



Acadian and Francophone Affairs
French Language Services Act

ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016



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Message from the Premier

The collaboration between the provincial government and the Acadian and Francophone community made it possible to develop and adopt the *French Language Services Act* in 2013. The government has been continuing to implement the Act since its proclamation, aligning the community's priorities with the government's capacity to provide services that meet those priorities.

This report focuses on the performance of French language services for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. It provides a synopsis of the activities of the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat. The contributions of the 20 government institutions subject to the Act in terms of the programs and services they offer are presented as well, along with an update on the complaints received and the work of the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee.

The year 2015-2016 was characterized by a strengthening of the ties that unite the government and the community, making it possible to establish a solid foundation for advancing the implementation of the Act. The next step will be to consolidate our shared vision, the ultimate goal of which is the development of the Acadian and Francophone community of Prince Edward Island.

It is by working together that we will build a prosperous future for our community.

Sincerely,

H. Wade MacLauchlan
Premier of Prince Edward Island
Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs



French Language Services Act

The *French Language Services Act* has been in effect since December 14, 2013 – the 2015 2016 fiscal year is the second complete year of its implementation. The *French Language Services Act* and its *General Regulations* establish clear obligations regarding the provision of services in French. The Act is based on the principle of aligning the service priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community with the service capacity of the government.



The Act provides for the designation of services and establishes obligations for the provision of designated services – they must be provided in a person’s choice of English or French and be of comparable quality in both languages. The designation of services is determined by government institutions, taking into consideration community priorities, and is done via regulations.

Regarding written correspondence and public consultations, the Act states that government institutions must respond in French, in writing, to written correspondence received in French and that the public must be provided with an opportunity to participate in French in public consultations.

The Act establishes various mechanisms to ensure its implementation:

- The Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee advises the Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs on matters related to the Acadian and Francophone community of the province, including its priorities for services in French.
- Each government institution is required to appoint a French language services co-ordinator who is tasked with providing advice on the implementation of the Act.
- A complaints officer, appointed by the Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs, addresses complaints made under the Act.
- The Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat ensures the administration of the Act and its regulations. The Secretariat also provides operational and administrative support to the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee and chairs the Co-ordinators’ Committee established by the Act.

In addition, the Act includes an accountability framework, which ensures, on an annual basis, that the government undertakes planning regarding French language programs and services, reports on complaints, and tables a report before the Legislative Assembly.

The *General Regulations* identify the 20 government institutions that are subject to the Act, define the active offer of designated services, and describe the designated services.



The three designated services are:

Designated Service	Government Institution
Services offered in person at the Abram-Village Public Library, the Dr. J.-Edmond-Arsenault Public Library (Charlottetown) and the J.-Henri-Blanchard Public Library (Summerside)	Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture
Provision by telephone and online of the Traveller Information Service (511)	Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy
Traffic signs, with the exception of stop signs and electronic variable message signs	

Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee

The Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee, founded in 1977, plays an important role in the implementation of the Act. The Committee ensures that the government is informed of the service priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community. It also advises the government on the designation of services, the provision of designated services in French, and any other matter related to the Acadian and Francophone community of Prince Edward Island.

The Committee is made up of ten members: one member for each Acadian and Francophone region (West Prince, Évangéline, Summerside-Miscouche, Rustico, Charlottetown, and Eastern Kings) and four other members, including the Chair. The members for 2015-2016 were:

Colleen Soltermann, Chair
 Yvonne Deagle, West Prince region
 Claudette Gallant, Évangéline region
 Josée Arsenault, Évangéline region
 (as of January 26, 2016)
 Béatrice Caillié, Summerside-Miscouche region
 Tilmon Gallant, Rustico region
 Jacinthe Lemire, Charlottetown region
 Rolland Dionne, Eastern Kings region
 Andy Gallant, member at large
 Mathieu Gallant, member at large
 Maurice Poirier, member at large
 (as of January 26, 2016)
 Selina Pellerin, member at large.



In 2015-2016, the terms of the members representing the Summerside-Miscouche and West Prince regions and the term of one of the members at large were renewed. Also, two new members, Josée Arsenault (representative of the Évangéline region) and Maurice Poirier (member at large), began their first three-year terms.

In 2015-2016, the Committee met four times in person and two times via teleconference.

In accordance with its mandate under the Act, the Committee identified the priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Government institutions use these priorities to prepare their annual plans and reports required under the Act.



Pursuant to the Act, the Committee adopted its first bylaws relating to its operation.

During the reporting period, the Committee closely monitored the public consultations that were carried out. As part of the consultations on democratic renewal, the Committee recommended that the brief prepared by the *Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin* (SSTA), the spokesperson of the Acadian and Francophone community, be taken into consideration.

Also, the Board of Directors of the SSTA and the Complaints Officer, Jean-Paul Arsenault, held discussions with the Committee about issues that are important for the community. The Board of Directors of *La Voix acadienne* made a presentation to the members of the Committee about the organization.

French Language Services Co-ordinators

Each government institution subject to the Act is required to appoint a French language services co-ordinator. Owing to departmental restructuring, the 2015-2016 fiscal year saw a number of changes among the co-ordinators, but all government institutions did have a co-ordinator.

The co-ordinators play a key role in ensuring government institutions deliver the annual plans and reports that must be prepared according to the Act. They also advise and support their institution regarding Acadian and Francophone matters and inquire into complaints made against their institution under the Act.



The Act also established the Co-ordinators' Committee, chaired by the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat. In 2015-2016, the Committee met four times. It focused its efforts on the implementation of the *French Language Services Act*.

During the reporting period, the Committee undertook a new activity – that of heightening awareness of the activities of the Acadian and Francophone community through presentations by community stakeholders and the exchange of information about community activities or initiatives.



Priorities of the Acadian and Francophone Community

As indicated above, the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee is responsible for informing the government of the priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community.

During the reporting period, the Committee agreed that the priorities for 2016-2017 would be identified in three areas: 1) services proposed for designation, 2) priority services and programs, and 3) horizontal priorities. The Committee had the priorities identified for 2016-2017 validated by the SSTA and the *Réseau des développeurs*, which confirmed the importance of the services identified as priorities.

The Committee then informed the Minister of these priorities. As prescribed in the Act, this information was shared with the government institutions to support the development of their annual plans for 2016-2017.

The following are the priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community for 2016-2017:

Services and Programs Proposed for Designation

Provincial services at French language early childhood centres
Community Cultural Partnership Program
In-person service at the Access PEI centres in Wellington, Charlottetown, Summerside, and Tignish
Home care for seniors

Priority Services and Programs

Child Protection Services
Disability Support Program
Programs for seniors (housing, Senior's Secretariat funding)
Social Assistance Program
Visitor Information Centres (designation of positions)
Student loans and scholarships

Horizontal Priorities

Access to information and communications in French
Identification of bilingual employees

Government Capacity

The capacity of government institutions to offer services in French depends greatly on their bilingual workforce. The Public Service Commission is responsible for monitoring, within the public service and Health PEI, designated bilingual positions and bilingual employees who are not in designated positions. Here is a comparative table of the figures as of March 31, 2014, 2015, and 2016:



Bilingual employees of the Government of PEI	2014	2015	2016
Designated bilingual positions	119	120	116
Bilingual employees not in a designated position¹	102	110	120
Total	221	230	236

The decline in the number of designated bilingual positions for 2016 is due to the elimination of temporary positions within Executive Council Office and the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

The Commission's efforts throughout 2015-2016 to identify bilingual employees not in a designated position made it possible to add ten employees to the list.

The following are examples of designated bilingual positions:

- Administrative Assistant
- Safety Standards Officer
- Social Assistance Case Worker
- Pension and Benefits Officer
- Information Technology Systems Support Team Lead
- Judicial Clerk
- Customer Service Representative - Access PEI
- Staffing Officer
- Branch Library Technician
- Museum Site Director
- Autism Consultant
- Translator
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Child Mental Health Therapist
- Occupational Therapist

During the reporting period, in order to support the bilingual workforce, the Commission offered employees wanting to improve their French proficiency, the opportunity to take language courses. The courses, delivered by the *Collège Acadie Î.-P.-É.*, are offered at 11 learning levels with classes available in Charlottetown or Summerside, depending on registrations. In all, 123 seats were taken up by employees at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

¹ Bilingual employees are employees whose oral French language skills have been assessed by the Public Service Commission and who have achieved at least the "Intermediate Plus" level.



French Language Training Registrations by Level (%)

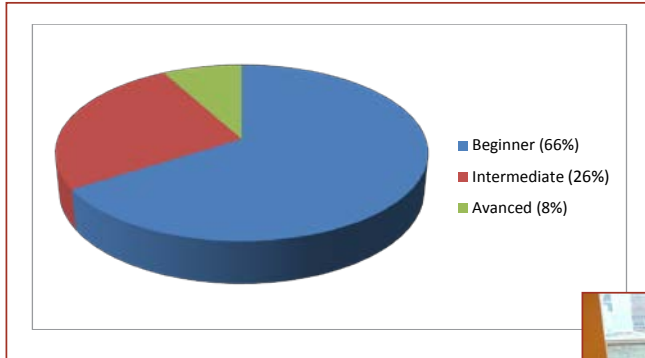


Photo credit : Collège Acadie Î.-P.-É.

Accountability Framework

Among the accountability measures set forth in the Act are the complaints mechanism, annual plans and reports by government institutions, and the annual report of the Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs.

a) Complaints Mechanism

The complaints mechanism allows for members of the public to make a complaint when a government institution does not comply with its obligations regarding designated services, written correspondence in French, or public consultations. The complaints mechanism consists of two levels. At the first level, a complaint is addressed by the French language services co-ordinator of the institution at issue, and at the second level, by the Complaints Officer. The current Complaints Officer is Jean-Paul Arsenault, who was appointed on December 14, 2013, for a five-year mandate.

In 2015-2016, information and resources concerning the complaints mechanism continued to be available online on the provincial government's website (this can now be viewed at <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/executive-council-office/complaints-mechanism-french-language-services-act>). This information and these resources include a list of services concerning when a complaint may be made, an overview of the complaints handling process, the complaint form, and information about the complaints mechanism.

In 2015-2016, two government institutions received a total of four complaints under the Act. The complaints were addressed at the first level by the French language services co-ordinators of the institutions at issue.

The following is an overview of the complaints received:



Government Institution	Complaint Subject	Results
Health PEI	1. Response in English to the English version of a form partially completed in French	1. The complaint was sent to the Complaints Officer, who rejected it because the form, as it was filled out by the complainant, did not indicate a desire for a response in French. However, the Complaints Officer indicated that a form completed in French constitutes correspondence.
	2. Response in English to the English version of the form that was completed in French	2. The complaint was sent to the Complaints Officer. Since April 2016, Health PEI provides the form in question, as well as supporting documents, in French and English.
Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy	3. English traffic sign	3. The complaint was resolved. The department recognized the mistake and replaced the sign right away.
	4. Error on a French traffic sign	4. The complaint was resolved. The Department recognized the mistake and corrected the error on the sign.

In addition to the complaints made under the Act, the Complaints Officer and the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat addressed several other complaints and various questions related to non-designated services. As well, access to the complaints mechanism has been improved through the government's Web renewal process. (The complaint form can be obtained at https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/forms/5_-_complaint_form_fillable_savable_en_14dec2013.pdf.)

b) Annual Plans and Reports

The Act states that government institutions must prepare annual plans and reports. Because of this process, government institutions plan, on an annual basis, actions aimed at enhancing services offered in French and subsequently report on them.

The Act requires government institutions to provide information on the following in their annual plans:

- The service priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community in relation to the services they provide;
- Their capacity to provide services in French;
- The provision in French of their designated services, if applicable.

In their annual report, institutions must also provide information on complaints they have received regarding their compliance with the Act. For the 2015-2016 period, all of the government institutions subject to the Act presented an annual plan and an annual report.



c) *Minister's Annual Report*

This report is the third to be tabled before the Legislative Assembly since the proclamation of the Act in December 2013. With the exception of the first report, which covered the period from December 14, 2013, to March 31, 2014, the Minister's reports cover the period from April 1 to March 31.

Activities of the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat

The role of the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat is to advise and support the government on all matters related to the Acadian and Francophone community. The Secretariat is also responsible for the administration the Act and its regulations.

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Secretariat provided support to government institutions, the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee, the Co-ordinators' Committee, and the Complaints Officer regarding the implementation of the Act.

The Secretariat co-ordinated the planning process for the annual plans and reports with the co-ordinators and assisted government institutions with the development of those documents by providing them with templates and by acting as a resource team.

The Secretariat continued the development, begun in 2014-2015, of the administrative process and tools needed for the implementation of the Act. In 2015-2016, those efforts included:

- Tools to support the French language services co-ordinators with the complaint process;
- Tools to support the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee with the identification of the priorities of the community.

The Secretariat continued its collaboration with the SSTA as part of a working group – the purpose of which is to ensure open and ongoing communication between the government and the spokesperson of the Acadian and Francophone community regarding the implementation of the Act. In 2015-2016, the working group met twice. It discussed the implementation of the Act, including the annual plans and reports, the complaints mechanism, and the identification of the priorities of the community on services in French, as well as many issues that are important for the community, such as the new 2017-2027 Global Development Plan.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat worked in partnership with the Acadian and Francophone community. Existing relations were strengthened and new relations were established. One of the Secretariat's employees joined the Organizing Committee for the Finale des Jeux de l'Acadie 2015 for several months through a secondment. She provided the Committee with communications and public relations support. The organizations with which the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat collaborated in order to move forward on the community's priority issues include the *Coopérative d'intégration francophone*, the *Collège Acadie Î.-P.-É.*, the *Congrès mondial acadien 2019*, *RDÉE Î.-P.-É.*, *La Voix acadienne*, the PEI French Health Network, and the SSTA.



Photo credit: La Voix acadienne

During the reporting period, the Secretariat managed the administration of the 2013-2018 Canada-PEI Agreement on French Language Services. This Agreement supports the efforts of the Government of Prince Edward Island to increase its capacity to provide services in French in accordance with the priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community.



In 2015-2016, the contribution of Canadian Heritage was \$1,237,500. The Government of Prince Edward Island matched this contribution in order to fund projects for improving the provision of services in French. The Agreement's strategic plan sets out three objectives:

- Strengthen the policy and planning frameworks in support of government institutions;
- Maintain formal communication and consultation with the community;
- Support the development, planning, and delivery of quality services and programs in French.

The Agreement's strategic plan identifies six priority sectors: health and wellness, public safety, culture, social services, tourism, and access to information in French. A total of 10 government institutions received project funding and 13 designated bilingual positions were funded under the Agreement.

In 2015-2016, the Government of Prince Edward Island, supported by the Secretariat, participated in the 2015 Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie. The conference was held in Toronto as part of the 400th anniversary of the French presence in Ontario. At the conference, which brings together federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for the Francophonie, the topics on the agenda were French language government services, economic development, tourism as a tool for promoting the Canadian Francophonie, Francophone immigration, and French language media.

In addition, the Government of Prince Edward Island, represented by the Director of the Secretariat, participated actively in the Intergovernmental Network on the Canadian Francophonie and in a number of its sub-committees. The Network brings together government officials who support the work of the Conference members.

During the year, the Secretariat also participated in the work of the Regional Joint Cooperation Commission between Atlantic Canada and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. A number of the sectors dealt with by the Joint Commission correspond to priority sectors of the Acadian and Francophone community of Prince Edward Island, such as culture, tourism, and health.

Progress Made by Government Institutions

Government News in French

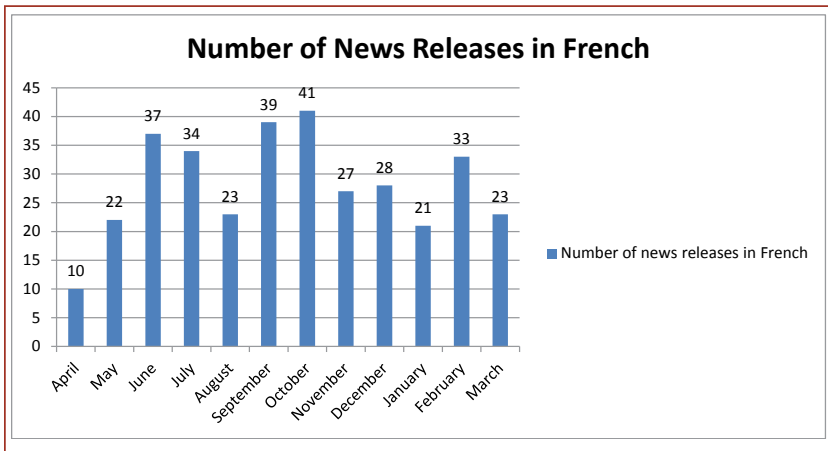
In 2015-2016, the government issued 338 news releases in French out of a total of 496. Those news releases dealt with various issues, and a number of them provided information about government services and programs. Here are a few examples of the topics covered:

- Improving educational technologies across the province;
- The 811 Telehealth service (available in French and in more than 120 other languages);
- Consultations on the *Child Protection Act* and the *Water Act*;
- The Health PEI survey on language preference for health services;



- Programs and services related to the province's labour market offered by Skills PEI;
- The new export readiness program aimed at supporting entrepreneurs;
- Increased access to mental health services for youth;
- The new Francophone school in the Eastern Kings region;
- Precautions to be taken to prepare properly for emergency situations;
- Call for applications for a new round of grants to promote wellness in the province's communities.

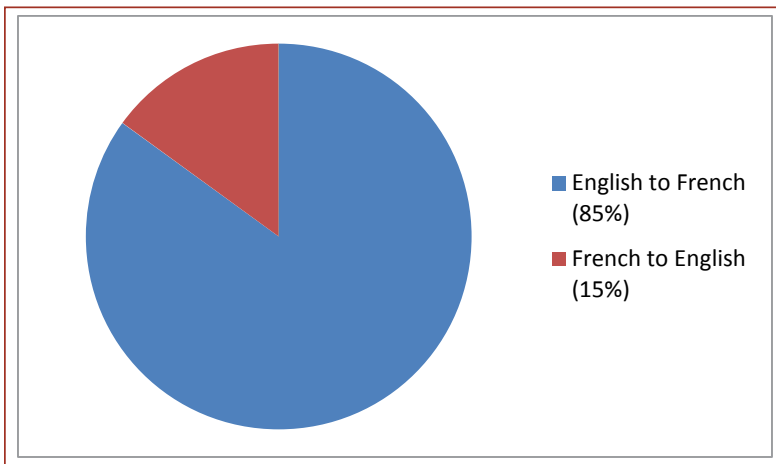
Number of News Releases Published in French



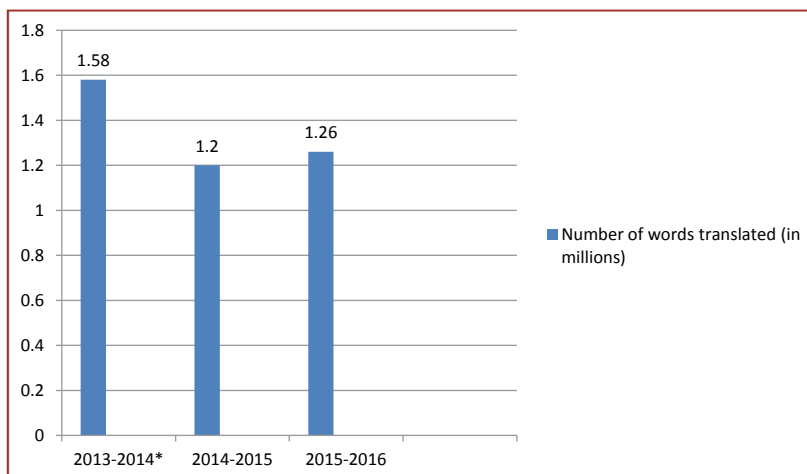
Translation Services

The provincial government's Translation Services play a key role in the delivery of French language services by government institutions. Translation Services enable government institutions to increase the amount of information available in French. In 2015-2016, Translation Services translated 1.26 million words, of which 85% were translated from English to French and 15%, from French to English.

Percentage of Words Translated by Source Language and Target Language



Number of Words Translated by Fiscal Year (in millions)



*The figure for 2013-2014 includes the translation done for PEI 2014 Inc., the organization responsible for the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference in 2014.

Highlights

During the reporting period, government institutions implemented their annual plans for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and subsequently prepared and submitted an annual report to the Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs. The following section provides a list of highlights of the progress made during the year.

Agriculture and Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotional campaign featuring food products and beverages from Prince Edward Island (carried out in collaboration with the PEI Liquor Control Commission) conducted in French http://peiflavours.ca/fr/thats-island-style - Addition of bilingualism as an asset in the Department's job postings
Executive Council Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant progress made in the renewal of the government's website by Communications PEI - Engage PEI available in French https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/fr/information/conseil-executif/contribuons-a-li-p-e
Prince Edward Island Public Service Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of a policy on the designation of bilingual positions and the revocation of this designation - Publication of the brochure <i>Se préparer à une entrevue</i> (How to Prepare for the Interview) - Distribution of Antidote (linguistic revision software) to employees in designated bilingual positions
Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing efforts to provide services in French when requested in person or over the telephone - Publication of the document <i>Que faut-il savoir au sujet des contrats de location?</i> (What Should I Know About Entering into a Rental Agreement) http://www.irc.pe.ca/rental/odrrp-rental-agreements-Francais.pdf

Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of promotional material in French for the 2016 Youth Video Contest on workplace safety - Consideration of requests for services in French for the purpose of identifying priority services
Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of the French version of the Commission's 2014-2015 Annual Report http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/annualreptfrnch.pdf - Creation of an award, for the Island Heritage Fair, for a French language project on human rights
Communities, Land and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for Islanders to participate in French in person, online, or by phone in the consultations on the <i>Water Act</i>
Economic Development and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of services in French at the Visitor Information Centres and over the toll-free information line - Increased collaboration between the Department and organizations in the Acadian and Francophone community - Direct support for the Francophone tourism sector through a website translation program and training for Francophone tourism operators
Education, Early Learning and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of French versions of the resources of the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program - Provision of early childhood autism services in French, including Intensive Behavioral Intervention, Transition to School Process and Intensive Kindergarten Support - Active offer of designated services under the Act: in-person services at the Abram-Village Public Library, the Dr. J.-Edmond-Arsenault Public Library, and the J.-Henri-Blanchard Public Library
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for Islanders to participate in the annual prebudget consultations in French, and publication of related material in French - Efforts of Information Technology Shared Services to ensure that the government's new website is available in English and French
Innovation PEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of services in French by Business Development Officers
Justice and Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution in French of all messages from the Department concerning public safety - Provision of 911 Service in French (accessible at all times) - Efforts to recruit a bilingual Public Safety Officer within the Emergency Measures Office - Publication of French versions of the forms of the Fire Marshal's Office intended for the public
Workforce and Advanced Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of support services in French for student loans and scholarships - Provision of financial support for <i>La Voie de l'emploi</i>
PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparations for the designation of services at the <i>Musée acadien</i> - Production of bilingual brochures for six of the seven provincial museums - French components for the protected marine area of the Basin Head Fisheries Museum

PEI Liquor Control Commission	- Provision of services in French by bilingual employees at three outlets
Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The « Walk-a-lot » challenge, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Prince Edward Island map created by Samuel Holland, was offered in French in the Acadian and Francophone community - Publication of all information pertaining to immunization was made available in French, including the adult immunization schedule and factsheets about vaccinations - Approval of a French Language Services Policy by the Chief Public Health Office
Health PEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey carried out to identify Islanders' preferred language for health care services in order to include this information on new health cards - Development of practices to systematically identify the linguistic capacities of health care professionals - Participation of 20 Health PEI employees at a professional development day on the active offer of French language services, organized by the PEI French Health Network - Considerable increase in the French content on the Health PEI website in order to promote the offer of services in French - Elaboration of a promotional plan for the 811 service (which is available in French) - Assignment of a bilingual staff member to offer dental services to the French language schools in Prince County - Commitment toward establishing a bilingual neighborhood project at the Beach Grove Home - Translation of the website for the Island Helpline in collaboration with the PEI French Health Network and the Canadian Mental Health Association (Prince Edward Island Division)
Family and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of services in French in connection with the consultations on the <i>Child Protection Act</i> review - Presentations on child protection offered at French language schools for the first time - Publication of promotional material in French for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Island Waste Management Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of French versions of resources and tools concerning the waste management program http://www.iwmc.pe.ca/fr/index.php - Regular publication of advertisements in French as part of the Corporation's ongoing awareness campaign
Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of in-person services in French at four of the eight Access PEI centres and by phone at all centres - Increased publication of information in French on the Department's website - Driver's exams offered in French throughout the province - Active offer of designated services under the Act: Traveller Information Service (511) and traffic signs

Moving Forward

The government continues to move the implementation of the Act forward, while aligning the service priorities of the Acadian and Francophone community with the government's capacity to provide services that meet those priorities.

Here is an overview of some initiatives coming up in 2016-2017:

- The working group bringing together the SSTA and the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat will expand. The chair of the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee, the Complaints Officer, a French language services co-ordinator, a representative of the Prince Edward Island Public Service Commission and a representative of the Prince Edward Island French Health Network will be invited to join the group. This will enhance discussions regarding the implementation of the Act and increase collaboration between the government and the community.
- The Public Service Commission will lead two initiatives aiming to increase the government's capacity to offer services in French. One of them aims to identify bilingual employees within the government institutions subject to the Act, to inform them of the possibility of having their oral French language skills assessed and to encourage them to do so. The other initiative will focus on the development of a recruitment strategy for bilingual positions that are hard to fill both internally and externally.
- The launch of the new government website will make it possible to offer more online services in French and to considerably increase the amount of information and communications published in French. Islanders will also be able to access the entire website while using a French interface.