

French-language Services Plan for 2007-2008

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Nova Scotia Senior Citizens' Secretariat

Dennis Building, 4th Floor
1740 Granville Street
PO Box 2065
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2Z1
Email: scs@gov.ns.ca
Internet: www.gov.ns.ca/scs

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Message from Chief Executive Officer, Valerie White

At the Nova Scotia Senior Citizens' Secretariat, hereafter referred to as either the Seniors' Secretariat or Secretariat, each person we serve is important to us. Communicating with all of our stakeholders about their needs, and the programs and services government offers to them, is key to our success. This year promises to be a busy and challenging one for us. Beginning this year, a priority for the coming years will be a focus on the Secretariat's French-language Services Plan. As 2007-2008 is the first year the Secretariat will develop a French-language Services Plan, it will be a building year.

While the Secretariat has already implemented a number of French language activities, we will be identifying and employing more strategies to serve our province's Acadian and francophone population more extensively. First year priorities include developing linkages and partnerships within government that address the French-language services needs of Acadian and francophone seniors, working with the Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse to consult and begin to identify the needs for French-language services, and to support French-language training opportunities for staff.

The success of the Secretariat's French-language Services Plan progress can, in large part, be ascribed to two main factors; the active participation and cooperation of the Secretariat staff as well as the vigilance, ideas and suggestions of the Acadian and francophone community and organizations.

Although we have achieved some progress, much remains to be done. In order to continue to make gains, we will have to rely on various types of partnerships and alliances, particularly with the Acadian and francophone community. As the Secretariat works each year on its plan and activities, the following five fundamental pillars will guide its progress- sustainability, flexibility, "phased in" approach, builds on successes, and, input from the Acadian and francophone community. In order to achieve further progress in the implementation of the plan, we will have to continue to find original and innovative solutions.

We look forward to continued partnership with Acadian and francophone seniors as we develop the French-language services we need to stay connected to all seniors throughout the province.



Valerie White
CEO, Seniors' Secretariat

Mission, Vision, Mandate and Structure of the Secretariat

Mission

The Seniors' Secretariat is committed to ensuring the inclusion, well-being, and independence of seniors in Nova Scotia by facilitating the development of policies on aging and programs for seniors across government and through the provision and coordination of strategic planning, support, services, programs and information. This will be achieved through leadership and collaboration with our partners.

Vision

Nova Scotia is an inclusive society of caring communities that supports the well-being of seniors and values their contributions (Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, 2005).

Mandate

The Seniors' Secretariat facilitates the planning, development, and coordination of policies, programs, and services for seniors in partnership with government departments, seniors, and voluntary seniors' groups. The Secretariat uses a variety of methods to consult with seniors and ensure their views are considered by the province in the development of policies, programs, and services. It also serves as a single entry point to the Government of Nova Scotia – providing information on programs and services for seniors and their families and responding to seniors' issues and concerns. The Seniors Secretariat leads the implementation of the Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia.

Structure

The Seniors' Secretariat is a cabinet committee chaired by Nova Scotia's Minister of Seniors. Other ministers of the Secretariat include the Minister of Health, Minister of Community Services, Minister of Education, Minister of Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations, Minister of Health Promotion and Protection, and Minister of Justice. The Secretariat office is staffed by a Chief Executive Officer and six permanent employees.

Responding to verbal and written requests from the public to communicate in French

By the end of July 2007, Secretariat staff will receive a written memo outlining the importance of providing service in French and the procedure for doing so. The memo will state that all written requests received from the public that are communicated in French will be replied to in French.

French-language services/activities currently offered

Currently, the Secretariat has undertaken a number of French language activities related to its work on the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy. With the assistance of the Nova Scotia Office of Acadian Affairs, the Secretariat has been able to translate several key elder abuse resource documents into French. These include the Executive Summary of the *Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention*; the elder abuse brochure, and the 2006 NS Elder Abuse Awareness Day Poster. The brochure and poster, printed with funding support from the Canada/Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services, were posted to the Secretariat's website and distributed across the province in recognition of Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June 2006.

In partnership with the Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) and with translation support from Acadian Affairs, the Secretariat is pleased to be able to offer its upcoming Elder Abuse Prevention e-Bulletin in French and English. The first of the bi-monthly editions is expected to be released in April 2007 with invitations to subscribe being sent out by the end of March 2007. All editions of the e-Bulletin will include a French-only section, highlighting French-language resources and/or programs and services. It is anticipated that RANE will contribute this content and work with the Secretariat in responding to inquiries and submissions regarding the e-Bulletin that are submitted in French. RANE will be recognized within the e-Bulletin for their contributions.

RANE is also included as a member of the Group of IX Seniors' Organizations which acts as an advisory committee of the Secretariat. RANE's participation on the Group of IX is an important mechanism to the Secretariat in ensuring the voices of Acadian and francophone seniors are heard.

How the Secretariat's plan will contribute to the preservation or growth of the Acadian and francophone community

Our plan includes measures related to communicating in French, consulting the Acadian and francophone community, and increasing and promoting services available in French.

Our department provides services to seniors, their families and the organizations that serve them. By working towards ensuring that services are available in French, we enabling Acadians and francophones to speak in their language in times when they are most vulnerable. We are thereby contributing to the preservation of the community.

Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2007-2008

As 2007-2008 is the first year the Secretariat will develop a French-language services plan, it is a “building year”.

In the year 2007-2008, the Secretariat will concentrate on reviewing in detail any previous consultation work that has been completed that has identified needs of the Acadian and francophone seniors.

The Secretariat also intends to work with the Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse to discuss and begin to identify the needs for French-language services.

Hearing from Acadian and francophone seniors, first hand, is important to the Secretariat as it begins its French-language services planning. The intent is to put in place specific and informed goals, objectives and measures in the 2008-2009 plan based upon what is learned in 2007-2008.

As the Secretariat works each year on its plan and activities, the following five fundamental pillars will guide its progress: sustainability, flexibility, “phased in” approach, builds on successes and input from the Acadian and francophone community.

Therefore, in 2007-2008, the Secretariat will begin its work on the following specific activities which relate directly to the corporate objectives that are included within the *Strategic Plan for French-language Services for Nova Scotia* document.

Corporate Objective 1: Strengthening the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- Develop linkages and partnerships within government that address the French-language services needs of Acadian and francophone seniors.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- Meet with the French-language Coordinators in departments that the Secretariat most often refers requests and issues from seniors in order to ascertain and prioritize needs for French-language services.
- Support the work of the Office of Acadian Affairs and the implementation of the French-language Services Act by ensuring representation of the Secretariat on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee.

Corporate Objective 2: Consulting with the Acadian and francophone community.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- An initial scan of the needs of Acadian and francophone seniors for services to be provided in French.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- The Secretariat will work with Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) to consult with seniors across the province in order to begin to identify needs for French-language services. In order to facilitate this discussion, the Secretariat will ask RANE to include the Secretariat on their agendas for upcoming meetings that RANE holds across the province throughout the next year.
- The Secretariat will continue to consult with RANE on the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy.
- Continue to consult and work with RANE as a member of the Group of IX Seniors' Organizations which acts as an advisory committee of the Secretariat.
- Review previous consultation work that has been completed that has identified needs of the Acadian and francophone seniors.

Corporate Objective 3: Communicating, sharing information, and promoting services available in French.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- In partnership with RANE and with translation support from Acadian Affairs, provide the Secretariat's upcoming Elder Abuse Prevention e-Bulletin in French.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- With RANE, promote the e-Bulletin within Acadian and francophone communities.

Corporate Objective 4: Supporting French-language services development, planning and delivery in priority areas.

Specific goals and objectives for 2007-2008

- Increase staff's ability to communicate in French.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008

- Support staff through release time to participate in the French-language training opportunities available through the Office of Acadian Affairs.

(In order to build capacity within the Secretariat, the CEO and Senior Policy Analyst have already completed the first course of French-language classes made available through the Nova Scotia Office of Acadian Affairs.)