

**Guideline 011 - French Language
Services Guideline**

Effective Date: May 20, 2025

Preamble

Pursuant to the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency *Rules of Procedure*, the Complaints Director (Complaints Director) may issue guidelines at any time as the Complaints Director deems necessary to carry out his/her/their functions under the Act, or in regard to the LECA's practices and procedures. Where any guideline conflicts with the Rules or the Act/Regulation, the Rules and the Act/Regulation shall apply.

Purpose

The Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA) plays an important role in overseeing and investigating police misconduct in Ontario. LECA is committed to providing French language services in compliance with its obligations under the [French Language Services Act](#) (the FLSA).

The purpose of this guideline is to:

- Explain the requirements and scope of the FLSA;
- Affirm LECA's commitment to complying with the FLSA; and
- Inform the public of the general impact of these requirements on the complaints process.

Provision of Services in French in Ontario and Scope of the FLSA

- Section 5(1) of the FLSA provides that a person has the right to communicate in French with, and to receive available services in French from LECA.
- Section 7 of the FLSA provides that obligations may be subject to limits, as circumstances make reasonable and necessary.¹
- The FLSA ensures Ontario services are offered in French in 28 designated areas across the province where there are at least 5,000 Francophone residents or where Francophones constitute at least 10% of the population.

¹ *Lalonde v. Ontario* (2001), 153 O.A.C. 1 (CA): "The word "necessary" means that services can only be limited when this is the only course of action that can be taken...at a minimum they require some justification or explanation...it cannot simply invoke administrative convenience and vague funding concerns as the reasons for doing so".

- The FLSA does not legislate any responsibilities upon individual municipalities to provide French language services, although a [municipality](#) may choose to do so of its own accord.
- Municipal police services which have opted into the FLSA include:
 - Ottawa Police Service
 - Greater Sudbury Police Service
 - Peel Regional Police Service
 - Toronto Police Service
 - York Regional Police Service
- The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), as a division of the Ministry of the Solicitor General, provides French language services in compliance with the FLSA.

Guideline for the Provision of French Language Services

- LECA is committed to ensuring its services are accessible to Ontarians equally in either French or English.
- LECA makes an active offer of French language services at first contact with an individual, which includes taking measures that it considers appropriate to make the individual aware of the availability of those services.
- Once a request for services in French is made, LECA will provide French language services in their totality.

Reviewing Complaints:

- Members of the public may submit complaints in French or English.
 - Where a complaint is submitted in French or a complainant indicates that French is their preferred language of communication, either on a form, verbally or in writing, the complaint will be deemed a **French Complaint** and all relevant policies and provisions relating to the provision of the French language services shall apply.
 - A French-speaking or bilingual staff member will provide support to a French Complaint.
 - All correspondence related to a French Complaint will be translated into French.
 - The Complaints Director may refer a French Complaint to the OPP or to a municipal police service which has opted into the FLSA.
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- A decision letter to refer or retain an investigation of a French Complaint will indicate that:

- The quality of French language services will be of equivalent quality to the same service provided in English.
- All file-related correspondence will be provided in French;
- The complainant will be interviewed by an investigator in their language of choice (French or English).
- An investigative report will be provided in the complainant's language of choice (French or English).

Requests for Review:

- Requests for review pursuant to s. 71 of the PSA or s. 167(3) of the CSPA may be submitted in French or English.
- A French-speaking or bilingual staff member and/or a LECA third-party service provider will be assigned to support the review of an investigation of a French Complaint.
- A complainant may provide written submissions in support of their request for review in French or English.
- All submissions and documentary evidence provided in French will be translated to English before the review process commences.
- Decisions will be released in the language (French or English) requested by the complainant.

Judicial Review Applications:

- All judicial review materials in relation to a French Complaint shall be translated into both French and English.

References:

- LECA French Services FAQs
- French Language Services Request Form
- [LECA Rules of Procedure](#)
- [French Language Services Act](#)
- [Part X of the Community Safety and Policing Act 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 1, Sched. 1](#)

Feedback, Inquiries, and Complaints:

Feedback about the quality of French language services or this guideline can be sent to LECAFrenchServices@ontario.ca.

Complaints about LECA's compliance with its obligations under the FLSA may be sent to the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario. The Ombudsman's jurisdiction includes ensuring that the rights of Ontarians and the obligations of government agencies are respected according to the FLSA. For more information, visit their website:

www.Ombudsman.on.ca/.