



French-language Services Plan

2024–2025

*Department of Health
and Wellness*

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Department of Health and Wellness

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Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment and the Office of Addictions and Mental Health.

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

Message from the Deputy Ministers

Bonjour.

We are transforming healthcare in Nova Scotia by investing in infrastructure, services and people to provide more care faster to Nova Scotians. For our Acadian and francophone communities, this work also includes our continued efforts to address barriers to accessing healthcare information and services in French.

Over the past year, the French Service Language Advisory Committee met monthly with Nova Scotia Health (NSH), Izaak Walton Killam (IWK) Health Centre, Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH), Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR), Seniors and Long-Term Care (SLTC), and other partners on a coordinated approach to strengthen outreach to French-speaking communities.

Print materials, such as the notifiable disease reporting poster *It's the Law*, are now available in French, along with more web content and social media posts. We also worked to make public health guidance on alcohol and health available in French at NSLC locations across the province.

We also partnered with Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse (RSNÉ) in a Community Asset Mapping interview to better understand the work they do and how we can support them. This work is ongoing.

Looking forward, we will continue to work with Université Sainte Anne to support its Francophone health professions program. At the same time, we are working with provincial health profession regulators to collect more robust data on practitioner languages.

We will also work with the Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment on their new website, which will be available in French.

Our commitment in the year ahead is to continue strengthening relationships with our partners, supporting ongoing initiatives, and exploring new opportunities to improve service delivery for our French-speaking Nova Scotians.

Dana MacKenzie, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Wellness
Kathleen Trott, Deputy Minister, Office of Addictions and Mental Health

What we are doing to contribute to the growth of the Acadian and francophone community

This strategy outlines the Department and Offices' endeavours to enhance the promotion of health services in French and align these services with the specific needs of Acadian and francophone communities.

DHW and the Offices' actively involve the Acadian and francophone communities in its primary initiatives. Collaborative efforts among French Language Services Coordinators (FLSCs) from the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and the Offices', Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), and the IWK Health Centre are focused on disseminating information that supports the provision of French-language services throughout the health sector. The Health Authorities Act outlines the defined roles and responsibilities of DHW and the health authorities.

The FLSCs of DHW, NSHA, and IWK hold non-voting positions on the board of directors of RSNÉ. This non-profit organization brings together key stakeholders from the healthcare sector and the francophone community. The primary aim of RSNÉ is to enhance access to health services in French in Nova Scotia.

French-language services coordinator:

The FLSC is Jennifer Saulnier, who can be reached at Jennifer.Saulnier@novascotia.ca

Ongoing services offered in French.

- 811 services are available in French through French-speaking nurses and on-demand third-party interpretation services. The 811 website also includes health fact sheets in French.
- Acadians and francophones in Nova Scotia can access a comprehensive description of insured health services in the province in their language through the annual report of the *Canada Health Act*. Like other jurisdictions, Nova Scotia provides information to Health Canada for the annual report, which is available online in French and English.
- Acadians and francophones in Nova Scotia can access the Fair Care Race and Linguistic Identifier project web opt-in portal in French. <https://novascotia.ca/apps/rbli/>

How we communicate with the public in French

DHW and the Offices' have a French Written Correspondence and Verbal Communication Policy, revised in July 2018. The correspondence team, program areas, and FLSC work together to ensure that correspondence received in French is responded to in French, as the policy requires.

Written and oral materials used in public engagement initiatives with the Acadian and francophone communities in Nova Scotia for the Health Equity Framework are presented in French. To do this, we engage with our partners at Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) to translate documents.

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

The following describes key accomplishments against actions identified in the 2023-2024 French-language services plan:

- **Support compliance with the *French-language Services Act and Regulations*.**
 - A detailed French-language services plan that has identified key areas of focus in enhancing French-language services in the province.
 - FLSC participated in the French-language Services Coordinating Committee under Nova Scotia's Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF).
 - In partnership with CNS, work was done collaboratively to translate documents into French officially, including news releases, projects, and documents.
- **Work with internal teams to support French Language Services delivery, where applicable.**
 - A French-language services site is available on our Intranet (internal to the government) and continues to be updated.
 - French-language training was expanded in the following ways:
 - French courses were promoted internally through various channels, such as e-mails and announcements on our Intranet.
 - Staff participated in both Université Sainte-Anne programs and our internal awareness course, Acadie at a Glance, provided through the Public Service Commission.
 - The FLSC met monthly with NSH, IWK, Office of Addictions and Mental Health, Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment, Seniors and Long-term Care and other institutional partners with aligned goals to ensure coordinated efforts to strengthen our outreach to French-speaking communities and our priorities found in the Health Equity Framework.
 - Our internal French Service Language advisory committee increased membership by 15%.
- **Support French-language services in the province by actions related to DHW's core activities.**
 - We continue to use CNS for official public-facing translation and have increased French communication with our community health system partners (Réseau Santé).
 - The Health Equity Framework (HEF) project team made a concerted effort to connect with various communities in the province. The HEF team worked collaboratively with community partners to identify gaps in access to healthcare services in the province. Multiple engagements with communities were accomplished through collaboration with organizations, such as, Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse, Le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), Regroupement des aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE), Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE). Furthermore, in collaboration with these organizations, a survey was made available to the public. To gather insights to inform the framework, sessions were held in French; online surveys were also translated and made available in French. These communities continue to be engaged with Health and Wellness.

- The Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment (OHPR) offered French written material for the Community Fund. It leveraged the connection with Réseau Santé to encourage other Acadian and francophone community applications.
 - The OHPR met with Université de Sainte Anne to discuss health academic programming.
 - The Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH) worked collaboratively with Health Canada on an opportunity to provide a tobacco cessation workshop within Nova Scotia, with an option reserved for a French-speaking audience. OAMH worked with French-speaking and Acadian contacts to identify a group within the province to host the workshop. The Tobacco Free NS Website was translated into French.
 - Francophone community-based organizations were invited to attend the engagement session to define the Universal Mental Health and Addiction Care framework's vision and key values.
 - The Health and Human Resource (HHR) Initiative consulted with community leaders in 2023, led by KPMG. Representatives from Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse and La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse were included.
 - CANImmunize Clinic Flow eConsent web content (supporting the school immunization program) was translated into French and Arabic, supporting 842 students in 11 French schools.
- **Use administrative tools to promote French-language services.**
 - Communicated to various employees via email, presentations, etc.
 - Maintained our internal French language services intranet website with the most current user guidelines and communications processes requiring translation services.
- **Enhance materials available to French-speaking Nova Scotians in print and online.**
 - Updated the *It's the Law* posters (French and English) on the DHW website to include four diseases added to the Reporting of the Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations through a Report and Recommendation to the Executive Council.
 - Translated social graphics used on social media channels like X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook.
 - Created a PDF graphic for the website for publicly funded vaccine/immunoglobulin policy, outlining the publicly funded routine vaccine schedule for Nova Scotians.
 - Translated Nova Scotia's Communicable Diseases Manual's general information sheet on Malaria at the request of Nova Scotia Health to help provide info to a French-speaking person.
 - In partnership with NSH, IWK, and the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, and based on CCSA's new guidance on alcohol and health, Point-of-Sale messaging was developed and displayed at NSLC locations.

- **Increase the availability of relevant health information in French to support the community's development and future engagement.**
 - In 2023-24, Réseau Santé hosted a student intern through the Equity Youth Health Experience Program Pilot Initiative. The student was from the community and worked on health-related projects supporting Acadian and francophone communities.
 - Ongoing collaborations through the Health Equity Framework, which underpins the need to address equitable linguistic offering in human health resources.
 - The DHW FLSC continues to be a conduit for French-language health information by having regular briefings with the community.
 - The FLSC attended the AGM for Réseau Santé.
 - The FLSC engaged with RSNÉ in a Community Asset Mapping interview to better understand their functions and needs and how we can be more efficient in our support.

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2023–24

The following objectives are from the government's strategic plan for French-language services.

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

- Goal 1.1: Support compliance with the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations
 - Planned measures:
 - The Department will publish a French-language services plan.
 - And also will continue to participate in the French-language Services Coordinating Committee.
 - Efforts will be made to continue to provide presentations to senior leadership about meeting the requirements of the *French Language Services Act* and regulations.
 - Review and update of the French Language Policy, previous revision was conducted in 2018.
 - Promotion of funding opportunities coming out of the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreements on Minority Language Services.
 - FLSC will continue to collaborate with the different internal branches to identify opportunities for improvement of French Language Service delivery.
- Goal 1.2: Work with internal teams to support French Language Services delivery, where applicable
 - Planned measures:
 - The French Languages Services Council will meet regularly to identify gaps in service delivery.
 - Work with the Equity Programs and Initiatives team to further the Health Equity Framework.

- Goal 1.3: Use administrative tools to promote French-language services.
 - Planned measures:
 - Senior leadership will continue encouraging and promoting relevant training, such as French courses or *Acadie at a Glance*.
 - Maintain our internal French Languages Services website with the most current guidelines and processes for translation services for DHW staff.
 - A directory will be built of staff who are French language speakers (contact list of employees who can provide support and speak French) as a resource for the department.

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

- Goal 2.1: Continue to support French-language services in the province by establishing actions related to DHW's core activities.
 - Planned measures:
 - Continue to offer written and verbal communication in French for ongoing and future public engagement initiatives through the Equity and Engagement division and Communications Nova Scotia.
 - All content and materials related to the new 9-8-8 program, a Suicide Prevention Helpline that provides urgent, live, trauma-informed support by phone and text, 24/7, will be available in French. Currently, the service is not available in both official languages.
 - Conduct public consultations on French Language academic health programming.
 - OAMH will provide translated documents for the Community Wellness Framework once released.
 - The engagement platform Engage4Health website will be relaunched this year and include projects and opportunities for the public to interact with health system partners about transformation, in French. The availability of French engagement will depend on each project's needs.
 - New physician contracts will be developed and offered in French.
 - DHW, NSH and IWK will be working collaboratively to better understand how to improve access to healthcare services and programs for French speaking Nova Scotians, through a partnership with the Federal Government.

Objective 3: Maintain ongoing dialogue and engagement with the Acadian and francophone communities.

- Goal 3.1: Increase the availability of relevant health information in French to support the community's development and future engagement.
 - Planned measures:
 - FLSC will maintain an open dialogue with community representatives through such actions as participating in RSNÉ meetings and attending the AGM of Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE).
 - The Department will support Université Sainte Anne with its Francophone health professions programs.

- DHW will work with provincial health profession regulators to collect more robust data on practitioner languages.

In conclusion, the implementation and execution of the French Language Services plan shows the Department of Health and Wellness and the respective Offices' commitment to linguistic duality and respecting cultural diversity in Nova Scotia. We will continue to pursue ways in which the Acadian and Francophone community can access health services with ease, which can assist with their full participation in the various services offered by the health system and its partners. We look forward to continuing to support the community.