

Subject: Language of Service
Effective: February 2011
Revised: June 2021

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy identifies procedures to be followed by New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) staff to ensure that library services are offered in both official languages and provided in the official language chosen by the person receiving library services.

This policy is intended to assist and guide staff in meeting the requirements of the [Official Languages Act](#) and corresponding government policies.

2.0 APPLICATION

This policy applies to library services provided by NBPLS staff.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Active offer of service means informing the public, at the first point of contact, that services are available in both official languages.

Library service within the context of this policy, refers to circulation, reference/information services, public access computing, signage, publications and postings intended for the public.

Library programs are a planned presentation or activity given at a scheduled time by library staff or another resource person to a group of library users.

Linguistic community means either the English or French linguistic community of New Brunswick within the meaning of section 16.1 of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#).

Official languages means the official languages of New Brunswick (English and French) identified in subsection 16(2) of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#).

A **service point** is any place where the public interacts with NBPLS staff in person, via telephone, or via online communication to receive library services; e.g., library, provincial or regional office, and all service desks.

Service of equal quality is service which is actively offered in both official languages and which is available in the official language chosen by the member of the public without undue delay.

4.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY

[The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[The Official Languages Act](#)

[An Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick](#)

[New Brunswick Public Libraries Act](#)

5.0 GOALS / PRINCIPLES

NBPLS recognizes its obligations under the [Official Languages Act](#) and is committed to actively offering and providing services of equal quality to the public in the public's official language of choice.

Members of the public or organizations who wish to communicate with any service point within NBPLS can do so in the official language of their choice and they can expect to be offered and receive library services in the official language of their choice, wherever library services are provided.

6.0 REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS

6.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1.1** The Executive Director of NBPLS is responsible for ensuring that this policy is communicated to all staff.
- 6.1.2** The provincial, regional and local management teams are responsible for ensuring that this policy is carried out in their respective areas.
- 6.1.3** All supervisors within NBPLS are responsible for ensuring that an active offer is made and that New Brunswick government issued bilingual service signs promoting the active offer, (e.g., "It's your choice! / C'est votre choix!" signs) are posted at each service point.
- 6.1.4** All staff within NBPLS share responsibility for the successful implementation of this policy.

6.2 ACTIVE OFFER IN PERSON

- 6.2.1** Initial Bilingual Greeting: NBPLS staff are to use a two-language greeting. The active offer is successfully made when the greeting includes both official languages, regardless of the order in which they appear.

Some examples of a two-language in-person greeting are:

- "Hello, Bonjour!"
- "Bonjour, May I Help You?"
- "Good Morning, Bonjour!"
- "Hello, Puis-je vous aider?"

6.2.2 Providing Service in the Official Language of Choice: Once the active offer is extended, library services must be provided in the official language chosen by the person receiving service.

- When a service point is staffed with a unilingual staff member unable to serve the person in the official language chosen, the staff member should say, "Un moment s'il vous plaît" or "One moment please" depending on the language used by the person receiving service, and immediately request assistance from a staff member with the required language skills.
- When no member of a library's staff has the required language skills, the staff member will connect the person by telephone to a member of the NBPLS staff with the required language skills.

6.3 ACTIVE OFFER BY TELEPHONE

6.3.1 Initial Bilingual Greeting: NBPLS staff are to use a two-language greeting. The active offer is successfully made when a telephone greeting includes both official languages, regardless of the order in which they appear.

Some examples of a two-language telephone greeting are:

- "New Brunswick Public Library Service, Bonjour!" or
- "Service des bibliothèques publiques du Nouveau-Brunswick, Good Morning!"

6.3.2 Providing Service in the Official Language of Choice: Once the caller has indicated his or her official language of choice, staff can either assist the caller by responding to the request or by transferring the call to an NBPLS staff member with the appropriate language skills.

- Unilingual staff: When the call is answered by a member of the NBPLS staff who is not able to fully respond in the official language chosen by the caller, the staff member should say, "Un moment s'il vous plaît" or "One moment please," depending on the official language used by the caller and transfer the call immediately to someone who can communicate in the caller's official language of choice.

6.3.3 Voicemail and/or Answering Machine Requirements:

- Bilingual staff: To ensure the active offer of service is made in both official languages, all staff who provide service in both official languages and who have voice mail or an answering machine must have a complete bilingual greeting.
- Unilingual staff: Staff who do not provide service in both official languages must provide instructions at the end of their greeting on how to obtain service in the other official language.
 - Examples :
 - Pour le service en français, appuyer sur le 0 / For service in English, press 0.
 - Pour le service en français, composer le XXX-XXXX / For service in English, dial XXX-XXXX.

Note: The Government of New Brunswick provides a [tool kit](#) with suggestions for voice mail greetings and voicemail setup.

6.4 ACTIVE OFFER THROUGH SIGNAGE AND PUBLICATIONS INTENDED FOR THE PUBLIC

- 6.4.1 All service points must prominently display New Brunswick government issued signs indicating the availability of service in both English and French; e.g. "It's your choice!/ C'est votre choix!" signs.
- 6.4.2 Interior signs related to library services must be bilingual. Examples include: open hours, directional, and policy signs.
- 6.4.3 Exterior library signs, which announce the existence of an NBPLS public library within a building, must be bilingual. Each participating municipality has the responsibility to provide such a sign or signs. Due to the linguistic duality of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, public-school libraries are exempt from this requirement.
- 6.4.4 All publications and postings intended for the public will be in both official languages. Examples include: library newsletters, program posters, registration forms, social media posts.

6.5 ACTIVE OFFER THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE

- 6.5.1 When the recipient's official language of choice is not known, NBPLS sends correspondence in both official languages.

6.5.2 When the recipient's official language of choice is known, NBPLS sends correspondence in the recipient's official language of choice, or in both official languages.

6.6 ACTIVE OFFER THROUGH THE NBPLS WEBSITE

6.6.1 The NBPLS website is to be bilingual.

- The NBPLS main page must allow users to select their official language preference. Thereafter, they should see NBPLS pages in their language of choice, with a link for switching to the other official language available on each page.

6.6.2 Local library websites are to be bilingual and must include a bilingual link to the NBPLS website.

7.0 GUIDELINES / RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that each service point have scripts available to assist staff in fulfilling the requirements of this policy. The Government of New Brunswick provides a [toolkit](#) with helpful suggestions for developing such scripts.

8.0 REGIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

In consultation with the Provincial Office, Regional Directors may develop additional guidelines and procedures consistent with and necessary to support this policy.

9.0 REFERENCES

An Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>).

New Brunswick Public Libraries Act (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

The Official Languages Act (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

Government of New Brunswick, Treasury Board - Policy and Guidelines – Toolkit (http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/treasury_board/human_resources/content/about_us/policies_and_guidelines/toolkit.html).

10.0 CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

NBPLS Provincial Office, (506) 453-2354