NOVA SCOTIA

French-language Services Plan

2025–2026

Department of Service Nova Scotia

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French-language Services Plan
Department of Service Nova Scotia
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Department of Service Nova Scotia

Bonjour!

We're proud to share Service Nova Scotia's 2025–2026 French-language Services Plan.
This plan reflects our progress from April 2024 to March 2025 and outlines key priorities for the year ahead.

Nova Scotia's vibrant French-speaking community—including residents, students, workers, and visitors—enriches our province in countless ways. Their contributions strengthen our social, cultural, and economic fabric.

As a core government service provider, Service Nova Scotia is committed to delivering inclusive, accessible, and high-quality services in French—both in person and online. Supporting the Acadian and francophone community is central to our work and aligns with our commitment to the French-language Services Act.

We look forward to building on this work in the year ahead.

Joanne Munro
Deputy Minister
Department of Service Nova Scotia

French-language Services Coordinator

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
French-language Services Coordinator
Department of Service Nova Scotia
1505 Barrington Street, P.O. Box 10,
Halifax, NS B3J 3K5

Note: The French-language Services Coordinator for Service Nova Scotia also provides support to Department of Municipal Affairs.

What we achieved in 2024–2025

Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public.

2024/25 Focus Areas

We improved online services and information, working with partners such as Cyber Security, Digital Services, and Public Works. Key updates included:

- **HARP & Seniors Care Grant**: Improved applications and processing.
- **Collection Services**: Ongoing client communication updates.
- **Personal Property Registry**: Updated Guide on how close and exact matches
- **Registry of Lobbyists**: Guide development in progress.
- **Registry of Motor Vehicles**:
    - Online Driver's Licence Renewal.
    - Updated online knowledge tests (Class 7), which included Rules of the Road and Signage Recognition.
- **Residential Tenancies**: New and updated Residential tenancy guides on renting, lease termination, evictions, and dispute resolution.
- **Vital Statistics**: Citizen Online Booking Tool now includes Vital Statistics

Ongoing Multi-Year Projects

We continue enhancing government services with French-language components, including:

- **Registry of Joint Stock Companies**: Online portal and web content.
- **Registry of Motor Vehicles**: Expanding online knowledge testing (Classes 1-4, Air Brake).
- **Vital Statistics & Joint Stock Companies**: Modernization efforts.

Inform the Public about Services in French

2024/25 Key Efforts

- Promoted French-language services through media and word of mouth.
- French staff greeted clients with *Bonjour!/Hello!*
- 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 140%
    - SNS (and CSDS digital projects on our behalf) 65,300 words
    - DMAH/OFM/NS Guard /DEM: 40,800 words

Continue to strengthen the Bonjour! Program

Worked with our internal communications team to promote French training and cultural awareness within the department including:

- Promoted French training and cultural awareness within the department.
- Shared French-learning and cultural opportunities, including:
    - Acadian Heritage Month & National Acadian Day (Aug 15)
    - *Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie* (March 1–31) & *Journée internationale de la Francophonie* (March 20)
    - *Fête de la Musique* (June 21)
    - *Acadie at a Glance* & French-language training (Université Ste-Anne)
    - *Oui Chef!* and *FRUNCH* (French at Lunch) sessions
- Translated materials for the SNS Minister's Awards, including certificates.
- Translated materials for internal recognition program.
- Published a series of blogs on Acadian history, cuisine, festivals, and language to government's internal website with over 86,000 views across all of our communications platforms.
    - Acadian Heritage Month
    - The Ships of the Acadian Expulsion | Navires de la deportation
    - Rendez-vous de la Francophonie (RVF) 2025

Look for opportunities to update public facing offices

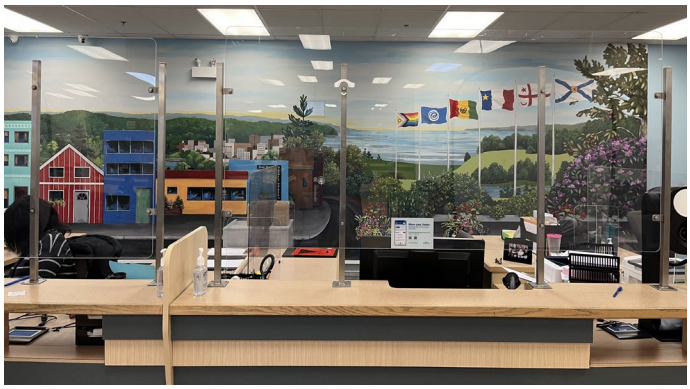
Update and improve signage at SNS buildings

- As leases change, we look for opportunities to create bilingual signage at our public facing offices (below left). In 2024/25 the following offices have revised bilingual signage:
    - Alcohol, Gaming Fuel and Tobacco, Dartmouth
    - Antigonish (below right) and Yarmouth Access Offices
    - Land Information Services, Dartmouth
    - Processing and Dirstribution Center, Dartmouth
    - Shelburne Registry of Motor Vehicles

Access NOVA SCOTIA
ACCÈS NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Access Centers

- Pilot bilingual *Q-matic* ticketing system (RMV Windsor)
- Bilingual AEDs in public spaces (in progress)
- *IDEA Mural*: *Art Takes Us on a Journey* (Dartmouth Access Centre - below)



Public Engagement

Continued support for Acadian and francophone participation in public consultations.

- *Geographic Names Engagement Hub: Name change for Belliveaus Cove - Digby County.*

  In June 2024, Geo Nova invited the community to vote on changing Belliveaus Cove to Belliveau Cove in Digby County, reflecting historical records that show the spelling as “Belliveau Cove”, named after an Acadian family who settled in the area – Jean Belliveau and his three sons. Results will be shared once official

What we are planning 2025/26

During 2025–2026, we will continue to explore ways to enhance French-language services across Service Nova Scotia. This may include increasing internal awareness through outreach activities, such as a departmental roadshow, and identifying opportunities to strengthen capacity through targeted support, student placements, or dedicated roles. We are also considering initiatives to improve the visibility of bilingual services, including a review of signage in public-facing facilities. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to inclusive, accessible service delivery for all Nova Scotians.

In 2025–2026, we look forward to building on the momentum of Acadian Heritage Month, officially declared in Nova Scotia last year and first celebrated in August 2024. This annual recognition offers a valuable opportunity to continue promoting cultural awareness across the department and within our public-facing spaces, while celebrating the rich history and contributions of the Acadian community.

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
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.

Our vacant positions are advertised with French-language capacity as an asset or bilingual required.

APPENDIX B: Inventory of Services

Services we offer in French - Website, Online, In person, and Business Services:

Communications, Publications, Signage and Translated Material

Access Nova Scotia Offices, and other In-person services

- Access NS Digital Advertising Screens
- Book an appointment – Access NS tool
- COVID-19 signage (physical distancing, floor stickers)
- Free Wi-Fi in Access Centres
- iPad communication tools
- Qmatic ticketing service
- Respectful workplace signage

Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco Services available in French

- License Application
- iPad communication tools

Business services available in French:

- Societies Act - unofficial translation
- BizPaL – business permits and licenses application
- Qmatic Ticketing service: Access Centres, Business Registration Unit
- Nova Scotia Estimated Kilometer Worksheet for International Registration Plan
- Registry of Joint Stocks modernization:
  - Company Name Search
  - Name Reservation Request
  - Society Update Forms/Special Resolution Forms
  - By-laws and Memorandum of Association Forms

Contact Center – technology updates

New telephone technology for Public Enquiries, RMV, BRU and Collections allows for better call handling.

Geographic Information Services

Updates to the 1:10,000 Halifax Regional Municipality map sheets to include French information.

Translation and Simultaneous Translations Services:

- Translations were supplied by Translation Services, Acadian Affairs and Francophonie
- Simultaneous translation services were provided upon request at Residential Tenancies hearings

Vital Statistics:

Website information and guides along with 21 forms, applications and affidavits including the Gender Options for Identity Documents are now bilingual.

- iPad communication tools
- Qmatic ticketing service

Bilingual Signage

- 1505 Barrington Street - Head Office
- RMV offices:
  - Baddeck
  - Shelburne

Website: novascotia.ca/SNS
In March 2024 more than 72% of the information about SNS programs and services was available in French.

Online Services available in French:
In March 2024, the following online services were available in French.

- Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco - Online Ticket Lottery License Application
- Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates
- Birth registration kiosks
- Book an appointment – Access NS tool
- Change of Address Service
- Clearview Connects – Fraud report portal
- Collection Services – Payments
- Heating Assistance Rebate Program
- Lien Check
- Motor Vehicles Services
  - RMV – French accents/long names
  - Vehicle Permit Renewal
  - Pay a Fine
  - Pay a Fee for Default Fines
  - Road and Knowledge test payments
  - Pay a Parking Ticket
  - RMV Online Inquiries Service
  - Online Knowledge Tests (Class 4, 6,7,8)
  - Online Driver's Licence Renewals
  - Online Dealer Services (available to Car Dealers)
  - Driver Insurance Abstract Service (available to Insurance Companies)
- Nova Scotia Permits Directory
- Personal Property Registry Service
- Property Tax Rebate for Seniors
- Public Enquiries contact form
- Seniors Care Grant (Seniors)