



Active Offer

GUIDE TO ENSURE ACTIVE OFFER OF SERVICES

October 2023
Secretariat of Official Languages



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ACTIVE OFFER OF SERVICE IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The public is entitled to receive services in the official language of their choice. You have the obligation to make an active offer of service in both official languages. Your professionalism in this area will be appreciated by your clientele and your department.

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TELEPHONE GREETING

With telephone reception, the active offer of service in both official languages means using a two-language greeting, followed by the provision of service in the client's language of choice. Examples of a two-language telephone greeting are:

“Province of New Brunswick, Bonjour!”

or

“Province du Nouveau-Brunswick, Good Morning!”

The order of the two languages used in the telephone greeting is not important. The active offer is considered to have been made when the greeting includes both languages, regardless of the order in which they appear.

Once the caller has indicated the language of choice, the employee can either assist the caller by responding to the request or transfer the call to an appropriate person. If the employee is unable to understand the caller's request, the employee should say “Un moment, s’il vous plaît” or “One moment please”, depending on the language used by the caller and transfer the call immediately to someone who can communicate with the caller in the language of his/her choice.

Under no circumstances should an employee apologize for a lack of language skills or enter into a conversation with a client in the language not chosen by the client.

KEY POINTS:

Telephone greeting

- Always answer in both official languages.
- Continue the conversation in the official language chosen by your client.

If you are transferring the call

- Keep a list of bilingual employees close at hand.
- Inform your client that you are transferring his/her call to someone else.
- Give the client the name and the phone number of this person and tell the client this person is bilingual.
- Inform your colleague of the language used by your client.

VOICE MAIL BOX SETUP AND VOICE MAIL GREETINGS

VOICE MAIL BOX SETUP

Employees have 3 options available when a voice mail box is initially setup on a phone number:

- Bilingual (English and French)
- Unilingual English
- Unilingual French

This language of the voice mail box establishes:

- a) the language of the prompts you hear when you record your greetings;
and
- b) the language of the supplier's default or canned system messages.

You can request a change to your voice mail box language setup thru your departmental telephone administrator.

VOICE MAIL GREETINGS

To ensure the active offer of service in both official languages:

- employees who provide service in both official languages and who have voice mail must have a bilingual voice mail greeting.
- employees who do not provide service in both languages must provide instruction at the end of their greeting in the other language on how to obtain service in this language (e.g. "Pour service en français, composez le 0").

There are two types of recorded Voice mail greetings:

- Personal voice mail greetings
- Extended absence (out of office) voice mail greeting

Recorded Voice mail greetings should always allow the caller the "0" default option to reach a person.

Example of a Bilingual *Personal voice mail greeting*:

Hi,

You have reached the voice mail of **NAME** at the **Name of Department**. Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible *or press "0" to speak with the receptionist.*

And/et

Bonjour,

Vous avez joint la boîte vocale de **NOM** au **Nom du ministère**. SVP laissez un message et je retournerai votre appel dans les plus brefs délais *ou composez le zéro si vous désirez parler à la réceptionniste.*

Example of a Bilingual *Extended Absence greeting* (out of office):

Hi,

You have reached the voice mail of NAME at the Name of Department.

I am currently out of the office but I will be back on date. Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible *or press "0" to speak with the receptionist.*

And/et

Bonjour,

Vous avez joint la boîte vocale de NOM au Nom du ministère.

Je suis présentement à l'extérieur du bureau mais je serai de retour le : date. SVP laissez un message et je retournerai votre appel dans les plus brefs délais *ou composez le zéro si vous désirez parler à la réceptionniste.*

Example of a Unilingual *Personal voice mail greeting* with instructions to obtain services in the other official language:

Hi,

You have reached the voice mail of NAME at the Name of Department.

Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible *or press "0" to speak with the receptionist.* **"Pour service en français, composez le 0".**

OR/ou

Bonjour,

Vous avez joint la boîte vocale de NOM au Nom du ministère.

SVP laissez un message et je retournerai votre appel dans les plus brefs délais *ou composez le Zéro si vous désirez parler à la réceptionniste.* **"For service in English press 0".**

Example of a Unilingual *Extended Absence greeting* (out of office) with instructions to obtain services in the other official language:

Hi,

You have reached the voice mail of NAME at the **Name of Department**.

I am currently out of the office but I will be back on date. Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible *or press "0" to speak with the receptionist.*
"Pour service en français, composez le 0".

OR/ou

Bonjour,

Vous avez joint la boîte vocale de NOM au **Nom du ministère**.

Je suis présentement à l'extérieur du bureau mais je serai de retour le : date.

SVP laissez un message et je retournerai votre appel dans les plus brefs délais *ou composez le Zéro si vous désirez parler à la réceptionniste.* **"For service in English press 0".**

SERVICE IN PERSON

Extending the active offer in person also requires a two-language greeting. Once the active offer is extended, service must be provided in the official language of choice of the client. Usually, the two-language greeting in person is shorter than on the telephone. Some examples are:

"Hello, Bonjour!"

"Bonjour, May I Help You?"

"Good Morning, Bonjour!"

"Hello, Puis-je vous aider?"

Similar to the active offer on the telephone, the order in which the two languages appear is not important.

If the employee extending the active offer of service is unable to serve the client in the language chosen, the employee should say "Un moment, s'il vous plaît" or "One

moment please” depending on the language used by the client and immediately request that an employee with the required language skills serve the client. An employee should not proceed to serve the client in the language not chosen by the client.

It is important to note that the language of choice refers to the client’s language of choice and not the employee’s language of choice.

KEY POINTS:

Personal Greeting

- Always greet your client in both official languages.
- Continue the conversation in the official language chosen by your client.

Referral to another employee

- Keep a list of bilingual employees close at hand.
- Inform your client that you are going to ask someone else to see him/her.
- Give your client the name of this person and, if necessary, the phone number, and tell the client this person is bilingual.
- Inform your colleague of the language of the client.

VISUAL ASPECT

The presence of bilingual signs is an important visual element indicating that services are available in both official languages. All offices must prominently display signs indicating the availability of service in both English and French. In addition, all exterior and interior signs in all offices and in all areas of the province must be in both official languages. All signage must conform to the [Visual Identity Standards](#) of the Province of New Brunswick, available from Communications New Brunswick.



KEY POINTS:

- Make sure the official languages symbol is clearly visible to the public and that it properly directs them to where they can be served in both official languages.
- Make sure that signage and documentation intended for the public are displayed in both official languages.

CORRESPONDENCE

CORRESPONDENCE INITIATED BY GOVERNMENT

When correspondence is initiated by a government department or agency, the active offer is considered to have been extended when all documentation is sent in both official languages. Once the client responds in the language of his or her choice, all future correspondence should be addressed in the language chosen by the client. At any time, a client may request to change his or her language of choice.

With correspondence as with all other forms of documentation, equal importance should be given to the two official languages. Documents should either be prepared in a side-by-side or front to back format.

CORRESPONDENCE INITIATED BY A CLIENT

When correspondence is initiated by a client, the response must be prepared in the language in which the letter was written. The only exception would be if the client specifically requests otherwise.

An example of this would be that some clients such as lawyers communicate on a regular basis with government on behalf of their own clients. A lawyer may initiate contact with a government department in English one month and in French the following month due to the language preference of a particular client. It is therefore important to ensure that regardless of the language originally chosen by the client (in this instance the lawyer), the reply must be prepared in the language in which the most recent letter was received.

KEY POINTS:

- Ensure all correspondence and documentation is available in the language chosen by the client.
- When you initiate the correspondence, provide the documents in both official languages.
- Respond using the last official language chosen by the client.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES

The active offer of service in both official languages must always be provided at the first point of contact with the use of all electronic service delivery channels such as Internet Services, E-mail and kiosks. When a client first approaches a kiosk, the default language should not be one language or the other, but rather equal importance should be given to both languages. The first decision the client makes is to indicate the language in which he or she wishes to be served. At any time during the course of such a transaction, the client should have the option of switching to the other official language (toggle) rather than having to back out of the system and start over.

All provincial government Internet postings must be made available at the same time in both official languages. Specific guidelines with respect to the [Internet postings](#) are available from Communications New Brunswick.

Any new information system intended for public use that is purchased or developed must be in both official languages. Where unilingual systems exist, provisions should be made to translate or otherwise provide service in the other official language. At the first available opportunity, existing unilingual systems intended for public use, must be converted to bilingual systems.

KEY POINTS:

- Provide clients with the choice of official languages at the first opportunity.
- Ensure all electronic postings are available simultaneously in both official languages.
- For e-mail, apply the same principles as for correspondence.

E-MAILS AND OUT OF OFFICE E-MAIL MESSAGES

When a government employee initiates written e-mail correspondence and the intent is to send it to a group of people from an outside organization or to a group of employees, the information must be sent in both official languages. Out of office e-mail messages must also be provided in both official languages.

Example of a bilingual out of office e-mail message:

Le français suit :

Hi,

I am currently out of the office. I will gladly reply to your message upon my return on Wednesday May 17th.

Should you require immediate assistance please contact Name at (506) ### - #### or by e-mail: e-mail address

Have a nice day!

Bonjour,

Je suis présentement à l'extérieur du bureau. Il me fera plaisir de répondre à votre message à mon retour le *mercredi 17 mai*.

Pour une aide immédiate, veuillez communiquer avec *Nom* au *506-###-####* ou par courriel à : *adresse courriel*.

Bonne journée!