

Plan de services
en français

French-language
Services Plan

2019-2020

Municipal Affairs

Affaires municipales



Message from the Deputy Minister

We are pleased to share with you the French-language Services Plan for 2019-2020 for the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA). Information in this plan outlines the progress we have achieved in our delivery and implementation of French-language services over the past fiscal year and identifies the priorities and initiatives for the upcoming year.

DMA values the vital role municipalities play in building a strong, vibrant Nova Scotia. Our department enables municipalities to build healthy, safe and vibrant communities, supports fire and building safety, and works in collaboration with municipal, provincial and federal departments to strengthen provincial and municipal emergency preparedness through planning, training and exercise. This cooperative approach enhances the ability of Nova Scotians to augment community resilience during times of emergencies and helps municipalities become stronger.

The mandate of DMA is delivered through the following divisions/offices:

1. Policy, Planning and Advisory Services;
2. Grants, Programs and Operations, which includes the Office of the Fire Marshal; and
3. Emergency Management Office (EMO).

DMA recognizes the importance of creating awareness of the use and delivery of French-language services and encourages the promotion of a positive image of French-language services to staff and the public. Whenever possible we recommend the inclusion of French-language services be considered when new programs and services are being developed and offered.

Municipal Units are also encouraged to identify opportunities, where appropriate, to deliver new services or improve existing services in French, enabling Acadians and francophones to interact with government in the language of their choice.

Nancy MacLellan

Deputy Minister

Department of Municipal Affairs

Response to French Requests

DMA responds to verbal and written requests from the public in a timely manner in French whenever possible. Written correspondence received from the public is replied to in the language of the original correspondence; translation of written correspondence is arranged through our French-language Services Coordinator. Any phone or in-person service enquires received in French, are handled by French-speaking staff whenever possible.

Priorities of the Acadian and Francophone Community

DMA provides access to government information, programs and services to Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians in the language of their choice. The Department continues to leverage its close working relationship with Service Nova Scotia to provide online services for municipalities and continues to encourage municipalities to offer services in French.

We continue to encourage the Acadian and francophone community to provide feedback on services and to indicate areas or programs where the department can initiate new French-language service offerings to suit the community's needs.

Public Consultations

Our policy on public consultations is in accordance with the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations. If a public consultation is planned, we will include options for members of the Acadian and francophone community to participate in French in the public consultation process.

Contact Us

The Acadian and francophone community is encouraged to use the online Public Enquiries Contact Form to send your questions or comments about programs and services. Simply select the topic "French-language Services".

Coordonnatrice des services en français

Le Ministère a recours aux services de la coordonnatrice des services en français de Service Nouvelle-Écosse.

Michelle Saulnier, coordonnatrice des services en français
Ministère des Affaires municipales
1505, rue Barrington, C.P. 2734
Halifax (N.-É.) B3J 3K5

Goals and Objectives

DMA continues to build on the policy direction identified in the NS Strategic Plan for French-language Services, 2013-2018. The plan laid out corporate objectives focused on three key areas: leadership and policy direction, availability and accessibility; and community engagement and outreach.

In **2018**, a new agreement with Heritage Canada will result in a new *Nova Scotia Strategic Plan for French Language Services, 2018-2023*. This plan will present both new challenges and new opportunities. What we know now indicates that this plan changes the focus of the objectives but maintains their key areas: leadership and policy direction, availability and quality of service; and community engagement and outreach.

Corporate Objective 1: Leadership and policy

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

Corporate Objective 2: Services to the Public

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

Corporate Objective 3: Community

Maintain on-going dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community.

Leadership and Policy Direction

Championing French-language Services

The Deputy Minister champions and encourages French-language services through the integration of French-language services into our policies, programs and services.

Supported by our French-language Services Coordinator, staff are encouraged to champion French-language services, and to find new and innovative ways to help grow and deliver the best possible French-language services.

DMA is committed to fulfill its obligations pursuant to the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations.

Availability and Accessibility of French-language Services | Active Offer

We support, encourage and utilize the active offer concept put forward by the Province of Nova Scotia and encourage the community to participate by requesting services.

The active offer of French-language services by the Government of Nova Scotia means that its public institutions proactively inform citizens when a service is available in French.

Its purpose is to ensure that citizens feel comfortable expressing themselves in French when seeking a service; that the service provided in French is comparable to what is offered in English; and that the service in French is evident, accessible, readily available, and demonstrated in the form of a bilingual greeting, signage, or other means.

Goals and Objectives

- Educate program owners and staff on the *French-Language Services Act* and Regulations to improve their understanding of the Act and Regulations and how to comply with the Act and Regulations in the delivery of programs and services to Municipalities.
- Provide municipal information in French to municipalities and Nova Scotians, whenever possible.
 - *Bonjour! Services en Français*, signage.
 - Provide information online about our programs and services in French.
 - Develop bilingual services, forms and affidavits for use online, in-person, mail, or by phone.
- The Department, as directed by the Deputy, includes French-language services in our work in consultation with the French-language Services Coordinator, on topics such as:
 - Emergency management,
 - Office of the Fire Marshal,
 - Regional Economic Networks and the Business Retention Expansion Program,
 - Land use planning, and
 - Other topics
- Critical public information related to Health Safety and Security, is available to citizens in the language of their choice. Such as:
 - Emergency alerts;
 - Public notices and warnings; and
 - Fire safety information.
- Educate and inform staff on the active offer:
 - *Bonjour! Services en Français*, signage;
 - Provide information online about our programs and services in French;
 - Develop bilingual services and forms for use online, in-person, mail, and by phone, whenever possible; and
 - Translate press releases, advertisements, invitations to participate, discussion papers, surveys, reports and results.

Continued Efforts for 2019-2020

- Continue to promote the availability of French-language services to the public through print or online advertising, social media and by word of mouth.
- Work with program owners to identify opportunities to deliver new or improve existing services in French.
- Display the *Bonjour! Services en Français*, signage in offices where French Services are available to the Public, such as the EMO offices in Dartmouth.
- Include French-language services, whenever possible, in fire prevention programs and services.
- Strengthen the municipal-provincial relationship by working in partnership with Acadian and francophone community organizations like the Conseil de développement de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Strengthening this relationship and our ongoing dialogue will support municipalities, Acadians and Francophones in building a rapport with DMA and the Province, leading to greater trust and confidence.

Communications with the Public | Printed or Electronic

Goals and Objectives

- Critical public information related to Health, Safety and Security is available to citizens and municipalities in French.
- The public has a greater ability to interact with government in the language of their choice.
- Information related to Federal Funding programs to municipalities will be available in French, whenever possible.
- Any new information system supporting electronic services intended for public or municipal use, which is purchased or developed, whenever possible, should be in both languages. Where unilingual systems exist for use by the public, whenever possible, provisions should be made to translate or otherwise provide the service in both languages.

Continued Efforts for 2019-2020

- Collaborate with program owners on ways to refine or redevelop approaches, programs, and strategies for planning and delivering French-language services in priority areas. This includes increasing the availability of French information online for programs and services.
- Financial assistance is available to support the inclusion of French-language information in any new or updated information systems used by municipalities or the public.
- Financial assistance is available for French-language advertising to support the inclusion of French-language ads and materials in advertising and marketing campaigns.
- Maintain the level of French-language services currently offered, by phone, in-person, through our website and through “Ask Us” public enquiries.
- Continue to encourage the translation of web content, forms, brochures, manuals and other publications as opportunities become available (e.g. National Disaster Mitigation Program).

Availability and Accessibility of French-language Services | Human Resources

Goals and Objectives

- Inform and advise hiring managers of the availability of the Public Service Commission's French-Language Services Human Resource Guidelines that encourages government to hire bilingual staff.
- Increase staff engagement as we strive to make DMA a safe and engaging workplace.
- Increase the number of staffing actions that include bilingual ability as an asset, to increase the number of bilingual staff in the department and in government.
- Increase the number of staff participating in French-language training and cultural awareness training: *Acadie at a glance*.
- Develop a sense of French community to encourage, attract and retain staff that can provide French-language services.

Continued Efforts for 2019-2020

- Encourage managers to advertise vacant positions with French-language capacity as an asset.
- Continue to advertise vacant positions with French-language capacity as an asset.
- Actively encourage management to increase the number of bilingual staff hired in all divisions and at all levels.
- Provide staff with opportunities for French-language training.
- Encourage staff to attend cultural awareness training, *Acadie at a Glance*, or other training opportunities offered in French.
- Provide staff with opportunities to practice their French-language skills.
- Encourage staff to request resources for French-language skills development, maintenance, and growth.

Community Engagement and Outreach | Public Engagement

Goals and Objectives

- To have one component of each consultation undertaken by the Department available in French in accordance with the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations.
- Assist and support with consultations, through:
 - the use of a French-speaking meeting facilitator, interpretation services, etc.
 - the translation of documentation, press releases, advertisements, invitations to participate, surveys, discussion papers, reports and results.

Continued Efforts for 2019-2020

- Planned consultations for the 2019-2020 fiscal year are:
 - Municipal Elections Act
 - Assessment Act

Planned Measure

- Strive to have one component of each public consultation undertaken, available in French as appropriate.

Community Engagement and Outreach | Municipal Services

Goals and Objectives

- The Acadian and francophone community has access to municipal services in French.
- Encourage municipalities to increase the amount of French-language information and services provided to the public.
- Encourage municipalities with an Acadian and francophone community to offer French-language information online through their websites and through BizPal.
- Encourage Acadians and francophones to find out about and participate in local government.
- Provide municipal and School Board Election information in French.
- Encourage a continued dialogue of cooperation and partnership between the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNEÉ), Municipal Advisors and the Regional Enterprise Networks (RENs) that supports economic growth and immigration, youth work force attachment, and rural enterprise.

Continued Efforts for 2019-2020

- Collaborate with Service Nova Scotia in relation to French-language services provided by DMA.
- Collaborate with the Municipal Advisors and municipalities to assist with the translation of website content for municipalities with French communities that do not have French content available online.
- Encourage municipalities to increase the amount of French-language information and services provided to the public.
- Encourage Acadians and francophones to find out about and participate in local government.
- Encourage the Department to translate information and publications related to EMO.
- Provide more Fire Prevention and Public Safety messages and materials in French such as tv screens in Access NS sites.
- Continue to encourage a closer working relationship between Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Municipal Advisors and the Regional Enterprise Networks (RENs).

Community Engagement and Outreach | Community Development and Growth

The development and vitality of the Acadian and francophone community is enhanced by the delivery of French-language services.

Goals and Objectives

- Collaborate and engage our stakeholders to ensure policies, programs and services encourage and support vibrant, safe, and healthy French Language communities.
- Encourage Acadian and francophone not-for-profit community groups and municipal units to learn more about funding programs offered by DMA.
- Encourage municipalities with an Acadian and francophone community to offer French-language information online through their websites and through BizPal.
- Encourage Acadians and Francophones to find out about and participate in local government.

Continued Efforts for 2019-2020

- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with Acadian and francophone community organizations to help DMA recognize the need for French-language government services.
- Liaise with the Acadian and francophone community organizations through business and community events.
- Ensure Municipalities are aware they can request the translation of their content within BizPal.
- Have more Acadians and francophones find out about and participate in local government.
- Encourage more Acadians and francophones to become volunteers for the Ground Search and Rescue teams in their communities.
- Assist municipalities with Acadian and Francophone populations and not-for-profit community groups as they apply for grants. The funds are used to facilitate improvements in their community or in municipal government service delivery and administration.

Agencies, Boards and Commissions

Acadians and francophones are encouraged to become members of DMA's agencies, boards, and commissions.

Information about ways to participate is made available through the Provincial "Grow your career. Serve your community" Executive Council Campaign published in Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

For more information, visit: https://novascotia.ca/exec_council/abc/

Conclusion

The goals and objectives outlined in this plan build upon the foundation of French-language services DMA has in place to provide Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians with options to interact with government in their own language. We recognize that providing increased access to programs, services and information in French benefits citizens, employees and all of government.

DMA currently provides information and services online in French and continues to encourage municipalities to interact with Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians to develop French Services.

Appendix

2018-19 Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives

Protect Health and Safety through the promotion of fire, building and life safety practices

Active Offer / Communications with the Public and Information Materials: Printed or Electronic

- Continued to promote the availability of French-language services to the public through radio, print, social media, online advertising, and by word of mouth.
 - Fire Prevention Week: Look, Listen, Learn: <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20181004003>
Semaine de la prévention des incendies : regarde, écoute, apprends :
<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20181004004>
 - Fire Safety Tips for Summer: <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20180614005>
Conseils de sécurité-incendie pour l'été : <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20180614006>
 - Beautification and Streetscaping Projets Announced :
<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20180720001>
Annonce de projets d'embellissement et d'aménagement du paysage de rue :
<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20180720002>
- Prepared a bilingual version of the National Disaster Mitigation Program information pamphlet.
- In collaboration with Municipality of Halifax, we facilitated access to translation for information related the Office of the Municipal Clerk.
- Displayed the *Bonjour!* Services en Français, signage in offices where French Services are available to the public, such as EMO in Dartmouth.
- Maintained the level of French-language Services currently offered by phone, in-person, through our website and through "Ask Us" public enquiries.
- French-language advertisements and materials in advertising, marketing campaigns and info graphics.

Emergency Management Office (EMO)

EMO has a bilingual Manager of Operations to enhance our ability to send Alert Ready Messages in both English and French. This allows us to communicate effectively with French speaking communities before, during, and after emergencies. It also enables us to respond to French media requests.

All 911 services are available in French, as are the 911/EMO brochures. EMO Social Media tweets about helping citizens prepare for emergencies, included information in French. Information relating to emergency preparedness and what to do in an emergency was made available.

Examples include EMO Social Media tweets such as:

- Home Emergency Kit
- Car Emergency Kit
- Power Outage Safety Tips
- Blizzards and Severe Storms Warnings and Updates
- Freezing Rain and Ice Safety Tips
- Flooding Safety Tips
- Public Emergency System Test Alerts were bilingual
- Knowing when to call 911

Office of the Fire Marshal

Information was made available in French to help reduce the risk of fire and know what to do if a fire happens. Examples include:

- Provided \$108,390.57 in grants to first responder organizations in Francophone communities
<https://beta.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/1-1450/emergency-service-provider-fund-esp-f-grant-recipients-2018-en.pdf>

Department of Municipal Affairs website: www.novascotia.ca/dma

Communications Nova Scotia is currently overseeing major changes to the DMA website. DMA will work with Communications Nova Scotia on the translation of web content, this continues to be a significant effort as Government transitions to a new platform.

Human Resources

- One staff participated in French-language training provided through Université Ste. Anne.

Municipalities Improve Economic Growth and Viability

Public Engagement

DMA consulted with municipalities last year on a variety of topics that impact them including, The Nova Scotia Building Code, Minimum Planning Standards and Powers to Expend Money. These consultations took a variety of forms and all municipalities, including those with a significant Acadian and francophone community were invited to participate and provide the views of Councils and citizens.

Community Development and Growth

- Co-hosted the meeting with the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNE) and the French Municipal Administrators in November 2018.
- Kept an ongoing dialogue with Acadian and francophone community organizations at business and community events.
- Encouraged Acadians and francophones to find out about and participate in local government.