

# French-language Services Plan

2021–2022



Office of the Ombudsman

  
NOVA SCOTIA

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French-language Services Plan  
Office of the Ombudsman  
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## **French-language Services Plan 2021–22**

*Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman – Bureau de l'ombudsman de la Nouvelle-Écosse*

### **Message from the deputy head or CEO**

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 2021-2022. The plan outlines our priorities for 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 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, 902-424-6780)

## Services we offer in French

- Complaint resolution services when the complainant extends to the active offer in French or the complaint involves the French- language services Act
- The online complaint submission form
- The Office’s website
- The Annual Report
- The French-language Services Plan
- Information brochures and promotional banners
- The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary programming
- Outreach presentations to Acadian and francophone community groups

## How we communicate with the public in French

Intake staff initiate verbal communication with “Hello, bonjour” and say “un moment s’il vous plait” if the service user is speaking French and the staff member is not fluent in French. Intake staff then get an Ombudsman Representative who is fluent in French to complete the interaction. Likewise, complaints or enquiries submitted in French via email or web submission will be further assigned to staff who are fluent in French.

## What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2020–21

### Goal 1

- **Ensure consistency in French-language services policy**

- Updated communication guidelines
- Updated list of French speaking staff

### Goal 2

- **Maintain active offer and ability to provide complaint resolution services in French**

- Updated communication guidelines which now include further instruction beyond the initial language offer
- Staff are now asked to say “un moment s’il vous plait” before staff obtain a French speaking staff member to communicate with the French service user
- More than one staff member can 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**

- All promotional publications such as brochures are available in print and on the Office’s website in French

- **Continue outreach efforts to Acadian and francophone populations**

- Outreach was not scheduled because of the pandemic

## **How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2021–22**

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

- Fulfill obligations determined in the French Language Services Act
  - Continue to be an active member on the French Language Services Committee by attending every meeting
  - Continue to compose a yearly French Language Service Plan
- Amend the Internal Operations Manual to ensure increased quality in French service ability
  - Ensure the French language offer is official office protocol for staff at the intake level

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

- Provide complaint resolution services in French
  - Maintain the active French communication offer
  - Maintain and seek to enhance the ability to provide services in French.
  - Ensure all current promotional publications are readily available for distribution and for new material to be available in French
- Improve the quality of French language speakers in the office
  - Continue to encourage staff to enroll in French language courses offered by Université Sainte-Anne and provide staff with all relevant application forms

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

- Maintain communication with the Acadian and francophone community
  - Re-establish outreach via teleconference or web conference while COVID-19 is still a public health issue
  - Continue to distribute Ombudsman educational brochures and materials in French