



Government of the Northwest Territories

Standards for French Language Communications and Services

Edition 4.0

August 2024

Government of
Northwest Territories

Version control and accuracy

The information contained in these Standards is subject to revision as required.

The version published on the website of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is the most up to date version.

[French Language Services Coordinators](#) and Government of the Northwest Territories communications staff are encouraged to suggest revisions or request a copy of this document by contacting the Francophone Affairs Secretariat at francophone@gov.nt.ca.

Outdated archival versions of the Standards are available for reference purposes. Contact the Francophone Affairs Secretariat for more information.

Summary of updates

Edition	Date	Updates
Edition 4.0	August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanded definition and examples of active offer• Enhanced references to complementary guidelines• Emphasized distinction between required practices and contextual background/nuances• Reorganization of bilingual publication formats and examples• Refreshed references to new communications tactics

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About these Standards

Required actions are indicated by turquoise highlighting. Background and context are also provided.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has two documents that guide French Language Communications and Services: the [Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services 2023-28](#) (Strategic Plan) and the Government of the Northwest Territories Standards for French Language Communications and Services (the Standards).

While the Strategic Plan outlines guidelines, the Standards provide specific direction for providing services and communications in French.

The Strategic Plan was approved by the Executive Council.

Government of the Northwest Territories communications, programs and services should be accessible in French through appropriate and practical methods. The Government of the Northwest Territories' objective is the effective offer and delivery of French language services and the simultaneous publication of public communications materials in French and English.

In regard to resources available for implementing the standards, French Language Services Coordinators should reference their French Language Communications and Services Operating Plan and associated budget.

"Where criteria are met..."

These Standards apply to the communications and services provided by Government of the Northwest Territories departments or ministries, the Office of the Legislative Assembly and any agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body designated in the [Government Institution Regulations of the Official Languages Act](#) that meets the criteria for significant demand and the nature of the office and/or head or central office.

There is **significant demand** for communications and services to the public in both English and French from offices of [government institutions](#) located in Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik and Yellowknife.

Other guidelines and Standards

These Standards complement and work in tandem with the [Government of the Northwest Territories Visual Identity Program](#) and [associated guidelines](#) that fall under the Government of the Northwest Territories Communications directives.

Implementation of French communications and services works towards collaboration with the [Indigenous Languages Communications Guidelines](#) and the Indigenous Languages Services Standards developed by the Indigenous Languages Secretariat, especially for matters related to active offer and signage.

Translation

Using French Translation Services for translation and proofreading ensures that French content will be of the highest quality. For English print and web content, the [Government of the Northwest Territories Style Guide](#) provides guidance on writing, editing and reviewing. In a similar manner, adherence to French grammatical, punctuation and layout conventions is ensured by French Translation Services.

Please review the French Translation Services Manual. To request a copy, contact francophone@gov.nt.ca.

Can my bilingual employee translate?

Government of the Northwest Territories materials intended for the public must be translated by French Translation Services. The use of French Translation Services ensures consistent use of accurate terminology, as well as proofing of final versions before publication.

An employee in a bilingual required position or who has achieved bilingual preferred status and receives the bilingual bonus is encouraged to correspond with and serve the public in French. For example: if a member of the public calls or visits your office with questions about a program you offer, the bilingual employee can converse with them and respond to emails in French; however, if the department is advertising that program, the materials must go through French Translation Services.

1.0 Responsibilities

While the Standards are intended to be used primarily by [French Language Services Coordinators](#) and communications staff, employees at all levels of government have responsibility and accountability for compliance. Here is a selected list of responsibilities. Refer to Guideline 1 of the [Strategic Plan](#) for a more detailed description of responsibilities.

- Ministers are responsible for providing French language communications and services in their assigned [government institution\(s\)](#).
- Deputy Heads are responsible for providing clear direction within their area of jurisdiction regarding French language communications and services.
- French Language Services Coordinators are trusted advisors who should be consulted before additional clarification is sought from the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. Coordinators are responsible for assisting and advising members of their government institution in the development and execution of quality French communications and services and following their institution's Operating Plan for French language communications and services.
- Communications staff are responsible for assisting and advising Government of the Northwest Territories employees in the development and implementation of quality French language communications based on the Strategic Plan Guidelines, Standards and Communications and Policy Directives.
- Bilingual service providers and non-bilingual frontline staff are responsible for:
 - working with their Government of the Northwest Territories institution's French Language Services Coordinator to understand their role in offering and delivering French language services to the Francophone community;
 - being familiar with their obligations, the Strategic Plan Guidelines and appropriate processes and methods regarding the active offer and effective delivery of French language services; and
 - recognizing the importance of their roles in the implementation of the [Official Languages Act](#) and related policies, the Strategic Plan and understanding the role of public assessment and feedback.

2.0 Active offer

The active offer is normally the first step for effective delivery of French communications and services.

An active offer is a message that informs the public that they may use French or English when receiving communication or services from a [government institution](#).

Active offer can include:

- signs such as a tent card or window sticker stating, “[À votre service en français](#)”¹;
- [personal greetings when serving the public](#)², such as “bonjour, hello” in person or [on the phone](#)³;
- [outgoing voicemail messages](#)⁴, [email signatures or auto-replies](#)⁵ for public-facing employees;
- [lapel pin](#)⁶ worn by a bilingual public-facing employee;
- link to the alternative language version of a [mirrored bilingual website](#)⁷;
- active offer wording in [publications](#)⁸ that states there are other languages available; and
- reference on [bilingual cover page of large documents to inclusion of French summary](#)⁹.

2.1 Active offer signage

Where criteria are met¹⁰, a government institution (or a third-party acting on behalf of one) must display active offer materials at points of public service, i.e., the outside door, window, entrance hallway, service counter. Materials must be visible to all clients seeking service.

All **public-facing** employees in bilingual required positions, or who have bilingual preferred status for French, must wear magnetic active offer pins to identify themselves.

It is not recommended that other employees wear pins as it can frustrate French-speaking clients who expect employees wearing such pins to be able to communicate in French.

Resources related to active offer and training on how to use them are available from [French Language Services Coordinators](#). Additional information is available in the documents, [Active offer of French](#)

¹ 2.1 Active offer signage

² 4.0 Service delivery

³ 4.2.1 Telephone

⁴ 4.2.2 Voicemail

⁵ 3.1.3 Email signature

⁶ 3.1 In-person service

⁷ 3.2.3 Website

⁸ 2.2 Active offer for printed publications

⁹ 3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication

¹⁰ Where criteria are met

[language service: A quick reference guide for front-line staff](#) and [Working together to make the active offer: A guide to creating a consistent service experience for the French-speaking public](#) which can be found on the Francophone Affairs Secretariat webpages on the Education, Culture and Employment website.

Public-facing employees should receive the necessary guidance to respond to French language service requests before they display active offer signage.

2.2 Active offer for printed publications

2.2.1 French

When public materials have been created [separately in English and French](#)¹¹, the active offer must be included in each document.

The format is as follows:

An English version of this document is available.

[print this in the French version]

Une version française de ce document est disponible.

[print this in the English version]

It is not appropriate for the active offer to impose a barrier such as “upon reasonable request”.

When uploading a document to a government institution’s website, consider the format of the document:

- Bilingual document: when you have a document that includes both English and French in a single document, select the “language neutral” option for the resource.
- Separate English and French documents can be uploaded to the respective English or French side of the website.

A government institution (or a third-party acting on behalf of one) shall ensure that resources intended for the public are published in the correct language on the correct English or French side of its public website. In cases where the resource is bilingual in a single document, make it available on both sides of the website.

¹¹ 3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication

2.2.2 Indigenous official languages

The Indigenous Languages Secretariat and Corporate Communications administer a printed active offer for the nine Indigenous Official Languages for inclusion in publications. Resources are available on [Bear Net](#).

2.3 Signage inviting public feedback "Votre avis GTNO"

The active offer of communications and service in French is complemented by an invitation for the public to provide their feedback on the quality of the French communication or service. This invitation features the phrase, ["Nous voulons votre avis" \("We want your feedback"\)¹²](#).

A government institution – or a third-party acting on behalf of one – must display signage inviting public feedback (Votre avis GTNO) at all physical points of public service and on the French versions of e-Service portals.

French Language Services Coordinators regularly provide training on Votre avis GTNO and the active offer.

¹² 7.0 Public feedback on receiving French language communications and services

3.0 Communications

3.1 Correspondence

Government of the Northwest Territories sending

Where criteria are met¹³, outgoing correspondence, whether **mailed as hard copy or attached digitally to email**, sent by a government institution directed to an *external generic audience* should be in English and French¹⁴.

Outgoing correspondence, whether **mailed as hard copy or attached digitally to email**, sent by a government institution directed to an *external targeted audience* should be in French when it is known that receiving individual(s) or organization(s) prefers French, or out of respect for their mandate and purpose.

French correspondence (whether **mailed as hard copy or attached digitally to email**) addressed to Francophone organizations (or to French-speaking individuals) must be sent at the same time as correspondence sent to English counterparts. It is not appropriate to send the English version first and forward the French version at a later time.

Note: Commission Scolaire Francophone, Territoires du Nord-Ouest (CSFTNO) is a government institution, not a non-governmental organization; nevertheless, French is the preferred language of communication in certain cases. Consult the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's French Language Services Coordinator for advice.

Attachments

Attachments to outgoing French or bilingual correspondence, whether **mailed as hard copy or attached digitally to email**, sent by a government institution directed to *external or targeted audience* must be reviewed to determine if they also need to be translated. Seek advice from your French Language Services Coordinator.

Government of the Northwest Territories replying

When government institutions receive an inquiry in French via correspondence they shall respond in French.

Can my bilingual employee translate?¹⁵

Employees not fluent in French should seek the advice of a bilingual colleague or their institution's French Language Services Coordinator, who can determine whether incoming correspondence requires a formal translation from French Translation Services, or whether an informal paraphrase by a bilingual employee will be sufficient to determine the response.

¹³ Where criteria are met

¹⁴ 3.1.1 Letterhead

¹⁵ Can my bilingual employee translate?

It is not necessary to send the English copy to the Francophone organization/French-speaking member of the public. Ensure the English copy of correspondence is provided to non-bilingual employees copied on the correspondence or to relevant management.

3.1.1 Letterhead

The language of letterhead will match the language of correspondence. Letterhead exists in bilingual, French and English versions.

Correspondence, whether **mailed as hard copy or attached digitally to email**, sent by a government institution directed to an *external generic audience* should be in English and French on bilingual letterhead, or on separate French and English letterhead in the case of government institutions who do not have bilingual letterhead.

Targeted correspondence should use letterhead in the language of the receiving individual or organization.

Address formats are different in French than in English, so include the recipient's address in your translation request to ensure that French correspondence uses the correct format.

3.1.2 Email address naming convention

When creating a generic public-facing email address, Government of the Northwest Territories institutions should consider making separate bilingual addresses.

Example: youth@gov.nt.ca and jeunesse@gov.nt.ca

3.1.3 Email signature

Where criteria are met¹⁶, employees receiving the bilingual bonus for French, and employees managing email accounts that are promoted as a point of public service must use a bilingual email signature and auto-reply.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has an email signature template that all employees must use. This signature is available on [Bear Net](#).

Reference the Government of the Northwest Territories [Visual Identity Guidelines](#) or contact your institution's French Language Services Coordinator for more information.

Individuals who wish to include a description of suitable French pronouns in an email signature are encouraged to contact their French Language Services Coordinator to explore the options in French.

¹⁶ Where criteria are met

3.2 Digital

3.2.1 Social media

Government institutions must ensure that social media content is available in English and French and complies with the Government of the Northwest Territories Social Media Guidelines.

Each language version of a social media account should contain a link to the other language version.

Any comments or questions in French must be answered in French.

If you are sharing a link to a third-party site, include the French language link on the French social media account, if one exists. If the third-party website is not available in French, an alternative website with similar content in French should be considered, or a disclaimer should be included beside the hyperlink that the website is only available in English. A brief description of the third-party's content should be included as part of the post.

Please refer to the Government of the Northwest Territories Social Media Guidelines for further direction.

X (Twitter)

These messages are generally of insufficient length for bilingual format; therefore, separate English and French tweets are recommended. Tweets translated from English to French generally require more characters. Messages related to a minister's portfolio must be translated, while messages that relate to a minister's role as an MLA and/or local constituency politician could be issued in the language of their choice.

Instagram

If overlaying text on a graphic or image, ensure text is included in the translation request.

3.2.2 Video conference platforms

When using video conference platforms to provide communication and service to the public, government institutions must ensure that equitable service in French is offered¹⁷ and facilitated^{18,19}. For example, this could include (among other options) the presence of bilingual employee on the call to respond to questions in French, and all relevant publicly intended materials are provided in the appropriate French format.

¹⁷ 2.0 Active offer

¹⁸ 4.0 Service delivery

¹⁹ 5.1 Engagements

3.2.3 Website

Government institutions must ensure the website content, menus, navigation, alt-text, interfaces, web forms and other elements that are viewed by the public are translated and available in French and English.

This applies to departmental websites, campaign or marketing websites, arm's length entities which provide public service and third-party applications used to deliver online services on behalf of Government of the Northwest Territories institutions.

In designing French versions of websites, you will need to consider that French translation frequently results in longer phrases or sentences than English. Such considerations will apply to website content, navigation, interfaces, alt-text, image captions, menu choices and general page layout.

Choice between French and English must be available to the public upon accessing the site, and in mirrored format as the user navigates through the pages of the site.

Institutions must establish and follow a procedure that ensures:

- existing website content is translated into French; and
- new public website content is translated and posted in French and English simultaneously.

For current best practices, French Language Services Coordinators should consult their communications staff regarding the [Consistent User Experience](#) (CUE), as well as the institution's representative on the Government of the Northwest Territories' Web and Digital Presence Committee or another related group. The Francophone Affairs Secretariat and/or the Corporate Communications Digital Advisor may also be consulted as required.

3.3 Materials intended for internal use

Where a communications product is intended for internal operational guidance or purposes of the government institution, it will not require translation.

The government institute generates written documentation intended for internal use. Operational and procedural manuals, internal job posters, instructions and directives to staff, internal reports, etc. are created for and used by the public service itself.

Such documents may be made available to the public for political or transparency reasons, but were not created as deliberate, purposeful and formal communications to the public.

Some materials may fall into a grey area and will require a judgement call in consultation with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

3.4 Public information materials

Information published for the public must be available in English and French simultaneously. This includes all existing and new technologies intended for public communication. French and English must

have equal prominence. Refer to Standard [3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication](#) regarding formatting.

Translation costs for information materials intended for the public is covered by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. Materials made available to, but not intended for the public, do not require translation. Questions can be directed to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

Educational materials

At times, government institutions create educational materials for use in schools. Where these educational materials link with school curriculum, staff and funding resources are available to support government institutions in ensuring they are available in French.

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat provides guidance to government institutions, so they can correctly adapt, translate and publish educational materials.

3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication

Video

All videos intended for the public must be available in both French and English.

Institutions will choose between separate English and French videos, dubbed or subtitled versions based on the nature of the message and the intended audience.

It is more efficient (in terms of time and cost) to [plan French and English versions of a video from the start rather than to retroactively adapt an English video after it has been completed](#)²⁰.

Although subtitles are technically easier than dubbing, dubbing is generally a better quality of communication than subtitles. Videos narrated throughout (in which there are no scenes with actors speaking to the camera in English) are more effectively dubbed rather than subtitled.

If a government institution is unsure of how to approach French language requirements during the planning phase of a video, [the French Language Services Coordinator may be consulted to provide advice on all aspects of bilingual video production—from drafting the Requests for Proposals to post production](#)²¹.

Formats

[Communications intended for the public](#)²² must be prepared in bilingual format and published simultaneously with French and English having equal prominence.

Bilingual format means either:

- French and English together in the same product (mirrored bilingual);

²⁰ 6.0 Procurement

²¹ 1.0 Responsibilities

²² 3.6 Communications tactics

- separate French and English versions, with each version having an active offer²³; or
- summary translation format.

Mirrored bilingual format:

English and French communications products described in this category and intended for the public should be printed side-by-side or one-after-the-other throughout the product. Design options include:

- parallel, dual column format;
- blended format (for example, city/ville; name/nom);
- back-to-front, with English on one side and French on the other; or
- bilingual flip, with each version upside down in relation to the other.

Separate English and French versions format:

English and French communications products listed in this category and intended for the public should be printed in separate English and French versions, each of which must contain an active offer²⁴.

Separate English and French versions of **advertisements** do not require active offer.

Summary translation format:

Large documents exceeding 20 standard pages²⁵.

A government institution may replace the full text translation of a public document with a summary translation if the original document exceeds twenty standard pages of text.

Whichever summary translation is appropriate²⁶ should be included in the publication immediately following the English executive summary or the introductory message if there is no executive summary. Documents will also have a bilingual title page and a mention of the translated summary in the table of contents.

This sentence must be included on all cover pages:

“Le présent document contient la traduction française du sommaire et du message du ministre²⁷”

Full translation of the entire document may be recommended by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat in specific cases.

²³ 2.2.1 French

²⁴ 2.2.1 French

²⁵ Appendix A – Glossary

²⁶ Summary translation can include an executive summary. If a publication does not lend itself to the inclusion of an executive summary, then a description of the publication and its purpose, as well as the message from the minister (or other issuing official), may be translated.

²⁷ Or other issuing official.

3.6 Communications tactics

The examples provided are included for illustrative, but not exhaustive, purposes. Refer to related the [Cabinet and Corporate Communications Directives](#).

Advertising tactics

Item	Description	Format
Advertising in magazines or publications other than newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Applied anywhere that meets the criteria for significant demand and the nature of the office and/or head or central officeWhen it comes to advertising in northern publications other than newspapers, government institutions are encouraged to develop bilingual ads	Separate versions
Web advertisement		Separate versions
Paid notice, advertisement or insert in a newspaper, periodical, website, radio broadcast or on television (e.g. tender or proposal calls, job advertisements, proclamations, meeting or hearing notices, program and service announcements, promotional inserts, public education messages, commercials, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where criteria are met (significant demand, nature of the office, head or central office), all written advertisements in English in a newspaper must be advertised in French in a French language newspaper, maintaining due respect for publishing deadlinesIf the English ad is in colour, the French ad must also be in colour	Separate versions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad content may be adapted to better suit the French audience (e.g. during special themed weeks such as Small Business Week, a government institution may choose to replicate their entire English ad in French, or advertise only those events that are occurring in French) 	
Employee recruitment advertising (job descriptions for bilingual positions only)	Department of Finance (Human Resources) will coordinate the translation for all departments prior to going live on e-Recruit	Separate versions

Communication materials tactics

Item	Format
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Advisory • Media Statements • News Release • Ministerial Activities (including any attachments such as backgrounder) 	Separate versions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory • Public Health and Emergency Measures 	Separate versions
Annual Report/Action Plan/Strategic Plan (less than threshold for summary translation)	Mirrored bilingual (English and French texts are printed in the same document)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochure • Materials intended to inform, educate or instruct the public 	Separate versions with active offer on each version of the document (refer to Standard 2.2.1 French)

Certificate, ceremonial (award)	The option to receive a French version of the award will be offered to francophone recipients (refer to Standard 5.1.1 Events)
Certificate, regulatory	Mirrored bilingual (English and French texts are printed on the same side of the document, blended, side-by-side or one after the other)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee ID• Name tag	Mirrored bilingual (when ID badges and name tags are used in a workplace where the public can see said badges and tags, they must be produced in mirrored bilingual format and accommodate French accents as required to ensure the correct spelling of proper names)
Form, online	Separate, with active offer on each version of the form (refer to Standard 2.2.1 French) and posted on the respective mirrored English and French versions of an institution's website
Form, printed hard copy	Mirrored bilingual – a form printed in hard copy mirrored bilingual format should have the French and English versions posted separately on a government institution's website because mirrored bilingual format does not lend itself to posting on a website (refer to Standard 2.2.1 French)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Info card for ad mail• Product with minimal copy	Mirrored bilingual
License, regulatory	Mirrored bilingual (English and French texts are printed on the same side of the document, blended, side-by-side or one after the other)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manual• Materials intended to inform, educate or instruct the public	Separate versions with active offer on each version (refer to Standard 2.2.1 French)
Map	Separate versions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Government of Canada maintains a list of geographical names that require

	<p>presentation in English and French; however, most geographical names have only one official form. When the French version of a document or website contains a map, it should include the French version of geographical names.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The statement “Please note that most geographical names have only one official form. Only certain geographical names require presentation in English and French.” should be used on both static and interactive maps.
Ministerial directive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mirrored bilingual• At the discretion of the issuing Minister, or when such directive or policy contains a form which the public must use to access a service or program
Permit, Regulatory	Mirrored bilingual (English and French texts are printed on the same side of the page, blended, side-by-side or one after the other)
Policy, Cabinet	Mirrored bilingual
Policy, Departmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mirrored bilingual• At the discretion of the issuing Minister, or when such directive or policy contains a form which the public must use to access a service or program
Policy, Government of the Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mirrored bilingual• When it is the only explanatory document intended for the public on the related topic i.e., there are no relevant brochures or public webpages on the topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poster• Tent card	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mirrored bilingual (English and French texts are printed on the same side of the page, blended, side-by-side or one after the other)• Tent cards must have both English and French texts on the front-facing side

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report cover page• Technical, large report	Summary
Scientific, Technical, Reference and Scholarly Documents	<p>Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government of the Northwest Territories publications of a scientific, technical, reference or scholarly nature may be exempted from translation. Generally, these documents, including raw data, are created for the Government of the Northwest Territories' internal purposes• They may be made available to the public for the purposes of transparency; however, as the purpose of their creation was not intended for the public, they will frequently not require translation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Signage</u>²⁸• Refer to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Government of the Northwest Territories "Interim process for Government of the Northwest Territories signage"○ Standard <u>2.1 Active offer signage</u>○ Standard <u>2.3 Signage inviting public feedback "Votre avis GTNO"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mirrored bilingual• All public signage (unless using universal pictograms):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ highway signs○ parks and tourism signs○ public project signage such as those for construction projects○ building signage (exterior and interior)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speech, published version• Intended for the public by Ministers delivered in significant demand communities (but not in the Legislative Assembly)	Separate versions

²⁸ Where criteria are met

4.0 Service delivery

A government institution – or a third-party acting on its behalf – must actively offer and deliver **public services** according to the French Standards.

Seek advice from the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and Procurement Shared Services concerning third parties.

After the public has been informed via active offer that French service is available, service must be provided in direct, referral or interpretation (language facilitation) format.

Public-facing employees should be trained to actively offer and facilitate French language service before displaying the active offer materials or making a verbal active offer.

Inadequately prepared staff can lead to frustration and complaints by members the public seeking service in French.

Staff must not make the member of the public feel as though they are “imposing,” or to give the impression that they should try to “get by” in English.

Direct service

A bilingual employee may provide service to a member of the public in French. Direct service is provided face-to-face, over the phone or internet or via email.

Referral service

A non-bilingual public-facing employee may request assistance from a bilingual employee who will help serve the member of the public in French.

The bilingual service provider may not be located at the first point of contact, but can provide the service over the phone, through email or video conferencing or by using internet-based service mechanisms.

Service via interpretation or language facilitation

Non-bilingual public-facing employees at points of public service may request assistance from an interpreter (or language facilitator) for the delivery of a service to a member of the public in French.

Where circumstances require programs and services to be provided through interpretation, the interpretation service will be promptly available and of excellent quality. This means there should be minimal delay in securing and making available a suitable interpreter. The interpreter must be fully fluent in both English and French.

Only certified interpreters should provide interpretation service; however, a language facilitator may aid members of the public in accessing a service in French. Interpretation/language facilitation can happen in-person, over the phone or remotely through video conferencing.

Contact your departmental [French Language Services Coordinator](#) for assistance.

Service for urgent or highly confidential matters

Ideally, French services to the public should be available **directly and without the use of a third-party** (i.e. without either referral or interpretation/language facilitation). **When the service sought by a member of the public involves urgent or highly confidential matters, they are entitled to immediate service in French.**

4.1 In-person service

All public-facing employees in **bilingual required positions** or who have **bilingual preferred status** for French are encouraged to wear **magnetic active offer pins** to identify themselves.

Other employees should not wear these pins as it can frustrate French-speaking clients who expect employees with such pins to be able to communicate in French.

4.1.1 Business cards

When bilingual service providers and non-bilingual frontline employees working at points of public service are issued business cards, they will be in bilingual format, printed front-to-back.

In certain circumstances, unilingual employees may feel it appropriate to have bilingual business cards. For example, an English-speaking employee who deals with French-speaking clients on a regular basis may wish to be clear on their title and contact information in French.

This can also be true of high-level government institution employees who interact with other levels of government.

4.2 Virtual service

4.2.1 Telephone

Bilingual service providers and non-bilingual public-facing employees at points of public service where criteria are met²⁹ will include a verbal English and French active offer in their greeting when answering phone calls from the public:

“Bonjour/Hello” Or “Hello/Bonjour”

The member of the public should be given a moment to respond in the language of their choice. When the member of the public speaks in French, a non-bilingual employee will respond with:

“I understand you would like service in French,” followed by “un moment s'il vous plaît,”
or “one moment please.”

²⁹ Where criteria are met

A non-bilingual employee will then reach out to a bilingual colleague (either in-person or by phone) to help serve the individual. The individual will be informed that another person is being added to the call.

Additional scripts are provided in [Active offer of French language service: A quick reference guide for front-line staff](#) which is available on the Education, Culture and Employment website.

If a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Services TNO exists and no in-house bilingual supports are nearby, the employee will add Services TNO to the call so they can promptly help the employee serve the individual via language facilitation.

Employees should not make the client feel as though they are “imposing,” or to leave the impression they should try to “get by” in English.

4.2.2 Voicemail

Bilingual service providers and non-bilingual frontline employees at points of public service [where criteria are met³⁰](#) will have a current, bilingual outgoing voicemail message.

Select one of the following voicemail outgoing messages:

Standard message:

“Hello/Bonjour. A message in English will follow. Vous avez joint ____.

Veuillez laisser un message et je vous rappellerai. Merci.

You have reached _____. Please leave a message and I will return your call.

Thank you.”

or

“Bonjour/Hello. Un message en français suivra. You have reached ____.

Please leave a message and I will return your call. Thank you.

Vous avez joint _____. Veuillez laisser un message et je vous rappellerai.

Merci.”

Away from desk message:

“Hello/Bonjour. A message in English will follow. Vous avez joint ____.

Je ne suis pas au bureau. Pour un service en français, veuillez communiquer avec _____. Merci.

You have reached _____. I am out of the office. For assistance, please contact _____. Thank you.”

Or

³⁰ Where criteria are met

“Bonjour/Hello. Un message en français suivra. You have reached ____.
I am out of the office. For assistance, please contact _____. Thank you.
Vous avez joint _____. Je ne suis pas au bureau. Pour un service en français,
veuillez communiquer avec _____. Merci.”

Offices are closed message:

“Bonjour/Hello. Un message en français suivra. You have reached _____.
Our offices are closed and will reopen on DATE. Thank you.
Vous avez joint _____. Nos bureaux sont fermés jusqu’au DATE. Merci.”

or

“Hello/Bonjour. A message in English will follow. Vous avez joint _____.
Nos bureaux sont fermés jusqu’au DATE. Merci.
You have reached _____. Our offices are closed and will reopen on DATE.
Thank you.”

Contact your departmental French Language Services Coordinator who can assist with a specific greeting, and/or help arrange for assistance with recording a bilingual message for non-bilingual frontline employees.

If the length of your voicemail message permits it, give callers an option to bypass a longer bilingual message by including the following bilingual component near the start of your message:

“To bypass this message, you can press the number sign/star at any time.
Pour accéder à la boîte vocale, appuyez sur le carré/l’étoile.”

Note: Depending on how your voicemail system works, delete one or the other of “sign/star” and “le carré/l’étoile” from the above text.

4.2.3 Interactive telephone directories

Both French and English must be used in the recorded greeting of interactive auto attendant directories.
Messages must be comparable both in quality and content. Either language can come first in the message.

For example, based on the nature of the voicemail system, the message might be as follows:

“Bonjour/Hello. For service in English, press 1.
Pour le service en français, appuyez sur le 2.”

4.2.4 Video conference platforms for public service

Refer to Standard [4.2.4 Video conference platforms](#) for advice on serving the public via Teams, Zoom or other virtual technologies.

4.2.5 E-service

Refer to Standard [3.2.3 Website](#) for advice on serving the public via E-service websites and web forms.

5.0 Public events

5.1 Engagements

Public hearings and meetings

"It is important to note the distinction between public engagement and 'targeted' or 'stakeholder' engagement, which refers to an engagement process that involves only specific demographic groups, or partners and stakeholder groups, and excludes the general public."

[Public Engagement Employee Guide](#), June 2022, p.4

Government institutions occasionally conduct public engagement to seek public opinion regarding major changes to legislation, regulations or policy, or regarding initiatives that impact the Francophone community (i.e. health and social services, public safety, French-language education). [Where criteria are met³¹](#), government institutions holding these public meetings or public hearings must ensure that all or a portion of the engagement is bilingual.

The extent of bilingual preparation for the engagement depends on the anticipated level of French participation by the public. To determine this, [any advertisements or promotion must be published in both French and English media³²](#), and include an invitation for the public to indicate their intention to participate in French by emailing or calling the respective government institution. This should be done in sufficient time so that the necessary arrangements can be made in advance of the event.

[Even if there is no public response to the advertisements in advance of the event, French speaking individuals might attend. The institution should provide them with available bilingual information related to the topic and an option for bilingual service \(for example, a business card for a bilingual employee who can answer their questions\).](#)

Consider direct service, interpretation or language facilitation for the various aspects of the hearings or meetings, including:

- receiving emails or calls from the public indicating their intention to participate in French for the engagement;
- [the presence of bilingual staff at the engagement³³](#); or
- the use of virtual simultaneous interpretation;
- [registration and reception of members of the public³⁴](#) and presenters;
- interactions between presenters and members of the public during the engagement; and

³¹ [Where criteria are met](#)

³² [3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication](#)

³³ [4.1 In-person service](#)

³⁴ [2.1 Active offer signage](#)

- availability of bilingual public information material³⁵.

If bilingual employees are not present at public events, non-bilingual employees will provide members of the public requiring service in French with a business card, brochure, info sheet or other publication containing bilingual information, as well as contact information for a bilingual service option (bilingual employee, website, voice mailbox, etc.)

Virtual simultaneous interpretation

Virtual simultaneous interpretation is provided by private contractors with technical support for video conferencing software capable of multiple audio channels. For events that are entirely or partially in-person, during which virtual simultaneous interpretation is used, ensure that microphones and interpretation headsets are available.

Without interpretation headsets, only consecutive rather than simultaneous interpretation would be possible during in-person meetings, which doubles the time required for communication.

Technical advice is available from the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

Translation of materials for engagements

Plenty of advance notice, even at the planning stage when dates are tentative, will facilitate the translation of documents and related materials as well as the booking of interpreters, which gives the interpreters the necessary preparation time.

A dedicated meeting in French for all significant demand communities

Alternatively, consider engaging all significant demand communities of the Francophone community in a targeted engagement with bilingual program experts. Arrange for the presence (actual or virtual) of simultaneous interpretation if bilingual program experts are not available. Use teleconferencing or videoconferencing³⁶ to link to other significant demand communities where appropriate.

In some circumstances, this model could be delivered by a third-party partner from the Francophone community. Contact your French Language Services Coordinator for guidance.

Engagements hosted by multiple institutions

Government institutions frequently co-host events with other government institutions and/or external organizations.

The French Language Services Coordinator of each government institution should be included in planning, especially to ensure timely translation of their institution's documents or presentations used during engagements.

³⁵ 3.4 Public information materials

³⁶ 5.1 Engagements

Public surveys and evaluations

Where criteria are met³⁷, when a government institution notifies the public of an opportunity to respond to a survey to complete an evaluation, or to provide oral or written comments/feedback on a matter, public-facing materials, such as advertisements and posters, which inform the public about surveys or evaluations, must be issued in English and French.

The survey, evaluation, feedback form, voicemail box or other instrument used to receive public input will be available in both French and English³⁸.

In the case of a face-to-face or telephone interview or survey, a non-bilingual interviewer will actively offer service in French³⁹.

Members of the public requiring service in French will be given contact information for a bilingual option to participate in the interview or survey (bilingual employee, website, voicemail box, etc.) This could include a business card, brochure or information sheet.

5.1.1 Events

Tradeshows

Where criteria are met⁴⁰, tradeshow booths must display an active offer and materials such as banner, signage and other communications materials must be available in the correct bilingual format.

Government of the Northwest Territories kiosks and booths at trade shows, career fairs, industry events etc. outside the Northwest Territories must also comply with the above requirements.

If bilingual employees are unavailable to participate in such public events, non-bilingual employees will provide members of the public requiring service in French with available bilingual information and an option for bilingual service.

Ceremonies, events and awards

Government of the Northwest Territories institutions issuing ceremonial awards (e.g. Education Hall of Fame, Minister's Culture and Heritage Circle, NWT Literacy Awards, etc.) should offer recipients the option to receive a French version of the award.

When planning a ceremony, event or award presentation, government institutions should consider if aspects could be made bilingual.

For example, if a francophone individual or organization were to receive recognition, the relevant portion of the event could be delivered in both French and English.

³⁷ Where criteria are met

³⁸ 3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication

³⁹ 4.0 Service delivery

⁴⁰ Where criteria are met

Government of the Northwest Territories employee recognition awards are internal. Seek guidance from your French Language Services Coordinator and the Department of Finance and observe VIP obligations.

6.0 Procurement

Requests for Proposals

Government institutions drafting a Requests for Proposals for communications or services should write the Requests for Proposals to ensure it informs proponents whether the planning, budgeting, timelines and implementation of their work will require provisions for French communications and services.

Employees should consult their French Language Services Coordinator when the terms of reference of the Requests for Proposals are being drafted, and throughout the project.

The Requests for Proposals should state which French language responsibilities rest with the institution (e.g. translation, interpretation arrangements), and which French language responsibilities rest with the successful proponent.

The Requests for Proposals will clearly advise proponents whether their bid will require capacity in French (internal or sub-contracted) to meet the evaluation criteria of the proposed contract.

If the Requests for Proposals require that the proponent create a communications instrument intended for the public, the deliverables must comply with Standards [3.4 Public information materials](#), and [3.5 Bilingual formats for public communication](#).

Efficient planning and production procedures can save time and effort and result in quality bilingual products ready for simultaneous launch. If you have any procurement-related questions, you are encouraged to contact Procurement Shared Services.

Ensure that French translation requests are submitted in a timely manner so that the Requests for Proposals description is bilingual wherever it appears on the Government of the Northwest Territories Contract Opportunities site.

Requests for Proposals case study #1

As the successful proponent in a Request for Proposals, a contractor facilitated the **public evaluation of a major government program**. Various French-speaking groups had actively participated in multiple aspects of the program. The Requests for Proposals did not stipulate that the proponent would need to conduct a portion of the evaluation in French with those groups.

Much effort and expense were required to try to obtain public feedback in French after the contractor had already met the terms of the contract and had been paid.

A better planned and executed Requests for Proposals would have resulted in a more efficient outcome.

Requests for Proposals case study #2

A **public information video** was finalized in English, and it consisted of on-screen actors speaking in English (as opposed to voice-over narration) and numerous graphical shots (charts, maps, etc.). It was launched in English and a French version was made retroactively. This process took months, and cost much more than the original budget for the project.

Matching French subtitles and dubbing over shorter English segments is challenging, expensive and time-consuming. Also, the creation of French graphical elements required starting from scratch.

The successful proponent had no idea that French would be required as it was not referenced in the terms of reference of the Requests for Proposals. Subsequently, a separate contract was required, costing more time and money, and resulted in much frustration. The inclusion of expertise and advice from the government institution's French Language Services Coordinator in the early planning stages would have saved money and resulted in the simultaneous launch of a high-quality bilingual product.

7.0 Public feedback on receiving French language communications and services

The public can provide feedback on French language services and communication at any time.

Where criteria are met⁴¹, promotional materials with the feedback invitation “Nous voulons votre avis” (“We want your feedback”) and a link or QR code to the relevant webpage⁴² must be placed at all physical points of public service.

Feedback invitations should appear on French versions of any Corporate Communications approved marketing websites for special programs and arm’s length entities that offer public service features, such as "Contact Us" or "Have Your Say."

This also includes the French versions of e-Service portals.

Receiving and responding to public feedback is an important part of improving the Government of the Northwest Territories’ delivery of French communications and services to the public. French Language Services Coordinators of government institutions work together with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat to ensure an appropriate follow-up has been made in response to public feedback.

The opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of French communications and services is complementary to the active offer. French Language Services Coordinators can provide multipurpose cards and stickers to points of public service, directing the public to the webpage about the feedback process. French Language Services Coordinators can also provide training and advise on how to display and use these materials.

⁴¹ Where criteria are met

⁴² At the time of publication the relevant web page was: www.votreavisgtno.ca

Appendix A – Glossary

Active offer

Active offer is the set of measures taken by [government institutions](#) to ensure that French language services are available and accessible, and publicized as such. An active offer may take the form of a sign, a personal greeting or a message. Its purpose is to ensure that an individual feels comfortable expressing himself or herself in either language when seeking a service.

Advertisement

Includes, but is not limited to, any notice or insert in a newspaper, periodical or broadcast (television, radio, etc.). For example, tender or proposal calls, job advertisements, proclamations, meeting or hearing notices, program and service announcements, promotional inserts, public education messages and commercials.

Available to the public

A description of internal communications instruments created for the purpose of guiding the work of government institutions' management and employees, but which is published for political or transparency reasons.

Backgrounder

Backgrounders provide additional detailed information about a subject that is relevant to a news release and which media may ask about.

Backgrounders will be distributed by email at the same time that its attached news release is distributed. The backgrounder will be posted to the Government of the Northwest Territories website as a link within the body of the release.

Bilingual

In this document, bilingual refers to French and English. By extension, non-bilingual refers to the same languages.

Bilingual mirrored format

A format in which both English and French appear in the same product in two parallel columns on each page, back to front or in other variations of layout.

French Language Services Coordinator (FLSC)

There is one [French Language Services Coordinator](#) assigned to each government institution. All are members of the French Language Services Coordinating Committee.

Government institution

Departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Office of the Legislative Assembly and bodies cited in the [Government Institution Regulations](#).

Intended for the public

A description of communications instruments created with the intention to inform the public of a government institution's activities.

Interpreter

An individual certified to facilitate oral communication – and in some cases, the interpretation of short documents (either simultaneously or consecutively) between users of different languages.

Language facilitator

An individual who facilitates oral communication – and in some cases, the interpretation of short documents (either simultaneously or consecutively) between users of different languages.

Media Advisory

A brief email issued to notify media of an upcoming event or media opportunity.

Media Statement

A written statement composed of a number of paragraphs attributed to the Minister that provides a Government of the Northwest Territories perspective or position on a notable event or public issue.

Ministerial Activities Advisory

An email to Northwest Territories media with a summary of ministerial travel, intergovernmental meetings and public appearances for the upcoming week.

Nature of the office

As per Government Institutions Regulations, for the purposes of paragraph 11(1)(b) of the [Official Languages Act](#), the nature of an office of a government institution is such that it is reasonable that communications with and services from that office be available in both English and French, if the office:

- (a) generally, offers services to the public;
- (b) in respect of those services, is a central service point or a referral centre providing services to the public for the whole of the Northwest Territories.

News Release

An announcement with a description of what the Government of the Northwest Territories is doing in relation to a specific issue or topic. It quotes the minister and explains how the announcement relates to the Assembly's goals and priorities.

The purpose of a news release is to generate media interest in a Government of the Northwest Territories story or issue, resulting in news stories based on interviews with a Government of the Northwest Territories spokesperson.

Point of public service

Physical locations, phone lines and digital products such as service counters, phone numbers published as contact for programs (1-800 numbers and other), intake offices, websites and online service portals where the public can access Government of the Northwest Territories services. These include points of public service delivered by third-parties on behalf of Government of the Northwest Territories institutions.

Public engagements

- **Public hearing:** a meeting held by a government institution in order to review and make a determination on a given matter.
- **Public meeting:** a meeting held for furthering or discussing a matter of public concern, whether attendance at the meeting is general or selective.

Public information material

Communications instruments (in printed, electronic or broadcasted formats) intended for notice to, or for use by, the public.

Public Notice

A brief, factual notice issued by Cabinet Communications to provide information about items of public interest.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

An advertised request for bids from vendors or service providers to carry out a proposed contract.

Significant demand communities

As per the Government Institution Regulations, and for purposes of the *Official Languages Act* of the Northwest Territories, the following communities are considered to represent “significant demand” for communications and services in French:

- Fort Smith
- Hay River
- Inuvik
- Yellowknife

Standard page of text

300 words.