



Unilingual Canadians

Some people think that the new official languages policies are a barrier to entry and advancement in the public service for unilingual Canadians.

- As of March 31, 2005, 39.7% of positions in the public service across Canada were bilingual and most of these (95.5%) were in Ontario, the National Capital Region, Quebec and New Brunswick. In Western and Northern Canada, generally only positions needed to provide services to the public in both official languages where there is a significant demand are bilingual. In regions designated as bilingual for language-of-work purposes (the National Capital Region, New Brunswick and parts of Ontario and Quebec), some positions may also be bilingual to provide supervision or other services to employees in their preferred official language. There are no regions designated as bilingual for language-of-work purposes in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or in Western or Northern Canada.
- There is ample opportunity for employment in the public service for unilingual Canadians. A rewarding career exists without having to learn the other official language and without having to leave the West or the Atlantic provinces. This is true right up to the executive level of director general (DG). For example, in the four western provinces, 79.4% of executive positions still require only the knowledge of English.
- The proportion of bilingual positions is as follows (March 31, 2005):

Location	Total of PS positions	Bilingual Positions	% of Bilingual Positions by Region
Western Provinces and Northern Canada	35,553	1,564	4.4%
Ontario*	20,583	2,099	10.2%
National Capital Region	70,613	45,703	64.7%
Quebec*	19,603	12,063	61.5%
New Brunswick	5,464	2,693	49.3%
Other Atlantic Provinces	13,097	1,391	10.6%

* National Capital Region excluded

- According to the official languages policies that took effect in April 2004, bilingual positions at all levels open to the public may be staffed non-imperatively. In those cases, unilingual persons may be appointed and provided with language training at government expense. This approach was taken to give unilingual Canadians equal opportunities for employment and advancement. In addition, when staffing from within the Public Service, executive entry-level positions and other positions below this level may continue to be staffed non-imperatively when it is not indispensable that the position be filled immediately with a bilingual candidate.
- The number of language training hours has been increased by up to 410 hours to provide time for those who have not had much exposure to their second official language. As well, language training becomes a development tool for employees who want to advance and eventually hold bilingual positions. Institutions are called upon to promote language training and to integrate it into professional development plans.
- To be appointed Assistant Deputy Minister, a move to the National Capital Region is probably required since most positions at that level are located there. Since 1998, all Assistant Deputy Minister positions are designated bilingual C/B/C, that is the superior level (C) for reading and oral interaction and the intermediary level (B) for writing. Most senior positions are staffed from within the public service, with career public servants who have had years to develop the required expertise and to take the training required to meet all the qualifications, including language requirements.