



French-language Services Plan

2024–2025

*Department of Municipal
Affairs and Housing*

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French-language Services Plan
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
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French Language Services Plan 2024–2025

Municipal Affairs and Housing

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

March 2024

NOTES: This plan covers the period from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Bonjour!

I am pleased to present our French Language Services (FLS) Plan for 2024-2025.

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) provides programs, grants, and funding along with services and guidance to municipalities, towns, and villages in many areas including safety and security, budget planning and finance, and policy and program development. The Department helps municipalities across the province govern and provide municipal services in times of emergency. DMAH works to create conditions favourable to the development of housing and to grow affordable housing within the province.

We recognize that the Acadian and francophone community plays a vital role in the cultural richness of our province. In collaboration with other designated public institutions, we are committed to enhancing and promoting access to French-language Services for all Nova Scotians. We hope that our efforts will make it easier for the Acadian and francophone community to access our services and programs in the language of their choice. We will continue to focus on actively offering French-language services whenever possible.

At DMAH, we are committed to providing access to government information and our programs and services to Nova Scotians in French. Whenever possible, we recommend FLS be considered when new programs and services are being developed and offered. We recognize the important role we play in preserving and promoting the province's Acadian and francophone culture and heritage. Municipalities, towns, and villages are also encouraged to identify opportunities, where appropriate, to deliver new services or improve existing services in French, enabling Acadians and francophones to engage with all levels of government in the language of their choice.

We are proud of the work we do to promote FLS and welcome this opportunity to share it with you. We continue to look for opportunities to provide services in French, while raising awareness of FLS within the department. We are committed, not just to meeting our obligations under the *French-language Services Act*, but to improving our capacity to offer FLS as a department.

Byron Rafuse
Deputy Minister
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

How we contribute to the growth of the community

Our French-language services coordinator supports departmental staff in evaluating French-language communications needs and assists us in developing our departmental French-language services plan. This plan helps to provide for the delivery of French-language services to the Acadian and francophone community.

As needed, our coordinator reaches out to the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie to better understand community needs and determine requirements. Our departmental program staff are encouraged to consider translation requirements and benefits at the earliest possible opportunity to allow for thorough planning and adequate time to implement.

As we continue to maintain and improve French-language services, we welcome feedback on our progress, and invite you to share your comments or questions by contacting our French-language services coordinator. If you wish to make a formal complaint regarding French-language services, please contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

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

Michelle Saulnier
FLS Coordinator



What we achieved in 2023–2024

Inform the Public about Services and Emergency Situations in French

From our newsfeed: <https://news.novascotia.ca>

- [Préparations en vue de l'ouragan Lee](#)
- [Préparation en vue de la saison des ouragans](#)
- [Fin de l'état d'urgence provincial](#)
- [Déclaration de l'état d'urgence à l'échelle de la province](#)
- [Financement pour l'infrastructure municipale et l'innovation](#)
- [Plus de financement pour les fournisseurs de services d'urgence](#)
- [41 projets approuvés dans le cadre de programmes d'emploi et d'embellissement et d'aménagement du paysage de rue](#)
- [De meilleures infrastructures liées à l'eau et aux eaux usées dans quatre collectivités](#)

From EMO and the Alert Ready system:

- Yearly tests of the National Alert Ready system – using a bilingual message
- EMO Social Media Alert Ready – Your phone has the power to save a life.
- EMO held one session of the Emergency Alert System training for Municipalities in French
- NSEMO activated the Provincial Coordination Centre to monitor storms and emergency situations along with Nova Scotia Power and other partners.
- Emergency and disaster preparedness: <https://novascotia.ca/emergency-education/>

Social media announcements:

- Wildfire LiveStream
- Provincewide State of Emergency Declared
- Home Emergency Kit
- We're monitoring the Storm
- Storm Update
- Extreme Cold
- Stay Safe During Power Outages
- Food Safety
- Safety Tips: Flooding
- Using Well Water after a flood

We also promoted and shared information from other government departments and our community partners in French

- Be prepared to check on your neighbours.
- Emergency Preparedness Week – [get prepared.ca](https://getprepared.ca)

Nous surveillons la tempête



NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Préparez-vous



NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Trousse d'urgence pour la maison

NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE



Liste de coordonnées importantes



Aliments secs et en conserve



Renseignements sur la garde des animaux de compagnie



Ouvre-boîte manuel



Trousse de premiers soins et liste de vos médicaments sur ordonnance



6 litres d'eau par personne (2 litres par jour)



Lampe de poche à manivelles ou à piles



Radio à manivelle ou à piles (et piles de rechange)



Chargeur pour votre téléphone cellulaire

Sécurité alimentaire



NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Mesures de précaution INONDATION



Prévoyez

- ✓ Assurez-vous que les portes et les fenêtres du sous-sol sont étanches.
- ✓ Installez une pompe de puisard et vérifiez votre assurance.
- ✓ N'entreposez pas d'articles importants au sous-sol.

Pendant une inondation

- ✓ Surveillez les bulletins météorologiques et les nouvelles.
- ✓ Assurez-vous que votre trousse d'urgence soit prête à apporter avec vous.
- ✓ Ne traversez jamais une zone inondée et évitez les rivières ou les cours d'eau.

Après une inondation

- ✓ Ne retournez pas à la maison avant de confirmer qu'il est sécuritaire de le faire.
- ✓ Faites vérifier votre système électrique par un électricien qualifié.
- ✓ Éviter d'entrer en contact avec les eaux de crue.

NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Pour votre sécurité, éloignez-vous des côtes



NOVA SCOTIA
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE

Municipal Affairs

Land use planning process charts available in French:

- Chart 1 – Planning Documents Approval Process
- Chart 2 – Land Use Bylaw and Development Agreement Approval Process

Housing

- Bilingual housing staff meet with Francophone clients as needed to assess specific client concerns.
- Nova Scotia's 2022-25 National Housing Strategy Action Plan
<https://beta.novascotia.ca/documents/national-housing-strategy-action-plan-2022-2025>
- Community Housing Growth Fund
<https://centre.support/grants/community-housing-growth-fund/>
- Housing Needs Assessment materials, including the Key Findings Document were made available in French. <https://novascotia.ca/action-for-housing/docs/provincial-housing-needs-assessment-report-key-findings-fr.pdf>

Continue to work to strengthen the Bonjour! program

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 fete de la musique (June 21)
- Acadie at a Glance and French-langauge training
- 12 Oui Chef! French at Lunch – Learn French while learning about cooking



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.
- Municipal Affairs consulted with all municipal units on a new service exchange agreement between the Province and municipalities. One session was conducted in French.

Conclusion

We are pleased to offer Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians many options to interact with government in their own language. We achieve this in collaboration with other departments, agencies, boards, or commissions including the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, through the French-language Services Coordinating Committee. We value this partnership, which ensures a continued understanding of the unique needs of our province's Acadian and francophone community.

Providing government information and services in the language of the residents seeking services is part of the government's approach to making services more accessible. This helps remove barriers that may limit residents' full participation in their communities, workplaces, and lives while promoting their social, cultural, and economic well-being.

Nova Scotia is home to thousands of French-speaking residents and welcomes many French-speaking Canadian and international visitors, students, and workers, all of whom contribute to the social, cultural, linguistic, and economic richness of the province. We also recognize the important and valuable contributions of past, present, and future French-speaking residents in the development and prosperity of the province. Providing access to quality government services in French benefits the Acadian and francophone community's economic, social, and cultural well-being, and contributes to its continued growth and development.

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 - Making sure Nova Scotians are aware that our services are available in French. 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.

APPENDIX B: Inventory of Services

The following is a detailed inventory of French-language services and information provided by DMAH as of March 31, 2023.

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.

Examples of services included:

- Prepared a bilingual version of the National Disaster Mitigation Program information pamphlet.
- In collaboration with the Halifax Regional Municipality, we facilitated access to translation for information related to 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 NSEMO 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

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 in French.

Print brochures available to the public in French:

- Are you ready for an emergency?
- Facts About 911

Alert Ready system - Emergency situations can unfold quickly, and, in some instances, alerts can help people protect themselves and their families.

- Tests of the National Alert Ready system – using a bilingual message
- Province, Police Make Changes to Alert Ready System

Examples of bilingual EMO social media tweets were as follows:

- Issued tweets and news releases in French – before, during and after a storm or emergency situation
- Stock your Emergency kit

- Hurricane Season Preparation
- Get Prepared
- Remove loose objects
- Batten down the hatches and put away that lawn furniture, Nova Scotia – there’s a storm coming.
- Home emergency kit
- Car emergency kit
- Power outage safety tips
- Blizzards and severe storm warnings and updates
- Freezing rain and ice safety tips
- Flooding safety tips
- Reminders about the public emergency alert system
- Knowing when to call 911

Office of the Fire Marshal

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

An educational campaign to inform Nova Scotians on safety precautions they can take to protect themselves from fire leading up to Fire Safety Week in October each year. Topics included:

- ‘Some Heroes Wear Capes’ ad and video, fire safety checklist, evacuation plans, wood stoves, chimneys, phones, space heaters, Fire safety, put a lid on it! when cooking;
- Keep your cooking area clutter-free! Turn pot and pan handles inward; Be smart use a timer; Never leave pots unattended; Keep kids safe in the kitchen; Install smoke alarms and smoke alarms save lives. Change the batteries in your smoke detectors;
- Is your BBQ ready? Fire won’t wait. Plan your escape. Keep fire safety in mind during the holidays.
- Published information on proposed Building Code changes via the Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse.
- Issued a number of fire hazard Recall / Notices related to consumer goods.



Housing

The following affordable housing reports were published in French in 2021-2022:

- Affordable housing report Spring 2021: Charting a new course for affordable housing in Nova Scotia;
- Solutions for housing and homelessness; and,
- Affordable housing progress report: January 2022.

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing website:

In March 2022, a portion of the online information about DMAH programs and services was available in French.

Public Engagement

We consulted municipalities on a variety of topics that impacted them including:

- the Municipal Elections Act;
- Assessment Act;
- Nova Scotia Building Code;
- Minimum Planning Standards;
- Code of conduct;
- Housing supply and housing needs
- Short-term rentals; and, Accessibility.

Community Development and Growth

- 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.
- Supported the 2020 Municipal and CSAP elections through the following services:
 - Provided the Candidate's and Safe Elections Guide in French and English ahead of the Municipal Election;
 - Worked with the Elections Vendor and CSAP to ensure that French translations for election materials were adequate; and,
 - Provided French-language posters for polling stations.

Acadian and Francophone communities also received help from other DMAH programs such as:

- Provincial Capital Assistance Program for water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste projects [Grant Supports Municipal Infrastructure Projects](#).
- The Municipal Financial Capacity Grant, which is an unconditional grant to support municipalities in providing services to Nova Scotians.
- Volunteer fire departments, ground search and rescue organizations, and First Nations fire departments' grants to help address the impacts of rising operational costs.