



# **French-language Services Plan**

**2025–2026**

*Department of Cyber  
Security and Digital Solutions*

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French-language Services Plan  
Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions  
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# **French-language services plan 2025–26**

## *Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions*

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

### **Message from the deputy minister**

We are pleased to share with you the 2025-26 French-language services plan for the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions.

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions (CSDS) was established to enhance cyber security and transform the way digital services are developed and delivered to Nova Scotians. CSDS is responsible for information, communication, cyber security, and technology services for government and is a partner in health care delivery.

As the digital leaders in government, we are focused on listening to the needs and expectations of Nova Scotians and we aim to deliver inclusive, accessible, high-quality French-language services and information across digital channels.

We recognize the importance of French-language services, and we are committed to meeting our obligations and improving our capacity to offer French-language services as outlined under the French-Language Services Act.

Moving forward, we will continue to support the needs of the Acadian and francophone community by looking for more opportunities to provide services in French, as well as to raise awareness of French-language services within the public service.

We are incredibly proud of the team and the work they do everyday, and we welcome the opportunity to share this plan with you.

Natasha Clarke  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions

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

CSDS will continue to develop digital public services which make efforts to incorporate French language services from the outset. This aligns with CSDS's mandate to deliver high-quality, citizen centred, digitally enabled programs and services. This will ensure that Acadian and francophone members of the community can access more of the services they need in their preferred language, increasing trust and efficiency in the delivery of essential public services.

Human-centered design is at the heart of how the Department solves problems. We put people at the center of the development process, enabling our teams to create public services which resonate and meet the needs of our communities. Through this process, we continue to encourage teams to engage early and well with Acadian and francophone communities when developing digital public services through consultations and communications. We wish to understand and develop services which adapt and enable our communities to have an improved end-to-end experience accessing public services, and improved outcomes when receiving support from public services.

We encourage Nova Scotians to access services from government in French. We also encourage Acadians and francophones to have their voices heard by participating on agencies, boards and commissions. As we continue to maintain and increase 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. The Office of the Ombudsman can follow-up on complaints with respect to access to French-language services.

**French-language services coordinator:**

Noel Guscott (he/him/il, [Noel.Guscott@novascotia.ca](mailto:Noel.Guscott@novascotia.ca), 902-456-1488, Senior Digital Policy Advisor)

## Services we offer in French

CSDS currently offers and is focused on further delivery of the following services in French with other Departmental colleagues.

- French-language services currently offered online include, but are not limited to:
  - Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP)
  - Seniors Care Grant Applications and Processing
  - Digital Services For You
  - My NS Account
  - NS Pay
  - Child Abuse Registry
  - Online Driver's License Renewal
  - Online Vehicle Permit Renewal
  - Land Information Services
  - Registry of Joint Stocks Companies
- Publishing information about programs and services in French on NovaScotia.ca.
- Encouraging the translation and development of bilingual services, forms, and affidavits for use online.

## How we communicate with the public in French

CSDS follows the *French-language Services Act* (2004).

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 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 in emergency response when critical information is changing rapidly and needs to get out quickly. French will always follow as soon as possible.

### **Translation Services**

The Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophone (OAAF) 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 Nova Scotians aware that our services are available in French, where and when feasible. 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, can be 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.

### **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.

### **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.

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

CSDS provided and continues to provide a range of French-language enabled products and services across the public sector. We are in the process of optimizing and improving the quality of existing French-language supports for services like the Seniors Care Grants and Online Vehicle Permit Renewals, etc. We are beginning to identify future digital services which will benefit from French-language supports early in the development stage, thereby better serving our francophone and Acadian communities.

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

CSDS will continue to develop and implement French-language supports in products and services developed for citizens and businesses aligned with the government's mandate and strategic priorities, and the priorities of the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

CSDS will continue to support multi-year and ongoing initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Web content updates
- Registry of Motor Vehicles online testing and renewals
- Registry Modernization (i.e. translated information on Vital Statistics Registry, Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Land Information Services etc.)
- Various grants and other benefit programs for the public (i.e. HARPS) translated into French.

### **Strengthen frameworks for French-language services**

CSDS appointed a dedicated French Language Services Coordinator who will be responsible to support departmental colleagues in assessing French-language communication needs, supporting the development of the French Language Services Plan, and collaborating within government to ensure access to translation services and other assistance to advance French-language opportunities, as required.

CSDS teams continue to design products and services from the beginning to support both official languages and continue to improve existing services with French-language support.

### **Engage the Acadian and francophone community**

CSDS 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. 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. Each product and service are different, and teams are encouraged and enabled to develop engagement plans with the Acadian and francophone community when developing these services and products.

CSDS is not responsible for any Agencies, Boards and Commissions, but CSDS encourages Acadians and francophones 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.

### **Develop and deliver programs and services in French**

CSDS continues to encourage employees and other colleagues to incorporate French-language needs into the early development process of digital public services in the following ways:

**1. Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programs to the public.**

Our teams will continue to incorporate French-language capabilities into the development of digital public services and maintain existing services, such as the Seniors Care Grants, to ensure French-language support. Furthermore, we will continue to take a human-centered approach to designing public services and ensure that French-language capabilities are considered early in the development process.

**2. Inform the public about services in French.**

CSDS will continue to focus efforts on supporting and maintaining French-language services offered online and publishing information about programs and services in French on NovaScotia.ca. We also continue to encourage the translation and development of bilingual services, forms, and affidavits for use online.

**3. Encourage 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.

Nova Scotia embraces a thriving French-speaking population, alongside French-speaking Canadian and international visitors, students, and workers, all enriching the province socially, culturally, linguistically, and economically. We recognize and value the ongoing contributions of French-speaking residents to Nova Scotia's development.

Providing high-quality government services in French enhances the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the Acadian and francophone community, fostering continued growth and prosperity.