



**Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
Service Nouvelle-Écosse et Relations avec les municipalités**

**2007/2008
French Language Service Plan**

March 2007

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Introduction to the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was formed on October 1, 2000 to be the lead government Department for improving access to government information and services for businesses, individuals, and municipalities.

The Department is mandated to be the single window service provider for government's services; providing quality service delivery with convenient access for Nova Scotians. We aim to reduce the amount of red tape on businesses and individuals and provide municipalities with a single access point to the Provincial Government.

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2007-2008 French Language Service Plan for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. This plan outlines our priorities and initiatives for offering French-language services within the Department in 2007/2008.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is committed to identifying and implementing areas feasible for provision of French-language services. French-language services enhance the delivery of government services to the public by offering Nova Scotians access to services and information in their language of choice when conducting business with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

The Department made significant progress in 2006-2007 in the delivery of French-language services across several service channels. This year, the Department continued to offer bilingual service in our call centre and in-person RMV service in the Dartmouth and Yarmouth Access Nova Scotia Centres. We translated our Driver's Handbook and began offering written learner and motorcycle tests in French. High traffic areas of our website were translated and websites for new programs such as Service to Business, Your Energy Rebate and the Nova Scotia Graduate Tax Credit were launched simultaneously in English and French.

These are the beginning stages of a long-term project that will ensure Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations' policies, programs and services reflect the needs of the Acadian and Francophone community in Nova Scotia.



Greg Keefe, CMA
Deputy Minister

Policy on written and verbal communications in French

The Department will respond to verbal and written requests from the public in a timely manner in French whenever possible. Written correspondence received from the public will be replied to in the language of the original correspondence.

Bilingual employees in the Provincial Call Centre and Dartmouth and Yarmouth Access Nova Scotia Centres proactively offer service in French. This ensures French-language services are publicized, readily available, and easily accessible to the public.

The quality of services provided in French is equivalent to services offered in English.

French Language Services progress to date

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations began offering French-language services in the fall of 2005. To date, the following progress has been made to increase and improve our service offerings in French:

- A French Language Services Coordinator was appointed - this position is key to building momentum and driving progress in French-language services within the Department
- A French Language Services section was added to the Department's 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 business plans
- In-person RMV services are provided in French in the Dartmouth and Yarmouth Access Nova Scotia Centres
- Telephone service is provided in French in the Provincial Call Centre for Registry of Motor Vehicles, Vital Statistics, Residential Tenancies and general public inquiries
- The Driver's Handbook was translated and made available for purchase in French from our Registry of Motor Vehicle and Access Nova Scotia offices and through the Government's online bookstore
- Written driver examinations for Learner and Motorcycle Licences were made available in French in Registry of Motor Vehicle and Access Nova Scotia offices
- An electronic (PDF) version of the French Driver's Handbook was made available online
- Online Services were added in French for the following transactions:
 - Birth, death, and marriage certificate requests
 - Vehicle registration permit renewal
 - Change of mailing address
 - Fine payment
 - Personal Property Registry – Lien Check
 - Driver test payments
 - Knowledge test payments
- The most commonly used sections of the Department website were made available in French:

- “Life Events” Information
- Registry of Motor Vehicles
- Vital Statistics
- Permits directory - Registry of Motor Vehicles, Vital Statistics, Registry of Joint Stocks, Co-operatives Branch
- Petroleum Pricing Regulations
- Service to Business
- Your Energy Rebate Program
- Graduate Tax Rebate
- Ask Joe Howe government search engine
- French language training was provided to our employees through arrangements with the Office of Acadian Affairs
- Hiring competitions are advertised with French as an asset or requirement
- The French Language Service Coordinator represented the Department on the government’s French-language Services Coordinating Committee and subcommittees

Benefits to the Acadian and francophone community

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will strive to provide Acadian and Francophone Nova Scotians with access to government services and information in French. We firmly believe the Acadian and francophone community represents an important part of our clientele.

By increasing access in French to citizen and business-related government information and services, the Department’s 2007/2008 French Language Service Plan will expand on our existing service base and provide the Acadian and francophone community with additional options to interact with government in their own language.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is living within the spirit of the *French Language Service Act* and hopes to continue contributing to the growth and preservation of the Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia.

Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2007-2008

The Department will continue to improve and increase existing services in French in 2007/2008 in the following areas, subject to appropriate budget funding:

Corporate Objective 1. Strengthening the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- Create internal policy on delivering websites for new programs and initiatives in French
- Develop internal long-term strategy to identify and manage information management system changes needed to support French-language services
- Support the Office of Acadian Affairs on the implementation of the *French-language Services Act* and government-wide FLS initiatives

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- Ensure online information regarding new programs and initiatives within the Department is made available to the public in French
- Identify the potential impacts of French-language services on the Department's information technology and information management systems
- Continue representation of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee

Corporate Objective 2. Consulting with the Acadian and francophone community.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- Establish methods to measure the usage and customer satisfaction of the provision of French language services across delivery channels (in-person, telephone, online)

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- Measure usage statistics of in-person French service from our Dartmouth and Yarmouth Access NS Centres
- Conduct online survey to gauge customer satisfaction with the Department's French online services and program content

Corporate Objective 3. Communicating, sharing information, and promoting services available in French.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- Increase the amount of program content available in French on the Department's website
- Translate documents and publications such as manuals, forms and brochures
- Support government-wide initiative on French-language services signage

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- Identify and prioritize high traffic program areas of the Department's website to be translated
- Identify and translate key Departmental forms, brochures and manuals
- Increase the visibility of French-language services on the Department's website
- Inform the Acadian and Francophone community of French-language services with appropriate signs in offices where French service is available

Corporate Objective 4. Supporting French-language services development, planning and delivery in priority areas.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- Introduce increased services for business in French (in-person and online)
- Continue provision of existing French services across designated delivery channels
- Improve staff capacity to deliver French-language services
- Identify key transactions and service offerings suitable for delivery and translation into French
- Introduce bilingual birth certificates
- Provide staff with the opportunity to participate in French-language training

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- Maintain provision of French-language Services:
 - in the Provincial Call Centre
 - for clients accessing services in our Yarmouth and Dartmouth Access NS Offices
 - with online transactions
- Identify existing staff with French-language capacity to offer services in French in other Access NS Centres
- Provide bilingual staff with access to tools, terminology and resources to ensure their capacity to deliver services in French through the telephone, in-person and online service channels

- Continue to advertise all vacant positions in the Service Delivery division as seeking French-language capacity as an asset and as essential in positions where French is a requirement
- Work with the Office of Acadian Affairs to make French training available for staff in areas where there is a need/demand for French-language skills
- Begin providing new, bilingual long and short form birth certificates
- Provide increased access online to Registry of Joint Stock Companies information in French
- Provide French service in the Business Registration Unit for the Registry of Joint Stock Companies office in Halifax. These services include:
 - Business name search and reservation
 - Registration and renewal of Sole Proprietorship, Partnership, Corporation, Business Incorporation, Co-operative Incorporation, Credit Union: Incorporation, Society Incorporation (and Registration)

Conclusion

The goals outlined in this plan are achievable and will continue to build on our existing base of French services. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is making positive steps in the provision of French-language services; this is part of a long term project to provide Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians with increased access to services in French.

This is a very exciting initiative which benefits our customers, our employees, our Department, and government.