

Pacific Region Official Languages Best Practices

List of Best Practices

Canada Revenue Agency

For information on the Official Languages Program at the Canada Revenue Agency please contact Laurette Drolet, Regional Advisor Official Languages at (604) 666-8556 or by email at Laurette.Drolet@ccra-adrc.gc.ca

Pacific Region

Canada Revenue Agency Senior management has committed to sending their managers to the "Official Languages...a matter of respect" workshops.

Canada Revenue Agency Pacific Region graciously offered to cover all translation costs for the Pacific Federal Council Official Languages Committee newsletter "Coup de pousse" and are making it available to all their staff across the country.

Pacific Region

Burnaby Fraser Tax Services Office

Client Service/Revenue Collections Divisions - Lisa Hall (604) 587-2441

Responsible Citizenship- British Columbia French school pilot project

In keeping with the Canada Revenue Agency's commitment to reach and educate youth, a new learning unit entitled '*Responsible Citizenship and Canada's Tax System*' has been introduced to Grade 10 to 12 students, in a strategic partnership with the School District #93, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique.

As the course title suggests, the material was designed to provide insight on the importance of voluntary compliance, responsible citizenship and active participation in a democratic society.

The '*Teaching Taxes*' learning unit was also promoted, along with the opportunity for students to gain invaluable work experience by participating in the '*Community Volunteer Income Tax Program*'. The end result is that students will gain familiarity and confidence in dealing with tax matters, an important life skill for young people while giving 'something back' to their communities by helping others. The work experience gained forms part of the Grade Twelve Graduation requirements in B.C.

This unique opportunity to collaborate on a pilot project with the French schools in British Columbia, gathering input and feedback that will enhance the learning material for the future has been a win-win initiative. Strengthening ties with the francophone community while expanding communication in French.

The scope of this pilot project has national implications. The *Responsible Citizenship and Canada's Tax System* pilot learning unit is currently being revised based on input from educators and students in four provinces. Plans are to expand and integrate the material into schools across Canada.

Pacific Region

Northern B.C. & Yukon Tax Service Office

Client Services Division - Maureen Evanson: (250) 561-7888

1. French Lunches: The bilingual employees hold a French Lunch every Wednesday at noon that is open to all staff. During the hour, participants speak entirely in French, with the bilingual employees speaking at various levels to ensure everyone feels included. Most designated bilinguals attend each lunch; one non-designated bilingual employee is completing bilingual testing as a result of practicing and improving her French at these lunches.

2. Respect Inspires workshop: Team leaders from the Tax Service Office and a bilingual employee attended the Respect Inspires workshop this year in order to understand the challenges facing the delivery of services in both official languages, and the challenges faced by the bilingual employees delivering it.

3. Language maintenance calls: Over 2003/04, several bilingual employees participated in weekly phone calls with employees in different regions to practice speaking in both official languages. The phone calls would last from 30 to 60 minutes, with turns being taken in each language.

4. Web.fluent/Mots.branchés: Posters and pamphlets were ordered from Official Languages to promote the use of French technological terms between bilingual employees. The reaction was very positive as the bilingual employees welcome all opportunities to learn and practice correct terms in French.

5. French "mini-library": The bilingual employees in Client Services have organized a "mini-library" of French publications, ranging from grammar books to French newspapers. These materials are available to anyone who has a need for them.

6. "Meet & Greets": The Respect Inspires workshop brought together Team Leaders from other government departments who were facing the same challenges with respect to Official Languages. As a result, these Team Leaders have organized "Meet & Greets" to have bilingual employees from other government departments meet and discuss language maintenance and plan future events.

Pacific Region

Southern Interior Tax Service Office - Al Cooper (250) 492-9379 - Viv Mohoruk (250) 492-9412

When applicable to maintain oral proficiency, bilingual employees receive individual assistance from a teacher by telephone once a week. The sessions are organized by Official Languages Division as a specialized course.

In addition we have obtained copies of the PFC Toolkit for all Client Services staff and the PFC mouse pad for our front counter workstations. We are advertising CRA services in the newsletter of the Okanagan French Cultural Centre in Kelowna, participated in a Respect Inspires Workshop at the Centre earlier this year, and have used our bilingual staff to deliver some Income Tax Outreach Sessions at the Centre.

Few months ago a meeting was organized between the office's Director and the Director of the French association at the French Cultural Centre to introduce the new Director and to discuss ideas the community had to improve service to the Francophone community.

All the requests made by the association were accomplished. The Director intends to continue the dialogue to ensure that French services are comparable and that we do our best to support the French Community.

Pacific Region

Surrey Tax Centre - Patti Krestanovich - (604) 585-5202

Some examples of things we have done at the Surrey Tax Centre, together with the Burnaby Fraser Tax Services Office are:

1. We hold French Retention Sessions for bilingual staff every Tuesday from September through June (two 1-1/2 hour sessions). In September each year, we hold a focus session with the bilingual staff and the teacher from Educacentre, in order for the teacher to design the sessions around their individual needs and the needs of the Agency.
2. The Surrey Tax Centre subscribes to the French newspaper "L'Express Pacifique" for use by the bilingual employees.
3. Each year we celebrate "Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie" with a display and handouts for all staff. This year our cafeteria had a special menu one day with French Canadian cuisine.
4. Another initiative that we will be undertaking this fiscal is giving the bilingual staff "Tour Guide Training" to offer tours of the centre to French students. The bilingual staff taking part in this initiative will be preparing a one page French handout for the students, describing what we do at the Surrey Tax Centre.

Pacific Region

Vancouver Island Tax Services Office - Shawn Dheensaw - (250) 363-3646

The local managers are in the process of managing bilingual employee succession by analyzing the current make-up and language levels of the internal bilingual workforce of the Tax Services Office. The succession planning is aimed at providing greater insight into the current bilingual employees' career and departure plans, interest in maintaining or obtaining higher levels and preparedness of other potential staff wanting bilingual development. This will provide us with the information to make strategic decisions based on our current and anticipated capacity to manage

our local Official Language requirements.

Pacific Region

Finance and Administration - Karen Okahori – (604) 666-0791

- Mouse pads from the Pacific Federal Council
- Employees taking French language courses
- Senior Management Team members are taking French language courses during work hours

Pacific Region

Vancouver Tax Services Office (VTSO)- Robert Maier – (604) 691-4225

- The VTSO encourages bilingual employees to maintain their second-language proficiency by allowing them to participate in French retention classes during working hours.
- The VTSO funds tuition costs (through Educational Assistance) for persons interested in taking evening French courses.
- The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program will be offered to the Francophone Community in French.

Canadian Human Rights Commission

BC and Yukon Region

Harry Monk, Regional Director - (604) 666-2252 - HARRY.MONK@chrc-ccdpc.ca

Supply French language material in public waiting area and staff areas

Canadian International Development Agency

Pacific Regional Office - Josee Landry – (604) 666-5697 - josee_landry@acdi-cida.gc.ca

I am fluently bilingual and respond, verbally and in writing, to clients in either French or English, depending on their choice. I answer the telephone in English and French, thereby inviting callers to speak their language of choice. I also place bilingual CIDA publications in the reception area of the office. Also, the monthly newsletter that I produce is translated into French and both versions (English and French) are placed on the CIDA website.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

BC/Yukon Region - Maria Schiavone, A/Human Resources Advisor - (604) 666-8553 - Maria.Schiavone@cic.gc.ca

1. Bilingual employees identify themselves by wearing lapel badges (TBS pictogram pins).
2. At CIC, staff are encouraged to acquire new language skills and maintain their skill levels with various reference tools including Lexique, Termium, subscriptions to French papers and publications and other office applications. Learning tools are also available in our learning centre, including CD-ROMs, videos, cassettes and books for the independent study of French.
3. "Pause Café," a time when employees gather to discuss various issues around the use of the official languages. These meetings are held in French and the manager regularly invites members of the group to discuss issues raised in these meetings. A study was recently completed on this initiative and new sessions are being organized to be more informative, more accessible and to provide semi-structured events and activities to provide opportunities for staff to practice French.
4. A bilingual employee phone listing is available to all staff to as a reference tool. As well, Treasury Board's reminder of active offer tip sheet, telephone techniques and glossary reference sheets, as well as incorporating the video "A Matter of Service" are provided to management and incorporated into employee orientation.
5. Our regional learning centre continues to provide a variety of tools including CD-ROM's, books and videos that are available to all staff in order to further develop their bilingual capacity.
6. Staff are provided with a variety of tools to increase their bilingual capacity such as French keyboards and subscriptions to Francophone newspapers and publications.
7. Learning tools are also available via our Learning Centre or OL Coordinator such as language dictionaries, cd roms, video cassettes and books for self-directed French language studies.
8. An official languages section has been developed for our regional Intranet site and provides information to staff on the importance of official languages, a directory of offices and service points, initiatives in the region, language training/schools, Second Language Evaluation testing, Francophone associations and communities in the BC/Yukon region, working tools such as Lexique, Termium, Immigration and Citizenship Glossary, Language Nook, French keyboard tip sheet and useful links such as the OL Act and Regulations, Bilingualism Bonus directive and the Human Resources Management Agency's Website (formerly Treasury Board Secretariat.)

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

BC Region - Lucie Zaharoff - (604) 775-8016 - zaharoffl@inac-ainc.gc.ca

We have instituted a French-language training program in our office for approximately 120 staff including staff from the Department of Indian Residential Schools Resolution who are also located in our building. At this time we have 13 classes at various developmental levels which are being offered during working hours. This is a pilot project which will be assessed and evaluated to determine whether or not it is worthwhile pursuing in future years.

We also have periodic events to help staff retain what they learn. For example, we have pot luck lunches (déjeuner à la fortune du pot) once in a while where staff can exchange in French. We

have also partnered with our United Way campaign leaders in the fall, inviting folks to participate in a French Film Festival, whereby staff paid an entrance fee (and could purchase soft drinks and goodies) to watch a French movie during lunch time. Proceeds went to United Way. In addition, we have had a bake sale to raise funds for a French celebration (party) which was conducted all in French with an appropriate vocabulary list having been provided ahead of time.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Pacific Region - Sharon Malone - (604) 666-3924 - MaloneS@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

- The Official Languages Champion for the department-Pacific is an EX at the Director level (Gisele Bordeleau, Director of Technical Services, Canadian Coast Guard). This gives the Official Languages portfolio a higher profile and stronger support than might be expected from a lower level.
- The Regional Director of Coast Guard has a private tutor to help maintain his current level of French. As a best practice, when this Regional Director is unable to attend the session, he makes his tutoring time available to his staff for French language learning or maintenance. This results in minimum disruption to the tutor's scheduling and allows opportunities for language improvement and retention for others.

Health Canada

BC/Yukon Region - Jennifer Perzow - (604)775-7000 - Jennifer.Perzow@hc-sc.gc.ca

Sharing French language tips with regional staff via weekly intranet announcements.

National Research Council

Diana Nacer - (604) 221-3109 - Diana.Nacer@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca

On-site weekly French classes at the beginner, intermediate and advanced level for NRC employees.

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Karsten Kaemling - (604)666-5802 - karsten.kaemling@ocol-clo.gc.ca

Hosts meetings with students from Language Training Canada to discuss the legislative aspects of bilingualism and the work being done by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Province of British Columbia

Francophone Affairs Program, Intergovernmental Affairs

Louise Goulet - Louise.Goulet@gems9.gov.bc.ca

I wear and give away pins of the franco-columbian flag (available from the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB), which very often becomes a conversation piece and helps raise awareness about the fact that I speak French and that there is such a thing as a Francophone community in B.C.

I always have copies of our bilingual Web site bookmark in my purse to give away. So if people are interested, they can easily follow-up.

If there are any major francophone events, e.g. Festival d'été, I send information to people who may be interested via e-mail - to broaden the circle and raise awareness. For this purpose, I have developed a special distribution list of interested colleagues, English and French speaking. In doing this, I will often translate information into English for colleagues who do not speak French, again increasing awareness of the Francophone community.

I put French posters and publications around the office. If a new publication is particularly good (e.g. new SDE tourism brochure for Vancouver Island), I actually send it around to everyone via distribution list and tell them where they can get a copy.

I give highlights of the Francophone Affairs Program at staff meetings and 'show off' new

publications (e.g. new Guide-Santé).

I organize French lunches for those in the office who are interested. Many are learning French. I invite all staff in our group to special events we organize ourselves (e.g. Journée de la Francophonie at the Legislature)

When we have a birthday or special goodie day in the office, I make a point of bringing a French pastry, e.g. tartre au sucre, to also introduce a French cultural component and raise awareness. Lots of small steps, in the course of things, not standing alone, which raise awareness and make French 'fun'. French is put across as a welcome addition, value-added to the fabric of the office and of a way of doing things. Plus it costs very little!