



French-language Services Plan

2024–2025

*Department of
Service Nova Scotia*

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French-language Services Plan
Department of Service Nova Scotia
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« Plan de services en français 2024-2025 »*

March 2024

Department of Service Nova Scotia

Bonjour!

We are pleased to share with you the 2024-2025 French-language services plan for the Department of Service Nova Scotia (SNS). This plan outlines SNS's accomplishments from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, and outlines some of the key activities planned for 2024/25.

As key service providers in the government, our primary focus remains on actively engaging with the needs and expectations of Nova Scotians. We are committed to delivering inclusive, accessible, and high-quality French-language programs and services through both traditional and digital platforms.

Recognizing the importance of French-language services, we are dedicated to fulfilling our obligations under the French-Language Services Act and continuously enhancing our capacity to provide French-language services.

Looking ahead, we will continue to support the Acadian and francophone community, actively seeking opportunities to expand our French-language services and raising awareness within the public service.

Our team takes great pride in their daily work, and we welcome the opportunity to share this plan with you.

Joanne Munro
Deputy Minister
Department of Service Nova Scotia

French-language Services Coordinator

Our French-language services coordinator supports departmental employees in assessing French-language communication needs and assists in developing our departmental French-language services plan. This plan is instrumental in ensuring the provision of French-language services to the Acadian and francophone community.

When necessary, our coordinator collaborates with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie to better understand community needs and requirements. Our departmental program employees are encouraged to consider translation needs early on, allowing for planning and ample implementation time.

As we strive to uphold and enhance our French-language services, we value your feedback on our progress. Please feel free to share your comments or questions with our French-language services coordinator. For formal complaints regarding French-language services, we recommend contacting the Office of the Ombudsman.

If you have questions or comments, please contact our French-language services coordinator:

Michelle Saulnier
French-language Services Coordinator
Department of Service Nova Scotia
1505 Barrington Street, P.O. Box 10,
Halifax, NS B3J 3K5

Note: The French-language Services Coordinator for Service Nova Scotia also provides support to Department of Municipal Affairs and the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions.



What we achieved in 2023–2024

1. Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public.

In 2023-24 we focused our efforts on:

New and updated Online Services (collaborative work with the departments of Cyber Security and Digital Services and Public Works)

- HARP Applications and processing
- Seniors Care Grant Applications and processing
- Collection Services – letters issued to clients.
- Registry of Joint Stock Companies – translation of Amendment to Act
- Registry of Motor Vehicles:
 - Online Driver’s Licence Renewal
 - Online Knowledge Tests - Driver’s Licence class 7, which includes Rules of the Road and Signage Recognition changes
 - Registry of Motor Vehicles - [Peeling plate note](#)

Our work also included multi-year projects that have an impact on the productivity and efficiency associated with using government services where we are striving to ensure that new services include a French language component. Our continued efforts are focused on helping with:

- Registry of Joint Stock Companies online portal and supporting Web content
- Registry of Motor Vehicles: Online Knowledge Testing Commercial Class Licences: Class 1, 2, 3, 4, and Air brake licences
- Vital Statistics Registry and the Registry of Joint Stock Companies - Modernization

2. Inform the Public about Services in French

In 2023/24 we focused our efforts on:

- Promoting the availability of French-language services to the public through radio, print, social media, online advertising, and by word of mouth.
- French staff greeting clients with Bonjour!/Hello or Hello/Bonjour!
- Displaying the “Bonjour! Services en Français,” signage in offices where French Services are available to the public, such as in Dartmouth, Halifax, Truro, Port Hawkesbury, and Yarmouth.
- Maintaining the level of French-language services currently offered by phone, in-person, through our website and through “Contact Us” public enquiries.
- Publishing information about our programs and services in French on NovaScotia.ca.
- Encouraging the translation and development of bilingual services, forms, and affidavits for use online, in-person, mail, and by phone.

3. Continue to work to strengthen the Bonjour! Program

Worked with our internal communications team to promote French training and cultural awareness within the department.

Shared information with staff about cultural and French-learning opportunities available to them that helps celebrate language diversity and inclusion.

- National Acadian day (August 15).
- Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie March 1 to 31, 2024 ; et la Journée internationale de la Francophonie (20 mars).
- La fête de la musique (June 21).
- Acadie at a Glance and French-language training.
- French-language training opportunities at Université Sainte-Anne.
- Oui Chef!
 - French at Lunch – Learn French while learning about cooking.
 - Public Service Week – food insecurity / stretching your food dollars.
- SNS Minister’s Awards focused on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, and all materials used were translated to French, including the award handed out by the Minister.
- Access Center
 - Congrès mondial acadien 2024 (promotion)
 - Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse (promotion)
 - Access Center Dartmouth mural with Acadian flag added in to the design.
- Distributed 60 Bonjour boxes to the French Language Services Coordinating Committee members to help them celebrate Francophonie and Acadian Month in 2024.
- Facilitated a meeting with Association des juristes d’expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse and the Registry of Joint Stock Companies.



4. Updating and improve signage at SNS buildings.

- We continue to work to enable bilingual signage at our locations across the province as leases change.

5. Public Engagement

- Continued to provide advice, assistance, and support to include options for members of the Acadian and francophone community to participate in French in public consultations and engagements.

What we are planning 2024/25

We are pleased to offer Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians with options to interact in their own language, achieved through our continued collaboration with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie via the French-language Services Coordinating Committee. This partnership ensures we understand and meet the unique needs of our province's Acadian and francophone community.

During 2024/25 we will continue our efforts in delivering updated and new online services in the French language, and we will work closely with our internal partners to do so. Some examples include providing translation services for the Residential Tenancies Guide for Resolving Disputes, the Geographic Names Program, and preparing for the launch of the 2024 Heating Assistance Rebate Program. Our FLS Coordinator is also heavily involved with assisting the newly established Department of Emergency Management with their French language needs.

Last year, August was officially declared as Acadian Heritage Month in Nova Scotia, and 2024 will be the first time this is celebrated. There are so many wonderful events and activities being planned, which presents us with a great opportunity to continue efforts in promoting cultural awareness within the department, as well as in our public facing spaces.

Conclusion

Nova Scotia embraces a thriving French-speaking population, alongside French-speaking Canadian and international visitors, students, and workers, all enriching the province socially, culturally, linguistically, and economically. We recognize and value the ongoing contributions of French-speaking residents to Nova Scotia's development.

Providing high-quality government services in French enhances the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the Acadian and francophone community, fostering continued growth and prosperity.

Please drop by our offices or call in and say Bonjour!

APPENDIX A: How we decide when to translate

How we decide what information to translate and when to publish it:

What kind of information: Any printed or digital information intended for use by Nova Scotians.

When do we publish simultaneously in French and English, we give priority to information material to which one or more of the following apply:

We translate information and materials in French that meets one or more of the following requirements:

- a) failure to provide the information in French may compromise the health, safety, or security of members of the public
- b) the information is of particular relevance to the Acadian and francophone community
- c) Pertains to French-language services we deliver

We also translate when:

- a) Information has broad applications (justice, health, immigration, education, community interests, etc.)
- b) It is educational material (e.g. fun fact sheets intended for young children or students, general facts about Nova Scotia, etc.)
- c) It pertains to a service we currently provide, or updates information that was previously available in English and French

* There are instances when simultaneous publication is not possible, for example when critical information is changing rapidly and needs to get out quickly. French will always follow as soon as possible.

Translations beyond the minimum requirements of the regulations

On occasion, we may choose to translate beyond the minimum requirements : Translating content that is not within the regulations is a decision made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with our department's French-language services coordinator, program owner(s) and the department's Executive Leadership. Consideration is given to whether a program or service, for example, is delivered in French from start to finish or by using a planned iterative approach.

We ensure that when communicating with the public:

- a) all written correspondence in French that is received by our department is replied to in French.
- b) all information material issued to the public simultaneously in French and English displays a bilingual provincial logo; In some instances when simultaneous publication is not possible, for example when critical information is changing very rapidly and needs to get out quickly. French will always follow as soon as possible.
- c) we take reasonable and appropriate steps to make members of the public aware of the services available in French and English through various means including social media, print advertising, online, etc.

Translation Services

Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) manages our translation requests and ensures that our news releases are translated when they meet any of the requirements listed above or upon request.

Advertising

Our department promotes services offered in French in the same manner as they are promoted in English, to encourage usage/uptake in French. Our advertising, whether traditional print or digital, is translated and issued in French when it meets any of the requirements listed above. The bilingual (English-French) Government of Nova Scotia logo is used in our French-language advertising and any web addresses (URLs) point to French content.

Web Content and Digital Channels

Our department decides which aspects of our web content will be provided in French. We are guided by the priority list in this document. These decisions are made in consultation with our FLS coordinator, program owner(s) and the department's Executive Leadership.

Consultations

We plan and coordinate our public consultations according to the French-language Services Regulations and include options for members of the Acadian and francophone community to participate in French.

Agencies, Boards and Commissions

Acadians and francophones are encouraged to become active participants of our agencies, boards, and commissions which impact their business, their community or way of life. As we all have a part to play to help preserve and grow awareness of the Acadian and Francophone culture in Nova Scotia.

Human Resources

Public servants shall not be required or expected to provide translation services – even if the position they occupy is a French-English bilingual required position – unless they are a certified translator.

During recruitment activities, directors and hiring managers in consultation with our FLS Coordinator; should identify positions where oral and/or written proficiency in French would be required or an asset.

Where applicable, identifying when a position is deemed a bilingual (French-English) required position, should be considered if it will allow for more effective provision of French-language services.

Our vacant positions are advertised with French-language capacity as an asset or bilingual required.

APPENDIX B: Inventory of Services

Services we offer in French - Website, Online, In person, and Business Services:

Communications, Publications, Signage and Translated Material

Access Nova Scotia offices and In-person Service Office

- Access NS Digital Advertising Screens
- Book an appointment – Access NS tool
- COVID-19 signage (physical distancing, floor stickers)
- Free Wi-Fi in Access Centres
- iPad communication tools
- Qmatic ticketing service
- Respectful workplace signage

Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco

License Application

Business services

- BizPaL – business permits and licenses application
- Qmatic Ticketing service: Access Centres, Business Registration Unit
- Nova Scotia Estimated Kilometer Worksheet
- for International Registration Plan
- Registry of Joint Stocks modernization:
 - Company Name Search
 - Name Reservation Request
 - Society Update Forms/Special Resolution Forms
 - By-laws and Memorandum of Association Forms

Contact Center

New telephone technology for Public Enquiries, RMV, BRU and Collections allows for better call handling.

Geographic Information Services

Updates to the 1:10,000 Halifax Regional Municipality map sheets to include French information.

Translation and Simultaneous Translations Services:

- Translations were supplied by Translation Services, Communications Nova Scotia
- Simultaneous translation services were provided upon request at Residential Tenancies hearings

Vital Statistics:

Website information and guides along with 21 forms, applications and affidavits including the Gender Options for Identity Documents are now bilingual.

Bilingual Signage

- 1505 Barrington Street - Head Office
- RMV offices:
 - Baddeck
 - Shelburne

Website: novascotia.ca/SNS

In March 2023 more than 70% of the information about SNS programs and services was available in French.

Online Services available in French:

In March 2023, the following online services were available in French.

- Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco - Online Ticket Lottery License Application
- Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates
- Birth registration kiosks
- Book an appointment – Access NS tool
- Change of Address Service
- Clearview Connects – Fraud report portal
- Collection Services – Payments
- Heating Assistance Rebate Program
- Lien Check
- Motor Vehicles Services
 - RMV – French accents/long names
 - Vehicle Permit Renewal
 - Pay a Fine
 - Pay a Fee for Default Fines
 - Road and Knowledge test payments
 - Pay a Parking Ticket
 - RMV Online Inquiries Service
 - Online Knowledge Tests (Class 6,7,8)
 - Online Driver's Licence Renewals
 - Online Dealer Services (available to Car Dealers)
 - Driver Insurance Abstract Service (available to Insurance Companies)
- Nova Scotia Permits Directory
- Personal Property Registry Service
- Property Tax Rebate for Seniors
- Public Enquiries contact form
- Seniors Care Grant (Seniors)