

Progress Report on French-language Services

Provided by the Government
of Nova Scotia, 2022-23

Contents

- Message from the Minister 1**
- How we approach our work 2**
- Administration and policy work 3**
 - French-language services plans 3
 - French-language communications guidelines..... 3
 - French-language human resources guidelines 3
 - Informing the public of services available in French 3
 - French language training for public servants 3
 - Acadie at a Glance 3
- Programmes, services and special projects 4**
 - Translation services 4
 - In-person, online and telephone services 4
 - Municipal services 4
 - Healthcare and social services 5
 - Economic development and immigration..... 5
 - Education, early childhood, culture and recreation..... 5
 - Bilingual stop signs for Acadian and francophone communities 5
 - Vive l’Acadie community fund..... 6
 - Québec–Nova Scotia agreement..... 6
 - Acadian and francophone community projects..... 7
- Communication and consultations 8**
 - News releases..... 8
 - Print and radio advertising 8
 - Consultations with the public 8
- Results by the numbers 9**

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the Government of Nova Scotia's progress report on French-language services for 2022–23.

This report, published in accordance with the *French-language Services Act*, outlines initiatives implemented to maintain and improve provincial government services in French. The report provides an overview of new and improved French-language services and summarizes the work that has been done during the 2022–23 fiscal year. To find out more about specific initiatives led by departments, offices and government organizations, I invite you to consult their French-language services plans, which are available online.

French-speaking Nova Scotians can contribute to the development of programs and services in French, and provide invaluable input on issues that impact the lives of all Nova Scotians. I encourage members of the Acadian and francophone community to consider participating on agencies, boards and commissions ('ABCs') to ensure that the community has a voice in important decisions in our province.

I congratulate departments and offices for continually embracing new processes and technologies that facilitate dialogue with and service delivery to the Acadian and francophone community. Through continued collaboration and partnership with community and government partners, we will build on the progresses and momentum achieved.

Finally, I would like to thank the Province's public servants who deliver services to French-speaking clients, translators who help to make more public information available in French, as well as French-language services coordinators who work across their respective organization to plan and implement services for French-speaking Nova Scotians.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colton LeBlanc', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon. Colton LeBlanc

Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie

October 2023

How we approach our work

The **Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie** serves as government's central support agency for services in French. A division of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, the Office leads work to ensure Nova Scotians can receive government services in French.

The French-language Services Act and French-language Services Regulations designate the government institutions who have responsibilities for providing services in French, including publishing an annual French-language services plan.

The **French-language Services Coordinating Committee** (FLSCC) is an interdepartmental committee chaired by the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie and includes representatives from public institutions designated by the Regulations, who are referred to as **French-language services coordinators**. These coordinators serve as a first point of contact for services in French within their institutions and for the public.

In addition to the FLSCC, there is an **Advisory Committee to the Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie**, comprised of eight individuals from the Acadian and francophone community who provide the Minister with advice and information on issues of importance to the community. Acadian Affairs and Francophonie also engages executive and senior leadership throughout government on an ongoing basis to increase and sustain government French-language services.

This progress report marks the conclusion of Nova Scotia's latest **Strategic Plan for French-language Services**, which ended on March 31, 2023. To support the implementation of this five-year plan, federal funding matched provincial funding under the Canada–Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services (2018–2023). Nova Scotia is negotiating a new five-year funding agreement and strategic plan for 2023–28, in order to continue developing and expanding services in French.

Administration and policy work

Objective 1:

Strengthen internal operational structure including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks

French-language services plans

Government departments, offices and other government organizations offer services to the public in French. Each of these 'designated public institutions' publishes an annual French-language services plan, describing the improvements that have been made regarding services in French over the past fiscal year. The plans also establish goals for maintaining or improving services over the next fiscal year. To find out more about each institution's approach, consult the relevant French-language services plan online.

French-language communications guidelines

Members of the public can communicate in French with designated public institutions – any written correspondence in French will receive a reply in French. Additionally, Nova Scotia has developed guidelines on French-language communications to ensure consistency in government communications.

French-language human resources guidelines

The French-language human resources guidelines provide hiring managers and other public servants with guidance on hiring, supporting and retaining French-speaking employees.

Bilingual public servants can volunteer on the French-language hiring panel pool to help find French speakers to fill positions in government and to increase the ability of Nova Scotia's public service to offer services to the public in French.

Informing the public of services available in French

Nova Scotians should feel comfortable asking for, and receiving, services in the language of their choice. To this end, the government has developed, among other initiatives, the Bonjour! programme, which aims to inform the public that services are available in French.

French language training for public servants

French language training courses are available to public servants and MLAs at every level of French. More than 330 public servants participated in these courses in 2022–23. New, specialized courses are now available to employees as well: Université Sainte-Anne offers a business French course. Two different courses tailored to healthcare professionals are provided by Alliance Française de Halifax and Université Sainte-Anne.

Acadie at a Glance

A free, half-day cultural session is offered in French and English to government employees to raise awareness of Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone communities and to explain the role of public servants in offering French-language services to the public. In 2022–23, 110 public servants attended Acadie at a Glance sessions.

Programmes, services and special projects

Objective 2:

Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public

Translation services

More than one million words were translated into French in 2022–23. The following are examples of the information materials that were made available in French over the past fiscal year:

- Information and updates about public health
- Interpretive panels for the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic's CSS Acadia exhibit
- The African Nova Scotian Justice Action Plan (<https://novascotia.ca/just/publications>)
- Nova Scotia's new early-childhood educator compensation framework (<https://childcarenovascotia.ca/fr/ececompensation>)
- The government of Nova Scotia's accessibility plan for 2022–25 (<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/plan/fr/>)
- The Break the Silence website (<https://breakthesilencens.ca/?lang=fr>), which offers information and resources on sexual violence
- The Nova Scotia provincial parks visitor guide (<https://parks.novascotia.ca/parks-guide>)

In-person, online and telephone services in French

Nova Scotia continues to improve and increase services to the public in French. The Department of Service Nova Scotia received funding for 14 bilingual positions, including a French-language services coordinator, a webmaster and nine customer service representatives.

New and improved services are now available online, including an online service for paying municipal parking fines, updates to home heating support and information on driver knowledge tests, as well as updates to bilingual signage and online information in French.

Funding also enabled the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to launch a French-language micro-site at <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/fr>.

More government services are available in French. For details, see the French-language services plans published by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, or visit <https://beta.novascotia.ca/fr/programmes-et-services>.

Municipal services

Nova Scotia is proud to provide funding to support the delivery of municipal services in French. In 2022–23 the Municipality of the District of Clare received funding to support various municipal services in French, including simultaneous interpretation, advertising, public service announcements, a communications officer position and translation of municipal bylaws. Funding also enabled the Halifax Regional Municipality to publish documents in French, to provide French language training to municipal employees and to develop a new website for francophone newcomers to Halifax (<https://newinhalifax.ca/fr>).

Healthcare and social services

Ensuring access to healthcare and health communications in French is a priority for government. Nova Scotia Health employs a French-language services consultant, an interpretation services coordinator and a French-language communications adviser to help coordinate services and communications in French. A bilingual services coordinator helps French-speaking clients and families access care and services at IWK Health.

Economic development and immigration

Recognizing the importance of francophone immigration to Nova Scotia, the province published Growing Nova Scotia's Francophone Population: An Action Plan for Success 2022–25 (<https://acadien.novascotia.ca/en/reports>). The plan aims to encourage francophones from other countries and provinces to settle in Nova Scotia. Find out more at <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20221107002>.

In 2022–23, Nova Scotia provided funding to the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNE) – Nova Scotia's francophone economic development organization – to assist francophone businesses with preparing 44 business plans. The funding also enabled CDÉNE to offer more than 200 learning sessions and individual counselling sessions for francophone entrepreneurs.

On June 16, 2022, Nova Scotia and Louisiana signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) identifying sectors of mutual interest, including economic development opportunities as well as benefits for universities and cultural exchanges.

Education, early childhood, culture and recreation

Investments in early years and culture help ensure that Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone communities continue to thrive. The following are some initiatives funded in 2022–23:

- The Village historique acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse received funding to maintain and update its digital database in French, as well as to continue its bilingual communications;
- The Équipe d'alphabétisation de la Nouvelle-Écosse, or EANE, runs a programme to help parents of CSAP students develop their reading and writing skills in French. The programme, called 'Je parle français avec mon enfant', enabled 125 participants to support their children's French education in 2022–23;
- Regional libraries received funding to purchase an assortment of digital resources in French, including ebooks. Visit your local public library to access these materials; and
- Funding was also provided to develop anti-racism training for athletes and their families.

Bilingual stop signs for Acadian communities

Since the spring of 2022, 845 bilingual STOP/ARRÊT signs have been erected in the municipalities of Argyle, Clare, Guysborough, Halifax, Inverness and Richmond. This initiative was first proposed by students at the École secondaire de Clare and aims to promote the linguistic and cultural heritage of Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone communities.

Vive l'Acadie community fund

The Vive l'Acadie licence plate, which features an Acadian flag design, is available to Nova Scotian motorists. When purchasing or renewing the plate, a \$50 donation goes to a local Acadian and francophone community organization for the purpose of funding special cultural projects during the following fiscal year.

Projects funded by the Vive l'Acadie community fund in 2022–23 (\$47,900 or 958 plates):

- **Fête de l'Acadie:** a free outdoor concert at the Lunenburg harbourfront in celebration of National Acadian Day – *Association du Centre communautaire de la Rive-Sud, Cookville*
- **Fête franco d'automne:** an autumn farm visit for families and a wine-tasting tour followed by dinner – *Association francophone de la Vallée, Greenwood*
- **Rassemblement communautaire:** a dinner-theatre presentation at Christmas and a women's conference – *Centre communautaire Étoile de l'Acadie, Sydney*
- **Un Noël acadien en famille:** a concert featuring Acadian musicians from across Nova Scotia – *Centre communautaire francophone de Truro*
- **Cartes d'échange and Saluer aux artistes:** artistic workshops for students in CSAP schools and radio interviews with local francophone musiciens – *Conseil acadien de Par-en-Bas, Tusket*
- **À la (re)découverte de notre communauté:** various summer activities including kayaking and surfing workshops and a pop-up outdoor cinema; a networking opportunity for local francophone businesses; and the launch of a new, local, French-language social-networking site called Hého – *Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre, Dartmouth*
- **Court métrage « Du travail »:** production of a short documentary featuring interviews between Weldon Boudreau and local seniors – *L'Acadie de Chezzetcook, West Chezzetcook*
- A series of **online concerts, improvements to the Grosses Coques historic site, a video-game development workshop** for youth and a **dance workshop** – *Société acadienne de Clare, Saulnierville*
- **Le marché de Pomquet:** an outdoor, weekend market for Acadian artists and artisans – *Société acadienne Sainte-Croix, Pomquet*
- **Design and installation of visitor signage** highlighting Tor Bay's local Acadian culture – *Société acadienne de Torbé, Larrys River*
- The 75th edition of the **Gala du Festival de l'Escaouette** – *Société Saint-Pierre, Chéticamp*

Québec–Nova Scotia agreement

Nova Scotia is proud to partner with Québec to fund Acadian and francophone community projects. Each province contributes an equal amount each year to a common fund, which is then allocated to community groups based in either province who undertake special projects together. Québec and Nova Scotia jointly funded five projects in 2022–23:

- **Tournée Québec Cinéma,** a travelling showcase of Québécois films in Nova Scotia
- **Coup double,** art workshops for students in CSAP schools (organized by the Association canadienne de l'éducation de langue française)

- **L'Académie du Cinéma**, film-production workshops for CSAP students
- Development of **training materials** by the Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- **Planning for a collegiate partnerships fund** (Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada)

Acadian and francophone community projects

The Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie funds a wide variety of community projects to support the vibrant Acadian and francophone communities. More than \$380,000 was awarded in 2022–23 to organizations in sectors like culture, economic development, education, healthcare, tourism – to name a few. Some of the 34 projects funded in 2022–23 include:

- activities during French Education Week (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial);
- a strategic plan for the Société touristique Bon Temps d'Argyle;
- development of a provincial strategy for Acadian heritage (Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse);
- National Acadian Day celebrations (Minudie Heritage Association);
- Black History Month celebrations (D R Congolese Association of Nova Scotia);
- a mobility programme for francophone researchers (Acfas);
- Francofest and Quizou celebrations in Halifax (Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre);
- Grand Réveil, a visit to Louisiana by a youth delegation, led by the Société Nationale de l'Acadie; and
- distribution of a caregivers' guide (Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse).

National Acadian Day was also celebrated in Pubnico during the nationally televised Havre au Tchai concert attended by close to 2,000 people.

Communication and consultations

Objective 3:

Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community

News releases

In 2022–23, more than 100 government news releases were published in English and French.

Print and radio advertising

Advertisements and public-service announcements are often published in *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse*, Nova Scotia's only French-language newspaper. Government also runs radio spots on French-language stations throughout the province and conducts French-language advertising campaigns online and on social media networks.

Some of the subjects of French-language advertising campaigns in 2022–23 included healthy habits related to Covid-19, mental health resources, seniors' homecare services, blue-green algae and distracted driving.

Consultations with the public

Eighteen consultations with the public were conducted in French in 2022–23 on subjects including automobile insurance changes, the province's food and beverage strategy, the health equity framework, a new youth commission and amendments to the *Divorce Act*.

The Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie meets regularly with the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) and 29 member organizations. FANE is the umbrella organization which represents diverse sectors of the province's Acadian and francophone communities. This helps ensure an ongoing, constructive relationship to discuss issues, exchange information and consult on matters of importance to the community.

Results by the numbers

A data summary of the period from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023

Public service

- **31** departments, offices and institutions were represented on the interdepartmental French-Language Services Coordinating Committee

Promotion and advertising

- About **105** news releases were issued in French (**15%** of all news releases)
- **438** tweets by @OAAF_NE and a **37%** increase in Twitter followers since April 1, 2018
- **\$97,700** was spent on **59** individual print, radio and online advertising campaigns in French

Public engagement and translation

- **18** public consultations and **five** surveys were conducted in French
- More than **1 million** words were translated into French by departments, offices and other government organizations

Education and training

- More than **360** French language training placements were filled
- **110** public servants completed the Acadie at a Glance cultural training

Community

- Nova Scotians bought or renewed **958** Acadian flag licence plates, which provided **\$47,900** to community organizations; these donations enabled organizations to host **16** special events, cultural activities and other community projects in 2022–23
- **845** bilingual stop signs erected in **six** Acadian regions since the spring of 2022
- Québec and Nova Scotia jointly contributed a total of **\$49,550** to support **five** collaborative projects led by Acadian and francophone organizations
- More than **\$380,000** was spent on **34** Acadian and francophone community projects