

French-language Services Plan

**Department of
Health and Wellness**

2026–
27

French-language services plan 2026–27

Department of Health and Wellness

Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2026-2027 »

Message from the deputy ministers

Bonjour,

Strengthening healthcare in Nova Scotia means improving access to care for all Nova Scotians. Through investments in infrastructure, services and people, we are working to deliver care faster and closer to home. For our Acadian and francophone community, this includes ongoing efforts to enhance access to healthcare information and services in French.

Over the past year, we have worked with Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health, and Seniors and Long-Term Care to advance improvements in French-language health services. We have also engaged with Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and its members to ensure our work reflects the needs and perspectives of the communities we serve.

In the coming year, we will continue to work collaboratively with those partners and the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie to advance priorities identified through the Common Strategy for French-language Health Services that align with both community needs and the department's priorities. We will also strengthen our engagement with the Acadian and francophone community to help ensure their perspectives continue to inform our work. At the same time, we will continue efforts to improve availability of materials and communications in French so that more Nova Scotians can access information and services in the language of their choice.

Together with our partners, we remain committed to strengthening French-language health services across the province. By continuing to listen, collaborate, and build on the progress made to date, we are working to support a health system that is responsive to the needs of the Acadian and francophone community.

Merci.

Dana MacKenzie, Deputy Minister, Department of Health and Wellness
Jennifer Glennie, Deputy Minister, Office of Addictions and Mental Health

What we're doing to contribute to the growth of the Acadian and francophone community

The Department of Health and Wellness, the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, and the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (the Department and Offices) are taking action to ensure the Acadian and francophone community has access to safe, culturally appropriate healthcare services. This effort is required under the *French-language Services Act* and supported by the Health Equity Framework. This French-language services plan outlines how we verify that our programs, policies, and services align with the priorities identified by the Acadian and francophone community.

Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse (RSNÉ) is a non-profit organization that brings together key partners from the healthcare system and the Acadian and francophone community. As our primary community partner for improving French-language healthcare in Nova Scotia, we will continue our ongoing collaboration with them. The French-language Services Advisor (the FLS Advisor) for the Department and Offices holds a nonvoting seat on the Board of Directors of RSNÉ. We also engage with the Acadian and francophone community through available engagement tools such as Engage4Health to ensure that community priorities are reflected in the work of the Department and Offices.

French-language Services staff from the Department and Offices, Nova Scotia Health (NSH), the IWK Health Centre, and the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) work closely together to coordinate their efforts and support the delivery of French-language services across the healthcare system. The *Health Authorities Act* sets out the responsibilities of the Department and Offices, and the health authorities in this work.

As we continue to maintain and expand French-language services, we welcome feedback on our progress, and we invite you to contact our FLS Advisor with questions or comments in the language of your choice. The Office of the Ombudsman is also available to address complaints related to access to French-language services.

French-language services coordinator:

Marine Mercier (marine.mercier@novascotia.ca, (902) 229-3093)

Services we offer in French

- 811 services are available in French through French-speaking nurses and on-demand third-party interpretation services from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The 811 website also includes regularly updated health fact sheets in French.
- Acadians and francophones in Nova Scotia are encouraged to access and participate in the Fair Care Race and Linguistic Identifier project web opt-in portal in French: <https://novascotia.ca/apps/rbli/>.
- French-language materials are provided for various community programs.
- The 9-8-8 Suicide Prevention Helpline provides urgent live, trauma-informed support by phone and text in French: <https://988.ca/fr>
- Targeted Public Health Information is available in French.

How we communicate with the public in French

The Department and the Offices have a French Written Correspondence and Verbal Communication Policy, revised in July 2018. The correspondence team, program areas, and the FLS Advisor work together so that correspondence received in French is responded to in French, as the policy requires. Written and oral materials used in public engagement initiatives with the Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia are presented in French. To do this, we engage with the OAAF to translate documents.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2025–26

Goal 1: Strengthen frameworks for French-language services

- **Objective 1.1: Support compliance with the French-language Services Act and Regulations:**
 - We published a French-Language Services annual plan detailing past and planned measures to enhance French-language health services.
 - The FLS Advisor participated in the government-wide French-language Services Coordinator Committee (FLSCC) and relevant sub-committees.
 - The FLS Advisor created opportunities for teams within the Department and Offices to understand how to meet the requirements of the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations, as well as promoted funding opportunities coming out of the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Minority Language Services.
 - The FLS Advisor provided support with the translation process to the Department and Offices employees.
- **Objective 1.2: Work with internal teams to support French-language Services delivery, where applicable**
 - We updated our French-language Services SharePoint page to provide clear and accessible information to employees on French-language services obligations, options available to build or maintain French-language capacity and translation services.
 - The FLS Advisor presented strategic focus areas for French-language services to the Department and Offices leadership.
 - During Acadian Heritage Month, we provided opportunities for staff to learn more about the Acadian and francophone community.
- **Objective 1.3: Use administrative tools to promote French-language services**
 - Senior leadership continued to encourage and promote relevant training, such as French courses or Acadie at a Glance.
 - The FLS Advisor offered learning opportunities led by community members to the Department and Offices employee, including events during Acadian Heritage Month.

Goal 2: Be responsive to the needs of the Acadian and francophone community

- **Objective 2.1: Engage the Acadian and francophone community.**
 - The FLS Advisor offered support to internal branches in understanding Acadian and francophone community priorities and needs.
 - The Engage4Health platform provided information on opportunities to participate in public consultations in French.

- We reviewed how we conduct engagement with the Acadian and francophone community and compared practices with health partners and other jurisdictions. Results were validated through community interviews.
- The FLS Advisor maintained an open dialogue with community organizations by participating in RSNÉ meetings, attending events hosted by the Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and its member such as Équipe Acadie.

Goal 3: Enhance delivery of programs and services in French

- **Objective 3.1: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programmes to the public**
 - The Department and Offices continued their collaboration with NSH, the IWK Health Centre, RSNÉ and the OAAF. We finalized a common strategy that identifies priorities for improving French-language health services.
 - We continued to support NSH and IWK Health Centre in their project to improve healthcare linguistic data within the health authorities.
 - We worked with the OAAF to translate documents and public health campaigns such as:
 - eConsent documents.
 - [Air quality monitoring guide.](#)
 - [Wildfire smoke guide for outdoor and recreation sport events.](#)
 - [It's The Law posters.](#)
 - [Tobacco Free NS website.](#)
 - [Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment Community Fund form.](#)

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2026–27

Strengthen frameworks for French-language services

- **Objective 1.1: Support compliance with the *French-language Services Act and Regulations*:**
 - We will publish a French-language Services annual plan detailing past and planned measures to enhance French-language health services.
 - The FLS Advisor will participate in the FLSCC and relevant sub-committee work.
 - We will strengthen compliance by monitoring engagements activities conducted by the Department and Offices with the Acadian and francophone community.
- **Objective 1.2: Improve knowledge and data collection**
 - We will analyze publicly available data on the health and wellness of the Acadian and francophone community to continue identifying priority areas.
 - The FLS Advisor will create a portrait of Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia from a health perspective to support colleagues' understanding.
 - We will continue to provide support to NSH and IWK Health Centre for their linguistic data project.
- **Objective 1.3: Internal strategies for advancing French-language services**
 - Senior leadership will encourage and promote relevant training, such as French courses or Acadie at a Glance.
 - We will support staff to learn or practise French, and to further their knowledge and relationship with the Acadian and francophone community.
 - Acadians and francophones are engaged and included in the Staff Equity Strategy, as outlined by the Health Equity Framework.

Engage with the Acadian and francophone community

- **Objective 2.1: Improve engagement with the Acadian and francophone community**
 - The Acadian and francophone community will guide the Department and Offices to improve how they are being engaged on health concerns and opportunities. Health partners (NSH, IWK Health Centre and Seniors and Long-Term Care) and the OAAF will support collaboration on the project.
 - We will implement the improved process within the Department and Offices.
- **Objective 2.2: Engage the Acadian and francophone community:**
 - The community will provide guidance to the Department and Offices on how data collected through the Fair Care Race and Linguistic Identifier project is being used.
 - Available opportunities to participate in a health engagement activity will be found on Engage4Health.

Develop and deliver programs and services in French

- **Objective 3.1: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programs:**
 - The Department and Offices will continue their collaboration with NSH, the IWK Health Centre, RSNÉ and the OAAF on priorities identified in the Common Strategy for French-language health services.

- The FLS Advisor will work with the Department and Offices as needed to identify gaps in policy, programs and services relating to the Acadian and francophone community or French-language services.
- The Department and Offices will continue to translate documents, as required by the *French-language Services Act* and its Regulations.