

French-language Services Plan

2020–2021



Office of the Ombudsman


NOVA SCOTIA

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Office of the Ombudsman
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Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2020-2021 »

Message from the Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman’s mission is to promote the principles of fairness, integrity and good governance. This is done through ensuring that 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 make a complaint to the Ombudsman; this includes complaints related to the French-language Services Act and Regulations, as well as complaints on any matter where the complainant wishes to be served in French. In addition to the Ombudsman Act, under the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act (PIDWA), provincial government employees and members of the public can submit allegations of wrongdoing.

On behalf of the Office of the Ombudsman, I am pleased to present our French-language Services Plan for 2020-2021. This plan outlines our priorities for maintaining and improving our capacity to provide French-language services to members of the Acadian and Francophone community.

William Smith
Ombudsman

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 value this partnership, which ensures a continued understanding of the unique needs of our province’s Acadian and francophone community.

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.

French-language services coordinator:

Christina Redmond (christina.redmond@novascotia.ca, 902-424-1296)

Services we offer in French

- Complaint handling, when the complainant responds to the active offer in French or the complaint involves the French-language Services Act
- Outreach presentations to Acadian and francophone community groups
- The Office’s new website (published in 2019)
- The online complaint submission form

- The Annual Report
- Promotional banners used at events
- Three promotional brochures (for the general public, seniors, and youth, respectively)

How we communicate with the public in French

- Intake staff answer the phone with Hello/Bonjour with every call. Calls in French are then directed to a French-speaking staff member. When a complainant wishes to be served in French, all communication with them is done in that language.
- All written communication received in French is responded to in French.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2019–20

Goal 1

- Continue to develop the capacity of the Office to deliver French-language services
- Fulfill obligations determined in the French-language Services Act and Regulations

Goal 2

- Increase employee awareness of the approach by government to provide French-language services
 - Hosted an office-wide awareness event for La journée internationale de la Francophonie in March 2019
- Apply a coordinated approach to address human resource issues related to the delivery of French-language services
 - Maintained knowledge of French-language capacity among Office staff
- Ensure that key communications materials continue to be available in French
 - Maintained this with documents published in 2019-2020

Goal 3

- Integrate outreach priorities for the Acadian and francophone communities as part of the broader outreach initiative
 - Attended a seniors' expo in Yarmouth with numerous francophone participants

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2020–21

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

- Ensure consistency in French-language services policy
 - Include section on French-language services in updated policy manual to ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities
 - Hold an information session for staff on the French-language Services Act and the work done by the Office of Acadian Affairs and francophonie

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

- Maintain active offer and ability to provide complaint resolution services in French
 - Aim to have more than one staff member able to provide complaint resolution services in French
- Publish all promotional corporate publications available to the public in French, both in print and on the Office's website

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

- Continue outreach efforts to Acadian and francophone populations
 - Ensure that multiple outreach visits in 2020-2021 are conducted in primarily Acadian and francophone areas of the province, or focus on the Acadian and francophone community in minority areas
 - Consult with FANE regarding a possible Office of the Ombudsman presence (or provision of promotional material) for the Fédération's annual congress, to be held in fall 2020