

## French Language Services - Integration Process Guide

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Ontario Health is committed to improving the accessibility of French Language Services (FLS) across the province. Health service providers (HSPs) and Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) play a key role in achieving this goal, with many HSPs serving as FLS designated agencies under the *French Language Services Act* and others specifically identified to develop and provide services in French. Moreover, all HSPs have an FLS obligation outlined in their accountability agreements and must submit annual FLS reports to Ontario Health.

Integration of HSPs/OHTs is key for improving health service accessibility, quality, and both experience and outcomes for both patients and providers. Integration also has the potential to enhance health equity through a holistic, population health approach. The integration of any HSPs/OHTs may have an impact on FLS and the associated Francophone population, particularly for those HSPs that are designated, identified, or operating within a designated FLS region. Integration is thus an opportunity to enhance access to services, to incorporate the needs of various population groups, and to effectively use available resources. A key priority is to maintain, if not enhance, existing FLS across Ontario, particularly among HSPs that are designated or identified.

Below are key considerations and resources for pursuing a voluntary integration opportunity that maximizes benefit to the local Francophone population:

- Articulate the potential impact of the integration on the Francophone population and FLS provision on the HSP/OHT Integration Activity Pre-Proposal Form (refer to the [FLS Supplement](#) of the Health Equity Impact Assessment). This will help indicate the extent to which Ontario Health Regions will require key FLS personnel and leaders to review and support the integration.
- Engage the associated Ontario Health Regional FLS Lead early and throughout the integration process:
  - Each of Ontario Health's six Regions has a Regional FLS Lead, along with provincial level supports. Designated and identified HSPs will be well-acquainted with their Regional FLS Lead. HSPs unaware of their Regional FLS Lead can be connected through their Ontario Health Regional contacts.
  - Regional FLS Leads welcome questions, concerns, and discussion regarding integration opportunities at all points in the process, including working together through the below algorithm.
  - Regional FLS Leads help to determine the impact of an integration on FLS provision and whether it may proceed as proposed, including whether it requires reevaluation, adjustment, or legal input. Moreover, they are key in developing strategies to alleviate potential negative impacts of an integration.

- Regional FLS Leads will help seek out opportunities for an integration to have a net gain to FLS provision for the associated community. This could involve exploring potential FLS designation, identification, or other expansion of services. This is particularly important for those HSPs operating within an FLS Designated Area, where health system planners seek to ensure a comprehensive continuum of care for local Francophones.
- Work through the FLS Integration Algorithm below with the support of a Regional FLS Lead. Integration opportunities with a net negative impact on FLS are unlikely to be allowed to proceed by Ontario Health. It will be essential to develop strategies to offset or mitigate any negative impact to, or loss of, FLS.
- Outline in the Notice of Intended Integration (Proposal & Business Case):
  - A statement on the FLS status of each HSP/OHT associated with the integration (e.g., designated, partially designated, identified, non-identified, etc.)
  - A description of the local Francophone population
  - The expected impact of the integration on this Francophone population
  - An assessment of opportunities for the integration to increase FLS or lead to FLS designation/identification among one or more HSPs
- Continue to engage with the Regional FLS Lead throughout the integration process to help maximize benefit to the local Francophone population.

## Resources

- [Become a Designated Provider of French-Language Services](#)
- [FLS Supplement \(to the Health Equity Impact Assessment\)](#)
- [French Language Services Act, 1990](#)
- [French Language Services Office \(Ministry of Health & Ministry of Long-Term Care\)](#)
- [List of FLS Designated Agencies](#)
- [Ontario Ombudsman – French Language Services](#)
- [Ontario’s French Language Services Strategy](#)
- [Profile of the Francophone Population in Ontario - 2016](#)

**Figure 1. FLS Integration Algorithm**

