

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL	
Section: B. General Administration	Effective Date: July 1, 2010
Topic: 1. Administration	
Subject: 1.02. French Language Services Plan	
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General

The Board has developed this plan to ensure that the content and the intent of the French Language Services Act are followed in the delivery of services.

The need for bilingual services has been recognized in program design and hiring since the inception of the Board. As a result, the Board already has significant and adequate number of bilingual employees. There is a significant pool of prospective employees residing in the Eastern and Northern portions of the Sudbury District who are bilingual and who have appropriate education/experiences.

The following sections outline the policies, procedures and standards for French language services to be adhered by Board and staff. This document will be reviewed annually by the French Language Services Committee of the Board to ensure it remains consistent with legislation.

An analysis has occurred to assess the present FLS capacity against these policies, procedures and standards. That analysis shows the requirements have been met for staffing (Appendix A). An analysis about business practices and resources (Appendix B) using the format supplied by the Ministry also shows that the requirements have been met.

Quality of Services

The Board, consistent with provincial requirements, commits to the provision of services at the required level of French language proficiency. The Board will develop, during 2010, a system for confirming degrees of proficiency.

Complaint Resolution

All complaints related to the provision of specific program services in French from service applicants/recipients are dealt with by the appropriate Director/Program Manager. Each Director Program Manager retains a record of the complaints received and how they were resolved and forwards these to the CAO monthly.

If the complaint from service applicants/recipients cannot be resolved at the Director/Program Manager level they are referred to the CAO. If they cannot be resolved at the CAO level they will be referred to the French Language Services Committee of the Board.

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All complaints from agencies and stakeholders are referred to the CAO. If they cannot be resolved at the CAO level they will be referred to the French Language Services Committee of the Board.

Communications

Communication with Service Applicants/Recipients

Communication with service applicants/recipients is generally in the form in which the request or inquiry is received. Telephone inquiries normally require a telephoned response. Written inquiries require a written response. However any denial of a benefit or a service requires a written response in the language of the service applicant/recipient.

Oral and written communications will be in French to those clients, or members of the public who request it. Availability of French language service will be made widely known. The Director of Social Services will ensure that intake staff confirms the language of preference at the time of commencement of service to applicants.

Wherever possible, service applicants recipients of other language groups will be dealt with in the language of their choice. All requests for translation services other than French will be reviewed and arranged by the Director of Social Services. The Board accepts as a reality, the multi-cultural nature of Canadian society and the importance of having clients communicate in the language in which they are fluent.

Service applicants / recipients who request a language preference for French are identified as such in the appropriate provincial automated program systems. This designation leads, in some programs, to correspondence being printed in French.

Material broadly distributed to all service applicants / recipients is available in English and/or French. This includes posters and pamphlets available in all office locations. These materials are made available to the public when it is possible to have both the English and French or bilingual versions simultaneously available.

A standard telephone response has been developed to inform callers of the presence of French language services (Appendix C).

The Board website will have a redirection to a staff person for users seeking information in French.

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Communication with Agencies

All communication, whether in hard copy or electronic format, received by the Board in French will receive a reply in French. Once it has been confirmed, that an agency or entity prefers communications in French, all future communication from the Board is in French. A list of all agencies or entities preferring communication in French is maintained by the Executive Assistant to the CAO.

Communication with Stakeholders

Any forum or meetings, in which the purpose is to consult with stakeholders, will occur in both English and French sessions. In some situations, it may be possible to hold consecutive or concurrent sessions at the pleasure of those being consulted.

Public Speaking / Media Requests

Requests for presentations or media enquiries on Board issues in French are directed to the CAO. The CAO ensures that a competent French Language presenter is made available to speak to French language audiences concerning any issues or services under the Board's mandate. The CAO or their designate responds to all French language media enquiries or news releases.

Signage

Exterior signage is bilingual at all service locations. In all public housing locations an internal poster located on the publically accessible bulletin boards indicates how residents can access French language services. Each office and each counter location has a standardized sign indicating the availability of French language service.

Calling Cards

All administrative, housing and frontline social service staffs that are bilingual will have bilingual text on their calling cards.

Letterhead

All Board letterhead, whether in hard copy or electronic format, is bilingual.

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Board Minutes

The agency working language is English. However minutes which are made public will be translated on request. All such requests will be directed to the CAO. The CAO will report on the volume of such requests to the French Language Services Committee.

Forms

All forms which are provided by the various Ministries and which are meant to be completed by or sent to service applicants / recipients must be available in French/English. If the language of the application is French, then the forms signed by the service applicants / recipients will be in French. Internal working documents will be in English. In-house forms which clients sign or which clients receive to explain programs are available in French.

As in-house forms are developed, the Director of Social Services arranges for identified forms to be translated.

Supplies

A French dictionary and Thesaurus is available in each Board Area Office location.

Bilingual Positions

In order to meet the needs of the French speaking public and the requirements of the plan, a number of positions have been deemed bilingual. The designation of positions will be reviewed by the French Language Services Committee annually and any recommended changes will be submitted to the Board. No existing employee will lose their existing position as a result of this plan.

French Language Services Committee

A Terms of Reference for a French Language Services Committee is attached (Appendix D) and forms part of this plan.

All members of the Board are either elected municipally or through the Territories Without Municipal Organization (TWOMO) election process. One potential problem related to membership is that the District Social Services Administration Board's Act does not require the election process to result in a minimum number

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of French speaking Board members. The French Language Services Act requires the existence of a FLS committee but does not require them to be French speaking.

In practice, this has not been a problem in most jurisdictions because the regular municipal and TWOMO election processes has always produced sufficient French language speakers to form a FLS Committee. Due to the high percentage of the population of French speakers in this Board's jurisdiction, this should remain only a theoretical problem. If it were to occur that no French language speaker was elected to the Board, the Board would create a FLS Advisory Committee to provide advice to them on French language issues and the FLS plan.

This document contains reporting requirements to the FLS Committee.

Human Resources

General

Existing employees of the Board will not lose their present position as a result of the implementation of this plan. New employees or employees transferring into a position must meet the educational, experience and language qualifications for the position being filled. Bilingualism is an asset for most positions but ability to perform the work of the position is essential

Assessment of French Language Proficiency

In the first year of the implementation of this plan, all employees will be offered the opportunity to voluntarily take a French language proficiency test in order for them to be considered as bilingual employees. Employees taking the test will be advised of the test results and the results will be recorded on their personnel file. No retesting of proficiency would be required if in the future they wish to apply for a bilingual position.

Employee's declining to take the proficiency test would be considered as unilingual. If an internal position becomes available and they wished to apply for that position, the employee would still have the opportunity at that time to be tested for French language proficiency as long as they met the other educational and experience requirements of the position. The proficiency test would need to confirm that they have the language skill level necessary for the position. No

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additional time or training assistance would be provided to upgrade proficiency levels in the filling of positions.

French Language Training

Those employees who voluntarily take the French Language proficiency test and who do not meet the standards may enter into a training program to increase their skill level. The training agreement would take into consideration the employees existing position and any future plans the employee may have with regard to Board positions. A set amount of funding will be allocated each year to assist employees with training plans to increase their French language proficiency. Testing would follow the completion of any proficiency training in which the Board had shared in the cost.

Internal Postings

Internal bargaining unit positions which become vacant and which are designated bilingual must be filled by a qualified bilingual person through the posting process. When bilingual designated bargaining unit positions become available, they will be posted with an indication of the bilingual language requirement.

External Searches/Advertisements

If the position is designated bilingual advertising will occur in French publications in French. Advertisements in English publications for designated positions will state "bilingual required" and will state in French that detailed position requirements are available in French. The Executive Assistant will assemble and maintain a list of appropriate French language media.

All positions will be advertised externally noting bilingualism as an asset.

Hiring Process

For positions that are bilingual, the proficiency testing will be performed prior to interviewing a candidate to determine the skill of the applicant. If the applicant is an existing employee who had taken the proficiency testing already this requirement will be waived. If none of the applicants meets the language requirement, the Board will still proceed to fill the position.

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Appendix A - Bilingual Positions

The following positions will be designated bilingual. The following represents the minimum requirement. The present status (September 2009) of the requirement is in **Red**.

Senior Management

One of Senior Management Team i.e. Chief Administrative Officer, Executive Assistant to CAO, Directors or Program Managers - **Requirement met**

Human Resources

Adequate capacity to be available from the contracted provider - **Requirement met**

Child Care

One of the Management Group or staff - **Requirement met**

Ontario Works

Espanola

One of the Management Group or staff- **Requirement met**

Chapleau – One of Intake or Case Manager- **Requirement met**

Alban - One of Intake or Case Manager - **Requirement met**

Warren – One of Intake, Case Manager - **Requirement met**

Emergency Medical Services

One of the Management Group - **Requirement met**

Paramedics 10% of total fulltime paramedics in LaCloche, Sudbury East and Sudbury North areas. - **Requirement met**

Social Housing

One of the Management Group or staff- **Requirement met**

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Appendix B - Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Ministry of Community and Social Services

The French Language Services Plan template has been developed in order to assist transfer payment agencies and municipalities providing ministry-funded services in communities designated under the FLS Act. As an internal process, service providers may want to complete the FLS Environmental Scan to help determine quick-wins and areas of priority for development within identified timelines.

The FLS plan is to be **completed and returned** to the Program Supervisor.

Service Provider Name: Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board

Program(s): Ontario Works, Children's Services

Location(s): Jurisdiction of the Board

Designated areas served: Sudbury District

A French Language Service Plan should include the following topics:

Topics	Current Capacity	Short-Term Strategies	Long-Term Strategies
Access to client services in French <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of service (oral and written) • An adequate number of bilingual positions • Active offer of service; general population information of FLS • Other 	Requirements met Requirements met Requirements met		
Accountability for French language service provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative policies and procedures; easily accessed by any 	Requirements met Oct 1, 2009		

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<p>staff member; reviewed at Board level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected in management practices; senior manager accountable for FLS • Annual summary on FLS; submitted to Board • Other 	Requirements met	Set for October 2010	
<p>Quality of Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers professionally competent • Service linguistically and culturally appropriate • Service based on an understanding of French-speaking clients' needs • Other 	Requirements met		
<p>Communication with stakeholders including correspondence, telephone and over the counter services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French correspondence (letters and emails) are answered in French • Recorded message in French and English 	Requirements met		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key sentences are used to transfer French calls • Receptionist answers in French and English • Other 	Requirements met		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptionist answers in French and English • Other 	Requirements met		
Signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At entrance and at reception • Interior and exterior signs • Other 	Requirements met Requirements met		
Public Consultations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation available at public consultations • Separate English and French consultations • Other 		Will be done as consultations occur.	
Translation of written materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted by professional translators • Other 	Requirements met		
Complaints Resolution	Requirements met		

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Appendix C - Telephone Answering Script

1. The recorded script on the answering system and all incoming calls must be answered in the following format:

“Reception, (first and last name) speaking, Bon Jour”

2. If the client or applicant responds in French and you are unable to respond in French, say

“Un moment s’il vous plaît”

and transfer the call to a bilingual worker in your office.

3. If no bilingual worker is available, say

“Un moment s’il vous plaît”

then call an Area Office which has bilingual Area Intake, explain the problem and set up the call.

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Appendix D

Terms of Reference

Committee Name: French Language Service Committee

Membership

Three Board Members - voting

CAO (non-voting)

Human Resources (non-voting)

Other persons as required by the Committee ie: the Director of Social Services and/or other staff (staff are non-voting members)

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet at a minimum yearly. If changes to the FLS plan are approved, a second meeting in that year should occur to ensure full implementation of the changes.

Role of the Committee

1. Review the current French Language Services Plan (FLS).
2. Assess whether changes or adjustments should be made to the FLS Plan.
3. Ensure the FLS plan is being followed with regards to the hiring and promotion of staff.
4. Establish French Language testing requirements and ensure testing is done in a fair and objective manner.
5. Ensure new program information for clients is available in French.

Duty to Report

1. Prepare a report to the Board discussing the actions it has taken and the assistance the Committee has had in fulfilling its duties; and
2. Prepare a report to Board/Members describing the FLS Committee activities during the past report period.

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3. Recommend changes as the Committee deems appropriate.
4. Report on whether the Board is meeting the requirements under the legislation.