that respond to the priority needs of the Acadian and francophone community.
- increasing capacity to provide French-language services in priority areas.
- supporting French-language training for staff.
- measuring the benefits and effectiveness of French-language training, with course participants.

Planned Measures

Department of Justice will

- Promote French-learning opportunities to all staff members, including those in the Public Prosecution Service and Nova Scotia Legal Aid.
- Work towards providing more Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program (NSRJP) materials, resources, and services in French, commensurate with regional needs.
 - Consult Nova Scotia's 8 Restorative Justice Agencies, as well as Community Corrections offices, regarding French-language needs.
 - Identify and prioritize NSRJP materials (e.g., resources, program documents, forms, other program supports) for translation into French.
- Continue to increase the accessibility to French-language services through the increased availability and use of technology.
- Share bilingual job postings with external organizations to recruit more bilingual candidates.
- Fill bilingual Court Services positions as vacancies arise.
- Draft French pre-sentence reports.
- Documents uploaded to the Correctional Services webpage are translated in French and bilingual promotional material is created as needed.
- Continue to participate in the "Bonjour!" program.
- Educational programs in French are offered to individuals in custody at correctional settings upon request.
- Supervision of individuals in custody and in the community is offered in French, upon request.
- Translate Accessibility Standard related materials in French.
- Advertise in multiple job postings, "French will be an asset" or similar wording, if applicable, for positions where bilingualism is not required.
- Provide accessibility awareness and capacity building resources in French.
 - Provide Access Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities materials in French.
 - Provide the Accessibility Foundations training program in French.
- Continue prioritizing public and client documents for French translation, including: The Provincial Victim Services Program, Criminal Injuries Counseling Program, Restitution, and Independent Legal Advice.
 - Victim Services is exploring the translation of specific client letters and building a library of these documents on their internal SharePoint.
 - Victim Services will continue having materials translated and working with the JEIN Governance Committee for case management enhancements to produce French documents.
- Update and maintain the Victim Services website to provide French versions of priority brochures, forms, and information.
- Post front counter signage at multiple offices within the Department of Justice that reflects a multilingual greeting, "Welcome."

Nova Scotia Legal Aid will

- Provide French-speaking counsel to individuals who request a French-speaking lawyer.
 - Promote French as a desirable asset in hiring new personnel.
- Continue to offer French-language training made available by the provincial government to Nova Scotia Legal Aid employees.
 - Maintain communication with the coordinator for the French-language training and forward the dates and times when the training is offered to NSLA employees in a timely manner.
- Maintain subscription to Language Line.

Public Prosecution Service will

- Promote the availability of French training available through the provincial government and elsewhere.
- Continue to provide Antidote software licences to bilingual Crown Attorneys.
- Provide French-language *Criminal Codes* to bilingual Crown Attorneys.