

French-language Services Plan

2022–2023



Office of the Ombudsman


NOVA SCOTIA

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, 2022
French-language Services Plan
Office of the Ombudsman
April 2022
ISBN: 978-1-77448-337-4

French-language Services Plan 2022–23

Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman

Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2022-2023 »

Message from the Ombudsman

The Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman’s mandate is to promote the principles of fairness, integrity, and good governance. This is done by ensuring provincial and municipal government policies and procedures are applied fairly, consistently, and transparently. Under the Ombudsman Act, all individuals who receive services from these levels of government may lodge a complaint to the Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman. Such services include accepting complaints related to the administration of the French-language Services Act and Regulations. In addition, provincial government employees and members of the public can submit allegations of wrongdoing under the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act.

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman, I am pleased to present our French Language Services Plan for 2022-2023. The plan outlines our priorities for improving our capacity to provide French language services to members of the Acadian and Francophone community.

– William A. Smith, March 2022

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 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 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 Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman.

French-language services coordinator:

Kyle Jackson (Kyle.Jackson@novascotia.ca, 902-424-1296)

Services we offer in French

- Complaint resolution services when the complainant accepts the active offer in French
- The Annual Report
- Information brochures and promotional banners
- The French-Language Services Plan
- The Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman website including the online complaint form and case studies
- The 50th anniversary programming

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. A brief pronunciation lesson was also provided to staff. Furthermore, staff are encouraged to write their out of office email greeting in English and French. We currently have two Ombudsman Representatives who are proficient in French.

In addition, the online complaint form, the Annual Report, the French Language Services Plan, and informative brochures are also available in French.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2021–22

- Fulfill obligations determined in the French Language Services Act
 - We are an active member of the French Language Services Committee and attend every meeting
 - We offer services in French by using the French Language Services offer
- Amend the Internal Operations Manual to ensure increased quality in French service ability
 - It is now official office policy to extend the French Language Services offer while providing intake services
- Provide complaint resolution services in French
 - The Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman can provide services in French
 - The French Language Services offer is actively used by staff covering intake services
- Build on the provision of French language services provided by the office
 - Staff are encouraged to improve their French Language skills
 - An Ombudsman Representative was enrolled in a French Language course offered by Université Sainte-Anne in 2021
- Maintain communication with the Acadian and francophone community
 - Provided information brochures to the Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia and requested they circulate to any interested Francophone groups

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2022–23

Objective 1: Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks

- Fulfill obligations under the French Language Services Act
 - Continue to fulfill obligations determined in the French Language Services Act
 - Continue to participate in French Languages Services Committee Meetings
 - The French Language Services Coordinator or another Ombudsman Representative will inquire about the possibility of joining a subcommittee within the French Language Services Committee
- Ensure the active offer is used throughout by intake staff
 - Staff covering the intake position will be reminded by management and colleagues to provide the active offer to the public accessing our services
 - The Bonjour sign will be displayed at the front desk

Objective 2: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public

- Actively aim to improve the French language service capabilities of the office
 - Encourage staff to enroll in a French language course, such as the courses offered by The Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie
 - 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

Objective 3: Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community

- Maintain communication with the Acadian and francophone community
 - Encourage Francophone and Acadian youth to join the Ombudsman Youth Council
 - Ensure educational brochures are available in French
 - Distribute the educational brochures and banners to Acadian/Francophone stakeholders
 - Offer to extend outreach to the Acadian/Francophone community