

French Language Services Plan

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) has developed this plan to ensure the content and the intent of the *French Language Services (FLS) Act* is followed in the delivery of services.

The need for Bilingual services has been recognized in TBDSSAB program design and through our hiring practices.

There exists a small pool of prospective employees residing in the Thunder Bay District who are Bilingual and who have the appropriate education and experiences necessary for employment with the TBDSSAB. A summary of the bilingual population in the Thunder Bay District is provided in Appendix E.

An analysis was conducted to assess the present French Language Services capacity against TBDSSAB policies, procedures and standards. This analysis demonstrates the requirements of the FLS Act have been met for staffing (Appendix A). An analysis regarding business practices and resources (Appendix B) using the format supplied by the Ministry also shows the requirements have been met in these areas.

Quality of Service

The TBDSSAB, consistent with provincial requirements, commits to the provision of services at the required level of French language proficiency. Human Resources will develop a system for confirming degrees of proficiency prior to future hires.

Complaint Resolution

All complaints related to the provision of specific program services in French are considered and responded to by the French Language Services (FLS) Committee. The Committee retains a record of the complaints received and how they were resolved and forwards these to the appropriate Director monthly.

In the case where a client complaint cannot be resolved by the (FLS) Committee, they are referred to the appropriate Director. If they cannot be resolved at the Director level, they will be referred to the CAO.

All complaints from agencies and stakeholders are referred to the appropriate Director. If they cannot be resolved at the Director level, they will be referred to the CAO.

Clients will have the option of submitting a complaint in person or through the website.

Clients, agencies and stakeholders who are accessing services in French will be provided a feedback form to rate the quality of French services. If they are unsatisfied with the services received, the form will be forwarded to the (FLS) Committee for review and follow up.

Communications

The working language is English to ensure continuity of services, however, any member of the public or staff can address and or request information and services in French.

Communications with Clients

Communication with clients is generally in the form in which the request or inquiry is received. Telephone inquiries require a telephone response; written inquiries require a written response. Any denial of a benefit or service requires a written response in the language of the client.

Oral and written communications will be in French for those clients, or members of the public who request it. Availability of French Language Services will be advertised widely. The Supervisor, Intake will ensure that Intake Workers and Communications Clerks confirm the language of preference at the time of commencement of service to clients. Clients who confirm the language of preference as French will receive all future correspondence in French.

Materials broadly distributed to all clients are available in English. This includes posters and pamphlets. These materials will be translated to French upon request. All such requests will be directed to the Director of Client Services.

An automated telephone menu system has been implemented to inform callers of the availability of services in French. Callers can select an option for services in French, where they will be automatically transferred to a Bilingual Communications Clerk.

The designated Bilingual positions will have a consistent Bilingual voice mail message (Appendix C).

The website will inform clients of the services and programs offered in French. The website will offer users the option of requesting specific information in French as well as the option of submitting a feedback form.

The Intake area will have an up to date listing of French speaking staff as well as French agencies.

Communication with Agencies and Stakeholders

All communications received by TBDSSAB 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 will be in French. A list of all agencies or entities preferring communication in French is maintained by the Executive Assistant of the CAO.

Public Speaking and Media Requests

Requests for presentations or media enquiries pertaining to TBDSSAB in French are directed to the CAO. The CAO will ensure 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 will respond to all French language media enquiries.

Signage

Bilingual signage is available in all public areas of the main building. All offices and service locations will have standardized signage indicating the availability of French Language Services.

Letterhead

All Board letterhead, whether in hard copy or electronic format, will reflect the language of the correspondence. If the letter is written in French, it will be on a French letterhead and vice-versa.

Board Minutes

The Board minutes are prepared and distributed in English. However, minutes which are made public will be translated to French on request. All such requests will be directed to the CAO.

Forms

All forms and information which are meant to be completed or publicly made available to clients, agencies or stakeholders must be available in French and English. If the language of the application is French, then the forms signed by the clients will be in French. Internal working documents will be in English. In house forms for client signature or to explain programs are available in French on request.

Supplies

French dictionaries, thesauruses, Bescherelles and Antidote software are available to all designated Bilingual positions and on request.

French Language Services Committee

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

Human Resources

General

Existing employees of the TBDSSAB 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 and experience requirements as well as the language qualifications for the positions being filled. Bilingualism is an asset for most of the positions.

Assessment of French Language Proficiency

Employees will be offered the opportunity to voluntarily take a French language proficiency test (Appendix G) 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 should 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 wish to apply, 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 additional time or training assistance would be provided to upgrade proficiency levels in the filing of positions.

French Language Training

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. A set amount of funding will be allocated each year to assist employees with training plans to increase their French language proficiency. The amount of time, resources and dollars required to support French language training will be managed case by case. Testing would follow the completion of any proficiency training.

Internal Postings

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

External Postings

If the position is designated bilingual, advertising will occur in English. Postings for designated Bilingual positions will be forwarded to francophone agencies (Appendix F) for distribution. The Intake Workers will assemble and maintain a list of appropriate French language media and agencies.

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

Hiring Process

For positions that are designated Bilingual, the proficiency testing will be performed following the interview 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. TBDSSAB will still proceed to fill this position.

Appendix A

Bilingual Positions

The following positions will be designated Bilingual. The minimum written and oral proficiency requirements are listed. The present status requirements are in italics.

Client Services Division

Communications Clerk – *Requirement met*
Written Proficiency – Intermediate Plus
Oral Proficiency - Intermediate Plus

Intake Worker – *Requirement met*
Written Proficiency – Intermediate Plus
Oral Proficiency - Intermediate Plus

Property Management Clerk – *Requirement met*
Written Proficiency – Intermediate Plus
Oral Proficiency - Intermediate Plus

District Caseworker – *Requirement met*
Written Proficiency – Advanced
Oral Proficiency - Advanced

For adequate services to be available in French, a member of the following teams should be French speaking. The present status requirements are in italics.

Senior Management Team – *Requirement met*

Human Resources Team – *Requirement met*

Appendix B

Ministry of Children and Youth Services / Ministry of Community and Social Services / Ministry of Education / Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

The French Language Services Plan template has been developed in order to assist transfer payment agencies and municipalities providing ministry-funded services in communities designed under the *French Language Services Act*. The French Language Services Environmental Scan is available to help determine the areas of priority for development within identified timelines.

The FLS Environmental Scan is to be completed and returned to the FLS Committee.

Service Provider Name: The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
Programs: All Services, Programs and Holdings
Locations: Jurisdictions of the Board
Designated Area Served: Thunder Bay District

The FLS environmental scan 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 Services in French (oral and written) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To designate positions as necessary for each relevant service area Continue to ensure all program areas meet FLS compliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adequate number of Bilingual positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active offer of services in French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		
Accountability for French language Service Provision			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FLS plan, easily accessed by all staff and reviewed by Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FLA plan is available to all staff and has been approved by the Board 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing review of FLS plan by the Committee Include FLS requirement in new policies and procedures development Committee meetings to be held to ensure movement of plan into action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director accountable for FLS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FLS Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual summary report on FLS submitted to CAO and Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015 - Committee to submit summary report to CAO and Board Meeting set to ensure all parties are up to date. Then roll up to CAO and Board 	
Quality of Services			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers professionally competent (linguistically and culturally appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing review of quality of services • Ongoing assessment of employees proficiency in French
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service based on an understanding of French speaking clients' needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual employees have appropriate French proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
Communication with Stakeholders (Correspondence, Telephone & Over the Counter Services)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French correspondence (letters and emails) are answered in French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep staff list of French Speaking staff and agencies updated and current • Update tools and resources as necessary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual employees have Bilingual voice mail messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015: Remind staff of Bilingual voice mail message • Completed 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual automated telephone menu system, with option of selecting services in French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual Communications Clerks answers all calls in French and English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roster of French speaking staff and agencies available to Intake Workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and tools available to Bilingual staff (Antidote Software, Dictionaries, Thesauruses and Bescherelles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
Signage			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual signage throughout main office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep signage updated and current
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services available in French sign in all service locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		
Consultations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation services or Bilingual staff available at public consultations, meetings and forums on request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be available upon request 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to develop a procedure to respond to these requests
Translation of Written Materials			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of written materials conducted by professional translators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement met 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate forms and letters as needed • Provide French forms and letters to client identifying French as their preferred language
Complaints Resolution			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaint Review Process (in person and website) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep staff and clients informed of the complaint process Use feedback form for quality assurance purposes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client feedback form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement met 		

Appendix C

Bilingual Voice Mail Message

At the office

Bonjour/Hello. Vous avez joint (votre nom) du Conseil d'administration des services sociaux du District de Thunder Bay. Je suis au bureau mais présentement dans l'impossibilité de prendre votre appel. Veuillez me laisser un message détaillé et je vous rappellerai dès que possible. Merci.

Hello/Bonjour. You have reached (your name) with The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board. I am in the office; however I am currently away from my desk. Please leave me a detailed message and I'll return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.

Away from the office

Bonjour/Hello. Vous avez joint (votre nom) du Conseil d'administration des services sociaux du District de Thunder Bay. Je serai en (vacances/formation/voyage, etc.) jusqu'au (date). S'il s'agit d'une question urgente, veuillez contacter (nom) au (numéro de téléphone). Sinon, veuillez me laisser un message et je vous rappellerai à mon retour. Merci.

Hello/Bonjour. This is (your name) with The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board. I will be on (vacation/a course/a business trip, etc.) until (date). If this is urgent, please call (name) at (phone number). If you wish to leave a message, I will call you back when I return. Thank you for calling.

Appendix D

Terms of Reference

French Language Services Committee

Membership

One member from Client Services Division
One member from Corporate Services Division
One member from Housing Operations Division
One member from Human Resources Department

Other persons as required by the Committee.

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

Prepare a report to the CAO, including the FLS plan, Committee activities and actions, recommended changes and legislative compliance.

Appendix E

Thunder Bay District francophone Population (2011 Statistics Canada Census)

Thunder Bay District:

Total Population = 146,057

French = 5,265

Percent of total population = 3.6%

Thunder Bay Metropolitan Area (this includes Area 1 communities):

Total Pop = 121,596

French = 2,835

Percent = 2.3%

Greenstone:

Total Pop = 4,724

French = 1,250

Percent = 26.4%

Schreiber:

Total Pop = 1,126

French = 55

Percent = 4.8%

Terrace Bay:

Total Pop = 1,471

French = 100

Percent = 6.7%

TWOMO (Thunder Bay District Unorganized):

Total Pop = 5,910

French = 215

Percent = 3.6%

Marathon:

Total Pop = 3,353

French = 345

Percent = 10.2%

Manitouwadge:

Total Pop = 2,105

French = 315

Percent = 14.9%

Nipigon:

Total Pop = 1,631

French = 70

Percent = 4.2%

Red Rock:

Total Pop = 942

French = 45

Percent = 4.7%

Dorion:

Total Pop = 338

French = 15

Percent = 4.4%

Appendix F

Francophone Agencies

L'accueil francophone de Thunder Bay

Alpha Thunder Bay

Centre des femmes francophones du nord-ouest de l'Ontario (CFFNOO)

Association des francophones du nord-ouest de l'Ontario (AFNOO)

Le club canadien-français de Thunder Bay

Conseil scolaire de district catholique de Thunder Bay

Multicultural Centre

Appendix G

Language Proficiency Testing

A B Bilingual Services Inc.

Oral and Written Proficiency Testing
Any Badière 905-773-2285

French Evaluation Services

Oral and Written Proficiency Testing
Marie-Rose Reboul 705-887-7118

Appendix H

Translation Services

Timiskaming – Linguistic Competency Framework / Cadre référentiel de compétences linguistiques et culturelles

Linguacom -903 Cottonwood Avenue, Kingston, Ontario K7K -7K3