



# **French-language Services Plan**

**2024–2025**

*Office of the Ombudsman*

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Office of the Ombudsman

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## *Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman*

*Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2024-2025 »*

### **Message from the Ombudsman**

The Office of the Ombudsman considers and investigates complaints from people who believe they have not been treated fairly when accessing government services, or when they believe a policy or procedure has not been followed correctly. We are non-partisan and operate as an independent oversight agency.

I am pleased to present our French Language Services Plan for 2024-2025. The plan outlines the Office of the Ombudsman's progress and priorities for improving its capacity to provide French language services to members of the Acadian and Francophone community. – Christine Brennan, March 2024

### **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 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 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. 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 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:** Kyle Jackson ([Kyle.Jackson@novascotia.ca](mailto:Kyle.Jackson@novascotia.ca), 902-424-1296)

### **Services we offer in French**

- Complaint resolution services when the complainant accepts the active offer to communicate in French
- The Annual Report
- Information brochures and promotional banners
- The Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman website
- The online complaint form and case studies
- The French-Language Services Plan

## **How we communicate with the public in French**

Staff providing intake services for the Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman have been instructed to use the French-Language Services offer by saying “Hello, Bonjour”. If the member of the public continues to speak in French, staff are instructed to say “Un moment, s’il vous plait” and to seek assistance from an Ombudsman Representative who can speak French. Furthermore, staff are encouraged to communicate their out of office email greeting in English and French. We currently have two Ombudsman Representatives who are proficient in French.

## **What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2023–24**

- Develop and adapt plans and strategies for French language service delivery as part of the annual planning process.
  - French language services which could be further offered were identified.
- Fulfill obligations determined in the French-language Services Act and Regulations.
  - The French Language Services Coordinator participated in all French Language Services Committee Meetings.
  - The French Language Services Coordinator participated in the Human Resources and French-language Training subcommittee.
  - Publication of the French-language services plan.
  - Translated and posted all news releases and our annual report in both English and French on our bilingual website.
- Actively aim to improve the French-Language capabilities of this office.
  - Encouraged staff to take French Language courses offered to improve their French language speaking, writing, and comprehension skills.
  - Submitted a request for project funding to Acadian Affairs and Francophone to receive funding from the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on French Language Services funding to support or improve French-Language capabilities.
- Integrate outreach priorities for the Acadian and francophone communities as part of our broader outreach initiative.
  - Composed a plan on how to promote public awareness of the Office of the Ombudsman to Acadian and Francophone community groups.
  - Submitted a request for project funding to Acadian Affairs and Francophone to receive funding from the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on French Language Services funding to support outreach initiatives in Acadian and Francophone communities.

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

### **Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks**

- Fulfill obligations under the French Language Services Act.
  - The French-language Service Coordinator will participate in all French Language Services Committee meetings.
  - The French-language Service Coordinator will participate in all Human Resources and French-language Training subcommittee meetings and render assistance where possible.
  - Place emphasis on the active offer part of the Internal Operations Manual during policy reviews and staff training.
  - Publication of the French-language Services Plan.

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

- Actively aim to improve the French-language capabilities of the office.
  - Establish and prioritize French language services to be offered, and strategies or approaches for service delivery.
  - Ensure all staff are aware of the importance and office policy on the use of the active offer.
  - Ensure staff are aware of French language training courses offered by Université Sainte-Anne in coordination with The Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie and encourage staff to enroll.
  - Ability to work in French will be included as a consideration in recruiting and hiring new staff.
  - Ensure all new print materials are released in English and French.
  
- Ensure staff are aware of the historical and cultural significance of offering French-language services.
  - Encourage staff to attend Awareness Training on French language services and the Acadian and francophone community, such as Acadie at a Glance offered by the Public Service Commission.

### **Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community**

- Integrate outreach priorities for the Acadian and francophone communities as a part of our outreach initiatives.
  - Continue to identify areas of outreach priority within the Acadian and francophone communities during outreach planning.
  - Promote public awareness of the role of the Office of the Ombudsman to the Acadian and francophone communities or organizations.
  - Encourage Acadian and francophone youth to join the 2024-2025 Ombudsman Youth Council.