

Your language rights in New Brunswick

A summary of your rights under the *Official Languages Act* of New Brunswick

FACTSHEET 1 - Government and public services

What you need to know

English and French are the official languages of New Brunswick. The provincial government and most public bodies must therefore serve you in the official language of your choice.

Examples of public bodies that must serve you in the official language of your choice:

- Provincial departments (for example, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure)
- NB Liquor
- NB Power
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Office of the Ombudsman
- Service New Brunswick
- WorkSafeNB



Across the province

Throughout New Brunswick, the provincial government and most public bodies must serve you in the official language of your choice.



All communications

Your language rights apply to all types of communication.



Active offer of service

From the moment of first contact, you must be greeted in both official languages so that you know that services are available in both English and French.



Services of equal quality

Government and public services must be of equal quality in both official languages.



Official languages in everyday use

Examples of government programs and services that must be provided in the official language of your choice:

- Driver's licence
- Hunting licence
- Medicare
- Property assessment
- Public libraries
- Road conditions
- Social Assistance
- Student financial services
- Weigh stations

A wise choice

No matter where you are in the province, making use of a service in the official language of your choice contributes to the improvement of bilingual services. That's something that benefits everyone.

The active offer: an invitation to use the official language of your choice

Organizations subject to the *Official Languages Act* must inform you, from the moment of first contact, that their services are available in English and French. To do so, you will be greeted in both languages, for example, *Hello, Bonjour*. It is then up to you to choose the language you wish to use. And your choice of language must be respected throughout the chain of service.

The active offer applies to all forms of communication: in-person, on the telephone, on signage as well as in written and electronic communications.

In summary, the active offer is an invitation for you to communicate with and to receive services in the official language of your choice.

Education: an exception

In New Brunswick, each linguistic community (Anglophone and Francophone) has the right to its own schools and educational institutions. That right exists in order to protect the vitality and ensure the development of each community. Consequently, the following are not required to provide their services in both official languages:

- the provincial school system, including the English and French sectors of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- schools and their committees
- district education councils
- community centres
- community colleges
- universities

Beware of myths

Official bilingualism means that all government employees must be bilingual...

False. As of March 31, 2016, the provincial government required that 41% of its employees be bilingual.

Source: Government of New Brunswick

If your rights are not respected

There may be circumstances when public bodies do not respect your language rights. If that is the case, we invite you to contact us. Filing a complaint is easy and the investigations we conduct help improve the quality of bilingual services. To learn more, simply click on this [link](#).

How to contact us

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
for New Brunswick

Telephone: 1-888-651-6444

Email: commissioner@officiallanguages.nb.ca

Website: officiallanguages.nb.ca

Address: Kings Place, 440 King Street, King Tower,
Suite 646 Fredericton NB E3B 5H8

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
FOR NEW BRUNSWICK



COMMISSARIAT AUX
LANGUES OFFICIELLES DU
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

To find out more about your language rights, visit
www.officiallanguages.nb.ca.