

French-language Services Plan for 2007-2008

1. Name of designated Public Institution

Department of Justice.

Please note that although it is an independent branch, for the public's convenience the Public Prosecution Service French-language services plan has been included with the Department of Justice's plan. The Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service ("PPS") is not included in Schedule A to the *French-language Services Regulations* as a "designated public institution". Therefore, it is not required to publish a French-language services plan pursuant to s. 4 of the *Regulations*.

The designated public institution which most appropriately encompasses the PPS is the Department of Justice. During the Departmental French-language Services Committee meeting held January 22, 2007, it was agreed that the PPS would provide input in relation to PPS activities and objectives for inclusion in the Department of Justice's 2007-2008 French-language Services Plan .

2. Message from Deputy Minister

I am pleased to introduce the Department of Justice French-language Services Plan for 2007-2008 which reflects the commitment at Justice to enhancing the services we provide in French in order to meet the goals of the French language-services Act.

At the Department of Justice, in addition to our obligations under the French-language services Act, we are also required to provide certain French-language services under the Criminal Code of Canada.

To ensure the Department of Justice is responding to the needs of the Acadian and francophone community, departmental representatives meet regularly with representatives of l'Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse [AJEFNÉ] and Acadian Affairs.

The Department of Justice will continue to meet its statutory obligations to the Acadian and francophone community and will work to improve its French-language services to that community.

3. How our Department's staff has been instructed to respond to verbal and written requests from the public to communicate in French

Department of Justice staff respond to written and oral requests for service in accordance with their individual Division's standard for quality of service. Because the various Divisions, the Department, and the PPS differ widely in their contact with the public, a general response is impractical. The Division with the most public contact is Court Services and for convenience its direction is reproduced below:

Court Services Staff have been directed to forward written requests in French to the staff within the justice centre who are able to respond in French. If there is no one within that justice centre then the correspondence will be directed up through head office for translation

or to staff who are able to function in French and able to answer the question. Oral requests in French will be directed to the staff within the justice centre who are able to respond in French. If there is no one within that justice centre at the time the request is made, then the request will be either directed to other staff outside of the justice centre who are able to answer that question in French or directly to head office.

Other Divisions will utilize any members of their staff participating in the "Bonjour Campaign" to respond to specific inquiries in French. If there is no one at the local level that can handle the request may be referred to the Departmental Committee and Coordinator.

Correctional and Victims Services respond in much the same manner as Court Services.

The Public Prosecution Services [PPS] has one staff member who is part of the "Bonjour Campaign" and that staff member has agreed to respond to requests from the public to communicate in French in accordance with the approach recommended by that campaign.

The remaining PPS staff members who provide French-language services are Prosecutors. Therefore, their French-language communication obligations are governed by sections 530 and 530.1 of the *Criminal Code* ("CC").

The PPS has not issued formal French-language communications directives. That issue is to be addressed. However, the PPS staff who provide French-language services have done so whenever requested, above and beyond the requirements of the *Criminal Code*, to the extent that available resources reasonably have permitted. Where required, the services of out-of-region staff with French-language communication skills have been engaged.

French-language service has been added as a specific goal in the 2007-2008 Information Management business plan under one of their four strategic directions (there is public confidence in the justice system). The reference follows: "improving our ability to help clients meet their own needs, including enhancing services in French."

4. French-language services offered now:

The following specific services are provided

- Hearings in court are provided in French in accordance with the Criminal Code;
- Interpreters are provided in the Provincial Court for criminal matters.
- Interpreters are provided for Family matters;
- Staff participate in the Bonjour Campaign;
- Simultaneous translators are provided as required at Supreme Court and Appeal Court level for Criminal matters;
- Some print and website materials have been translated.

Correctional Services is able to respond to requests for French Pre-Sentence Reports and is also able to provide offender supervision services in French at certain locations.

Victims Services has had all of their informational print materials that they distribute to victims of crime translated into French.

In addition to the french-language services required by the *Criminal Code*, the PPS also:

- conducts Court proceedings not covered by s. 530 CC in French

- engages in oral and written communication in French with collateral agencies (particularly police agencies) and the general public (including accused persons, witnesses and the media)
 - makes presentations in French to students of the Conseil scolaire Acadien provincial
5. How the plan will contribute to the preservation or growth of the Acadian and francophone community

Through direct consultation with l'Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse and other representative Acadian and Francophone groups and through reference to the consultation reports generated by the Office of Acadian Affairs, the Department of Justice will continue to focus its efforts in specific geographical areas and on those areas of service deemed most important by the Acadian and Francophone community. In particular this means that Court Services will continue its commitment to providing French-language services in the Yarmouth, Digby, Metro and Port Hawkesbury areas. In general, the Department will look at ways to further improve its capacity to deal with front line inquires either at the counter, at reception areas or by phone and also to translate public material especially that available on the Department's web site.

Correctional Services is committed to providing French-language services in the Yarmouth/Digby area and hopes to expand this capability to the Port Hawkesbury and Metro areas.

Section 530 of the *Criminal Code of Canada* provides for the right to a trial in the official language of choice. Therefore, the PPS must and does have provincial prosecutors available to deliver services in either official language.

It is envisioned that the Plan will address the need to facilitate access to justice in French in Nova Scotia by continuing to provide French language training to PPS prosecutors and support staff, thus improving their ability to deliver services in French.

6. Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2007-2008

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

Highlights of Activities Underway:

- *The work of the Department of Justice French Services Committee will continue. Included on our committee is a representative of the Public Prosecutions Services (PPS).*
- *The Department of Justice's French Services Coordinator will continue to sit on the French Coordinators Committee of Acadian Affairs.*
- *The French Services Coordinator will continue to sit on the HR and training sub-committee.*
- *Representatives of the Department of Justice will continue meeting regularly with l'Association des Juristes d'Expression Française de la Nouvelle-Écosse (AJEFNÉ) to keep current on the needs of the Association and seek their comments and input regarding initiatives and on-going justice processes in the French language*

- *The French Services Coordinator will work with Acadian Affairs to implement the "Bonjour Campaign" in the Justice Department.*
- *Continue up-dating the French Services Plan as required*
- *Implementation of the Contraventions Act - use of the federal funding to enhance services in the processing of summary offence tickets in designated areas.*

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

- *Will continue to develop policies for the delivery of French language services within the Department of Justice.*
- *Twenty to twenty two (20-22) employees will participate in 3 specialized french legal terminology follow-up training sessions (with funding assistance from Federal Government).*
- *Will consider future French language training opportunities offered to provincial public servants, such as those organized by the Office of Acadian Affairs in the past 3 years or the seats in the Federal Forum classes offered by the Federal Government".*
- *identify and prioritize forms requiring translation into French and proceed with translation.*

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

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

Highlights of Activities Underway:

- *At this stage the Public Prosecution Services is relying upon the consultation conducted by Affaires acadiennes.*
- *Continue to meet legal obligations and enhance services pursuant to section 530 of the Criminal Code of Canada and the Contraventions Act.*
- *Will continue consultation on hearings in French.*
- *Will continue consultation on prioritizing requirement for bilingual forms.*

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

New Actions:

- *Will continue to work to increase our capacity to respond to criminal law needs in French throughout the province in an attempt to decrease the need for court staff to travel throughout the province to insure French coverage of court proceedings.*
- *Will continue to consult and meet with AJEFNÉ and a representative from FANE to explore areas where increased services could be offered to the Acadian and Francophone community.*
- *Explore with AJEFNÉ other methods for consulting the legal community and the community at large on French language services.*

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

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

Highlights of Activities Underway:

- *The French Services Coordinator will continue to work with Acadian Affairs to implement and monitor the "Bonjour Campaign" in the Department of Justice.*

- *Court Services employees are being surveyed to determine the level of French-Language service provided and to assess the need for additional tools.*
- *The French Services Coordinator will continue to identify and explore possibilities of French-language training for the employees.*
- *The Department will continue to inform AJEFNÉ and Coordinators committee of current projects underway.*
- *Public Prosecution Services [PPS] will address the issue of making public information available in both French and English.*
- *PPS will address the issue of establishing directives to staff for communication in French.*
- *PPS will continue to communicate to the Acadian and Francophone communities the steps being taken by the PPS to provide French-language services.*

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

New Actions:

- *French Services Coordinator will identify areas of justice websites to be translated into French and to consult with the community on whether these are the required topic areas for translation.*
- *French Services Coordinator will identify existing tools that may be accessible in French or may require translation into French to allow staff to carry out work functions more effectively in the French language.*
- *French Services Coordinator will explore signage in our facilities that allow rapid identification of access points for French language services.*
- *French Services Coordinator to identify existing and new print material that may be translated into French and consult with AJEFNÉ to ensure these documents would be useful to the Acadian and Francophone community.*
- *French Services Coordinator will explore possibilities of promoting French-language Services during Law Day*
- *Self-Represented Litigants French brochures will be printed, distributed to Justice Centres, and available on Justice website.*
- *French Services Coordinator will explore with Communications officer appropriate "news releases" to be made to the community regarding efforts and projects underway to enhance French-language services within the Department of Justice.*
- *French Services Coordinator will explore with Communications Officer inclusion of French language initiatives in the Department's Communication Plan.*
- *Management will discuss the issue of establishing goals, priorities, time-lines and budgetary allocations relating to translating the PPS's policy manual, information pamphlets and other publications into French and making them available on the PPS website.*
- *Management will discuss the issue of establishing specific policy directives relating to PPS staff engaging in French-language communications.*
- *PPS will continue to communicate the PPS's French-language training initiatives to the Acadian and francophone communities by way of e-mail distribution and website postings through l'AJEFNÉ and via public interest announcements on French community radio stations in Nova Scotia, thus making them aware of the PPS's ability to offer quality French-language services*

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

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

Highlights of Activities Underway:

- *Determine through a survey the current French-language capacity of our staff and identify areas where additional tools are required.*
- *Provide Justice Centre Lexicon, toolkits and dictionaries to Department of Justice employees who are able to provide services in French.*
- *Fill designated bilingual positions as operational needs demand*
- *Continue to send PPS prosecutors and support staff who provide French-language services to specialized French-language training as availability, funding and operational requirements permit.*
- *Continue to ensure that PPS prosecutors and support staff have access to the materials and resources required to appropriately deliver French-language services.*

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

New Actions:

- *Twenty to twenty two (20-22) employees will receive 3 follow-up modules in french specialized legal terminology training.*
- *French Services Coordinator will develop tool to measure success of training, increased use of the French-language skills and follow-ups with staff who have taken to training to evaluate the use and retention of the new acquired skills through the training.*
- *Will consider future French-language training opportunities offered to provincial public servants, such as those organized by the Office of Acadian Affairs in the past 3 years or the seats in the Federal Forum classes offered by the Federal Government".*
- *French Services Coordinator will work with Human Resources to identify up coming job postings that could require French abilities and assist with preparing job descriptions and interviewing candidates for any posted bilingual or French as an asset positions.*
- *French Services Coordinator will arrange language testing for job interview candidates to evaluate their abilities in the French language.*
- *French Services Coordinator will coordinate on-going French-language training opportunities for current and new staff.*
- *French Services Coordinator will research and identify working tools for French speaking employees to facilitate their offer of French-language services to the Acadian and Francophone community.*
- *French Services Coordinator will work with translator at Acadian Affairs to arrange all translation services required by the Department of Justice to insure quality and best price for services to be purchased for translation by contract.*
- *In the past the PPS has sent its French-language prosecutors to various specialized French-language training sessions, including: French Trial Advocacy as part of Ontario Crown School; the Justice System oriented training sessions offered through the Ontario French Language Institute for Professional Development; l'École des poursuivants du Québec (a Crown school conducted entirely in French), and legal terminology training sessions offered through l'AJEFNÉ. Neither of the Ontario training initiatives have been announced as being available in 2007 / 2008. The*

Bureau des affaires criminelles du Ministère de la justice du Québec has agreed to reserve as many spaces as they are able for PPS French-language prosecutors to attend l'École des poursuivants du Québec. The PPS already has funding in place for up to 6 prosecutors to attend. The PPS will send as many as availability and operational requirements permit. If the same training is made available again through l'AJEFNÉ the PPS will look into sending some of its French-language prosecutors to that training.

- *The PPS has sent one support staff member to the Specialized French Legal Terminology Training offered locally through l'Institut Joseph-Dubuc. If such training continues to be available in 2007/2008 the PPS will send as many support staff as availability, French-language capability, funding and operational requirements permit. If the same training is made available again through l'AJEFNÉ the PPS will look into sending its staff who provide French-language services to that training.*
- *As in the past, the PPS will continue to ensure that its French-language prosecutors have access to French Criminal Codes, French dictionaries, French-English dictionaries and verb conjugation guides.*
- *As in the past, the PPS will continue to ensure that its support staff providing French - language services has access to the "Bonjour Kit", French dictionaries, and such other materials as that staff may require.*
- *The PPS will continue to have a representative on the National French-language Prosecutions Committee which is in the process of establishing a national French-language prosecutors network, including a secure Bilingual Prosecutors site on the FPT Heads of Prosecution Extranet, for exchange of ideas, briefs, precedents and any other relevant documentation.*