

French Language Services Policy

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
Elections Ontario
November 2024

Aussi disponible en français

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Document History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Effective Date	Description of Changes	Approved By
1.0		December 2009	Original	Executives
2.0	January 2010	January 2010	Amended	Executives
3.0	May 2021	May 19, 2021	Technical revisions, including updated template, style and language.	Greg Essensa, CEO
3.1	March 2022	April 08, 2022	Technical corrections.	Greg Essensa, CEO
3.2	October 2024	November 1, 2024	Amendments to include new designated area (O.Reg. 793/21) and to reflect new requirements (O.Reg. 544/22).	Greg Essensa, CEO

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Section 1: Introduction

The *French Language Services Act (FLSA)* ensures that provincial government services are offered in French in 27 designated areas across the province with significant numbers of francophone residents (see Appendix A for a list of designated areas in Ontario). In addition, the *FLSA* guarantees individuals in these designated areas of the province the right to local French services from the provincial government.

Elections Ontario (EO) recognizes its responsibility under the *FLSA* to provide French language services and fully integrate considerations specific to the francophone community in its communication plans and strategies.

EO's French Language Services Policy outlines requirements for the active offer and delivery of French language services in designated areas, as well as requirements for translating public-facing documents.

EO has adopted the communication guidelines developed by the Ministry of Francophone Affairs (2010).

Section 2: Principles

Accessibility

Ensures accessible services when needed and availability of French-speaking staff to offer the service.

Active Offer

Ensures that French language services are clearly visible, readily and easily available, publicized, and of equivalent quality to services offered in English.

Bilingualism

Acknowledges the French language as a historic and honoured language in Ontario recognized by the Constitution as an official language in Canada, and by Ontario as an official language in the courts and in education.

Consistency

Ensures consistency in the quality and delivery of French language services to the public and electors at EOHQ and at returning offices in designated areas.

Equivalence

Recognizes that French-speaking individuals as well as Francophone organizations have the right to receive communication services in French, equivalent to those offered in English, at the same time and of the same quality in designated areas.

Section 3: Scope

The policy applies to relevant staff at EO Headquarters (EOHQ) and in the field in the 27 designated areas across the province.

It applies to electoral events and day-to-day election administration.

The requirements of this policy do not apply to the internal business language of EO, which is conducted in English. For the purposes of this policy, internal business includes interactions between EOHQ staff and its returning offices, with exceptions as noted in this policy.

Section 4: Definitions

The following five definitions are referred to throughout this policy:

Active offer of service in French

Measures taken to ensure that French-language services are public, visible, readily available, easily accessible, and of a quality equivalent to the services offered in English. It includes all types of communication, including the initiation of communication with French-speaking electors.

Designated area

A demographic region of the province in which the *FLSA* guarantees an individual the right to French language services from Government of Ontario ministries and agencies.

Electoral Event

Either a provincial general election, by-election, or referendum as defined under the provincial law.

Identified Position

A position that requires staff at EOHQ or in the field to communicate in French at an advanced or superior standard.

Public Information

Includes, but is not limited to, all general information, materials, election-related forms, news releases, web postings and content, reports, and advertisements.

Section 5: Mandatory Requirements

- 5.1. All public-facing information that EO produces in English in print or digital formats must be available simultaneously in French and of the same quality as the English version unless excepted.
- 5.2. The English version of any public-facing information that EO produces must include a message in French noting that the document is also available in French, and vice versa. All web-based content, and documents, available on EO's French webpages must be written in French.
- 5.3. Special consideration must be given to the specific needs of the Francophone community when developing strategic communication plans. Communication activities must incorporate appropriate approaches to reach Francophone audiences effectively.
- 5.4. Exceptions should be rare, reviewed on a case-by-case basis and can include:
 - a. Internal information intended for EO personnel only, except as provided in this policy.
 - b. Services delivered in non-designated areas, except as provided in this policy.
 - c. Highly technical materials.
 - d. Job postings on the EO website that do not require the successful candidate to be bilingual.
- 5.5. EO will translate all training materials for poll officials in designated electoral districts. Returning offices in the 27 designated areas must have access to these materials and must be made available on request to returning offices outside designated areas.
- 5.6. EO will follow the guidelines set by the Ontario Geographic Names Board with respect to the translation of mapping services, where feasible, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Geographic features that are surveyed and mapped by the province, such as lakes, rivers, islands, bays, points, ridges, valleys, are translated.

- b. Features associated with municipal jurisdictions such as the names and naming of streets, parks, buildings, and associated features making up the urban environment.
 - c. Organizational names, if the organization officially has a bilingual name.
- 5.7. EOHQ employees and election officials in the designated areas, and at EOHQ, must proactively offer an answer in the language requested when responding to public inquiries (i.e., in person or by telephone). For any services that EO provides in multiple steps, there must be a process in place to ensure anyone requesting service in French does not need to request service in French at every step of the service.
- 5.8. All public-facing documents will be sent to a certified translation vendor for translation. EOHQ employees must submit a ticket through EO’s Communications Services portal for all translation requests.
- 5.9. Availability requirements for English and French public-facing documents in print or electronic formats include, but are not limited to, those outlined below:

Table 1: Guidelines for print and/or electronic public materials	
Type	Requirements
Advertising Campaigns (e.g. province-wide public advertising, television, radio and online campaigns)	Available in both languages; publish English ads in English publications and French ads in French publications.
Business Cards/Badges	Available in a bilingual format or in both languages for designated bilingual staff.
Consultations (print)	If consulting with the Francophone community, documents must be available in both languages and bilingual staff should be available to assist as needed. It is recommended to have separate consultations for the Francophone

	community because they may have different concerns.
Correspondence (e.g. mail, fax, or email)	Response in the language of request (English or French).
Educational and informative videos	Available in both languages using Francophone stakeholders or professional actors for the French version. For direct translation of English videos, a voice-over is preferable to subtitles.
EO's Website	Available in both languages. English and French posted simultaneously.
Job Postings	Bilingual job postings must be available on a French webpage.
Marketing materials (e.g. display stands, signage, posters, Ontario Election Voting Guide, and brochures)	Must be available in a bilingual format or in both languages.
Media Releases (e.g. news releases, backgrounders) Memos and Bulletins Official Documents and Forms	Must be available in a bilingual format or in both languages.
Publications (e.g. handbooks, guides, reports, policies)	Must be available in a bilingual format or in both languages, with exemptions for technical and scholarly documents as prescribed under the <i>FLSA</i> . Provisions must be made to assist Francophone citizens who wish to review exempted documents.

<p>Signs</p>	<p>A sign must be posted at or near the entrance of EO headquarters locations that receive public visitors, as well as any other office open to the public that indicates that services are available in French at that office.</p> <p>Any sign outside of an EO office that has written text must include the text in both English and French in equal prominence, either on the same sign or on separate signs next to each other.</p>
<p>Surveys</p>	<p>Available in language of request (English or French).</p>
<p>Social Media (i.e. X, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, RSS feeds)</p>	<p>Available in a bilingual format or in both languages. Responses to comments by online users must be in the same language.</p> <p>This requirement will not apply when resharing unilingual posts from a partner.</p>

5.10. Guidelines for oral communications are outlined in the table below:

Table 2: Guidelines for oral communications			
Type	Principle	Strategy	Details
Consultations	Equivalence - EO responsibility	Documents in both languages Bilingual staff or interpretation services	Organize separate discussion groups or consultations for subjects of particular interest to the Francophone community. When relevant, compile and analyze views of Francophones separately because they may have different concerns.
Front-line services (in-person or by telephone)	Equivalence - EO responsibility	Greeting public visitors and callers in both English and in French.	For telephone callers, a greeting should be given in both English and French if callers are not first given a choice to select a language through an automated system.
Hearings	Equivalence - EO responsibility	Simultaneous video translation	
In-Person Meeting or Telephone call	Equivalence - EO responsibility	Services in both languages (English and French)	

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Public event	Equivalence - EO responsibility	Services in both languages	Key elements need to be considered.
Speech or presentation	Active offer	Languages of speaker with passages in the other language	Key elements need to be considered.

5.11. Guidelines for audio/visual communications are outlined in the table below:

Table 3: Guidelines for audio/visual Communications			
Type	Principle	Strategy	Details
Videos Podcasts, audio recordings	Active Offer	All public facing videos are in English and French Audio/Video productions	
Pictures, maps, and graphs	EO responsibility	Depending on the medium in which they appear (websites, videos, publications).	As provided in the policy for Ontario Public Service translation standards.
Social Media (i.e. X, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, RSS feeds)	EO responsibility	Video recordings of events in the language of the event.	Any videos made available to the public via EO's YouTube channel are available in both English and French.

Section 6: Roles & Responsibilities

6.1. Chief Electoral Officer

The CEO is responsible for:

- a. Providing strategic direction for the development of key business practices that govern the delivery of goods and services in French; and
- b. Meeting the requirements for French language services in election planning and administration as mandated by the *FLSA*.

6.2. Executives and Directors

Executives and Directors are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring their clusters and divisions develop and deliver French language services that align with the requirements of this policy and the *FLSA*;
- b. Overseeing operations of their program areas to ensure adequate resources and mechanisms are put in place to meet the needs of the Francophone community in Ontario;
- c. Ensuring the French language service objectives are integrated in new and existing program development and modernization initiatives; and
- d. Ensuring that their clusters and divisions have a sufficient number of bilingual staff available to provide French language services, as required.

6.3. Manager, Corporate Affairs

The Manager, Corporate Affairs is responsible for:

- a. Advising EO leadership and staff on matters related to the planning, integration and delivery of French language services through the development of this policy and ensuring it is regularly reviewed;
- b. Establishing stakeholder relations with Ontario's Office of the Ombudsman French Language Services Commissioner and the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Francophone Affairs to

continuously improve and strengthen the delivery of French language services at EO; and

- c. Coordinating, investigating, and resolving complaints in liaison with Ontario's Ombudsman French Language Services Commissioner, EOHQ employees, returning office staff, and the Francophone community.

6.4. Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- a. Organizing, planning and integrating French language services in business activities within their respective business areas;
- b. Ensuring that all employees within their respective unit follow this policy, the *FLSA*, and any other guidelines;
- c. Ensuring that French language service requirements are identified in service level agreements, legal contracts, memoranda of understanding, vendor information systems, request for proposals, pilot projects, and HR planning;
- d. Staffing and managing identified positions as needed and evaluating candidates in a fair and consistent manner with an accredited evaluator. Managers are encouraged to consult with the French Services Expert before drafting the job description for an identified position;
- e. Ensuring that the translation of documents is consistent with the requirements outlined in this policy; and
- f. Monitoring and reporting on French language services in their units in accordance with the spirit and intent of the *FLSA*.

6.5 Returning Officers

Returning Officers are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring the quality of French language services offered in their electoral district meets the requirements of the *FLSA* and this policy.
- b. Managing the delivery of services and communications in French within their electoral district.

- c. Overseeing the recruitment of identified positions to ensure an adequate level of electoral services are available in French equivalent to those offered in English.

6.6. EO Staff

EOHQ employees and election officials located in or serving designated areas, or are involved in the planning and/or delivery of services to the public are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that Francophone Ontarians have access to services in French of equivalent quality and accessibility to those offered in English;
- b. Reporting any omission or discrepancy affecting the proactive delivery of French language services to management; and
- c. Providing high-quality communication materials and services for Francophone Ontarians where needed. Employees in identified positions must provide high-quality French language services at an advanced or superior standard.

Section 7: Additional References

The following table identifies EO policies and documents that expand upon or are informed by EO's French Language Services policy.

Document Name	Author(s)
1. Guidelines for Communication in French	Ministry of Francophone Affairs
2. <i>French Language Services Act</i>	Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Section 8: Appendix

The table below shows the designated areas of Ontario where the *FLSA* guarantees an individual the right to services in French:

ED #	Electoral District (French)	Municipality	Area
002	Algoma—Manitoulin	District of Algoma	All
		District of Sudbury	All
		District of Thunder Bay	Township of Manitouwadge
007	Beaches—East York	City of Toronto	All
008	Brampton—Centre	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Brampton
009	Brampton—Est	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Brampton
010	Brampton—Nord	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Brampton
011	Brampton—Sud	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Brampton
012	Brampton—Ouest	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Brampton
017	Carleton	City of Ottawa	All
018	Chatham—Kent—Leamington	County of Essex	Townships of Tilbury North, Tilbury West
		County of Kent	Town of Tilbury, Township of Tilbury East
019	Davenport	City of Toronto	All
020	Don Valley—Est	City of Toronto	All
021	Don Valley—Nord	City of Toronto	All
022	Don Valley—Ouest	City of Toronto	All
025	Eglinton—Lawrence	City of Toronto	All
026	Elgin—Middlesex—London	County of Middlesex	City of London
027	Essex	County of Essex	Town of Belle River Townships of Anderdon, Colchester North, Maidstone, Sandwich West and Rochester,

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028	Etobicoke-Centre	City of Toronto	All
029	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	City of Toronto	All
030	Etobicoke-Nord	City of Toronto	All
031	Flamborough—Glanbrook	City of Hamilton	All as of December 31, 2000
032	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	City of Ottawa	All
		County of Glengarry	All
		County of Prescott	All
		County of Russell	All
036	Hamilton-Centre	City of Hamilton	All as of December 31, 2000
037	Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	City of Hamilton	All as of December 31, 2000
038	Hamilton Mountain	City of Hamilton	All as of December 31, 2000
039	Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	City of Hamilton	All as of December 31, 2000
041	Humber River—Black Creek	City of Toronto	All
043	Kanata—Carleton	City of Ottawa	All
044	Kenora—Rainy River	District of Kenora	Township of Ignace
046	Kingston et les Îles	County of Frontenac	City of Kingston
050	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	County of Kent	Township of Dover
051	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	County of Frontenac	City of Kingston
053	London—Fanshawe	County of Middlesex	City of London
054	London-Centre-Nord	County of Middlesex	City of London
055	London-Ouest	County of Middlesex	City of London
056	Markham—Stouffville	Regional Municipality of York	City of Markham
057	Markham—Thornhill	Regional Municipality of York	City of Markham
058	Markham—Unionville	Regional Municipality of York	City of Markham
060	Mississauga-Centre	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Mississauga

061	Mississauga—Est—Cooksville	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Mississauga
062	Mississauga—Erin Mills	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Mississauga
063	Mississauga—Lakeshore	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Mississauga
064	Mississauga—Malton	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Mississauga
065	Mississauga—Streetsville	Regional Municipality of Peel	City of Mississauga
066	Nepean	City of Ottawa	All
068	Niagara—Centre	Regional Municipality of Niagara	Cities of Port Colborne and Welland
071	Nickel Belt	City of Greater Sudbury	All
		District of Sudbury	All
		District of Timiskaming	All
072	Nipissing	District of Nipissing	All
		District of Parry Sound	Municipality of Callander
076	Orléans	City of Ottawa	All
078	Ottawa—Centre	City of Ottawa	All
079	Ottawa—Sud	City of Ottawa	All
080	Ottawa—Vanier	City of Ottawa	All
081	Ottawa—Ouest—Nepean	City of Ottawa	All
083	Parkdale—High Park	City of Toronto	All
088	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	City of Renfrew	City of Pembroke. Townships of Stafford and Westmeath
		District of Nipissing	All
089	Richmond Hill	Regional Municipality of York	City of Markham
091	Sarnia—Lambton	City of Sarnia	All
092	Sault Ste. Marie	District of Algoma	All
093	Scarborough—Agincourt	City of Toronto	All
094	Scarborough—Centre	City of Toronto	All
095	Scarborough—Guildwood	City of Toronto	All
096	Scarborough—Nord	City of Toronto	All
097	Scarborough—Rouge Park	City of Toronto	All
098	Scarborough—Sud—Ouest	City of Toronto	All

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099	Simcoe—Grey	County of Simcoe	Township of Essa
100	Simcoe-Nord	County of Simcoe	Town of Penetanguishene Township of Tiny
101	Spadina—Fort York	City of Toronto	All
102	Stormont—Dundas— South Glengarry	County of Dundas	Township of Winchester
		County of Glengarry	All
		County of Stormont	All
103	Sudbury	City of Greater Sudbury	All
104	Thornhill	Regional Municipality of York	City of Markham
106	Thunder Bay—Supérieur- Nord	District of Thunder Bay	Towns of Geraldton, Longlac, Marathon Townships of Beardmore, Nakina, and Terrace Bay
107	Timiskaming—Cochrane	City of Greater Sudbury	All
		District of Cochrane	All
		District of Nipissing	All
		District of Sudbury	All
		District of Timiskaming	All
108	Timmins	District of Cochrane	All
109	Toronto—Centre	City of Toronto	All
110	Toronto—Danforth	City of Toronto	All
111	Toronto—St. Paul's	City of Toronto	All
112	University—Rosedale	City of Toronto	All
117	Willowdale	City of Toronto	All
118	Windsor—Tecumseh	County of Essex	City of Windsor Town of Tecumseh Township of: Sandwich South
119	Windsor-Ouest	County of Essex	City of Windsor
120	York—Centre	City of Toronto	All
122	York—Sud—Weston	City of Toronto	All
124	Mushkegowuk—Baie James	District of Cochrane	All

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Section 9: Approval

The following table shows the authorization, amendment, and review dates for this policy.

French Language Services Policy	
Authorization	 Greg Essensa Chief Electoral Officer Date: January 28, 2025
Effective Date	November 1, 2024
Date Last Amended	April 8, 2022
Date of Next Review (Once per election cycle)	October 2028
Contact Information	ceo@elections.on.ca