

Report of the
Advisory Committee on
Francophone Affairs
To the Government of Saskatchewan



August 2015

*Government of Saskatchewan French-language
Services Policy*

Letter of Transmittal

Mr. Elhard:

As follow-up to our meeting of January 16, 2015, it is my pleasure to submit the tenth report of the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs. For this report, the Committee met with senior officials from provincial Ministries, Crown Corporations and Agencies to identify French-language services opportunities that align with the community's needs and the Government of Saskatchewan Plan for Growth.

In an open discussion, both public servants and Committee members expressed challenges and shared best practices respectively in an effort to increase French-Language Services and provide a better service in terms of access, delivery and awareness.

The French-language Services Policy is the foundational element for services in French offered by the Government of Saskatchewan. In this sense, it plays an important role in the development and vitality of the Fransaskois community.

On behalf of the Committee members, I am happy to present to you the first report of the year 2015 where our recommendations are designed to strengthen and improve the Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Dubé', written in a cursive style.

Michel Dubé
Chair of the Advisory Committee
August 2015

Summary

Members of the Committee as well as senior public officials discussed ways they could better collaborate and explored new areas within each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation and Agency where French-language programs and services could increase or improve. The following recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs seek to improve the delivery of French-language services by:

- raising awareness of the Government of Saskatchewan's French-language Services Policy;
- monitoring the progress of existing and new French-language services within government;
- taking into account the increasing role of third parties, the Internet and social media in the delivery of government services;
- facilitating better use of existing human resources by identifying provincial public servants who can speak French; and,
- defining the role and responsibilities of a liaison or 'champion' within each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation and Agency who will work with the Government of Saskatchewan's Francophone Affairs Branch (FAB) in the delivery and promotion of French-language services.

Recommendations

1. That each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation or Agency designate a 'champion' that would work with FAB to develop and promote French-language programs and services.
2. That each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation or Agency make the development and promotion of French-language services a part of their annual planning process.
3. That each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation or Agency evaluate services that are presently delivered online to determine whether a French-language component of the service could be added. (e.g. Highway Hotline)
4. That Ministries recommend to third parties delivering direct services to citizens on the province's behalf identify their existing French-speaking employees and encourage them to offer French-language services - especially in areas of the province where there are larger concentrations of francophone citizens.
5. That Ministries provide information in French regarding rights and responsibilities of employees and employers to newcomers looking for employment opportunities so that they are able to make informed decisions.



6. That Ministries translate to French the tools and information used to promote Saskatchewan to immigrants and interprovincial migrants.

Committee Mandate

In 2003, the Government of Saskatchewan adopted its French-language Services Policy. With this Policy, the Government of Saskatchewan committed to “enhancing services offered to the francophone community of Saskatchewan in support of the development and vitality of this community.”¹

The Policy is organized according to three areas:

1. Communication;
2. Development and delivery of services; and,
3. Consultation.

The mandate of the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs is to advise the Legislative Secretary through the review and analysis of programs and policies to guide the implementation of Saskatchewan’s French-language Services Policy.

Meeting Objective

On January 16, 2015, representatives from provincial Ministries and committee members met to identify new areas where French services could be offered and to enhance services already available in French, while facilitating the process of “building” French-language Services. They also discussed the current challenges provincial Ministries, Crowns Corporations and Agencies face in offering these services. To get a sense of the discussion, here are some of the questions that were sent to participants prior to the meeting:

- What areas can you identify as opportunities for French services that align with the Government of Saskatchewan’s Plan for Growth and your ministry/agency’s annual plan?
- Which services in your ministry/agency are currently in the highest demand? Are there any opportunities to offer these services in French, including partially? Is it feasible? If so, what would your ministry/agency need or require?
- What measures is your ministry/agency taking to ensure that the French services it currently offers are successfully delivered? What is your success story?

¹ Government of Saskatchewan, French-language Services Policy, available at [Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Policy](#)



Context

Today's Francophone Communities

Saskatchewan is home to a vibrant and growing francophone community with its population increasing by 7.7% between 2006 and 2011. The province now has close to 50,000 French-language speakers with about 18,000 of them declaring it as a first language. There has also been a 14.3% growth in regular use of French at home during this period, while new francophone communities are emerging in places like Lloydminster and Humboldt.

Milestones

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the province's Office of French-language Co-ordination (OFLC), renamed the Francophone Affairs Branch. The Government of Saskatchewan has been providing French-language services for 25 years in areas that meet Saskatchewan francophone communities' needs.

In addition, the province also celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Fransaskois Flag in 2015, which was adopted by the Government of Saskatchewan in 2005 as a provincial emblem. Recognizing the Fransaskois Flag shows that the provincial government acknowledges the heritage of Saskatchewan's francophones and their significant contributions to the province.

Alignment with Saskatchewan's Plan for Growth

The Committee believes that the Fransaskois' interest in the vitality of their community is aligned with the goals and aspirations brought forward in Saskatchewan's Plan for Growth.

- **Citizen-centred approach:** the committee would like to see the provincial government provide services to citizens in the official language of their choice;
- **Social and economic integration services:** the committee would like to see the provincial government provide quality services for newcomers in French;
- **Growing the province's population:** the committee would like to see the provincial government offer more French-language services that support labour mobility; and
- **Promoting Saskatchewan abroad:** the committee would like to see the provincial government include francophone countries when deciding on participation at job fairs such as Destination Canada.



Saskatchewan has increasingly become an international economic destination over the years. A growing number of francophones are coming to Saskatchewan from Africa, Europe and other Canadian provinces looking for work in the province's leading industries.

As a supporting example, the inquiries received by the province's French-language Services Centre via email and telephone show that the subject of immigration remains the most searched topic among clients. The information clients seek on this matter is typically as follows:

1. How can I immigrate to Saskatchewan?
2. Where can I find a job?
3. I don't speak English very well, is there someone that can assist me?
4. What French-language services are available?

The Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Centre's promotes the services made available by the *Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (ACF)*, and other francophone organizations specializing in integration support services to newcomers. However, promoting the programs, services and opportunities that Saskatchewan offers to make it an international destination of choice for francophones should be a responsibility shared by all provincial ministries, Crown Corporations and Agencies.

Improving the delivery of French-language services

Organizational Awareness

The Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Policy has been in place since 2003. This policy applies to provincial Ministries, Crown Corporations and other Agencies. Unfortunately, during round table discussions, it became clear that the policy is not well known within the provincial government. Also, as employees responsible for certain francophone files within a ministry move to other positions, those files are lost or forgotten. A better job needs to be done in terms of raising awareness regarding this policy, as well as developing and delivering French-language services and programs.

Recommendation 1

That each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation or Agency designate a 'champion' that would work with the Francophone Affairs Branch to develop and promote French-language programs and services.



More precisely, a “champion” could be an existing French-speaking public servant of a specific Ministry, Crown or Agency who will act as a liaison officer with the Francophone Affairs Branch. Their role would be to study the possibility of including a Francophone perspective on any project, undertaken in their yearly plan. In the event that the “champion” leaves to pursue other opportunities, another liaison officer will be designated and briefed about his or her new role and ongoing of future projects. Continuity is a key component to Saskatchewan’s successful application of the French-language Services Policy.

Recommendation 2

That each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation or Agency make the development and promotion of French-language services a part of their annual planning process.

Including the development of French-language services in the planning process would help ministries in aligning these services with their strategic goals and would raise awareness of French-language services within ministries.

Service Delivery

An important challenge in delivering French-language services in Saskatchewan is that the francophone population is dispersed throughout the province. However, online services can be accessed by francophones no matter where they are. This approach has been used by the Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Centre.

Recommendation 3

That each provincial Ministry, Crown Corporation or Agency evaluate services that are presently delivered online to determine whether a French-language component to the service could be added. (e.g. Highway Hotline)

Other initiatives are under way within the provincial government to improve the delivery of French-language services. A language capacity survey of government employees is used to determine French-language capacity that already exists within the public service and how it can be better leveraged to improve French-language services to citizens. Also, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Minister of Advanced Education for Saskatchewan and representatives from the Assemblée communautaire francasquoise (ACF), the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), University of Regina (U of



R), Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Collège Mathieu (CM) on January 29, 2014. The parties agree on a common goal to implement and provide postsecondary French-language education programs and services to Francophone students and to other students wishing to study in French in Saskatchewan.

The Committee strongly believes that ministries who have the capacity to offer services in French also have the responsibility to promote them on a regular basis. The role of promoting French-language services is a collective effort and a shared responsibility that must not always come from the Government of Saskatchewan's Francophone Affairs Branch but from all provincial Ministries, Agencies and Crown Corporations as a whole. Clients must be made aware that they can get access to French-language services through different windows. By doing so, the Government of Saskatchewan is fulfilling its citizen-centred approach in its Plan for Growth by providing better services to citizens, including in the official language of their choice.

Recommendation 4

That Ministries recommend to third parties delivering direct services to citizens on the province's behalf identify their existing French-speaking employees and encourage them to offer French-language services - especially in areas of the province where there are larger concentrations of francophone citizens.

A targeted approach for French-language Services that aligns with Saskatchewan's Plan for Growth

Language is an intrinsic part of how we deliver services to citizens. Being able to deliver services in the language preferred by the citizen is a way to deliver a better service and to make sure the needs and interest of the citizen are understood.

French-language services can be seen as a tool to attract and retain workers the province needs. To a large extent, the growth in francophone schools is a result of people moving here to participate in the economy and who want to maintain their French culture and language. Forty per cent of calls to the French-language Services Centre are from immigrants or interprovincial migrants wanting to move to Saskatchewan. They want to know where to look for a job and also what kind of French-language services are available to them.



Recommendation 5

That Ministries provide information in French regarding rights and responsibilities of employees and employers to newcomers looking for employment opportunities so that they are able to make informed decisions.

Advertising French services and programs is a key support tool for immigrants in order to ensure their integration. Newcomers are in need of direction as to where they can get access to French services. While the FAB's Service Centre does assist newcomers integrate in Saskatchewan by providing information through its website, emails and telephone inquiries, other Ministries should also carry this role knowing they have the capacity to do so.

Recommendation 6

That Ministries translate in French the information they use to promote Saskatchewan to immigrants and interprovincial migrants.

Conclusion

The Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Policy has been in place since 2003. The committee's guidelines would lead to a better implementation of the policy, which would meet the Fransaskois community's interests and the Government of Saskatchewan's interests as these recommendations align with the Plan for Growth.

As Saskatchewan is increasingly becoming a worldwide destination thanks to its economic health, these recommendations would do nothing more but benefit the province economically aside from enriching it culturally. As a telling example, the FAB's Services Centre continuously receives requests from clients who seek to move to Saskatchewan, and who also possess a professional experience similar to what the province needs (truck drivers, engineers, labourers, etc.).



Acting upon these recommendations, the Advisory Committee believes that it is indeed possible to develop opportunities and overcome challenges by:

- Maximizing the use of existing resources by identifying provincial public servants capable of offering services in French;
- Sending reminders to the public using social media or newsletters from ministries able to assist citizens in French; and
- Understanding that promoting French services is a responsibility and a collective effort for all provincial Ministries, Crown Corporations and Agencies.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

LIST OF MEMBERS

Michel Dubé (Chair), Prince Albert

Mr. Michel Dubé was born in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. He has been involved with the Fransaskois community for a long time, notably in community development and education. He was a member of the board of the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (ACF) from 1999 to 2010, first as community representative from the Prince Albert district and then as president from 2006 to 2010. He is currently the president of the Société canadienne-française de Prince Albert.

Mr. Dubé has been a journalist, consultant and entrepreneur. He has owned several businesses including a produce farm and a fishing lodge. He is now owner of a small store featuring local goods and operates a bison farm north of Prince Albert.

Élizabeth Perrault, Bellevue

Élizabeth Perreault and her husband own and operate a farm near Bellevue. Ms. Perreault has volunteered within many organizations in her community, including the local Francophone association and the Francophone school in her area. She has represented the St-Isidore school district (Bellevue) on the Conseil scolaire fransaskois since 2008.

Martin Prince, Delmas

Martin Prince is one of the owners of Prince Valley Farm Ltd., a family farm operation. He has a BA in political science and history from the University of Ottawa and a Bachelor of Science (agriculture business and food management) from the University of Alberta. He sat on the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee between 2001 and 2003. Mr. Prince volunteers with his local parish, the francophone community centre and francophone school. He and his wife have four children.

Luc Leblanc, Regina

Luc Leblanc was raised in New Brunswick where he earned a diploma in sheet metal fabrication and later earned his Red Seal Journey Person Certification. He is currently the president of Luxury Mechanical/LMC Projects, a business specialized in residential mechanical ventilation systems. As a volunteer, he sits on the board of directors at Centre éducatif Gard'Amis (a Francophone daycare) and is a ringette coach. Mr. Leblanc and his wife have worked with youth facing substance abuse issues. He is a regular speaker at Portage Atlantic Adolescent Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program Center and its parent support program.



Jean Nepo Murwanashyaka, Regina

Mr. Jean Nepo Murwanashyaka has lived in several countries and in several regions of Canada before settling in Saskatoon. Working with a firm of engineers in the mining sector, he has developed knowledge and expertise in project management, process engineering and problem analysis. Mr. Murwanashyaka is also very active in the French-speaking African community of Saskatoon.

Guylaine Patenaude, Saskatoon

Ms. Guylaine Patenaude was born in Manitoba but moved to Saskatchewan at a very early age. She worked for more than 10 years with the Association jeunesse fransaskoise (youth organization) and just recently received her certification in special events coordination. In 2010, she was awarded the Prix Jeune femme remarquable du Canada by the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (alliance of Canadian Francophone women).

Joanne Perreault, Hoey

Ms. Joanne Perreault has worked for more than 10 years with the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise, several years of which as deputy director. Living in Hoey, Ms. Perreault is self-employed, providing consultation and coordination services, and continues to be involved with the Fransaskois community.

Françoise Sigur-Cloutier, Regina

Originally from France and established in Saskatchewan for more than twenty years, Ms. Sigur-Cloutier has worked within the Francophone community both at the provincial and national levels. Having completed post-secondary studies in philosophy and education, she has also studied in the area of administration. Ms. Sigur-Cloutier worked as director of communications for Radio-Canada and is presently employed as a consultant. Ms. Sigur-Cloutier is president of the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise.

