

Section 4

Human Resources

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Bilingual human resources are essential to successful delivery of quality services in French.

Steps in Building a Bilingual Staff Complement

- Identifying existing capacity.
- Defining needs.
- Hiring for designated and non-designated positions.
- Retaining bilingual staff.

Identifying Existing Capacity

Most HSPs have French-speaking staff in their organization, but they are not aware of it. Start by developing the linguistic profile of existing staff, and then do the same with all new employees.

Methods of Evaluating Language Skills

Self-Assessment

Employees are asked to indicate their level of proficiency based on definitions of the different levels of competence as established by the Government of Ontario. A sample self-assessment tool and definitions of proficiency levels are provided on pages 143–144.

Informal Evaluation

This method involves one staff member with superior French-language skills asking questions in French to another staff member. Using definitions of levels of competence on pages 143–144, the first staff member assesses language skills of the second employee. This method is usually used during the interview process, but it could also be used to establish the linguistic profile of all staff members. The Erie St. Clair or South West LHINS' French Language Services Coordinator can also support HSPs with an informal evaluation of language skills.

Formal Evaluation

This method involves hiring a professional evaluator to conduct a formal linguistic evaluation based on strict criteria and is usually used as part of the hiring process for designated positions. In a unionized workplace, this method should be privileged to avoid potential grievances. The Erie St. Clair or South West LHINS' French Language Services Coordinators can provide some assistance to HSPs in finding professional evaluators.



1. *Bona fide occupational requirement*

The Ontario Human Rights Commission recognizes that proficiency in a certain language may be a reasonable and legitimate requirement for employment...

Fluency in a particular language could be a bona fide requirement in some employment or service situations."

Ontario Human Rights Commission,
www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-discrimination-and-language/language-related-grounds-discrimination-ancestry-ethnic-origin-place-origin-race.

Defining Needs

Using a template such as the one provided on pages 145–146, develop a human resource plan for each department.

Looking at the staff complement, determine the number of French-speaking staff members needed to provide services in French. Consider all the different job categories as well as coverage during vacation or illness. Francophone clients/patients should have access to comprehensive services in French during all hours of operations.

Designate these positions for the delivery of services in French and make proficiency in French a job requirement. The next time these positions become vacant, look for bilingual candidates. In the meantime, encourage employees holding these positions to learn French, if they are not bilingual. Please refer to Section 5 for more information on French language training.

Once positions have been designated, establish the linguistic profile, oral and written, for each position. Consider the role and nature of contact with patients/clients and the public. As an illustration, for a communication officer in charge of preparing press releases and communicating with the media, superior oral and written skills are a must and for a triage nurse at the emergency department, superior oral skills are required. A minimum of an advanced level is required to communicate with ease.

For more information, please refer to *Staffing and Managing Designated Positions, A Practical Guide for Managers* produced by the Office of Francophone Affairs on pages 147–167.

Hiring for Designated and Non-Designated Positions

When a position becomes vacant, if it is a designated position, ensure that proficiency in French is a requirement and include in the job description and posting a statement such as “This is a designated position. Proficiency in Canada’s two official languages is required.” The job posting should be available in both English and French. If the position is not designated, a statement like “Priority consideration will be given to candidates who are proficient in Canada’s two official languages” or “Proficiency in French is an asset” could be added.

When advertising, consider placing the posting in English and French newspapers. There are French community newspapers in a number of communities across Ontario and Canada (see list on pages 357–359). Locally, *Le Rempart* with a circulation of 7,500 serves the Windsor-

Essex-Chatham-Kent area and *L'Action* with a circulation of 4,000 serves the London-Sarnia area (marketing@altomedia.ca).

Other options to advertise:¹⁰

- *Employment Options Emploi*, bilingual employment services offered through Collège Boréal in Windsor (519 988-1766 or 519 252-1308) and London (519 672-1562).
- *CliquezSanté*, www.cliquezsante.ca/en.
- *Le bloc-notes*, leblocnotes@nexussante.ca.
- *TFO*, Ontario French public television, www.tfo.org (requires a facebook account).
- *Thehealthline.ca*, www.southwesthealthline.ca, in the South West LHIN area – in the Health Careers section.
- *Thehealthline.ca*, www.erieclairhealthline.ca, in the Erie St. Clair LHIN – job posting option to be available soon.
- *HealthForceOntario*, www.hfojobs.ca/default.aspx.
- Colleges and universities offering specific programs are an excellent way of reaching out to new or recent graduates and alumni. There are several colleges and universities offering French post-secondary education programs (see list on page 355).
- Secrétariat international des infirmières et infirmiers de l'espace francophone (SIDIEF), info@sidiief.org.
- Email distribution.
- *LinkedIn*.
- *Charity Village* and other similar websites.
- Erie St. Clair LHIN website, 519 351-5677.

Retaining Bilingual Staff

Increased job satisfaction will help with the retention of bilingual staff. They are more likely to remain in the organization's employ when:

- Delivery of services in French is part of their normal duties and French-speaking patients/clients are assigned to them.
- Delivery of services in French is not an additional workload.
- French-language training opportunities are offered.
- Professional development opportunities in French are available.
- Etc.

The *Regroupement des intervenantes et intervenants francophones en santé et en services sociaux de l'Ontario* (RIFSSSO) has developed a useful HR Support Kit, available online at www.rifssso.ca/ressources/publications/ressources-docs/trousse-d%E2%80%99appui-rh-vers-un-service-bilingue/.

¹⁰ The list is not comprehensive.



Section 4

List of Appendixes

Staff Survey – French-language skills

French Language Oral and Written Capability Levels

Human Resources Plan

Staffing and Managing Designated Positions, A Practical Guide for Managers