



REPORT ON FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

Ministry of
Francophone Affairs

Government of Ontario

2022

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Mr. Speaker,

It is with great pleasure that I hereby present this report on Francophone Affairs, which highlights our government's achievements in supporting the social, cultural and economic development of Ontario's Francophone community.

This document is part of an optimized planning and reporting process and lays the foundation for future reports that will detail our progress annually. It is intended for the general public, particularly the Francophone population whom, as part of our mission, we serve and support.

I truly hope that when Francophones read this report, they will agree that we have listened to them and that we have taken action that will strengthen the vitality of their communities. Indeed, I'm very proud of the work that we have accomplished together.

Despite a difficult period marked by the pandemic, we have managed to make tangible and significant progress. These results are truly the fruit of four years of work and they reflect both Ontario's unwavering commitment to the province's Francophone community and the collaboration of many partners, especially Franco-Ontarians themselves.

To ensure that Ontario's Francophonie has the tools it requires to succeed, taking concerted action in every level of the public sphere is important.

I wish to acknowledge the support of the Premier and Cabinet colleagues.

I am grateful for their leadership in priority areas for Francophones.

I would also like to thank the Provincial Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs, our partners in other jurisdictions, associations, the public, broader public and private sectors and civil society in general. Our accomplishments are truly the result of this collective effort.

Our approach to Francophone Affairs is based on two pillars: our French Language Services Strategy and our Francophone Economic Development Strategy. I am confident that these strategies and the measures in place will ensure that Franco-Ontarians will receive increasingly better and more accessible services that will enable their full participation in our province's social, cultural and economic development.

We have essentially created an environment that is even more conducive to the development and vitality of Ontario's Francophone community and our government believes that the entire province will be all the better for it.



The Honourable Caroline Mulroney
Minister of Francophone Affairs



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ontario's Francophone community is growing and changing. It is now more diverse and more dynamic than ever.

The Francophonie is a valuable asset for Ontario. The Province plans to preserve and showcase it by creating favourable conditions that will foster the well-being and social, cultural and economic development of Franco-Ontarians.

To do this, the government has adopted a strategic and coordinated approach, which is essential to generating significant and lasting effects.

Building on extensive consultations and roundtables with the Francophone community, we developed two complementary, broad strategies based on a government-wide approach and collaboration with a wide range of civil society stakeholders: the French Language Services Strategy and the Francophone Economic Development Strategy.

French Language Services Strategy

The [French Language Services Strategy](#) was launched in the fall of 2021 to improve the accessibility and quality of services that Francophones are entitled to, based on three pillars.

The first pillar aims to modernize the legislative framework. The [French Language Services Act](#) was significantly overhauled to improve access to more French language services, make services more readily available under the principle of active offer, put in place stronger accountability mechanisms and allow the government to expand access to a greater number of points of service in French.

The second pillar is focused on the importance of building and supporting workforce capacity so it can provide quality French language services.

Finally, the third pillar puts forward a cross-government approach to improve the delivery of French language services through better upstream service planning, improved accountability, and simplified processes such as the new designation process for service providers.

Tangible progress has already been made with regard to access to French language services, including several significant achievements in the key areas of justice, health and education.

Francophone Economic Development Strategy

The [Francophone Economic Development Strategy](#), which was launched in spring 2021, aims to increase the Francophone economic footprint, strengthen and promote the Francophone workforce, stimulate job creation and facilitate the development of new markets for Ontario's Francophone and bilingual businesses and organizations.

The Strategy is based on a concerted and cross-government approach, which has identified many current programs that can be enhanced to better target the Francophone economic community.

The Strategy is based on three pillars

First, to support Francophone entrepreneurship and innovation, Ontario has made investments that have led to the creation of the Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones and its Quartier d'affaires platform, in addition to the provision of services to Francophone businesses that are starting up or expanding.

In order to promote recovery, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs is also providing unprecedented support that directly targets Francophone businesses and organizations, such as the [Francophone Community Grants Program](#), whose budget has been doubled, and the creation of the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Francophone Non-Profit Organizations, which has saved many jobs.

Because the competitive strength of businesses depends on the availability of Francophone and bilingual workers, the government has also put more focus specifically on the development of a qualified bilingual workforce.

Finally, the government has worked to promote Ontario's Francophonie as an economic asset by building on Ontario's close economic relations with Québec and member countries of the [Organisation internationale de la Francophonie](#).

Development of a bilingual labour pool

As a critical basis for the two complementary strategies on French language services and Francophone economic development, the challenge of building a bilingual workforce was addressed in two ways: training and recruitment.

On this topic, the government is focused on programs and investments that specifically target Francophone communities. This includes, among other initiatives, the development in 2021-2022 of a four-year French Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, in response to the shortage of French language and French Immersion educators.

It is important to expand the pool of Francophone and bilingual workers by strengthening Francophone immigration, specifically the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program, which is the province's main lever.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry's mandate and role

The mandate of the Ministry of Francophone Affairs is to ensure that all Franco-Ontarians receive government services in French so they can fully participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the province while maintaining their linguistic and cultural heritage.

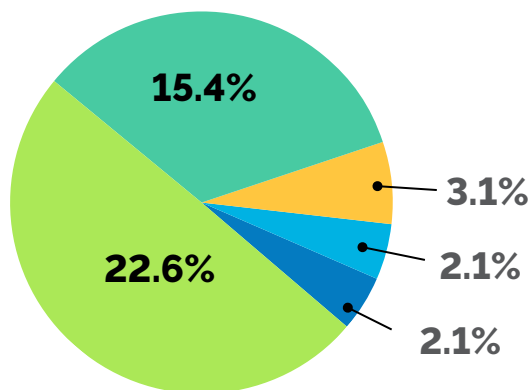
Francophones in Ontario

Francophones have been an integral part of Ontario society from its very beginning. They have shaped the province's identity and contributed to its growth for over 400 years.

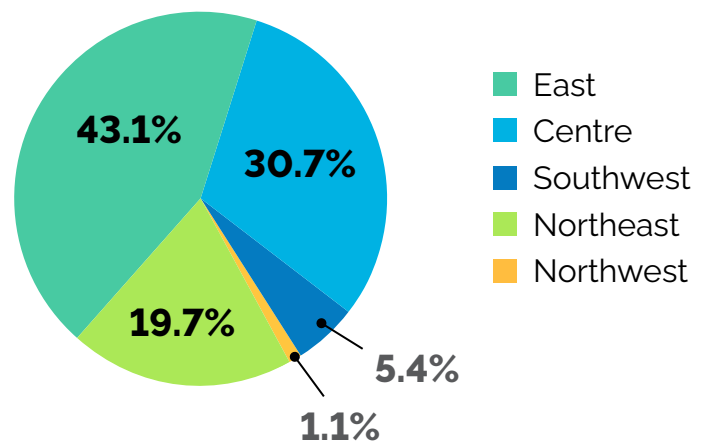
Since 2009, the Government of Ontario has used the inclusive definition of Francophone, which is defined as a person whose mother tongue is French or whose mother tongue is neither French, nor English, but who has a particular knowledge of French and uses French at home.

Of the 1.5 million Ontario residents who speak French, 622,415 are Franco-Ontarians, which represents the largest Francophone population of any Canadian province outside of Québec. And this population continues to grow. Growth is projected to reach 5.9% between 2016 and 2028, largely due to immigration.

Francophones by region, as a percentage of total population



Regional distribution of the Francophone population, by percentage



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

These percentages are calculated using the inclusive definition of Francophone in use in Ontario.

The composition of Ontario's Francophonie is also changing. The community is becoming increasingly assertive and active in order to assume its rightful place.

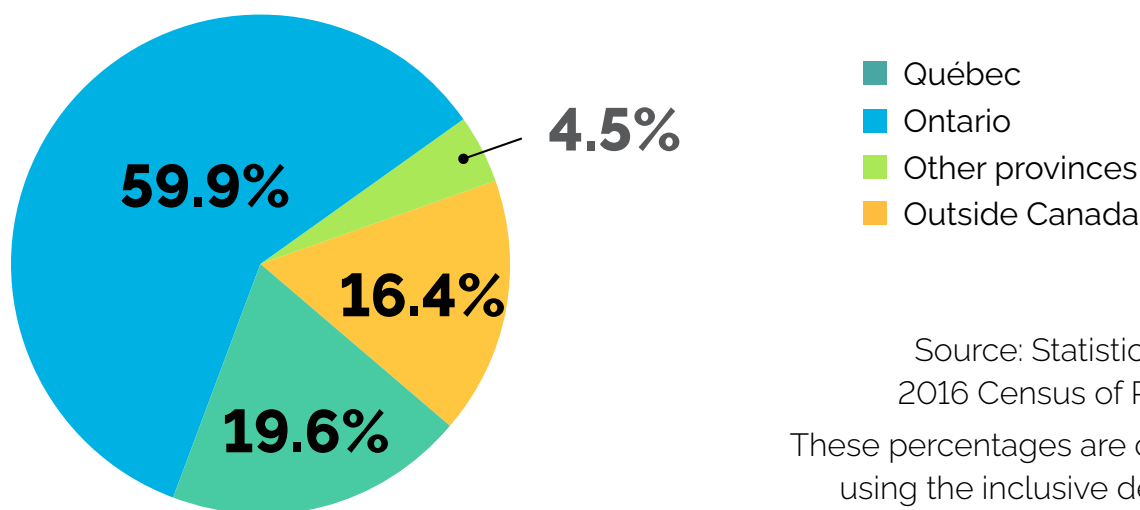
Francophones want to continue to thrive in French. They want to pass on their language and culture to their children. The demand for French language education is increasing faster in Ontario than elsewhere in Canada. In order to meet this need and enrich local communities, new daycare spaces have been created and new French language schools have been opened.

Francophones also want to be able to easily access quality services and live their lives in French with ease. The objective of both the French Language Services Strategy and the modernization of the *French Language Services Act* is to ensure that Francophones receive quality services when they are needed.

Francophones also want to apply their talents and linguistic skills to contribute to Ontario's prosperity. By coordinating the actions of various government and community stakeholders, the Francophone Economic Development Strategy aims to create favourable conditions for bilingual businesses and employees to succeed.

The Francophonie is an asset for Ontario so we must highlight and preserve it for future generations. The Province intends to support the growth and reach of the Francophonie in all sectors. This will involve creating favourable conditions that will contribute to the well-being and social, cultural and economic development of Francophones and Francophiles across Ontario. This is why the government has adopted a strategic and coordinated approach, which is absolutely essential to generating significant and lasting effects.

Percentage of Francophones in Ontario, by place of birth



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

These percentages are calculated using the inclusive definition of Francophone in use in Ontario.

A. FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

French Language Services Strategy

Background

The government recognizes that it is important for Francophones to be able to easily access services in French. That is why it has committed to modernizing and strengthening the *French Language Services Act*.

However, to achieve conclusive results, these legislative changes must be part of a more comprehensive approach that takes into account all the factors that need to be implemented.

It was therefore important to develop a comprehensive French Language Services Strategy with a focus on increasing Francophone and bilingual workforce capacity and leveraging effective and innovative service delivery models that provide a framework for all initiatives aimed at expanding access to French language services.

In order to validate the messages received from the Francophone population over the last several years, a six-week public consultation was launched by the Government of Ontario in June 2021. The goal was to explore effective and innovative ways to improve French languages services. The high response rate demonstrates the importance

that Francophones place on access to quality services in French. More than 950 people responded to the online public questionnaire and close to 80 people participated in regional and sectoral stakeholder roundtables and targeted discussions with provincial organizations.

The recommendations proposed by the French Language Services Commissioner also encouraged reflection within the government.

This consultation process provided an important foundation for the development of the French Language Services Strategy.

Strategic pillars

The French Language Services Strategy is built on three pillars that correspond to three priorities.

Pillar 1: A modernized legislative framework

Together, the *French Language Services Act* and its four regulations set out legal obligations for the delivery of services in French for ministries, certain agencies, designated agencies under the Act, and third-party providers delivering services on behalf of the government.

The Act was overhauled to improve access to more French language services, for a growing Francophone population in a constantly changing world.

The modernized *French Language Services Act* received Royal Assent on December 9, 2021.

Pillar 2: Francophone and bilingual workforce

An updated legislative framework is essential to modernizing the delivery of, and access to French language services. However, the quality of these services relies heavily on the availability of a workforce able to deliver these services in French.

This second pillar focuses on:

- Working within the government to increase the supply of skilled Francophone and bilingual workers by focusing on training and recruitment, particularly in key occupations and those experiencing labour shortages.
- Working with the federal government to create Francophone immigration corridors and professional certification accreditation.

Pillar 3: Service planning and delivery

The third pillar emphasizes a cross-government approach to French language services planning and delivery by focusing on the following areas, based on the recommendations of the French Language Services Commissioner:

- Improving upstream planning for services in French by incorporating it into existing cross-government planning processes.
- Enhancing the assessment of government services in French by reviewing the evaluation policy of designated agencies and developing an evaluation tool.
- Improving accountability by tabling annual reports in the Legislative Assembly and optimizing data collection with regard to French language services.
- Implementing effective or innovative French language service delivery models that are aligned with the needs of Franco-Ontarian communities.
- Streamlining the designation process under the *French Language Services Act* and providing better support for designated service providers.

The following pages provide further details regarding the changes made to the *French Language Services Act* and examples of initiatives related to access to services and the development of a Francophone and bilingual workforce.

Modernizing the *French Language Services Act*

In December 2021, in response to long-standing demand from Francophones in Ontario and following an extensive public consultation process in summer 2021, the government enacted the revised *French Language Services Act*.

This is a significant breakthrough for the Francophonie as it is the first substantial review of this Act since its adoption 35 years ago.

Changes to the *French Language Services Act*

From the outset, the preamble of the Act sets the tone. The preamble has been enhanced to recognize the diversity of the Francophone community and to emphasize that Francophones in Ontario have the right to the front-line services

they need and to opportunities to grow and thrive.

Other changes were based on the following objectives:

Improve access to services in French

- Clarify the obligation to offer services in French based on the principle of active offer. Active offer means that French language services are not only available but also brought to the attention of the client upon first contact.
- Create a new power to add designated points of government service anywhere in the province, including outside regions designated by the Act.

Changes in origin of Francophone immigrants in Ontario from 2006 to 2016

In 2006, more than one third of Francophone immigrants in Ontario were from Europe (36.7%) and one quarter from Africa (26.4%)

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006

In 2016, more than one third of Francophone immigrants in Ontario were from Africa (35%), while about one quarter were from Europe (28%).

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016

In 2021, 77% of new Francophone immigrants in Ontario were citizens of one of the following countries, in descending order: France, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Morocco, the Federal Republic of Cameroon, Algeria.

Source: Government of Ontario, with data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (4th quarter of 2021)

- Create new accountability tools to better prescribe the provision of French language services and communications.

Strengthen capacity to expand French language services

- Reflect the shift from Office of Francophone Affairs to Ministry of Francophone Affairs and broaden the Minister's mandate to include the promotion of Francophone affairs and French language services.
- Legislate the existing Provincial Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs to ensure continuity and a permanent consultation process.
- Add a regulation-making power to deal with the translation of government regulations.

The Provincial Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs is made up of 13 members who provide advice to the Minister regarding the *French Language Services Act* and the Francophone population of Ontario. Its members are representative of the various Francophone communities in Ontario and of different sectors of activity. Since the summer of 2018, the Committee has met 11 times.

Improve accountability

- Make all Ministers accountable and require them to report annually to the Executive Council on the implementation of the Act and the quality of services in French.
- Provide for a review of the Act and a consultation process at least once every ten years.

Modernize existing regulations and create new regulations to strengthen quality French language service delivery

The Act also provides new regulatory power to better specify how, when and where French language services are offered. The new regulations will come into force at a later date.

It is also expected that existing regulations on designated organizations, designated regions, and third parties will be updated.

Active offer means that the French language services to be provided by the ministries and agencies of the Government of Ontario are not only available but also brought to the attention of the client from the first contact, through any measure prescribed for this purpose by the Act.

- *The Act contains a new section on active offer, which came into force April 1, 2022.*

Latest progress on access to services in French

The goal of the French Language Services Strategy is to broaden access to French language services. Tangible progress has already been made in this regard.

Designation of a new region: City of Sarnia

In response to the request of Francophones in Southwestern Ontario, on December 13, 2021, the Government of Ontario announced that the City of Sarnia will become the 27th region designated under the *French Language Services Act*.

Beginning November 1, 2024, Ontario government offices located in Sarnia will offer French language services. This three-year period before the designation comes into force will enable service providers to build the capacity required to meet the requirements under the Act.

This progress demonstrates the government's desire to work together with communities to meet their aspirations.

A simplified designation process for organizations

Any public services provider who receives public funding may apply for designation under the Act to offer services in French. To encourage more providers to become designated and thereby expand the provision of French language services, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs has improved the process by:

- Simplifying the [application process](#), streamlining requirements and shortening the application review timeline.
- Developing resources to assist organizations with their designation application.
- Creating an electronic platform to replace the paper-based system.

As part of a pilot project to test this new process, seven organizations have already obtained designation. The streamlined process and platform were launched on January 13, 2022.

80%

of Francophones live
in a designated region.

Accents on driver's licences

As of September 2021, Franco-Ontarians have been able to request a driver's licence or Ontario Photo Card with French characters. The addition of these characters is more than a symbolic change. It is a first step in the province's plan to make French characters available on all Ontario government products.

Other progress in key areas

The French Language Services Strategy proposes an integrated and ambitious vision. While reviewing the legislative framework, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs also worked with its partner ministries in other key areas for Francophones.

Justice

The Ministry of the Attorney General launched [two initiatives](#) in Sudbury (2019) and North Bay (end of 2020), building on the success of a pilot project in Ottawa (2015-2017). In collaboration with the courts, these initiatives provide Franco-Ontarians with improved access to court services and court proceedings. We have seen that these initiatives have led to new practices that are having a lasting impact and which can be replicated in other regions of the province.

Furthermore, to build on its work to strengthen access to justice for Franco-Ontarians, the government introduced legislative changes to enable the [filing of documents written in French](#) at all Ontario courthouses, in all types of proceedings. These changes, which also expand access to the translation of court documents, came into force on February 1, 2022.

Health

Health is an essential service for the entire population, including Francophones in minority communities. The pandemic has brought this to the fore.

The government took a number of steps to ensure direct and open communication with Francophones during the pandemic by ensuring that the Premier's press conferences and media briefings by the Chief Medical Officer of Health were broadcast with either simultaneous interpretation or French subtitles.

The government also supports using innovative health service delivery models that meet the needs of Francophone communities. The Carrefour Santé d'Orléans is a perfect example of a hub and spoke delivery model that allows patients to access several bilingual hospital and community services that are integrated on one site, closer to where they live. The government invested \$75 million to support the creation of this facility which opened its doors in June 2021.

In May 2021, the Ministry of Long-Term Care held five roundtables on long-term care in French. In March 2021, the ministry also announced seven projects to upgrade French language and bilingual long-term care facilities which will create 777 new beds and redevelop 236 beds.

This goes hand in hand with the announcement of investments to build the necessary workforce. Because of the financial support from the province, La Cité and Collège Boréal have announced the accelerated training of 216 students in the Personal Support Worker program in March 2021. An additional investment was announced in October 2021 for the [training of 350 nursing students](#) at the

University of Ottawa, La Cité and Hôpital Montfort, providing them with the tools and clinical experience they need to strengthen Ontario's health and long-term care sectors.

Education

Postsecondary Education

Looking to the future, the government has taken historic steps to support Francophone students in Ontario by ensuring they have access to the education and training they need for rewarding careers that meet labour market needs.

The Université de l'Ontario français offers four multidisciplinary and truly innovative programs to prepare young people for tomorrow's world: Digital Culture, Human Plurality, Economy and Social Innovation, and Urban Environments.

The most significant development in the post-secondary education sector is undoubtedly the opening of the [Université de l'Ontario français](#) which welcomed its first cohort of students in September 2021. This historic achievement has turned a long-standing community aspiration into a reality: a university by and for Francophones. This large-scale project is expected to generate significant long-term social, cultural and economic benefits by leveraging the resources and talent in Ontario and attracting talent from outside the province.

As an extension of the approach that recognizes the importance of governance by and for Francophones, the government has introduced and passed a bill to make Université de Hearst the second fully independent French language university in Ontario.

The government is aware of the need to support Francophone students in Northern Ontario by providing them with solid post-secondary options, and has also ensured to support Laurentian University by taking over as debtor-in-possession, by offering the school an additional \$6 million in financial support, and by setting up financial support for students affected by program cancellations and those who had to enroll in another university to continue their studies. These measures are intended to maintain the availability of solid academic pathways in French and the partial designation of Laurentian under the *French Language Services Act*.

Elementary and Secondary Education

The demand for education in French for younger students continues to grow:

In 2020-2021, the number of French-language schools increased to 482 schools (374 elementary, 108 secondary) from 471 schools (365 elementary, 106 secondary) in 2018-2019.¹

1. These numbers do not include temporary remote learning schools.

In 2020-2021, the number of students in French-language schools increased to 113,118 from 111,024 in 2018-2019, an increase of 2,094 students.²

Outside of Québec, Ontario is the province with the largest number of students enrolled in French schools and the largest number of students in the country enrolled in a French as a Second Language program.

French immersion enrolment has increased steadily in the 5 years leading up to 2019-2020 (252,700 students enrolled). 2020-2021 did not see increased enrolment from the year prior (251,404 students enrolled), however this is likely a result of overall declines in enrolment experienced that year.³

Since the 2016-2017 school year, the Ministry of Education has invested nearly \$400 million in French-language capital projects creating over 2,400 new child care spaces and announcing twenty new French-language schools, six acquisitions for new French-language schools and eighteen additions and renovations to meet French-language student

accommodation needs while enriching local communities.

Ontario has also expanded the range of online resources to better support families and educators during the pandemic. [Mon Eurêka](#) offers individualized virtual tutoring to all students from grades 1 to 12 as well as an online summer camp, in which 25,000 students participated in 2020. [TFO's IDÉLLO](#) platform has also been expanded with resources for parents and children in grades 1 to 5.



2. Source: Ministry of Education.

3. Source: Data as reported by schools (and/or boards) in the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), October Submission, 2018-2019 to Preliminary 2019-2020 and Preliminary 2020-2021. 2020-2021 data is preliminary as of February 18, 2022.

B. FRANCOPHONE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Francophone Economic Development Strategy

Background

In spring 2021, the government launched its Francophone Economic Development Strategy.

Growth and prosperity are at the heart of the government's mission and the Francophonie, with its diversity and language skills, is a vital economic asset for Ontario which must be strengthened and showcased.

With this in mind, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs developed the Francophone Economic Development Strategy in collaboration with a number of partner ministries and also as part of a concerted approach involving the Francophone business community.

The strategy is based on findings from the 2018 and 2019 roundtables to identify the challenges facing Ontario's Francophone businesses, on recommendations proposed by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Francophone Economic Recovery Post COVID-19 as part of its work in Spring 2020, as well as the advice of Glenn O'Farrell, Special Advisor on Francophone Economic Development.

Objectives

The Strategy aims to increase the Francophone economic footprint, strengthen and promote the Francophone workforce, stimulate job creation and facilitate the development of new markets for Ontario's Francophone and bilingual businesses and organizations.

Strategic framework

The programs and initiatives on which the strategy is based were identified in response to the issues raised by Francophone entrepreneurs and key economic stakeholders. They are grouped under three pillars.

Pillar 1: Francophone entrepreneurship and innovation

This first pillar is designed to encourage and support entrepreneurship, a key driver of economic growth in Ontario.

The main programs to support the Francophone business community are those offered by the Ministry of Francophone Affairs. These supports are described in more detail in the following section.

Several other ministries offer programs focused on economic development and recovery, as well as training and business support. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to broaden the scope of these programs by increasing awareness in the Francophone business community and setting more ambitious targets to engage the ministries.

Programs with a Francophone component include [Ontario Arts Council](#) initiatives and those of [Ontario Creates](#), which offer targeted support for the Francophone creative sector.

Ontario has more than 18,000 Francophone SMEs, making up approximately 4.2% of the province's SMEs. The province is home to almost 50% of Francophone businesses outside Québec.

- Summary profile of the Franco-Ontarian Economy, FGA

Pillar 2: Bilingual skilled workforce: education, training and employability

The aim of this second pillar is to help businesses remain competitive and support Ontario's Francophone and bilingual workers by focusing on training and recruitment in key sectors.

This second pillar aims to:

- Promote entrepreneurship, especially among young people and women.
- Mentor and train the next generation of Francophone leaders.
- Enhance the programs offered by the province's French and bilingual colleges and universities so they better meet the current needs of business and the modern economy.
- Promote and encourage Francophone immigration to meet the need for more bilingual workers.

Ministries such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development are key partners in this area.

A total of 11.5% of Ontario's workers are bilingual and produce 12.1% of the gross domestic product.

- Summary profile of the Franco-Ontarian Economy, FGA

Pillar 3: Promoting Ontario's Francophonie as an economic asset

The goal of this pillar is to highlight the province's Francophonie as an economic asset and build on Ontario's outstanding reputation for a dynamic economy, a high standard of living and cultural diversity.

This pillar is based on Ontario's close economic relations with Québec and member countries of the [Organisation internationale de la Francophonie](#).

A broad commitment

Like the French Language Services Strategy, the Francophone Economic Development Strategy proposes an integrated approach calling on all stakeholders in government, organizations and the business community.

The Ministry of Francophone Affairs has worked together with 12 partner ministries to identify 38 existing programs and initiatives that can benefit the Francophone economic community.

Several of these initiatives will be enhanced to better support Francophones through:

- Increased and more targeted promotion.
- Revising the criteria for certain programs to boost the participation of priority groups, including Francophones.
- Setting specific targets.
- Introducing data collection mechanisms to optimize progress measurement.

An unprecedented investment for Francophone SMEs

In addition to the contribution of partner ministries, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs has **invested \$7.25 million** since 2020-2021 to support social enterprises, the business sector and Francophone business owners.

In addition, envelopes of 5.5 million have already been announced for the next two years.

Support for businesses

As part of its Francophone Economic Development Strategy, the Province offers significant direct financial support to organizations and businesses.

COVID-19 Relief Fund for Francophone Non-Profit Organizations

Faced with the exceptional circumstances created by the pandemic, the government recognized the importance of supporting Francophone organizations to enable them to weather the crisis and maintain their services to the community.

In 2020, Ontario set up this special \$1 million fund in addition to general supports. To support the reopening and the transition to post-COVID, the funding budget was renewed in 2021, for a total of \$3 million over two years.

The COVID-19 Relief Fund for Francophone Non-Profit Organizations has supported 117 Francophone non-profit organizations, helping keep 511 jobs, and creating 232 new ones.

Organizations receiving the funding operate in 22 service sectors. The evaluation of the applications took into account the following priority demographic sectors: women, Indigenous peoples, youth with disabilities, visible minorities, LGBTQ2S+, newcomers, Francophone seniors, low-income Ontarians.

Francophone Community Grants Program

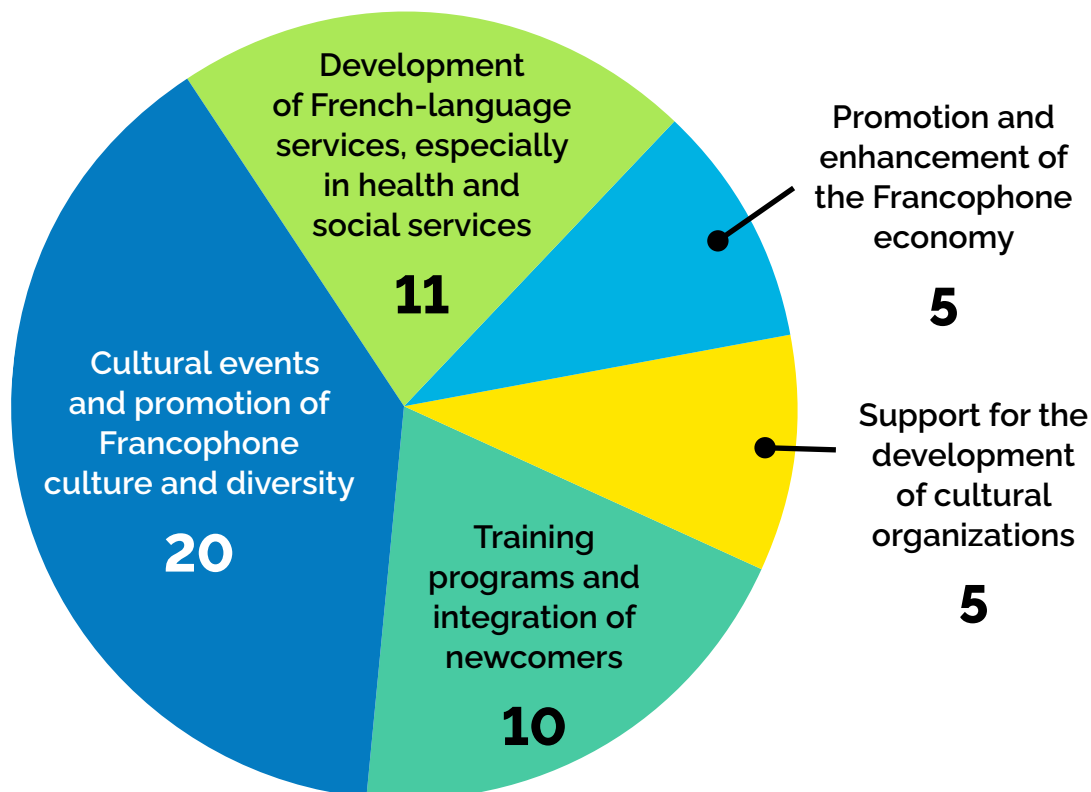
This program has supported Francophone organizations for several years. An economic component was added in 2020 to support projects that will create new jobs, provide more bilingual training opportunities, attract new Francophone clients, contribute to the growth of the cultural and tourism sector and increase the market share of businesses in Francophone communities both here and abroad.

The program's funding budget doubled in 2021 and is now \$2 million. This has increased the impact of the program by funding more projects and larger projects in various sectors. Fifty-one projects have been selected in 2021-2022 (46 in the Community and Culture stream and five in the Economic Development stream), a 70 percent increase compared to 2020-2021. The average funding went from \$34,000 per project in 2020-2021 to \$39,000 per project in 2021-2022, an increase of 15 percent.

Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones

In 2020-2021, through an initial investment of \$500,000, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs supported the creation of the [Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario \(FGA\)](#). The role of the FGA, which was formed in January 2021, is to facilitate networking

Projects funded under the 2021-2022 FCGP by activity sector (#)



between businesses and entrepreneurs with a view to building strategic alliances, creating new business opportunities and offering support and coaching services for businesses. The FGA already has 41 members, who represent more than 6,000 businesses and is overseeing the implementation of a digital platform, [Quartier d’Affaires](#), which offers business-to-business matching and allows members to share their expertise and tools. More than 120 businesses are registered in this component of the Quartier d’Affaires.

The [Regroupement des gens d’affaires de la Capitale nationale](#) has created a business-to-consumer component which, since March 31, 2021, was integrated into

the Quartier d’Affaires digital platform to increase the visibility of products and services of Franco-Ontarian businesses. 119 merchants are already registered in this component which offers more than 360 products and services.

The FGA also drafted a [Profil sommaire de l’économie franco-ontarienne](#) [summary profile of the Franco-Ontarian economy] which contains a wealth of information and identifies key issues that must be addressed on a priority basis to strengthen the province’s Francophone economic ecosystem.

A [new investment](#) of \$500,000 in early 2022 allowed the FGA to continue its service offer to Francophone businesses,

to enhance its female entrepreneur training programs, and, in partnership with the Société économique de l'Ontario and the Cooperation Council of Ontario,

to create a new Francophone business ecosystem to provide business pre-incubation, incubation, implementation and acceleration.

Promoting the Francophonie as an economic asset

As part of supporting and promoting the Franco-Ontarian economy, it is also vital that we promote it throughout Canada and abroad.

Promoting Ontario as a destination for Francophones and Francophiles

Promoting tourism that highlights the Francophone aspect of Ontario helps strengthen the vitality of communities and promote Ontario beyond its borders.

Ontario continues to be a destination of choice for Francophone travellers in Canada and abroad. According to the most recent data from 2019, Ontario recorded 232,000 tourist visits from France and 4.5 million tourist visits from Québec.

In 2021-2022 (to March 1, 2022), [over \\$1.6 million in grant funding was awarded](#) through the Ontario Arts Council to support 49 organizations throughout the province that offer public performances and activities of interest to Francophone tourists. Over \$480,000 was provided to Francophone festivals and events across the province from the [Celebrate Ontario](#)

and the 2021 [Reconnect Ontario](#) Festival and Event Program. These investments helped showcase Francophone events as important economic drivers and community builders for Ontario regions.

Funding of \$250,000 was also provided in 2020-2021 under the Canada-Ontario Workforce Development Agreement to support the Francophone and bilingual tourism workforce and to support economic reopening.

Strengthening ties with Québec

Since 2006, the Cooperation and Exchange Agreement between the Government of Québec and the Government of Ontario with respect to the Francophonie, has been promoting common initiatives in culture, education, early childhood and health. In March 2021, the Ontario government dedicated a new annual funding envelope of \$250,000 over three years to support the implementation of new projects that will promote synergies and collaboration between Francophones in Ontario and Québec. Under the previous call for projects in 2021, a total of 18 projects

were jointly funded. In January 2022, the two provinces launched a [new call for projects developed jointly by organizations in Ontario and Québec](#) with a focus on initiatives related to economic development, culture, education and tourism.

In May 2021, the two provinces also launched the [Ontario-Québec Francophonie Trade Award](#), which celebrates and promotes excellence in the Francophone business community. The award will be presented annually to one business in Ontario and one in Québec whose use of French serves to facilitate interprovincial trade. The two winning companies were announced on November 8, 2021, as part of the Francophone economic summit at the Toronto Global Forum.

Strengthening links with the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles

In September 2021, Ontario signed a [joint declaration with the French Community of Belgium](#) that focuses on education, youth, digital media and economic development, as part of its objective to strengthen ties with international Francophone communities. In collaboration with key ministries, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs is currently working on a formal agreement which is expected to be signed in 2022. This first agreement paves the way for the negotiation of similar agreements with other Francophone jurisdictions in the world.

C. FRANCOPHONE AND BILINGUAL WORKFORCE

Development of a bilingual labour pool

The French Language Services Strategy and the Francophone Economic Development Strategy both focus on a critical objective: a bilingual, skilled workforce that can ensure service delivery in French, meet the needs of employers and contribute to the province's economic growth. This is especially crucial in light of a shortage of bilingual employees in key areas for Francophones.

The Ministry of Francophone Affairs worked with its partner ministries in this area.

The issue was addressed on two fronts: training and recruitment on both internally and externally to improve services in French and support businesses and organizations.

Training

Several ministries already offer a range of education, training and workforce development support programs with a Francophone component. Below are a few of the more promising or recent initiatives that should be highlighted.

Micro-credentials strategy

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development are focusing on micro-certification programs: flexible and targeted rapid programs to respond to the needs of both businesses and workers. Several post-secondary educational institutions, including the Université de l'Ontario français, already offer these micro-credentials programs in French.

For example, La Cité has also pursued a skills-based teaching approach. From 2017 to 2021, all the courses in its 140 study programs have been reviewed and developed into learning units to allow students to follow a personalized pathway, based on their needs, experience and skills. This makes it possible to quickly create training courses that rely on the linking of content that has already been developed in order to offer micro-certifications.

Bridge Training Program

The Ontario Bridge Training Program is designed to help immigrants with international training to find a job in their field. More than 500 Francophones benefited from this program in 2020-2021.

An investment of \$2.75 million over three years as of October 2021 was made to provide targeted programs for Francophones: Access to construction and administration jobs at La Cité collégiale and the Financial Services Connections program delivered by ACCES (Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services) in partnership with Collège Boréal in Toronto.

SkillsAdvance Ontario program

This program supports partnerships that connect employers and training services in key sectors. As part of this program, the [Carrefour communautaire francophone de London](#) rolled out a pilot project to prepare individuals in precarious employment for careers in child care and early childhood education.

Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program

This program responds to a labour shortage in early childhood education by providing financial incentives to help those working in the field to earn an Early Childhood Education diploma or upgrade their qualifications to leadership roles in early childhood education.

Recruitment

French Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy

A shortage of teachers in the French language school system and in French as a Second Language programs is an issue that the Ministry of Education has been working on for several years. The Ministry developed its French Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2021–2025) based on the report and the working group's recommendations.

This strategy consists of four actions that revolve around building awareness of teaching pathways, removing barriers to teacher training programs and making them more flexible, and ensuring supportive teaching environments to boost staff retention.

Ontario launched two new initial teacher training programs in French at Laurentian University and a new initial teacher training program in technology education in French at the University of Ottawa. These three programs are designed to provide greater flexibility and access to teacher education.

In collaboration with various partners, the Province has also undertaken international recruitment initiatives and [launched a pilot project with France](#) to recruit more qualified French teachers.

Francophone immigration

Another factor in the development of a bilingual, skilled workforce is recruitment efforts in French-speaking countries. To ensure the vitality of Ontario's Francophone community, Ontario needs more immigrants.

The pandemic has slowed immigration from overseas over the past two years, but Ontario continues to work with the federal government to create Francophone immigration corridors targeting specific regions.

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program

is one of the Province's key levers for attracting and retaining Francophone immigrants. This program offers immigration streams for foreign workers with the professional or academic skills required to meet labour market needs. The Ministry of Francophone Affairs is working closely with the Ministry of Labour,

Training and Skills Development to foster immigration of Francophone professionals that Ontario wants to attract.

Upstream, the province promotes the recruitment of international students who enrich the vitality of post-secondary institutions and subsequently, the labour pool by supporting [Avantage Ontario](#).

Avantage Ontario is a consortium that assists with the recruitment of international students and the worldwide promotion of nine universities and two colleges that offer French or bilingual programs.

The proportion of French-speaking immigrants exceeded **4% in 2021**, the highest proportion in the last ten years. Under the Immigrant Nominee Program, this proportion has exceeded 5% in each of the last three years.

CONCLUSION

The Francophonie is a valuable asset for Ontario. It contributes to the province's vitality and wealth, materially, socially and culturally.

Indeed, 2021 marked the culmination of four years of hard work. The year could also be described as historic for Franco-Ontarians due to memorable events and important announcements. The progress that has been made demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring the growth of Ontario's diverse Francophone population.

The Province took a strategic approach. The overall development of Ontario's Francophonie relies on a series of factors that had to be aligned in order to create lasting and sustainable results.

With this in mind, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs has developed two major and complementary strategies: the [French Language Services Strategy](#), which supports the Ontario government's long-term vision of making public services more accessible, and the [Francophone Economic Development Strategy](#), which supports the government's efforts to contribute to Ontario's prosperity.

The impact of these strategies is the result of unprecedented consultation within the government and with stakeholders. Significant efforts have been made to put support and accountability mechanisms in place to better serve the Francophone population through the numerous government programs, and to earmark new investments, specifically for the Francophone community.

The winning conditions have been put in place to ensure a high quality of life and the future of Ontario's Francophone community and to boost the community's participation in the growth and vitality of the entire province.

REPORT ON FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS

Ministry of Francophone Affairs

Government of Ontario

2022