

French-language Services Plan

2023–2024

Labour, Skills and
Immigration



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French-language Services Plan
Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration
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Message from the Deputy Minister, Ava Czapalay

I am pleased to present the 2023-24 French-language Service Plan for the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

Our mission is to work as a trusted partner to help all Nova Scotians live, learn, and work to their highest potential. It is our department's top priority to foster a workforce that is inclusive and representative of our diverse communities, which in turn creates an innovative and thriving economy for all. This incorporates nurturing responsive and sustainable learning systems, enabling safe, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming workplaces and creating opportunities for growth.

As a department, we remain committed to providing a variety of French-language services to our clients. We recognize the importance of providing French services to Nova Scotians and are focused on preserving and promoting the province's Acadian and Francophone culture and heritage.

I am proud to share the achievements of each of our divisions this past year toward the amelioration of French-Language Services, and the goals we have set out for the year to come.

Message from the French Language Services Coordinator

I, along with the department of LSI, recognize the importance of French-language services, both for our employees and the Nova Scotians we serve. We endeavour to fulfill our responsibilities under the [French-language Services Act and Regulations](#) to the highest quality of standards. We continue to collaborate with other designated public institutions across government – including the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) – through the French-language Services Coordinating Committee, who I wish to thank. After hearing from FLS reps of the enthusiasm within LSI to meet the needs of our Acadian and French-speaking public and colleagues, I look forward to coordinating our departmental committee.

This year, we aim to build French-speaking capacity within our department and continue to create an inclusive and engaging working environment for Francophone individuals.

We encourage Nova Scotians to request services in French. We also encourage Acadians and Francophones to have their voices heard by participating on LSI 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 your comments or questions by contacting our French-language Services Coordinator.

Jillian Martin

French-language Services Coordinator

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Skills and Learning

Adult Education (AED)

AED works with Université Sainte-Anne (US-A) and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Ecosse (CDENE), on RPL and IQR projects, which are currently underway.

As part of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL), AED provides funding to US-A and L'équipe D'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Ecosse to deliver our adult learning programs each year. At US-A, Francophone adult learners can achieve their Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires pour adultes de la Nouvelle-Écosse (Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults).

AED helps the Halifax Youth Foundation administer the Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund (FLIEF) and each year, we receive and fund applications from French organizations.

When AED receives French correspondence from our NSSAL service providers, or when we send we often use [DeepL](#) to translate, if they are simple messages. This tool was suggested by our service providers. However, most of our communications remain in English for more complex responses.

How we maintained and improved French-language services in 2022-23

We can receive proposals and/or requests for agreement amendments for the International Qualification Recognition (IQR) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Funding Programs in French from francophone organizations. We use [DeepL](#) to translate the document/information.

French versions of the IQR and RPL Funding Programs guidelines are available on the [website](#).

We have been working with US-A and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Ecosse (CDENE), on RPL and IQR projects, which are currently underway.

How we plan to maintain and improve French-language services in 2023-24

As well as continuing to respond to French inquiries in the same language when possible, AED offers our service providers the option to access the Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS) in French, provides French application forms for the FLIEF to French organizations, and receives proposals and/or requests for agreement amendments for the International Qualification Recognition (IQR) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Funding Programs in French. AED will also continue to work with Université Sainte-Anne (US-A) and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Ecosse (CDENE) on RPL and IQR projects.

We will develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public.

For the public, we will deliver curriculum updates and diploma program review (Université Sainte-Anne).

In our goal to continually improve the delivery of the adult learning program we will have consultations with Université Sainte-Anne to discuss the needs of students and the next phase in curriculum updates and development.

Workplace Initiatives

The Job Bank for Employers Service is a bilingual service. Sector Initiatives also recently hired a bilingual program officer. The Workplace Education Initiative also has one team member who speaks French. As part of the program, all services are required to be delivered at the same quality in both French and English. Employment and Social Development Canada tests and regularly provides feedback on the quality of the service in both languages using a 'secret shopper' exercise.

A program administration officer is available to provide info and support to clients on applications to Sector initiatives programs, as required.

Sector Initiatives hired a bilingual program officer in 2022-23 and regularly supports participation in French language training through Université Ste Anne.

Employment Nova Scotia (ENS)

Employment Nova Scotia delivers its entire suite of programming in both English and French. Bilingual staff are positioned across the province in various government offices as well as within the Nova Scotia Works System. All public facing publications, contracts and letters to francophone speaking clients are all available in both languages. Employment Nova Scotia also ensures that its funded NS Works services providers are providing services in both languages.

All communication to the general public is translated into French this includes; marketing materials, program related materials on the Employment Nova Scotia Website, materials related to Nova Scotia Works, the novascotiawork.ca website, pull up banners for job fairs, etc.

How we maintained/improved French-language services in 2022-23

In 2022, Employment Nova Scotia has also strengthened the leadership role and partnership with the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Ecosse (CDENE), to provide leadership in French service delivery to the Nova Scotia Works system.

Employment Nova Scotia completed an analysis to determine how the offer of French service was occurring in NS Works. We also developed training to ensure that all centers are able to offer services for bilingual clients. Centres that do not employ French-Speaking staff must have an MOU with French designated have mechanisms in place to connect the client to a practitioner (virtually).

The Nova Scotia Career Development Association has committed to having all training and resources translated our French Speaking Career practitioners within the NS Works System.

How we plan to maintain/improve our French-language services in 2023-2024

Employment Nova Scotia has and will continue to facilitate a stronger leadership role of the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Ecosse (CDENE), within the NS Works System to ensure French speaking clients receive excellent service in their language of choice throughout Nova Scotia.

Labour Services

We have responded to requests for French services by working with our colleagues in New Brunswick who have facilitated requests for service.

The Branch maintains and posts online a comprehensive guide to the *Labour Standards Code* in French: *Guide du code des normes de travail de la Nouvelle-Écosse*.

The Branch currently has two Workers' Advisers who can speak with workers in French as required. However, these Advisers are not at a level of fluency to have comfort conducting hearings in French. If a worker needs to have a hearing conducted in French, Workers Advisers Program would arrange and pay for a translator to be present at the hearing.

If requested, the Nova Scotia Labour Board would arrange for a Board hearing (or other proceeding) to be conducted in French either by a Chair, Vice-Chair or panel fluent in French, and/or with the assistance of French Translation Services.

For Conciliation and Mediation Services, the Branch has responded to requests for communication in French by requesting the services of NB dual language staff to act on our behalf. Labour Standards has one officer who is fluent in French. This officer responds to email inquiries submitted in French and provides support when individuals ask to speak with an officer in French. WAP would translate documents informally where required and, if necessary, arrange and pay for an official translation of important documents (e.g., a medical-legal report in French required for an appeal).

The Board has various staff, Chair, Vice-Chairs and members with various levels of French proficiency who can communicate with the public and parties appearing before the Board, if required. Online and other Board material is available in English only (unless requested).

How we maintained and improved French-language services in 2022-23:

- Translated training and educational material in relation to domestic violence leave into French.
- Regularly updated the Guide du code des normes de travail de la Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Encouraged and supported staff requesting French-language training.

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

- Offer and encourage current staff to participate in French Language training.
- Encourage and support current staff to participate in French-language training.
- Seek out potential new staff with French speaking ability.
- Continue to utilize French speaking staff from New Brunswick as required.
- Continue to update the Guide du code des normes de travail de la Nouvelle-Écosse, as well as publish other documents in French.
- In its arbitrator recruitment efforts, the Branch is focused on recruiting a diverse group of arbitrators, including arbitrators who are able to conduct hearings in French.

Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency

NSAA summer sector youth apprenticeship programs (Building Futures for Youth, TestDrive, Serve it Up) received a language grant from outside of the NSAA to adapt and translate all promotional and marketing materials. This work is currently being discussed. Videos for the Serve it Up program are complete and available for viewing in classrooms.

NSAA summer sector apprenticeship programs organized family information sessions specifically for Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial students and their parents, whereas in the past, these families were included in regional sessions. The Education and Early Childhood Development Youth Pathways Consultant for CSAP has taken the lead and is providing all the relevant information in French while assisting with translations for the Program Lead and the NSAA Youth Outreach Coordinator (YOC).

Through Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization, there is an agreement with New Brunswick to translate curriculum standards, logbooks, and level exams. These are available in French across the region. Additionally, Nova Scotia participates in the Red Seal Program and all Red Seal Occupational Standards, interprovincial trade certification exams and other Red Seal products that are adapted/translated into French.

An agreement with New Brunswick allows Nova Scotia to send apprentices who want their apprenticeship technical training delivered in French to that province for training.

If a Francophone client calls or emails, we have several French speaking staff members who can respond to questions and requests from clients and the public.

How we maintained and improved French-language services in 2022-23:

The NS Apprenticeship Agency has maintained its French-language services in 2022-2023 as in years past. The NSAA Youth Outreach Coordinator (YOC) regularly presents to CSAP classrooms and engages teachers and students. Sessions have been permitted in English with a few assisted translations in French (with approval CSAP).

As additional trades are selected for harmonization, French translation is pursued.

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

The new Apprenticeship Management System currently under development in partnership with the Atlantic Provinces will be available to participants in both official languages.

Plans are being discussed to decide on the development of more French NSAA promotional and marketing materials, like placards, posters, and promotional items to CSAP schools and classrooms.

NSAA follows the ABC process set out by the Executive Council Office. NSAA promotes Apprenticeship Board positions to our partners and strives to achieve a balance of representation from across the province.

Corporate Policy and Services

CPS maintained their French- Language Services last year, and plans to improve in the coming year, in the following ways:

- Nova Scotia Careers in Demand (Carrières en vogue en Nouvelle-Écosse) is published biennially (planning another in 2023).
- By utilizing the distribution list to identify French speaking staff.
- Having French speaking staff display the “Bonjour!” Sign.
- Advertisements for Boards, Agencies, and Commissions are published in the *Le Courier*, Nova Scotia’s only French language newspaper.
- Respond to French correspondence in French, collaborating as needed with Acadian Affairs & Francophonie for guidance.
- Supported staff to participate in French-language training through Université Sainte Anne.

Safety

How we maintained and improved French-language services in 2022-23:

The Safety Branch has published new publications in English and French including:

Occupational Health and Safety division

- Safety manual for businesses – Manuel de sécurité pour les entreprises
- Workplace first aid guide – Les premiers soins au travail - Un guide pour employeurs et les secouristes
- Sun Safety – Prudence au soleil

Technical Safety division

- Elevators and Lifts Rack Card - Sûreté de ascenseurs et des monte -charge -
- Boiler and Pressure Equipment Safety- Sûreté des chaudières et des appareils à pression
- Sécurité Carburant - Fuel Safety
- (Infographic – 1 pager) Ice Rink Refrigeration System Safety - Mesures de sécurité – Systèmes de réfrigération des patinoires
- Non-Refillable Propane Cylinders - Bouteilles de propane non rechargeables
- Natural gas and propane water heaters recall - Rappel concernant des chauffe-eau au propane et au gaz naturel
- Outdoor patio heaters - Chauffe-terrasses : consignes de sécurité
- Crane & Worksite Safety – Imminent Weather (Septembre et Décembre)- Sûreté des grues à tour et des chantiers – Tempête imminente (September and December)

Safety Directive: Directive To Waive Practical Experience Requirement for Power Engineer Exam Applications - Directive visant la suppression de l'exigence relative à l'expérience pratique pour les demandes d'examen par les ingénieurs spécialisés en force motrice

The Safety Branch also published a few Safety notifications i.e., Safety Bulletins

- Isolated workplace first aid plan - Plan de premiers soins pour lieu de travail isolé
- Blasting Incidents – Preventing Flying Material - Incidents de dynamitage – Prévenir les pluies d'éclats
- Roofing Membrane /Protection incendie lors de la pose de la membrane d'étanchéité

- Guardrails / Garde-corps
- Electrostatic Cleaning Equipment Hazards Legal information / Dangers liés aux appareils de nettoyage électrostatiques
- Substance Use and the Workplace: Supporting Employer and Employees in the Trades L'usage de substances et le milieu de travail: ressources pour les employeurs et les employés dans les métiers
- Sun Safety - Risk of overexposure to Ultraviolet Radiation (UV) for outdoor workers / La sécurité au soleil : le risque de surexposition aux rayons ultraviolets (UV) pour les personnes qui travaillent à l'extérieur
- Cold stress / Le stress dû au froid

All Safety notifications are accompanied with a bilingual email message.

Communication with Nova Scotia employers

- The Safety Branch writes a bilingual message when they are reaching Nova Scotian employers about health and safety related subjects.
- We send a bilingual message to invite any employer to join our Safety Branch Contact list.
- We created a bilingual Microsoft Form for the Safety Branch contact list.
- The Safety Branch sent a bilingual email to all Chambers of Commerce to inform them about our services and promotional material about health and safety.

Engagements and consultations

- WHMIS online engagement: The web page was available in French and the engagement invitation was also sent in French.
- A bilingual survey was sent to all employers across Nova Scotia to consult them about Harassment in the workplace.
- A bilingual message was sent to workplaces to encourage participation of Acadians and francophones on agencies, boards and commissions.
- Technical Safety Code Adoption Call for Comment: direct email out to clients in French.

New tools this year

- The new Safety app NOVASAFE includes all content in French.
- We produced a new video about Internal Responsibility System which includes captions in French.

The Safety Branch received a few inquiries in French on the 1-800 information line. The Information Specialists sent these requests to a bilingual staff. This person contacted the client to discuss their question and worked with the Information Specialists to find the proper answer. This person wrote the answer in French and the Information specialists sent the response to the client.

Interpretation Services:

The Safety Branch has partnered with Access Language Services (ALS) to provide language interpretation services to assist the staff out in the field, or while communicating with clients that may otherwise have difficulty speaking and/or understanding English. This service includes interpretation in French when required. The services offered through this partnership include In-Person, Virtual, or Phone Interpreter, On-Demand Phone Interpretation and Translation Services.

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

A representative from the Safety Branch will continue work closely with the French language Services Coordinator for LSI.

The Safety Branch will continue to translate their promotional material in French including as guides, brochures, safety notifications, etc.

The Safety Branch will continue to communicate in French and English to all employers across Nova Scotia on health and safety related subjects. They will also offer French presentations upon request.

The Information Specialists will continue to consult a bilingual staff for assistance when they receive inquiries in French either by email or by phone. The inquiries will be responded to in French.

The Safety Branch will continue to include a French component in engagements and public consultations. The French component will depend on the nature of the consultation. If the consultation involves all Nova Scotians, there will be at least one session offered in French. Other consultations might only have a French component such as a web page including the engagement document and the online survey. The invitation will also be sent in both English and French.

Immigration and Population Growth

Services we offer in French:

- Nova Scotia's immigration marketing website (immigrationnouvellecrosse.com) provides information on immigration programs and other resources for newcomers in French.
- Applications to the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), and the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) can be done in French through Nova Scotia's online service (*Service en ligne de la Nouvelle-Écosse*).
- Assessments of NSNP, and AIP can be done in French.
- Bilingual staff assist clients and other partners. The Attraction and Engagement team currently has five bilingual staff, and the Programs team has five officers who can assess applications in French.
- Events, presentations, and workshops are delivered in French when feasible and appropriate for the audience, and IPG provides funding to three Acadian and Francophone settlement services organizations to deliver settlement services to French-speaking immigrants.
- The immigration@novascotia.ca email account receives and responds to correspondence in French
- Information on NSIPG's funding programs, i.e., Settlement Funding Program and Immigration is offered in French.
- The [2022-2025 Francophone Population Growth Action Plan](#), published in November 2022, outlines how government plans to increase the number of French-speaking newcomers who come to Nova Scotia and how to retain them.
- Publications such as promotional brochures, advertisements, and banners are translated into French or are bilingual where possible and appropriate for the audience.
- Francophone specific recruitment events are hosted in international jurisdictions to attract francophone newcomers.

Communicating with the public in French:

- Immigration and Population Growth are committed to offering French-language services (FLS) and to ensuring information and services are provided in French.

- The “*Bonjour!*” sign is prominently displayed in the reception area and bilingual staff wear the “*Bonjour!*” pin to indicate their ability to offer FLS when attending engagement events.
- Immigration and Population Growth responds to written and verbal requests from the public for FLS in a timely manner. Three bilingual staff provide partner engagement services in French, address FLS requests and interact with French speaking clients and partners. They include a new Senior Engagement Specialist who helps with the implementation of the Francophone Population Growth Action Plan; two bilingual Marketing Advisors who provide support in targeting and attracting Francophone candidates through our social media channels and marketing campaigns; and five bilingual immigration officers who process applications submitted in French to the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP).
- Formal correspondence received in French is interpreted internally and as needed, translated through translation services provided by Communications Nova Scotia (CNS).
- Engagement with francophone partners (employers, applicants, municipalities, etc.) and newcomers is provided in French, wherever possible.

How we maintained and improved French-language services in 2022-23

- Provided information to the FLS coordinator to share during the FLS Coordinating Committee
- Provided consistent communication of IPG obligations under the FLS Act and Regulations as well as compliance with the French Language Guidelines throughout NSIPG.
- Provided IPG staff with information on French Language Training to maintain staff participation and improve capacity of NSIPG staff to offer services in French. In 2022, eight staff participated in French Language Training.
- Provided IPG staff with information on diversity and cultural training and events to enhance internal awareness of the Acadian and francophone community.
- Celebrated and promoted Acadian and francophone culture through NSIPG’s social media channels and internal Diversity Committee and Engagement Committee.
- Distributed *Bonjour!* Materials.
- Supported the work of Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) by participating on the FLS Coordinating Committee and providing advice on corporate FLS initiatives including the Bonjour! Program.
- Responded in French to all written and electronic correspondence received in French
- Provided, via Communications Nova Scotia, translation services in all official French correspondence from NSIPG.
- Implemented the Francophone Immigration Action Plan 2019-2021 which saw an increase in French-speaking permanent resident landings in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia welcomed 795 new French-speaking Permanent Residents in 2022, more than the seven previous years combined.
- Elevated the francophone engagement specialist position to a Senior Engagement Specialist
- Hired six community navigators, two of whom are fluent in French, as well as two bilingual marketing advisors and two immigration Program Officers.
- Francophone Population Growth Action Plan: Collaborated with Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) and Acadian and Francophone partners to develop the new [2022-2025 Francophone Population Growth Action Plan](#). The Action Plan was launched in November 2022 and outlines the province’s commitment to support francophone immigration and inter-provincial migration in five key action areas:
 - Partner Engagement
 - Promotion and Attraction
 - Population Growth Programs

- Retention and Inclusion
- Research and Measuring Progress

How we will improve and maintain our French-language services in 2023-24

- Review francophone staffing complement and look for opportunities to increase French language service offerings through the hiring process. One of the designated French speaking positions has been vacant within the Attraction and Engagement unit but has recently been filled.
- Two community navigators and one marketing advisor who speak French have been added to the Attraction and Engagement team.
- Continue to ensure marketing and communication materials are translated when/where appropriate as per the French language services policy
- Provide opportunities for staff to enroll in French-language training
- Work with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) to identify attraction events that can continue to increase the number of French speaking newcomers
- Implement the Francophone Population Growth Action Plan in partnership with Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF), including meeting with the Acadian and Francophone partners at the senior level twice per year, meeting with the Acadian and Francophone partner's working group four times per year and participating in Provincial and Atlantic committees on Francophone Immigration.
- Engage with Francophone employers and economic development agencies across Nova Scotia to ensure IPG is addressing their labour needs through attraction and recruitment activity.