



French-language Services Plan

2025–2026

*Department of Health
and Wellness*

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Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2025-2026 »

Message from the deputy ministers

Bonjour,

Fixing healthcare is our top priority, and we are seeing progress. There are more collaborative care clinics, pharmacy clinics, mobile clinics, and virtual care options, all offering more ways to get care than ever before – with 81,000 more appointments available every month.

We are investing more than \$1 billion this year on new hospitals, emergency rooms and healthcare facilities. We are recruiting the healthcare professionals our province needs and have seen net gains of thousands of health providers over the last few years.

For our Acadian and Francophone communities, we continue our work on addressing barriers to accessing healthcare services and information in French.

Over the past year, we met regularly with our key healthcare partners to coordinate further improvements to the delivery of French-language services.

We continue to build on the work done through the Health Equity Framework, with collaborative efforts to address equitable linguistic offering of healthcare services.

This year we are working with our partners, including the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF), Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health Centre and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse (RSNÉ) to create a three-year strategy for French-language services, that aligns with both community needs and the Department of Health and Wellness transformation plan. This approach will strengthen cooperation and ensure a more comprehensive delivery of French-language services.

We will continue to improve availability of material and communication in French, through the review of our French-language services policy and by continuing the collaboration with the OAAF for translation services.

We are committed to continue strengthening relationships with our partners, supporting ongoing initiatives and exploring new opportunities to improve service delivery for our French-speaking Nova Scotians.

Merci.

Dana MacKenzie, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Wellness

Kathleen Trott, Deputy Minister, Office of Addictions and Mental Health

What we're 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. French Language Services Coordinators (FLSCs) from the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and the Offices', Nova Scotia Health (NSH), and the IWK Health Centre are actively collaborating to integrate their efforts and ensure comprehensive support to 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, NSH, and IWK Health Centre hold non-voting positions on the board of directors of Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse (RSNÉ). This non-profit organization brings together key partners from the healthcare sector and the francophone community. The RSNÉ is the main community partner to advance French-language healthcare services in Nova Scotia.

As we continue to maintain and increase 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 Advisor. The Office of the Ombudsman can follow-up on complaints with respect to access to French-language services.

French-language Services Advisor:

Marine Mercier (marine.mercier@novascotia.ca, (902) 229-3093)

Services we offer in French

- 811 services are available in French through French-speaking nurses and on-demand third-party interpretation services. The 811 website also includes regularly updated health fact sheets in French.
- Nova Scotia provides information to Health Canada for the annual report of the *Canada Health Act*, which is available online in French and English. The annual report gives a comprehensive description of medically necessary primary care services, hospital and dental surgery services in the province.
- Acadians and francophones in Nova Scotia are encouraged to access and participate in the Fair Care Race and Linguistic Identifier project web opt-in portal in French: <https://novascotia.ca/apps/rbli/>.
- The Office of Healthcare Professional Recruitment (OHPR) provides French-Language material on the [Community Fund Grant program](#).
- The 9-8-8 Suicide Prevention Helpline provides urgent, live, trauma-informed support by phone and text in French: <https://988.ca/fr>.

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 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 2024–25

The following describes key accomplishments against actions identified in the 2024-2025 French-language services plan:

- **Strengthen internal operational structures, including policy, legislative, and administrative frameworks:**
 - Support compliance with the French-language Services Act and Regulations:
 - We published a comprehensive French-language services plan that identified key objectives to expand French-language services in the province.
 - The French Language Services Coordinator (FLSC) participated in the French-language Services Coordinating Committee (FLSCC) lead by the 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.
 - The FLSC collaborated with internal branches to identify opportunities for improvement of FLS delivery.
 - Work with internal teams to support French Language Services delivery, where applicable
 - A French-language services site is available on our Intranet and is updated regularly.
 - The French-language Services Advisory Committee (FLSAC) met to support French-language Services delivery.
 - The DHW Equity and Engagement division worked with both internal and external partners to deliver on Acadian/Francophone-related actions under the Health Equity Framework, including the Fair Care project.
 - Use administrative tools to promote French-language Services.
 - A designated full-time French-Language Services Advisor has been hired to support the promotion and development of FLS services.
 - French-language training was delivered in the following ways:
 - We promoted French courses internally through various channels, such as emails and announcements on our Intranet.
 - Staff participated in both Université Sainte-Anne French language training programs and our internal awareness course, Acadie at a Glance, provided through the Public Service Commission.
 - We maintained our internal French Language Services website with the most current guidelines and processes for translation services for DHW staff.
- **Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programs to the public:**
 - Continue to support French-language services in the province by establishing actions related to DHW's core activities:
 - We continued to offer written and verbal communication in French for ongoing public engagement initiatives through the Equity and Engagement division and CNS.
 - All content and materials related to the 9-8-8 program, a Suicide Prevention Helpline that provides urgent, live, trauma-informed support by phone and text, 24/7, is now available in French: <https://988.ca/fr>.
 - We collaborated with CNS to provide meeting material in French while we were chairing Provincial-Territorial Health Ministers' meetings and Provincial-Territorial Conferences of Deputy Ministers of Health.

- Enhance materials available to French-speaking Nova Scotians in print and online:
 - The Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH) offers its Community Wellness Grant form in French.
 - Our social media pages offered French-language material, when relevant.
- **Maintain ongoing dialogue and engagement with the Acadian and francophone communities:**
 - Increase the availability of relevant health information in French to support the community's development and future engagement:
 - The FLSC participated in RSNÉ meetings.
 - The FLSC maintained an open dialogue with community representatives.
 - The OHPR engaged with the OAAF to explore an incentive program for attracting LPNs to Nova Scotia's French-speaking communities.
 - We hired a full-time French-language Services Advisor to support engagement with the Acadian and francophone communities and increase awareness of the specific needs of the community within the department.

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2025–26

Goal 1: Strengthen frameworks for French-language services

- Objective 1.1: Support compliance with the French-language Services Act and Regulations:
 - We will publish a French-Language Services annual plan detailing past and planned measures to enhance French-language health services.
 - The FLSA will participate in the FLSCC and its sub-committees where relevant.
 - The FLSA will continue to provide presentations about meeting the requirements of the French Language Services Act and regulations, as well as promote funding opportunities coming out of the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Minority Language Services.
 - We will review and update the French Language Correspondence Policy.
- Objective 1.2: Work with internal teams to support French Language Services delivery, where applicable
 - The FLSA will engage with internal branches to increase participation in the FLSAC throughout the department.
 - The FLSAC will work on establishing a strategic plan for the committee, aligned with DHW strategic objectives, in support of the improvement of French-language services.
 - We will continue to update our Intranet with the most up-to-date information on French-language services and translation processes.
- Objective 1.3: Use administrative tools to promote French-language services
 - Senior leadership will continue encouraging and promoting relevant training, such as French courses or Acadie at a Glance.
 - The FLSA will develop a plan to provide opportunities for DHW employee to increase their French-language capacity.

Goal 2: Be responsive to the needs of the Acadian and francophone community

- Objective 2.1: Engage the Acadian and francophone community.
 - FLSA will offer support to engage the Acadian and francophone community to internal branches.
 - The Engage4Health platform will provide information on opportunities to participate in public consultations in French.
 - FLSA 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).

Goal 3: Enhance delivery of programs and services in French

- Objective 3.1: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public
 - DHW will continue to collaborate with NSH, IWK Health Centre, RSNÉ and OAAF to develop an integrated common strategy to identify priority areas for improvement of French-language services.
 - We will continue to support NSHA and IWK in their project to improve healthcare linguistic data in Nova Scotia.
 - The FLSA will develop an evaluation framework to monitor performance of French-language services provided.
 - We will collaborate with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) to translate Public Health campaigns, when relevant.

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 to improve how 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 work together to support the community.