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Information sheet:

Reception

Welcoming a client either on the telephone or in person is often your organization's first chance to make an impression. By offering both English and French services, your client will appreciate the opportunity to continue in either of the official languages. Consider some of the following strategies and useful tips to help your organization provide bilingual reception services.

Telephone reception

- Answer the telephone in both official languages.
 - Keep a "cheat sheet" by the telephone with key phrases to respond to callers.
 - Identify bilingual person(s) within your organization to whom telephone calls may be referred.
- Ensure that voice mail messages are recorded in both official languages.
- If your organization does not have a receptionist or is unable to staff this position with a bilingual employee consider letting calls ring into a bilingual voice mail. Ensure that the call is returned by a previously identified person with the required language skills.

In-person reception

- Greet your client in both official languages.
 - If you have a reception area, consider staffing this position with a bilingual employee.
 - Keep a list of bilingual employees at hand.
- Ensure that written documentation in your reception area is available and displayed in both official languages.
- Ensure that a sign indicating that both official languages are spoken is visible to your clients. (see "**Official languages symbol**" information sheet)

Additional resources

For practical and readily available tips in providing a bilingual reception please consult the following:

Official Languages Publications and Guides – Service to the Public

From Bonjour to Au revoir – Usual expressions on the Telephone

Reminder – Advice to offer quality service in both official languages

On the Telephone – Glossary and usual expression for quality service in both official languages

www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/ollo/tools-outils/pg/index_e.asp#30

To highlight your organization's bilingual reception area consider ordering the following poster:

Official Languages Posters

English or French...Go ahead, it's your choice!

www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/ollo/tools-outils/pos-aff/index_e.asp