



FOLLOW-UP NOTE

Consultation on the *Police Review Commission*

March 2025

Introduction

[1] On November 27, 2024, the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services consulted Alberta's Francophonie in connection with the creation of the Police Review Commission ('PRC'). Nearly fifteen participants attended the session, including representatives of francophone community organizations such as the ACFA, the Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society ('AJFAS'), the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Alberta ('AJEFA'), the Réseau Santé Alberta ('RSA') and the Comité FrancoQueer de l'Ouest ('CFQO').

[2] In addition, the ACFA, the spokesperson for Alberta's Francophonie, and several other organizations, including AJFAS and AJEFA, were involved in the consultation process to overhaul the province's emergency and police services. In April 2021, the three organisations took part in a consultation as part of the review of the Police Act. In March 2022, the ACFA submitted a brief to the Ministry of Justice and the Solicitor General entitled *A provincial Police Service that Responds to the Rights, Safety, and Needs of Alberta's Francophonie*.¹

[3] The ACFA would like to take this opportunity to expand on several important points that participants shared with representatives of the Department of Justice and the Francophone Secretariat during the consultation session. We believe that it is important to grasp these elements as they would allow the PRC to offer French-language services in a targeted manner in order to maximize available resources and be more inclusive towards the Francophonie, while illustrating that Alberta's Francophonie is ready to collaborate with the government to offer these services.

[4] In particular, the ACFA would like to present, first, a contextual overview of the status of French in Alberta. Secondly, we will return to the avenues for reflection and recommendations concerning the creation of the CEP in relation to the themes discussed during the consultation, namely (1) improving accessibility, (2) alternative dispute resolution processes and restorative practices, (4) recruitment, retention, integration and training, and (5) other topics of discussion.

¹ ACFA, 2022, *A provincial Police Service that Responds to the Rights, Safety, and Needs of Alberta's Francophonie*.

Status of French in Alberta

Demographic Portrait

[5] Alberta's French-speaking community is firmly rooted in the province's history, demographics and institutions.

[6] The first francophone presence in Alberta dates back to the 18th century, more than 250 years ago. French was the first European language spoken in what is now Alberta. By the 19th century, several Métis communities, Franco-Catholic missions and Francophone villages had been established. Among them, four (4) villages became officially bilingual: Beaumont, Legal, Falher and Plamondon.²

[7] Today, Alberta has the largest population with French as its first official language spoken and living in a minority situation in Canada, after Ontario and New Brunswick.³

[8] According to Statistics Canada's 2021 census, 79,010 (1.9%) Albertans have French as their first official language spoken; 85,290 (2%) say French is their mother tongue; and 260,415 (6.2%) say they have a knowledge of French.⁴

[9] French is the 4th most common mother tongue in Alberta, after English which ranks 1st (3,083,840), Tagalog 2nd (108,395) and Punjabi 3rd (91,070). However, French ranks 2nd behind English in terms of knowledge of the language.⁵

[10] Among French-speaking Albertans, Statistics Canada estimates that 119,690 are likely to request services in French, or 2.6% of Alberta's population.⁶

[11] Alberta also has the second-largest population of children eligible for minority official language education in the country (excluding Quebec). The 2021 census shows that there are 67,154 children aged 0 to 18 with at least one parent who is a person entitled under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, representing 6.9% of children in the Alberta population.⁷ However, these figures had some limitations as they consider families from the same household. Some children may have been excluded from this count if one of their parents, brothers or sisters did not live in the same household. Statistics Canada then produced a study to estimate the number of children; the new figures came to 75,055 eligible children.⁸

[12] It is also important to note that the median age of the francophone population is 43, which is higher than the median age of the province's total population, which is 38. In

² Government of Alberta. "Francophone Heritage in Alberta". <https://www.alberta.ca/francophone-heritage>

³ Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*

⁴ Sociopol. 2024. *Démographic Portrait of Alberta's Francophonie : Provincial Profile*. https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Alberta-Portrait-provincial_Traduction-EN.pdf

⁵ Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*

⁶ Sociopol. 2024. *Démographic Portrait...* p.7

⁷ Sociopol. 2024. *Démographic Portrait...* p.42

⁸ Statistics Canada. 2024. *Study on the Underclassification of Children Eligible for Instruction in the Minority Official Language in the 2021 Census*. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/98-26-0008/982600082021001-eng.pdf>

fact, the francophone population has a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (18%), compared with the proportion observed in the general population (14%).⁹

[13] Moreover, the French-speaking population has grown and diversified over the years. This has had a significant impact on the growth of Alberta's Francophone community and the demand for French-language services.

[14] The number of Albertans with French as their first official language spoken has increased by 35.9% over 20 years (2001-2021).¹⁰ The number of Albertans with a knowledge of French has increased by 54.6% over 30 years (1991-2021).¹¹

[15] Although many francophones were born in Alberta, the majority came from across Canada and around the world. Among Albertans whose first official language spoken is French, approximately 24% were born in Alberta, 44% came from elsewhere in Canada and 32% from elsewhere in the world.¹²

[16] A closer look at the data from the 2021 census shows that 3,120 (4%) Francophones identify themselves as Aboriginal, mainly Métis (74%).¹³

[17] In terms of ethno-cultural diversity, 22,935 (29%) francophones belong to a visible minority group. Of these, 11,480 (15%) identify as black, 4,340 (6%) as Asian, 3,845 (5%) as Arab and 2,665 (3%) as Latin American.¹⁴

[18] The percentage of Albertans with an immigrant background within Alberta's francophone population is higher than within Alberta's total population, which stands at 23%. Africa is the birthplace of 50% of this francophone immigrant population, a significant difference from Alberta's total immigrant population, 57% of whom come from Asia.¹⁵

[19] The French-speaking population is also dispersed across the province, as Francophone communities have historically been established throughout the province. About a third of the French-speaking population lives in Calgary, a third in Edmonton and the remaining third is scattered among medium-sized cities (Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lethbridge), towns with federal services such as national parks (Jasper, Banff) and military bases (Wainwright, Cold Lake), more traditional rural communities (Rivière-la-Paix region, Saint-Paul, Bonnyville, Legal, Morinville, Beaumont, Plamondon) and new communities (Calgary and Edmonton suburbs, Brooks).

⁹ Sociopol. 2024. *Démographic Portrait...* p.21

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, 2019. The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019016-eng.pdf?st=cv_SYlJD; Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*

¹¹ Statistics Canada, 2019. The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2019016-eng.pdf?st=cv_SYlJD; Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*; Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 1991 Census of Population, Alberta*; Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 1996 Census of Population, Alberta*

¹² Sociopol. 2024. *Démographic Portrait...* p.27.

¹³ Sociopol *Démographic Portrait...* p.31.

¹⁴ Sociopol *Portrait démographique...* p.32.

¹⁵ Sociopol *Portrait démographique...* p.32

[20] Here is a table summarising the Francophone presence in these municipalities, including the number of children eligible for minority-language education.¹⁶

Municipalities	First official language spoken (FOLS)	Knowledge of French	Potential demand for services in French	Indigenous identity among those with French as FOLS	Children (0 to 18 years old) eligible for instruction in the minority official language	Ethnocultural diversity among those with French as FOLS
Airdrie	1 525 (2,1%)	5 410 (7,3%)	2 460 (3,3%)	40 (2,6%)	1 850 (8,6%)	455 (29,8%)
Banff	265 (3,9%)	880 (12,8%)	845 (10,2%)	0 (0%)	110 (12,4%)	20 (7,5%)
Beaumont	790 (3,8%)	2 030 (14,5%)	1 265 (6,15%)	40 (5%)	700 (11,1%)	130 (16,5%)
Bonnyville and surrounding area	865 (4,4%)	2 265 (11,6%)	1 380 (7%)	70 (8,1%)	610 (12,1%)	10 (1,2%)
Brooks	390 (2,7%)	540 (3,7%)	385 (2,6%)	0 (0%)	205 (4,9%)	285 (73%)
Calgary	23 590 (1,8%)	86 140 (6,7%)	34 640 (2,7%)	695 (2,9%)	19 845 (6,9%)	8 370 (36%)
Camrose and surrounding area	235 (0,8%)	1 035 (3,6%)	425 (1,5%)	15 (6,4%)	240 (3,9%)	15 (6,4%)
Canmore surrounding area	920 (5,4%)	3 180 (18,6%)	1 395 (8%)	0 (0%)	425 (14,7%)	40 (4,3%)
Chestermere	300 (1,4%)	925 (4,2%)	390 (1,8%)	0 (0%)	360 (5,9%)	100 (33,3%)
Cochrane	790 (2,5%)	2 880 (9,2%)	1 150 (3,6%)	10 (1,2%)	790 (9,7%)	25 (3,1%)
Cold Lake	815 (5,3%)	1 930 (12,6%)	1 100 (7,1%)	50 (6,1%)	555 (13,1%)	45 (5,5%)
Crowsnest Pass surrounding area	125 (1%)	500 (4,1%)	250 (2%)	0 (0%)	65 (3%)	0 (0%)
Edmonton	23 205 (2,3%)	67 175 (6,7%)	33 165 (3,3%)	600 (2,6%)	17 265 (7,9%)	10 750 (46,3%)
Falher surrounding area	1 240 (25,3%)	1 815 (37,1%)	1 610 (29,5%)	30 (2,4%)	420 (35,9%)	20 (1,6%)
Fort Saskatchewan	420 (1,6%)	1 495 (5,6%)	735 (2,7%)	0 (0%)	525 (8%)	70 (16,9%)
Grande Prairie	1 575 (2,5%)	4 890 (7,7%)	2 315 (3,6%)	150 (9,5%)	1 650 (10%)	250 (15,9%)
Grande Prairie County and	410 (1,4%)	1 470 (5%)	675 (2,3%)	35 (8,5%)	455 (5,6%)	20 (4,8%)

¹⁶ Sociopol Portrait démographique...

surrounding area						
High Prairie, Slave Lake and surrounding area	365 (2,2%)	625 (3,7%)	675 (4%)	0 (0%)	210 (4,9%)	35 (9,9%)
Hinton, Edson and Yellowhead County	575 (2%)	1 825 (6,5%)	855 (3%)	55 (9,6%)	375 (5,8%)	35 (6,3%)
Jasper	175 (4,5%)	765 (19,5%)	465 (10%)	25 (13,9%)	150 (21%)	10 (5,6%)
Lac La Biche County and surrounding area	410 (5,4%)	895 (11,8%)	580 (7,7%)	35 (8,5%)	290 (16,5%)	10 (2,4%)
Lacombe and surrounding area	330 (0,9%)	1 530 (4%)	655 (1,7%)	15 (4,8%)	395 (4,1%)	10 (3,1%)
Leduc and surrounding area	990 (1,9%)	2 990 (5,7%)	1 395 (2,7%)	70 (7,3%)	710 (5,4%)	100 (10,2%)
Legal and surrounding area	1 400 (2,8%)	3 610 (7,3%)	2 245 (4,4%)	50 (3,6%)	915 (7,5%)	35 (2,5%)
Lethbridge	920 (1%)	5 060 (5,3%)	1 795 (1,8%)	15 (1,6%)	955 (4,6%)	275 (29,9%)
Lloydminster	185 (1%)	935 (4,9%)	345 (1,8%)	15 (8,1%)	295 (5,7%)	30 (16,2%)
Medicine Hat	475 (0,8%)	2 210 (3,6%)	1 035 (1,7%)	25 (5,3%)	640 (4,9%)	60 (12,8%)
Okotoks and surrounding areas	1 120 (1,5%)	4 425 (6,1%)	1 685 (2,3%)	75 (6,8%)	1 025 (5,9%)	65 (5,9%)
Peace River and surrounding areas	605 (4,6%)	1 365 (10,4%)	850 (6,5%)	25 (4,2%)	370 (11,1%)	50 (8,3%)
Red Deer	1 285 (1,3%)	5 315 (5,4%)	2 200 (2,2%)	60 (4,7%)	1 370 (6,1%)	340 (26,5%)
Red Deer County and surrounding areas	500 (1%)	2 145 (4,4%)	840 (1,7%)	35 (6,8%)	630 (5,5%)	10 (1,9%)
Rocky View County	395 (1%)	2 805 (6,9%)	865 (2,1%)	15 (3,8%)	650 (7,1%)	55 (13,9%)
Saint-Albert	1 815 (2,7%)	7 115 (10,6%)	2 930 (4,3%)	75 (4,1%)	1 480 (9,7%)	270 (14,8%)

Saint-Paul and surrounding areas	1 025 (7,8%)	2 145 (16,2%)	1 525 (11,4%)	55 (5,4%)	650 (20,2%)	0 (0%)
Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and surrounding areas	1 250 (1,4%)	4 775 (5,4%)	2 400 (2,7%)	65 (5,2%)	1 120 (5,3%)	145 (11,6%)
Strathcona County (including Sherwood Park)	1 660 (1,7%)	6 725 (6,9%)	2 725 (2,8%)	60 (3,6%)	1 745 (7,9%)	245 (14,8%)
Wainwright	150 (2,4%)	340 (5,4%)	215 (3,4%)	30 (20%)	155 (10,6%)	0 (0%)
Wood Buffalo (including Fort McMurray)	1 650 (2,3%)	4 380 (6,1%)	2 485 (3,4%)	120 (7,3%)	1 340 (6,9%)	385 (23,3%)

[21] To serve this population, there are a number of organizations and institutions managed by Alberta's Francophonie. Four (4) French-language school boards (Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord, Conseil scolaire FrancoSud, Conseil scolaire Centre-Est and Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest) administer 45 primary and secondary schools, serving a total of 9,550 students. As for early childhood education, there are more than fifty daycare centres and preschools, many of which are integrated into French-language schools.¹⁷ There is also the ACFA and its 13 regional offices, as well as over sixty community organisations. Alberta's French-speaking community also benefits from a large number of private companies.

[22] Other organisations and institutions run by the English-speaking majority also offer services in French. These include one French-language post-secondary institution, the University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean, and more than 225 schools offering French immersion programmes or French as a second language courses.

Legislative framework

[23] Five main pieces of legislation govern the provision of French-language services in Alberta and the recognition of Alberta's Francophonie: (1) the Official Languages Act, (2) the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, (3) Alberta's French Policy, (4) the Alberta Education Act and (5) the Alberta Languages Act.

[24] At the federal level, Alberta's French-speaking community is recognised as an official language community in Canada under the Official Languages Act. Adopted in 1969 and modernised for the last time in 2023, this Act recognises French as one of the country's two official languages, while highlighting its vulnerability and the need for

¹⁷ Learn Square Inc. 2023. *Analyse démographique et déserts de garderie : Portrait de la petite enfance francophone en Alberta*. <https://fpfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Analyse-demographique-et-deserts-de-garderie-Fevrier-2023.pdf> (available only in French)

specific measures to protect it. It guarantees access to services in French in federal institutions, many of which are located in Alberta.

[25] Under its obligations set out in the Official Languages Act, the federal government makes a number of financial transfers to the province of Alberta concerning official languages. These include the Canada-Alberta Agreement on French Language Services¹⁸ and the Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction ('OLEP').¹⁹

[26] In addition, Alberta has constitutional obligations regarding the provision of French-language services under sections 19 and 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.²⁰ These sections guarantee respectively (1) the right to communicate in French in federal courts, and (2) the right to a French-language education of equivalent quality to that offered to the English-speaking majority for all children of Canadian citizens who have French as their mother tongue, who received their primary school instruction in French in Canada, or one of whose children received primary or secondary school instruction in French in Canada, including school management.²¹

[27] At the provincial level, Alberta adopted its *French Policy* ('Policy') in 2017, which was revised in 2023, in order to develop the offer of services in French and, consequently, to broaden access to the federal government funds available for official languages.²²

[28] Through this Policy, the "Government of Alberta acknowledges the past, present and continued social, cultural and economic contributions of the province's significant and diverse French-speaking population. Through meaningful engagement, dialogue and collaboration, the government is committed to enhancing services in French to support the vitality of the Francophonie in Alberta in a targeted and sustainable manner as resources allow".²³

[29] The *Policy* "applies to all Government of Alberta departments, agencies, boards and commissions, and to court services".²⁴

¹⁸ Government of Canada. "Supporting access to French-language services in Alberta". <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2024/12/supporting-access-to-french-language-services-in-alberta.html>

¹⁹ Government of Alberta. "Official Languages in Education Programs". <https://www.alberta.ca/official-languages-in-education-programs>

²⁰ Government of Alberta. 2023. *French Policy : enhancing services in French to support the vitality of Alberta's French-speaking communities*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/713b7d93-c164-496a-8da8-813a34066ec4/resource/e9a9be57-1625-4bb7-82fb-cdfdb84c83c2/download/cul-french-policy-2023-english.pdf>. p.5

²¹ Government of Canada. "Section 23 – Minority Language Educational Rights". <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cs/sj/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/check/art23.html>

²² Government of Alberta. *French Policy*...

²³ Government of Alberta. *French Policy*...p.6

²⁴ Government of Alberta. *French Policy*...p.6

[30] To support the implementation of the *Policy*, in May 2024 the Government of Alberta published its *French Policy: 2024-28 action plan*.²⁵ This is the province's third action plan since the *Policy* was adopted.

[31] Alberta's Education Act contains a section specifying who may access French-language education in Alberta, in accordance with the principles of Section 23 of the Charter, as well as provisions for the establishment of French-language school regions, including the appointment of French-language school trustees.²⁶

[32] Finally, *Alberta's Languages Act* also allows Albertans to use French in the province's courts and members of the Legislative Assembly to use French in the Legislature.²⁷

Improving accessibility

In what other ways can the PRC eliminate barriers to participation?

[33] In order to improve access to PRC services for Francophone communities across the province, there are a number of factors to consider, including language barriers, rurality and diversity.

[34] Firstly, the language barrier is a major obstacle to accessing government services in the province, including those that will be offered by the PRC once it is up and running.

[35] In emergency situations, such as those that would otherwise be referred to the PRC, the provision of services in the person's mother tongue, or first official language spoken, is essential in order to respect Canadian citizens' right to safety.²⁸ When someone whose first language is not English finds themselves in a stressful situation, it can be difficult to communicate in their second official language. In fact, Canada's *Commissioner of Official Languages* explains that "Individual bilingualism is not absolute, and in emergency situations, it is only natural that Canadians revert to the instant ease and reassurance of their first official language".²⁹

[36] Moreover, a judgment of the Alberta Court of King's Bench handed down on June 10, 2021 in *Dubé v. RCMP, 2021 ABQB 451*, demonstrated that there may be discrimination against Francophones within the police force. In summary, Franco-Albertan Mario Dubé was assaulted in 2006 by members of the Edmonton Police Service and the RCMP, who used excessive force. One of the language-related observations was that one of the officers was "irritated by the fact that Mr. Dubé spoke loudly in French"

²⁵ Government of Alberta. *French Policy: 2024-28 action plan*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/2b40e62c-9c60-4cbf-adb8-d8b9ec6041e0/resource/ffe50331-5dde-47e3-b6b1-e8e9d210ca52/download/acsw-french-policy-action-plan-2024-2028.pdf>

²⁶ Province of Alberta. *Education Act*. https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=E00P3.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779846450

²⁷ Government of Alberta. *French Policy...*p.5

²⁸ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. 2020. A Matter of Respect and Safety: The impact of Emergency Situation on Official Languages. <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/publications/studies-other-reports/2020/matter-respect-safety-impact-emergency-situations-official>

²⁹ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. 2020. A Matter of Respect and Safety...p.8

and that the agents did not take any steps to facilitate communication in French.³⁰ This case provides a concrete example of the existence of language barriers for French speakers when interacting with the police.

[37] Members of Alberta's Francophone community often have difficulty filling out documents in English, even when they are standardized, due to a lack of understanding of the fields to be completed. **The ACFA therefore recommends that the forms created by the PRC for filing complaints be translated and adapted so that this process is accessible in French.** To this end, the PRC could draw inspiration from the practices in force in British Columbia and Ontario, where forms are available in French and English (as well as in other languages).³¹ Offering forms in French would ensure better understanding among Francophones and enable them to fill in the forms correctly on the first try, thus reducing delays caused by errors or omissions.

[38] Secondly, as mentioned above, Alberta's French-speaking community is also spread across the province. Many Francophone communities are located in rural areas. This reality makes the disparity in services between urban centres and rural areas even more problematic for our community.

[39] To reflect the regional reality of Alberta's Francophone community, the ACFA's 13 regional offices offer services to Francophone communities in their area, (1) Bonnyville/Cold Lake, (2) Calgary, (3) Canmore/Banff, (4) Centralta, (5) Edmonton, (6) Grande Prairie, (7) Jasper, (8) Lethbridge, (9) Plamondon/Lac La Biche, (10) Red Deer, (11) Rivière-La-Paix, (12) Saint-Paul and (13) Wood Buffalo.

[40] While online services are an excellent way to reach a wider audience, the PRC must also recognize that access to high-speed internet is not guaranteed in all municipalities. Indeed, many rural areas in Alberta suffer from limited or unstable internet access, which could restrict the use of online services.

[41] The ACFA recommends that the Ministry study the addition of additional methods for filing a complaint with the PRC so that the process is accessible to Francophones established throughout the province. This could mean providing access to a bilingual French-English telephone line where complaints can be filed.

[42] If the PRC plans to set up offices in various municipalities, it is essential to consider the fact that in localities where there are Francophone schools, there is also a high concentration of Francophones in the surrounding area. Therefore, **the ACFA recommends that PRC offices located in a municipality with a francophone school have bilingual staff capable of offering services in French.**

[43] Third, as mentioned earlier, Alberta's Francophone community is becoming increasingly diverse; 29% of members of Alberta's Francophone community identify

³⁰ Dubé c. GRC, 2021 ABQB 451. https://albertacourts.ca/docs/default-source/qb/judgments/dub%C3%A9-c-grc-2021-abqb-451---motifs-du-jugement.pdf?sfvrsn=89697283_5 (Translated from French)

³¹ Office of the Police complaint Commissioner, *Complaints*, <https://opcc.bc.ca/complaints/>; Special investigations Unit, *Contact us*, <https://www.siu.on.ca/en/injured.php>

themselves as belonging to a visible minority. This can create additional barriers when interacting with the police or government commissions related to police work.

[44] For example, racial profiling within police forces in Alberta is still an issue for visible minority communities. According to documents obtained by CBC in 2017, Indigenous people (4% of francophones in Alberta) and Black people (15% of francophones in Alberta) are more likely than white people to be searched and stopped by the Edmonton Police Service.³²

[45] Indeed, the intersectionality between racial and linguistic identity creates a 'double minority' phenomenon for Francophones who identify as visible minorities. A Radio-Canada report also revealed that, within the francophone community, complaints have been made about racial profiling and anti-Francophone comments made by some police officers.³³

[46] In order to strengthen confidence in the CEP and to raise awareness of the realities and cultures of Francophones in Alberta, it is essential to create opportunities for exchanges between the CEP and the province's Francophone communities. In addition, the CEP plans to create community liaison positions to facilitate communication with communities across Alberta. The **ACFA recommends the hiring of a French-speaking community liaison officer with in-depth knowledge of the realities of Alberta's Francophone community.**

Alternative dispute resolution processes and restorative practices

What alternative dispute resolution groups and service providers would be appropriate? How should these groups and providers be selected?

[47] Francophone organizations in Alberta, such as AJEFA and AJFAS, have made their mark in the field of restorative justice, earning the trust and credibility of the province's Francophone communities.

[48] Created in 1990, AJEFA is the lead organization in the justice sector for Alberta's Francophonie. Its mission is to facilitate access to legal services in French for the general public and to promote the use of the French language in the administration of justice in Alberta.

[49] Thanks to the work of AJEFA, members of Alberta's Francophonie can exercise their constitutional right of access to justice in French. The organization offers various services and works closely with the provincial government to improve access to justice in the province. It should also be noted that the *French Policy* applies to judicial services.

³² Radio-Canada. « Profilage racial à Edmonton: la ministre de la Justice veut en savoir plus ». Radio-Canada, 15 septembre 2015. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/738949/profilage-racial-edmonton-autochtones-minorites-police-ministre-katheleen-ganley> (Available only in French)

³³ Kadjo, Danielle. « Écouter les francophones pour mieux réformer la police en Alberta. » Radio-Canada, 14 avril 2021. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1784635/police-reforme-alberta-francophone-racisme-diversite?fbclid=IwAR2Y7N-lwGJmPBiue705bKdwRHVul8EhQQ1obvB3zCtE95ygNONE9weg8KI> (Available only in French)

[50] Since 2015, AJEFA has been managing the *Alberta Legal Information Centre*, which provides legal information in English and French to Albertans. The centre provides an average of 1,500 consultations a year, helping to meet the legal needs of the community.

[51] In the area of restorative justice, the AJEFA makes a number of French-language resources available on its website and is a member of the *Alberta Restorative Justice Association* ('ARJA'). Its reputation, both within the francophone community and in Alberta's legal community, makes it a key player in this field.

[52] Another major player is AJFAS, a Francophone organisation established in 1999 in Edmonton. Working in the fields of education and crime prevention, its main mission is to prevent crime among young people and Francophone families of immigrant origin, while facilitating their integration into Alberta society.

[53] AJFAS administers the *Caravan Youth Justice Committee*, a restorative justice programme aimed at preventing crime among young French-speaking immigrants and their families. The committee is made up of trained members of the community, who support victims and young people who have caused harm in the recovery process.

[54] Considering the role of these francophone organizations in the restorative justice sector and in Alberta's Francophonie, **the ACFA recommends that the PRC work with them to provide services in the field of restorative justice.**

Recruitment, retention, integration and training

What recruitment strategies and community relations initiatives would help to attract a workforce that is representative of geographical and cultural diversity?

[55] In order to be able to offer services in French to members of Alberta's Francophonie, the PRC will need a workforce that is able to express itself in French. **The ACFA recommends several strategies to improve Francophone representation within the CEP workforce, including (1) identifying and hiring bilingual French-English staff within the CEP, (2) disseminating job offers to Francophone community organizations, and (3) collaborating with Campus Saint-Jean to offer courses in French.**

[56] First, the CEP could establish designated bilingual positions to hire employees from Alberta's Francophone community. This initiative would ensure that the PRC can fully offer its services in French to members of the community. Bilingual employees already exist within the departments and agencies that will report to the PRC, such as the *Alberta Serious Incident Response Team* ('ASIRT'). **The ACFA recommends that the Ministry identify and recruit these existing bilingual staff.**

[57] For positions where police experience is essential, many French-speaking police officers are already working in various police forces in the province, including the RCMP and the military police. Their expertise could be put to good use in meeting the PRC's bilingual needs.

[58] Secondly, the PRC could collaborate with organisations from Alberta's Francophone community to promote its vacancies. These partnerships would maximize the visibility of the opportunities among the province's Francophones. These organizations include the ACFA and its 13 regional offices, as well as Parallèle Alberta and several other organizations.

[59] The ACFA's regional offices serve as centres where Francophones can access information on job opportunities, programming of local activities and services in French, and other information relevant to their respective communities. In addition, these offices have an external network of Francophones that could be mobilised to fill positions within the PRC.

[60] Parallèle Alberta, the lead organization in the sector of economic development for Alberta's Francophonie, is mandated to provide employment services. Parallèle Alberta works with job seekers in its offices in Edmonton, Red Deer and the northeast of the province. Their team offers resume and cover letter development, English language training and practical resources.

[61] Third, Campus Saint-Jean offers a language training program for federal public service employees. There would be a real opportunity to work with the post-secondary institution to develop a similar program for provincial civil servants, or to adapt the existing program to allow Alberta government employees to learn French in an entirely francophone environment.

[62] Fourth, as mentioned earlier, Alberta's francophone community is rich in diversity. A growing number of francophones come from immigrant backgrounds, bringing valuable experience and skills to the PRC. In order to ensure adequate representation of these Francophones, the PRC should seek to collaborate with the various community organizations working with Francophone newcomers. Organizations such as Portail de l'Immigrant Association, which provides services and programs to newcomers and has offices in Calgary, and Francophonie Canadienne Plurielle, which has offices in Edmonton, Red Deer and Fort McMurray, would be valuable partners in helping the PRC recruit from Alberta's increasingly diverse francophone population.

[63] Furthermore, as the statistics above show, a large number of Francophones do not have French as their first official language spoken. These individuals, many of whom come from French Immersion schools, would be a major asset to the PRC. The PRC should consider working with the approximately 215 immersion schools in the province to promote and fill bilingual positions within the organization.

What training should be required for all PRC staff during the induction phase?

[64] According to Alberta's Francophonie, it is important that the PRC staff be well informed about the reality of Alberta's Francophone communities. **The ACFA recommends that the PRC provide its staff with training and documentation on the Alberta Francophonie.**

[65] The Government of Alberta has set an objection to “increase Francophonie and French Policy awareness across the Alberta Public Service”³⁴ Although this initiative is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, the PRC should consider working closely with this department and the Francophone Secretariat to provide training on the *French Policy*.

[66] The PRC would also benefit from working with French-speaking community organisations to provide training and develop information guides for staff.

[67] Thus, **the ACFA recommends that the PRC's approach should be based on talking about francophone communities with francophone communities.** Such collaboration would ensure that CEP officials, regardless of their role, develop a thorough understanding of Alberta's Francophonie. It is essential that training courses consider the reality of Francophone communities. Only Francophone organisations, rooted in these communities, can truly understand and transmit the cultural and linguistic specificities necessary for relevant and respectful education.

[68] This is why the subject of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) was raised during the consultation. Currently, RFPs are not developed in a way that considers the specific needs of Alberta's Francophonie to ensure the vitality of Francophone communities.³⁵

[69] RFPs aim to provide general services for the entire population, sometimes with a bilingual dimension, without taking into account the specific characteristics of Alberta's French-speaking community. This approach compromises the quality of services, as they require adjustments to be truly equivalent to those offered to the English-speaking majority. Simply translating services is not enough: a deep understanding of the linguistic and cultural issues specific to the French-speaking community is required.

[70] Alberta's Francophone organizations, which are often small and specialized, are in the best position to meet the unique needs of these communities. However, the current situation puts these organisations at a disadvantage, as it is often English-speaking organisations, which are often larger and not rooted in the French-speaking communities, that win the contracts. These organisations rarely have the capacity to understand the cultural and linguistic subtleties required to provide a quality service.

[71] **Accordingly, the ACFA recommends that the Government of Alberta work closely with stakeholders in Alberta's Francophonie.** Together, it is possible to design service agreements that more accurately and equitably meet the needs of francophone communities. This partnership should be a priority in the launch of RFP to ensure the vitality of Alberta's Francophonie, in keeping with the *French Policy*.

[72] One example is the work of AJFAS, which, in collaboration with the Edmonton Police Service, has created a resource entitled *The Handbook for Strengthening*

³⁴ Government of Alberta. *French Policy: 2024-28 action plan*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/2b40e62c-9c60-4cbf-adb8-d8b9ec6041e0/resource/ffe50331-5dde-47e3-b6b1-e8e9d210ca52/download/acsw-french-policy-action-plan-2024-2028.pdf>. p.8

³⁵ ACFA. Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028. P.16

*Harmony Between Communities and the Edmonton Police Service.*³⁶ This guide provides key information, such as the emergency services available, the steps to take when interacting with the police, interpretation resources for non-English speakers and the responsibilities of the police. Translated into 16 languages, this document could inspire the creation of a similar resource tailored to the needs of the PRC.

[73] Another example is the training developed by the CFQO on issues related to sexual and gender diversity that affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities within the Francophonie. The PRC could collaborate with the CFQO to raise awareness among Alberta civil servants of the issues affecting these Francophone communities, thereby promoting an inclusive and respectful environment for all.

Other topics for discussion

Linguistic obligations of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

[74] In Alberta, municipalities outside Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge have agreements with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police ('RCMP') for the provision of police services. As a result, Alberta already offers a number of services in French. Of the 124 RCMP detachments in the province, approximately 30 offer services in French. The following municipalities have French-language services: Airdrie, Bonnyville, Canmore, Chestermere, Cold Lake, Elk Point, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Jasper, Lac La Biche, McLennan, Red Deer, St. Albert and St. Paul. Note that the RCMP is currently reviewing the designation of its bilingual offices, so this list of municipalities may soon change.

[75] The RCMP is subject to section 20 of the Charter, which recognizes two fundamental rights: (1) "the right to communicate in French or English with certain institutions" and (2) "the right to receive services from those institutions in English or French".³⁷

[76] As a federal institution, the RCMP is therefore required to comply with section 20. Consequently, if a complaint filed with the PRC concerns the RCMP, it is imperative that the complainant be given the opportunity to submit it and to follow the entire procedure in the official language of his or her choice, including French.

[77] In light of these linguistic obligations, the **ACFA recommends that if the RCMP and the Government of Alberta negotiate the inclusion of the RCMP in the jurisdiction of the PRC that the complaint process be available in French, in order to ensure that the rights guaranteed by section 20 of the Charter are protected for every Albertan.**

³⁶ Alliance Jeunesse-famille de l'Alberta Society, 2011, *The Handbook for Strengthening Harmony Between Communities and the Edmonton Police Service*. https://issuu.com/edmontonpolice/docs/sh_french?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fflight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true

³⁷ Government of Canada. *Section 20 – Right for the public to communicate with and to receive services from federal institutions and New Brunswick institutions*. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csi-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/check/art20.html>