

INFO-GTNO

French Language Communications Newsletter



Welcome to Info-GTNO

Info-GTNO is an e-newsletter produced by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). The newsletter will be published a few times a year to share news and information about what the GNWT is doing to improve access to information and services in French for the French-speaking public. The newsletter can also be found on the **Secretariat website**.

A word from the Secretariat

(Left to right) Executive Director of the Conseil de développement économique des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, Antoine Gagnon, Executive Director of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, Benoît Boutin and Executive Director of the Fédération franco-ténoise, Jean de Dieu Tuyishime at the Active Offer Toolkit launch in July

As director general of the GNWT Francophone Affairs Secretariat, I take the challenge of improving the information and services our government provides to the French-speaking public quite seriously. I have seen this issue from many angles throughout my career and bring that perspective to my current position.

As a long-time franco-ténois resident, I understand how important it is to be able to access information and receive service from one's government in one's own language. As a long-time GNWT employee, I also appreciate the very real operational challenges faced by the departments and agencies tasked with making that happen.

Since taking on the leadership of the newly-created Francophone Affairs Secretariat in 2012, I have also come to appreciate more than ever the connection between these two realities: that shared goals and collaboration not only allow you to achieve more, they make the achievements themselves more satisfying.

Over the past three years, our office has worked in collaboration with representatives of the franco-ténois community, in particular the Fédération franco-ténoise (FFT), to advance our shared goals. I can't say enough about how important the input, support and collaboration of the FFT and the broader francophone community has been to our progress. It has made all the difference.

Within the GNWT I have also seen the power of collaboration: with the Office of the Commissioner for Official Languages, departmental senior management, the department of Executive, and the French Language Service Coordinators in departments and agencies who are so essential to implementing our strategic objectives on the ground.

In our consultation with communities, we heard loud and clear that the single most important commitment the GNWT could make was to strengthen its active offer at front-line points of service in person, on the phone and on the internet. As the content of this first newsletter shows, these are all areas where we are focussing our efforts and where partnerships will be key to our success. I recognize that much work remains to be done as we continue to expand and improve the information and services our government provides in French, but with the strong partnerships we now have in place, I am optimistic that we will not only succeed, but that our success will be more meaningful because it was arrived at by working together.

Benoît Boutin, Executive Director



Increasing the profile of French language services



Acting NWT Languages Commissioner Shannon Gullberg participated in the launch of the new GNWT Active Offer Toolkit

In July 2015, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat launched the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Active Offer Toolkit and orientation DVD. It invited representatives from the franco-ténoise community and GNWT departments to a reception celebrating this important milestone.

The active offer is a way of greeting the public which informs them that they are welcome to communicate with the GNWT in either English or French when seeking information or a service.

The theme of the GNWT's active offer materials is "À votre service en français". It includes a range of materials departments can use to promote the availability of GNWT information and services in French.

The toolkit includes promotional pieces such as tent cards, pins, posters and window stickers, as well as "how to" resources that will help GNWT departments and employees make the active

offer and respond to requests for service in French. The DVD can be used with staff to help provide orientation and training.

A key audience for the orientation materials is staff who do not speak French themselves, but who are a first point of contact for the public. The toolkit and DVD provide practical instructions and tips to help understand their role and feel more comfortable providing the active offer.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment to improving access to information and services in French by:

- establishing the Francophone Affairs Secretariat;
- working in partnership with the Federation franco-ténoise to develop the Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services, and
- establishing GNWT Standards for French Language Communications and Services.

The GNWT has also consulted with French-speaking residents in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik to get their input on implementation of the strategic plan.

Departments and agencies have now assessed internal requirements and developed their operating plans.

The active offer is one way the public will see the outcome of all these efforts. French-speaking residents and visitors are encouraged to request information and services in French to contribute to the ongoing development of these services.

"As a front-line employee, you play a critical role in the active offer, even if you don't speak French. You can ensure French-speaking clients feel welcome and well-served by facilitating positive, timely access to the services they need – at the counter, on the telephone, or by email."

GNWT QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE ON THE ACTIVE OFFER

www.gov.nt.ca goes bilingual!



The GNWT's website has been online since 1997 and has undergone many changes since those early days. This past July, the GNWT launched a fully redesigned website, showcasing a modern, simple look and feel. The redesign included a complete French mirror site at www.gov.nt.ca/fr.

This is an important step in the process of

increasing the GNWT's web content in French.

The new website is easier to navigate and features a rotating banner to highlight new GNWT programs, links to some of the most popular pages, a spotlight section to highlight GNWT news stories, and better search capabilities.

The site's design is based on the GNWT's Consistent User Experience (CUE) web standards which were released last year and provide direction for the look and feel of the new website. These standards were developed using current best practices, online research and consultations with other provinces.

Another exciting online development is the new online Service Directory (services.exec.gov.nt.ca/fr). This site provides basic information about all GNWT services to individuals, organizations and businesses, including a description of the service, where to get more information and key contacts. The directory is bilingual and can be searched by department, by type of service or using a custom search.

The launch of the new GNWT website is the beginning of a new era for the GNWT's online presence and will support efforts departments are making to increase their online service delivery as well as their French web content.

Staff Profile

DAENA PHYBERS,
Bilingual Customer Service Agent
Yellowknife Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office
Department of Transportation

Daena Phypers was born and raised in Yellowknife. English is her first language, but thanks to a French immersion education, she is one of three bilingual customer service agents at the Yellowknife Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office.

"It's nice to be able to help people feel more comfortable," she says, noting that sometimes French-speaking clients don't know they can ask for service in French. "Sometimes I can tell they are struggling in English and they are definitely happy when I say I can serve them in French."



When Daena was in grade school, immersion was just starting up in Yellowknife. She started with pre-immersion in grade 3 and moved into full immersion in grade 4. She continued with immersion

through to Grade 12. She says she stuck with immersion in high school because she knew that speaking French would be beneficial to her career.

Daena worked as a summer student in the GNWT for three summers and has been in her current position for two years. She says that, at first, the specialized terminology of driver and vehicle licensing took a bit of effort to learn in French, but now are second nature. After a few years out of immersion, she admits she was a bit nervous about using her French. "When I first started, it was really nice to have clients tell me my French was okay. That felt good," she says.

Did you know?

Numbers aren't everything, but they can provide a snapshot of progress. Here are a few interesting statistics that help illustrate what the GNWT is doing to provide information and services to the French-speaking public.

- During the 2014–2015 fiscal year, the GNWT French Translation Services, the Department of Justice Legal Translation Services and the Workers Safety and Compensation Commission **translated 1,710,084 words**. The GNWT French Translation Services alone translated 1,053,522 million words for 35 government institutions.
- From April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, **Services TNO processed a total of 367 requests** for service from the public. Services TNO Services is a French-language service centre that provides information and a number of services on behalf of GNWT departments. Some of the services the office provides include:
 - health card information and applications
 - information on Extended Health Benefits
 - birth certificate application information
 - fishing licence info and applications
 - hunting licence information and applications
 - rental officer applications
 - official transcripts
- 100% percent of departments have developed an Operating Plan on French Language Communications and Services.



For information and service in French

The GNWT is committed to improving its active offer of information and services in French.

To find out more, contact:

Services TNO
867-920-6153 (in Yellowknife)
1-866-561-1664 (toll free)
francophone@gov.nt.ca
www.servicestno.ca

Every department has a French Language Services Coordinator who sits on the **GNWT French Language Services Coordinating Committee**.