

Government of Saskatchewan French-Language Services Policy



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Introduction

According to 2001 Census data, Saskatchewan's Francophones, known as the Fransaskois, make up approximately two per cent of the province's population, while the province's bilingualism rate stands at 5.1 per cent based on people reporting knowledge of both French and English. Francophones in Saskatchewan are spread throughout the province in both urban and rural areas. As is the case in many rural communities in Saskatchewan, a large part of the population from Francophone areas has moved to major urban centres.

Francophones are an important component of the province's linguistic duality and play an active role in Saskatchewan's economic, cultural and social development. In agriculture, business, the service sector and in many other parts of the Saskatchewan economy, the Fransaskois have shown and continue to show a great sense of leadership and initiative which contributes to the economic vitality of Saskatchewan.

To assist provincial government ministries, crown corporations and agencies in providing more services in French to the Francophone community, the Office of French Language Coordination, now known as the Francophone Affairs Branch (FAB), was established in 1990. Its main responsibilities include:

- liaison between the government and the Francophone community;
- support for provincial ministries, crown corporations and agencies in providing enhanced services in French;
- translation services to provincial ministries, crown corporations and agencies; and
- support to the minister responsible for Francophone affairs.

In addition to meeting its constitutional and statutory obligations, the Government of Saskatchewan pursues targeted initiatives to respond to needs identified by the Francophone community. This is an approach that is taken in many other provinces and territories throughout Canada. The enclosed French-language services policy statement is intended to be a constructive means for provincial ministries, crown corporations and agencies to support the Fransaskois community's development and vitality.

FAB is responsible for developing the policy guidelines and a workable timeframe for the achievement of the service goals in consultation with provincial ministries, crown corporations and other agencies.

Government of Saskatchewan French-Language Services Policy

Purpose

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes that linguistic duality is a fundamental characteristic of Canada and that Saskatchewan's Francophone community is an important component of that linguistic duality. We acknowledge the long-standing and continuing contribution of Saskatchewan's Francophone community to the social, cultural and economic development of this province.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to enhancing the services offered to Saskatchewan's Francophone community in support of the development and vitality of this community.

Service Goals

Communication

- That correspondence with individuals or groups be carried out in the official language preferred by the client.
- That print and electronic information, material and forms, intended for the general public, along with identity documents and certificates, be provided in a bilingual format when appropriate. The choice of documents will be determined in consultation with the Francophone community and subject to cost and distribution considerations.
- That public notices and signs in both official languages be posted where appropriate.
- That public information campaigns be conducted in the French language when such campaigns are conducted in English when appropriate. The choice of public information campaign will be determined in consultation with the Francophone community and subject to cost and distribution considerations.

Service delivery and development

- That the designation of bilingual positions be considered as a means to more effectively provide French-language services.
- That the inclusion of a French-language services component be considered when new Government of Saskatchewan programs and services are being developed.
- That the "active offer" approach be used when services are offered in French. ("Active offer" means that the service is publicized to potential users, that the general public is encouraged to use the service and is comfortable doing so, and that the service quality is comparable to that of the service provided in English.)

Consultation

- That appointments to provincial boards, commissions, agencies, and other bodies consider representation from the Francophone community when discussions touch on sectors with a direct impact on this community's development.
- That the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs serves a consultancy role in the implementation of this policy.

Application

This policy applies to the provincial government, its ministries, crown corporations and other agencies.

Under the direction of the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, the Francophone Affairs Branch (FAB) of the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport is mandated to guide and monitor the implementation of this policy.

The FAB will develop a workable timeframe for the achievement of the service goals, in consultation with provincial ministries, crown corporations and other agencies.

As well as providing translation and advisory services, the FAB will draft realistic guidelines in consultation with the provincial government ministries, crown corporations and other agencies to achieve the service goals set out in this policy, keeping in mind financial considerations.

The FAB will publish an annual report on French-language services detailing progress in order to ensure public accountability.

Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated within five years of the date of implementation. This evaluation will be carried out by the Francophone Affairs Branch in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs.