French-language Services Plan

Department of Opportunities and Social Development

2026–27

NOVA SCOTIA

French-language services plan 2026–27

Nova Scotia Department of Opportunities & Social Development and Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : «Plan de services en français 2026-2027 Ministère des Opportunités et du Développement social et du Conseil consultatif sur la condition féminine de la Nouvelle-Écosse»

Message from the deputy minister

Bonjour!

On behalf of Nova Scotia's Department of Opportunities and Social Development and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am pleased to share our French-language Services Plan for 2026–27. This annual plan reflects our continued commitment to ensuring Acadian and francophone communities can access our programs and services in the language of their choice. Strengthening French-language services requires steady collaboration — across government, with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, and with community partners whose insight and leadership guide this work. Together, we are making meaningful progress in improving the quality, visibility, and accessibility of services in French.

As we move forward, we will continue to support staff with the tools and training needed to confidently offer services in French, expand the availability of translated materials, and promote active offer across our department. Thank you to the many employees whose dedication makes this work possible. Your efforts ensure that every Nova Scotian can engage with us in a way that is clear, respectful, and inclusive. I invite you to visit our website to learn more about services available in French: http://gov.ns.ca/coms/fr/index.html.

Merci beaucoup,
Craig Beaton
Deputy Minister
Department of Opportunities and Social Development
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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

We recognize the importance of French-language services and endeavour to fulfil 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 programmes, 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. We greatly value this partnership, which ensures 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 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:
Grace Dean (Grace.Dean@novascotia.ca, 902-233-4195)

Services we offer in French

Printed and digital materials

- Various sections on the Community Services website describing programs and services and access to French forms, brochures, and reports
- Contract through 211 and Canadian Red Cross to provide access to COVID-19 related supports and resources in French
- Tip sheets on communicating remotely with children and teens for professionals, parents, and caregivers
- Booklet and form to request and administrative review or appeal of a decision
- FAQ for caregivers and other documents for the Alternative Family Care program
- Foster Care marketing materials such as a poster, French foster care brochures, bookmarks, and a French/English language parade banner
- Booklet "What You Need to Know..." explaining amendments to the *Children and Family Services Act*
- Forms such as the Income Assistance application, Child Abuse Registry form, and licensing forms
- Standard Household Rate brochure, poster, and fact sheet
- Information on accessing Poverty Reduction Building Vibrant Communities Grants

Employee resources

- Over-the-phone interpreter services through the Language Line
- French Speaking Directory (directory of employees who can speak French)
- French-language Services toolkit for employees which includes an infographic on how to respond to verbal and written requests/communications in French and an infographic that explains Active Offer
- French-language Services section on Pulse, our Intranet
- "Bonjour" visual identification program
- French-language training

How we communicate with the public in French

In accordance with the *FLS Act* and *Regulations*, as well as our own French-language Services guidelines, all verbal and written correspondence received in French was responded to in French with the help of CNS Translation Services and/or our FLS Coordinator. We do our best to have staff available onsite that can immediately answer inquiries in French. When someone is not available to handle requests, staff can access interpretation services through our Language Line or through our directory of French-speaking employees. Both resources are available on our intranet site. French Written Correspondence and Verbal Communication Guidelines and posters are also available to staff to help them when responding to requests in French.

A French-language services toolkit is available on our departmental intranet site to provide guidance and support to employees for active offer, translation, verbal, and written communications in French. We also strongly recommend to French training participants to actively offer French-language services when possible.

In accordance with the *FLS Act* and Regulations, as well as our own French-language Services guidelines, if a public consultation is planned, we will include options for members of the Acadian and francophone community to participate in French in the public consultation process. Our goal is to provide members of the Acadian and francophone community with the opportunity to participate in the public consultation process when possible.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2025–26

Strategic Objective 1 – Leadership and Policy Direction
Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks

Senior Leaders and Staff

- The Deputy Minister and Senior Management Team have supported the FLS Coordinator's continued participation on the Provincial FLS Coordinators Committee and its applicable subcommittees.
- We promoted National Acadian Day, through the OSD intranet site: The Pulse.
- The FLSC promoted the French Written and Verbal Correspondence guideline and online toolkit for staff use. This toolkit includes an infographic on how to respond to verbal and written requests/communications in French and an infographic that explains Active Offer.
- We currently have 40 staff in Service Delivery who have identified that they have the ability to communicate in French.
- The following have been shared:
    - The French-language Speaking Hiring Panel Roster to hiring managers.
    - The use of Language Line and the French-language Speakers Directory among staff and senior leaders.
    - The French-language Services Human Resources Guidelines.
    - The OSD French-language Toolkit for employees.

Strategic Objective 2 – Community Engagement and Outreach
Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community

Community Engagement and Outreach

- OSD responded in French to all verbal and written correspondence received in French.
- Materials supporting consultations and proposed changes to adoption records were translated.
- The Department continues its effort in recruiting foster/adoptive parents in both French and English.
- The CFSA engagement materials were available in French, with the opportunity to respond in French.
- Service Delivery has built a partnership with Universite Sainte Anne to provide Bachelor of Social Work placements and employment opportunities for graduates.
- Service Delivery has also created partnerships with French community organizations that champion French culture and provide culturally relevant information to programs.
- In 2025-2026 the Status of Women Office supported the FLS plan objective of community engagement and outreach in the following ways:
    - translated, designed, printed, and distributed Change pour le mieux: un livre pour les femmes victimes de violence, and the Neighbours, Friends, and Families brochure series on the following topics: how to talk to someone who's experiencing abuse; how to talk to someone who is abusive; and how to safety plan;
    - translated, designed, printed, and distributed 211 Helpline cards (men's, women's, all genders, and all lines);
    - met with FFANE to learn about their carte des services aux victims de la violence fondée sur le sexe (map of services for victims of gender-based violence) project, an interactive online map identifying French-language supports for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), and to discuss future opportunities for partnering; and
    - provided new funding through the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Minority-language Services and in partnership with Acadian Affairs, for 3 French-language outreach workers at women-focused organization that had identified a need for services in French:
        - Alice House (Halifax Regional Municipality)
        - Bryony House (Halifax Regional Municipality)
        - Tri-County Women's Centre (Yarmouth County)

External Communications

- Multiple offices display publications about programs and services in both languages.
- OSD has worked with the Executive Council Office to advertise opportunities in both French and English to become a member of government agencies, boards, and commissions.

Strategic Objective 3 – Quality and Availability of French-Language Services
Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public

- The language line was promoted on our intranet site; contact information is available on the OSD intranet directly on the FLS page and on the main menu for Forms, Policies and Procedures.
- French-language training offered by Université Sainte-Anne was promoted through emails sent to employees.
- The Department continues to promote and encourage the participation of its employees in French-language training through OSD Pulse and emails sent to employees.
- The French-language Speakers Directory was updated on a bi-annual basis.
- OSD staff also have access to interpretation services through the Language line, which enhances our capacity to offer FLS to the community.

Visibility and Accessibility of FLS

- The FLS Plan was published on our internet and intranet sites in English and French.
- OSD continued to be represented at Acadian and francophone community organizations and 3rd party service providers' AGMs i.e. Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), Réseau Santé, etc.
- OSD continued to be represented on Réseau Santé along with Acadian Affairs, Department of Health and Wellness and numerous groups representing Acadian and francophone organizations.
- Making French and English posters available, as applicable, to support observances such as African Heritage Month and Acadian Heritage Month.
- The FLSC makes "Bonjour" materials available to all OSD offices.

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2026–27

Objective 1: Strengthen Internal Operational Structures Including Policy, Legislative and Administrative Frameworks

1.1 The French-language Services Coordinator (FLSC) provides advice and recommendations to senior leaders.

- The FLSC will continue to represent the Department on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee and on FLS subcommittees.
- The FLSC will continue to promote awareness and use of a French Written and Verbal Correspondence guideline to supportstaff in responding to requests in French.
- The FLSC will support and promote the use of the French-language Speaking Hiring Panel Roster by hiring managers when possible.

1.2 The FLSC builds and maintains relationships between and within departments.

- The FLSC will continue to build relationships with senior leaders and to share information about FLS Act and regulations.
- The FLSC will continue to meet with senior leaders to identify the needs for specific Frenchlanguage services.
- The FLSC will share information about translation services.
- The FLSC will promote the use of the Language Line and the French-language Speakers Directory amongst staff and senior leaders.

1.3 The Deputy Minister champions and encourages French-language services through:

- The continuous work of the French-language Services Coordinator.
- The consideration of French-language services into the department's policies, programs, and services.
- Staff actively championing and offering French-language services.
- The promotion and use of translation services.
- Senior leaders will encourage all staff to champion French-language services to help support and grow our French-language services.
- Senior leaders will encourage and promote active offer of French-language Services in areas where we offer front-line services.
- Supporting departmental awareness by promoting upcoming French-language holidays and observances on The Pulse, and helping highlight key events during Acadian Heritage Month to strengthen visibility and engagement across OSD.

1.4 The Deputy Minister is a member of the Committee of Deputy Ministers on FLS.

- The Deputy Minister will continue to be an active member of the Committee of Deputy Ministers on FLS.
- The FLSC will provide advice and recommendations when required.

1.5 OSD educates and promotes awareness of its obligations relating to French-language services and strives to fulfill those obligations in accordance with French-language Services Act and Regulations.

- The FLSC will share information and increase awareness about the French-language Services Act and Regulations as well as the resources that are available to staff.
- OSD will publish a French-language services Plan and contribute to the Government's annual progress report on French-language Services.

Objective 2: Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community

2.1 In accordance with the French-language Services Act and Regulations, OSD will provide, when possible, option for the community to participate in French (i.e. online surveys, consultation, engagement sessions).

- Provide opportunities for the Acadian and Francophone community to participate in province wide consultations, surveys, focus groups, or other engagement activities in the language of their choice.

2.2 Continue to build external relationships with the Acadian and francophone community and share information about services available in French. Improve and increase external communications in French with the Acadian and Francophone community.

- OSD shall continue to work with the Executive Council Office, who has the primary responsibility for recruiting members of the public to government agencies, boards, and commissions, and regularly advertises opportunities in both French and English. For more information, please visit www.gov.ns.ca/exec_council/abc
- OSD will continue to be represented at Acadian and francophone community organizations and 3rd party service providers' AGMs, i.e., Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), Réseau Santé, etc.

- Track and ensure timely responses to requests from external and internal audiences received through the website, phone calls, emails, or written correspondence.
- The FLSC will collaborate where possible with other departments and community organizations to plan annual celebrations (National Acadian Day, August 15th, International Francophonie Day, March 20th).

Objective 3: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public

3.1 Increase staff awareness on the French Language Services Act and Regulations to improve their understanding of our obligations and how to comply with the Act and Regulations in the delivery of programs and services.

- The FLSC will offer advice on how French-language services can be integrated into current and new initiatives carried out by CNS.
- Promote resources like the Language Line, the FLS Speaker directory and online toolkit for employees.
- Increase and promote the use of the Bonjour! logo/visual signs within DCS offices to increase active offer.
- Child and Youth Caring Facilities will promote increased employee participation in FLS training in order to enhance service delivery and promote cultural connections for youth in care.
- Continue to make French and English posters available, as applicable, to support observances such as African Heritage Month and Acadian Heritage Month.

3.2 Provide learning and development opportunities for staff and promote the French-language courses offered by Université Sainte-Anne.

- Promote French-language training according to the Université Sainte-Anne schedule of courses.
- Promote participation of employees in the Acadie at a Glance training.
- Encourage staff to request resources for French-language skills development, maintenance, and growth.

3.3 Ensure critical public information related to health safety and security is available to citizens in the language of their choice.

- Support the translation of web content, forms, brochures, manuals, and other publications as opportunities become available.
- Promote the availability of French-language services to the public through the use of the Government Visual Identification Program “Bonjour” and by actively offering bilingual services.
- Develop and post English and French signage in public spaces in all DCS offices to communicate safe and respectful office protocols.

3.4 Support staff learnings and development regarding FLS.

- Continue efforts to increase employee engagement.
- Increase the number of staff participating in French-language training and cultural awareness training.

- Promote the Acadie at a Glance training.

3.5 Support managers in hiring bilingual staff.

- Inform and advise hiring managers of the availability of the PSC French-Language Services Human Resource Guidelines and the French-language Hiring Panel Pool to support them in hiring bilingual staff.
- Consider including bilingual ability/language skills as an asset in postings for new hires in regions where it makes most sense.
- Increase awareness about the benefit of having bilingual staff in all divisions and all levels.
- Commit to hiring additional targeted bilingual positions, such as for Local Area Coordinator positions to support initiatives in community like the DSP School Leavers Program.

3.6 *In 2026-27, the Status of Women Office aims to support the FLS plan objective of community engagement and outreach in the following ways:*

- continue to collaborate with la fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FFANE) to identify opportunities to support the organization's efforts to advance the personal and social development of Acadian, Francophone and French-speaking women in Nova Scotia through the provision French-language materials produced by the Status of Women Office to FFANE and its partners;
- continue to promote and distributed Change pour le mieux: un livre pour les femmes victimes de violence, and the Neighbours, Friends, and Families brochure series on the following topics: how to talk to someone who's experiencing abuse; how to talk to someone who is abusive; and how to safety plan; Guide pour les filles; and 211 Helpline cards (men's, women's, all genders, and all lines); and
- Plan to continue funding French-language outreach workers at Alice House, Bryony House, and Tri-County Women's Centre through the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Minority-language Services and in partnership with Acadian Affairs.