



Government of Alberta Budget 2023: Strategic Investments to Expand French Language Services

Brief submitted by the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) to the Honourable Travis Toews, President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, as part of the public consultations on the 2023 Budget

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Introduction

[1] The Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta ("ACFA") thanks the Government of Alberta for the opportunity to present this brief as part of the public consultations for the 2023 Budget.

[2] Founded in 1926, the ACFA is the spokes organization for Alberta's Francophonie. The ACFA rallies key stakeholders to protect the accomplishments and enhance the vitality of Alberta's Francophonie, and improve its members' rights. Its mandate is to represent Alberta's French-speaking population; promote their physical, intellectual, economic, cultural, and social well-being; and encourage, facilitate, and promote French-language learning and Alberta's Francophonie at large. In addition, the ACFA fosters the inclusion of French speakers, whether they have French as their mother tongue or as a learned language, of all origins within a plural francophone space.

[3] In this brief, the ACFA and RSA present the following:

- a) The **status of French in Alberta** by presenting a demographic portrait of Alberta's Francophonie and two legislative texts that support the offer of services in French and the recognition of the Francophonie in the province;
- b) An **overview** of the *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028*;
- c) Specific recommendations in relation to the *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie* and the mandate letters of the concerned ministries.

Status of French in Alberta

[4] Alberta's Francophonie is well-established in the province due to its history, demographics, and institutions.

[5] The first francophone presence in Alberta dates back to the 18th century, well over 200 years ago. French was the first European language spoken in the territory that became Alberta. As early as the 19th century, several Métis communities, Franco-Catholic missions, and Francophone villages were established. Four of these villages became officially bilingual: Beaumont, Legal, Falher, and Plamondon.¹

[6] Today, Alberta has the largest population with French as its first official language spoken and living in a minority setting in Canada after Ontario and New Brunswick.²

[7] Approximately 79,965 (1.88%) Albertans report French as their first official language spoken, 88,005 (2.06%) report French as their mother tongue, and 261,435 (6.13%) report knowledge of French.³

[8] In addition, Alberta has the second largest population of children eligible for minority language education in the country (excluding Québec). There are 67,140 children who have at least one parent that is a rights holder.⁴ Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* ("Charter") gives children the right to be educated in the minority official language; in Alberta this is French.

¹ Government of Alberta. "Francophone heritage in Alberta." <https://www.alberta.ca/francophone-heritage.aspx>

² Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

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

⁴ Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

[9] French ranks 4th among mother tongues 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] Moreover, there has been an increase and diversification of the French-speaking population over the years.

[11] The number of Albertans with French as their first official language spoken increased by 35.9% over 20 years (2001-2021).⁶ The number of Albertans with knowledge of French increased by 54.6% over 30 years (1991-2021).⁷

[12] Although many Francophones were born in Alberta, most came from all over Canada and the world. Among Albertans with French as their mother tongue, about 25% were born in Alberta, 50% came from elsewhere in the country (e.g. Quebec, New Brunswick, Ontario), and 24% came from elsewhere in the world, mainly from Africa.⁸

[13] Furthermore, the French-speaking population is scattered throughout the province, as Francophone communities have historically been established across Alberta.

[14] About one-third of the French-speaking population lives in Calgary, one-third in Edmonton, and the remaining third is scattered among medium-sized cities (Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lethbridge), cities with federal services such as national parks (Jasper, Banff, Canmore) and military bases (Wainwright, Cold Lake), more traditional rural communities (Peace River area, St. Paul, Bonnyville, Legal, Morinville, Beaumont, Plamondon), and newer communities (Edmonton and Calgary Metropolitan regions, Brooks).

[15] This French-speaking population has access to, for example, 43 Francophone schools, four Francophone school boards, nearly 40 Francophone daycares and preschools, one French-language post-secondary institution, 215 schools that offer programs for French learners (e.g., French immersion), two community health centers that offer services in French and more than 60 community organizations.

[16] In addition, two pieces of legislation provide an official framework for providing services in French in Alberta and the recognition of Alberta's Francophonie.

[17] At the federal level, Alberta's Francophonie is recognized as an official language community in Canada under the *Official Languages Act*. Adopted in 1969, this federal law recognizes French as one of the country's two official languages and guarantees access to services in French in federal institutions.

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

⁶ 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=pjEe95Zr>; Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2019. *The French Language in Alberta, 2001 to 2016*; 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*.

⁸ Government of Alberta. 2018. *The Francophonie in Alberta: Strong and Vibrant*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/56de91f7-c69e-4fac-8e82-a3b8c9025f25/resource/f4bf7d7f-cda2-4910-9b8e-daeb496553e9/download/albertasfrancophonecommunitiesstrongandvibrant.pdf>

[18] At the provincial level, Alberta adopted its *French Policy* in 2017 to develop its offer of services in French and expand its access to federal government funding available for this purpose.⁹ This policy "applies to all Government of Alberta departments, agencies, boards and commissions."¹⁰

[19] Within its *French 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."¹¹

The Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028

[20] The *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie 2023-2028* ("Action Plan")¹² is the most ambitious undertaking Alberta's Francophonie has ever undertaken to identify its priorities for the delivery of services in French by the provincial government.

[21] Developed by the ACFA, the Action Plan is a credible new tool to help guide government, elected officials, public servants and political parties on the priorities, opportunities, and challenges of Alberta's Francophonie, for implementing the province's *French Policy*.

[22] Work on the Action Plan began in June 2021. The ACFA conducted a rigorous consultation process. In all, 200 community leaders, representing over 40 community organizations and institutions, and 520 French-speaking Albertans participated in the consultations through interviews, focus groups, and a survey.

[23] The data collected was used to draft the final version of the Action Plan, which the ACFA officially unveiled in October 2022. The Action Plan includes nearly 200 actions over five (5) years in eight (8) targeted areas of intervention. Many of the actions have direct links to the Government of Alberta's priorities (e.g. business plans, action plans, mandate letters) and are low cost.

[24] For this reason, the ACFA proposes below a series of recommendations for the 2023 Budget based on specific actions identified in the Action Plan.

⁹ Government of Alberta. 2017. *French Policy*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/56f40d9c-6354-4c34-8d53-df3748dcb1c5/resource/457d1381-3523-46af-9dd1-17e8c6050cb6/download/french-policy-francais.pdf>

¹⁰ Government of Alberta. 2017. *French Policy*, page 4.

¹¹ Government of Alberta. 2017. *French Policy*, page 2.

¹² Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie, ACFA. https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Version-officielle_Plan-daction-FRAB_EN-1.pdf

Recommendations

Increasing the Canada-Alberta Agreement on French-Language Services

[25] The Government of Alberta signed an agreement with the federal government's Canadian Heritage specifically to develop the offer of services in French within the province, namely the *Canada-Alberta Agreement on French-Language Services*.¹³

[26] Historically, the Government of Alberta has received funding through this agreement which does not reflect the demographic weight of its French-speaking population. Alberta receives the second lowest amount of funding although its French-speaking population in a minority setting is the third largest in Canada.

[27] Despite the adoption of the *French Policy* in 2017, which among other things was intended to increase the Government of Alberta's capacity to access more federal funding to develop the offer of provincial services in French¹⁴, Alberta still receives an inadequate amount of funding under the agreement to meet the needs of a growing French-speaking population.

[28] The ACFA recognizes that the Government of Alberta is currently working with the federal government to negotiate a new agreement. With the support of the ACFA, the Government of Alberta could seize the opportunity to negotiate an enhanced agreement to secure its fair share of available federal funding.

[29] The ACFA believes that developing services in French as identified in the *Action Plan for Alberta's Francophonie* would be facilitated by increasing the available funds within the agreement. This would allow the Government of Alberta and Alberta's Francophonie to receive federal funding that they would not otherwise have received.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

A. Provide core funding to support the Alberta Bilingual Municipalities Association (ABMA).

[30] The ABMA has 17 member municipalities that wish to reap the economic benefits of bilingualism, including four officially bilingual municipalities (Falher, Beaumont, Plamondon, and Legal). The association works in four main areas: tourism development, attracting bilingual skilled workers, investor attraction, and developing initiatives in the energy sector. The ABMA aims to encourage strategic projects and initiatives of an economic nature that benefit all the regions represented.¹⁵

¹³ Francophone Secretariat and Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/f8a8b4ed-33e8-4b56-ac75-7aa991a19ce6/resource/e7ad6bd5-937c-4bd7-a9df-a84a9df5fe14/download/cmsw-2018-2019-canada-alberta-agreement-on-french-language-services-application-guidelines.pdf>

¹⁴ Government of Alberta. 2017. *French Policy*.

¹⁵ Alberta Bilingual Municipalities Association. <https://lecdea.ca/en/abma-en/>

[31] In her mandate letter, the Minister was given the directive to “**Strengthen and maintain a relationship** of mutual respect and cooperation with **municipal leaders** to serve Albertans more cooperatively.”¹⁶

[32] This dedicated funding for the ABMA would support the efforts of this network of bilingual municipalities in their work areas. In the long term, these efforts will not only foster economic development in the province, but also promote the economic opportunities Alberta can offer and give it a competitive advantage over other provinces.

B. Develop French-language resources in public libraries through grants to purchase material and increase the visibility and promotion of these resources.

[33] Libraries provide services and resources at no or low cost. Members of French-speaking communities across the province looking for resources have difficulty finding those resources in French.

[34] Although not directly related to the Minister's mandate letter, the Government of Alberta's *French Policy 2020-23 Action Plan* provides for access to French-language resources through the Alberta library system.¹⁷ This funding would help the ministry continue its efforts to implement the *French Policy*.

Ministry of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism

C. Develop a recruitment strategy for Francophone countries (e.g., West Africa).

[35] Immigration is one of the *Action Plan*'s targeted sectors of intervention. There is a problem with the vitality of Alberta's Francophone community, which the Government of Alberta can address through Immigration, namely a drop in the demographic weight of Francophones in Alberta.¹⁸ In addition, there is a labour shortage in the Francophone community, which causes serious problems in the early childhood, health (including mental health), education and community sectors, among others.

[36] According to data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the *Alberta Advantage Immigration Program* (AAIP) admits only 25.7% of all permanent residents to the province. This rate is the third lowest of all provinces (excluding Quebec). The proportion of French-speaking residents admitted under AAIP is 0.8% of all AAIP admissions (2017-2021); this is below the percentage that Alberta's Francophonie represents.

[37] The Alberta government has the capacity and jurisdiction to increase these admission rates. For comparison, Saskatchewan and Manitoba admit over 60% of permanent residents to their provinces. In 2003, the province of Manitoba set a target of 7% Francophone immigration.

¹⁶ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, The Honourable Rebecca Schulz. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71e02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/6a069899-5a94-4975-a6b0-4b17ffc0e0/download/ma-mandate-letter-municipal-affairs.pdf>

¹⁷ Government of Alberta. 2020. *French Policy 2020-23 Action Plan*, p.12-13. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/96f8b5e5-7bf3-433b-832b-285dff9da82/resource/cf497bed-18e4-4c14-a7b1-346063c92a51/download/cmsw-french-policy-action-plan-2020-23.pdf>

¹⁸ Louan Charpentier. "En Alberta, le nombre de francophones augmente, mais leur poids démographique diminue." *Radio-Canada*, August 17, 2022. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1906157/recensement-rapport-francais-langue-maternelle-connaissance>

[38] By increasing the number of permanent residents chosen by the province and by ensuring that there is also a quota for French-speaking permanent residents, the province can fill the gaps outlined above.

[39] Moreover, in her mandate letter, the Minister was instructed to **"Work with the federal government to significantly expand the number of immigrants accepted under the Provincial Nominee Program and develop new pathways for Alberta companies to directly recruit workers with key skills in technology, agriculture, construction and other areas of shortage."**¹⁹

D. Improve the availability of reception and settlement services in French throughout the province, including in rural areas, by providing a designated budget.

[40] In addition to recruitment, the settlement of Francophone immigrants is a priority for Alberta's Francophonie.

[41] However, before the government can bring more Francophone immigrants to Alberta, it must ensure their reception, settlement, and integration. Thus, the province needs well-funded reception and settlement services in French established throughout the province. For most Francophone immigrants, there is also the challenge of learning English. For these immigrants, accessing English as a second language courses offered by the Francophone community is often a greater guarantee of success.

[42] Having a designated budget for these reception and settlement services for Francophone immigrants links directly to the Minister's mandate letter; she was directed to "Work with the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Outreach, Muhammad Yaseen, to ensure every Albertan has access to **English as a Second Language training and settlement services.**"²⁰

Ministry of Culture

E. Maintain funding associated with the Provincial Art Service Organizations and Provincial Heritage Organizations.

[43] Currently, two Francophone organizations receive funding through these two programs. The *Regroupement artistique francophone de l'Alberta (RAFA)*²¹ receives funding from the *Provincial Art Service Organizations* program. The *Société historique francophone de l'Alberta*²² receives funding from the *Provincial Heritage Organizations* program.

[44] In his mandate letter, the Minister was given two directives that relate to the work of the RAFA and SHFA, making it important to maintain the funding they receive from these two programs:

¹⁹ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism, The Honourable Rajan Sawhney. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/c627d082-142a-4c08-ae16-d2cc99cfc509/download/tim-mandate-letter-trade-immigration-multiculturalism.pdf>

²⁰ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism, The Honourable Rajan Sawhney.

²¹ *Regroupement artistique francophone de l'Alberta*. <https://www.rafa-alberta.ca/lerafa.ca/rafa/mission-mandat/index.php>

²² *Société historique francophone de l'Alberta*. <https://histoireab.ca/a-propos/shfa/plan-sectoriel/>

- a) "Ensure the **Alberta Foundation of the Arts** places **priority** on **Alberta artists, art, and cultural materials**;
- b) **Promote** and celebrate **Alberta's unique** cultural identity and **heritage**."²³

F. Maintain and develop the Francophone Secretariat.

[45] The Francophone Secretariat is essential to the *French Policy*. It "liaises with the Alberta's Francophonie and coordinates the implementation of the French Policy".²⁴

[46] To fully exercise its role, the Government of Alberta should ensure adequate and predictable funding for the Francophone Secretariat. The Secretariat must be able to fulfill its responsibilities within the entire government. Currently, the Francophone Secretariat's team of six employees needs to be bigger to fulfill its mandate. In addition, the Francophone Secretariat is headed by an Executive Director, but would benefit from an increase in this position to the level of Assistant Deputy Minister. The Francophone Secretariat must deal with the Assistant Deputy Ministers designated by each ministry to assist and advise the Ministry of Culture and the Francophone Secretariat on implementing the *French Policy*.

Ministry of Education

G. Implement the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on equivalency in Francophone education and Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[47] Francophone education is the cornerstone of Francophone communities. Schools are spaces where young people learn basic subjects, but also where they build their identity and live in the Francophonie.

[48] Since the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v. British Columbia*²⁵ decision in June 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld true equivalency in education.

[49] The impact of this decision is to ensure that right holders (i.e., those who have the right to education in the minority official language) can have access to all educational goods of the same quality and equivalent to those of majority language students. In addition, the judgment has the effect of creating remedial obligations concerning capital deficiencies, programming, and parental choice.

[50] The following are several examples of initiatives that are currently implementing or could implement the Supreme Court's decision:

²³ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Culture, The Honourable Jason Luan. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/456085b2-bc74-45fb-9aa4-a19b92c5567c/download/cul-mandate-letter-culture.pdf>

²⁴ Government of Alberta. "Francophone Secretariat." <https://www.alberta.ca/francophone-secretariat.aspx>

²⁵ Supreme Court of Canada. 2020. *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v. British Columbia*. <https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/18390/index.do>

G (1). Maintain and fund the French Education (K-12) Unit

[51] When the French Education Branch (FEB) closed in 2017, Alberta's Francophonie was concerned about the decrease in Francophone expertise within the Ministry of Education. The recent creation of a new unit dedicated to French language education is a step in the right direction. The government must ensure that the office is adequately funded to do its work.

G (2). Develop and implement long-term capital plans to evaluate what is needed regarding school capital projects and school maintenance from a retroactive perspective (20 years).

[52] As mentioned earlier, data released by Statistics Canada shows that 67,140 children are eligible for Francophone education in Alberta²⁶. Currently, there are close to 8,700 students in the Francophone system. Even with a small number of students compared to the considerable potential of 67,140, some schools are overflowing, and the services are not equivalent to those of the educational system of the English-speaking majority.

[53] The *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v. British Columbia* decision clearly gave governments the duty to ensure that the infrastructure of the minority is equivalent to that of the majority. In collaboration with Francophone school boards, the Government of Alberta should develop a long-term plan to address infrastructure deficiencies.

[54] In her mandate letter, the Minister was directed to “work with the Minister of Infrastructure (sic) develop a proposal **to significantly increase the number of schools in our growing communities.**”²⁷ These growing communities include Alberta's Francophonie.

G (3). Revise the funding formula to reflect the additional costs associated with French-language instruction (e.g., transportation, infrastructure, human resources, etc.).

[55] The pedagogical resources required for teaching in French are more expensive than those required for teaching in English.

[56] The Government of Alberta should ensure that Francophone schools, school boards, and teachers have access to the same quality of resources as those found in Anglophone schools.

G (4). Maintain the Centre francophone d'éducation à distance (CFÉD) and improve its funding.

[57] Since the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in parents and students turning to the use of online resources.

²⁶ Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population, Alberta*.

²⁷ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate Letter for the Minister of Education, the Honorable Adriana LaGrange. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/990fa607-be10-45ea-b823-af8f4626e8a7/download/educ-mandate-letter-education.pdf>

[58] In addition, almost one-third of French-speaking people live in rural areas of the province. Children from rural families may have difficulty travelling to urban centers to access Francophone education.

[59] The CFÉD gives everyone access to a Francophone education regardless of their location.

[60] The government should ensure that the CFÉD has the necessary funding to continue to offer its services and increase funding to meet the growing demand for this service.

G (5). Maintain a service agreement between Alberta Education and the Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta (FPFA) and increase the associated funding to continue the training of Francophone school councils.

[61] Since 1986, the FPFA has had the mandate to represent, equip, and bring together francophone parents in Alberta. The organization supports school councils made up of francophone parents.

[62] Since French-language resources for parent development are expensive and unique, the Government of Alberta should continue to provide funding to the FPFA to pursue its unique mandate and build parents' identity and pride in the Francophonie.

G (6). Develop a French-language learning program for adults who wish to complete their high school education.

[63] Francophone adults who have not had the opportunity to complete their high school education, for various reasons, should be able to do so in French. However, there is no offer currently available in Alberta.

[64] The Government of Alberta should invest in and create an adult learning program in French, so that these adults can graduate from high school and continue to participate in the province's economic recovery.

G (7). Maintain funding for accentalberta.ca.

[65] Accentalberta.ca is "a bilingual directory designed for school communities so they can find recreational, cultural and educational resources and activities that are available in French for students in Alberta."²⁸ Currently, the ACFA receives funding for this project.

[66] In addition to being an important pedagogical tool for Francophone and French immersion schools, the website supports parents' choices in their children's education. This helps not only French-speaking parents, but also English-speaking parents who choose the French immersion program for their children and parents who do not speak French but have their children enrolled in Francophone schools.

²⁸ ACCENT, <https://accentalberta.ca/en/about/index.php>

[67] Maintaining funding for the directory links to the Minister's mandate letter: "Continue to support **parental choice** throughout our **education** system."²⁹

G (8). Maintain funding for socio-cultural activities in French in OLEP, both for Francophone schools and French as a Second Language programs.

[68] Alberta receives funding from the federal government through the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP), which funds, among other things, socio-cultural activities in French in schools.³⁰ The current agreement expires in March 2023. The Government of Alberta government should develop a strategy for the upcoming negotiations.

[69] Socio-cultural activities are important because they help Francophone schools and school boards create spaces where young Francophones can come together and build their sense of belonging to the community. This contributes to the identity building of young Francophones, a pillar of Francophone education. Funding for socio-cultural activities also helps schools and school boards with French as a second language programs to ensure that all young people can practice their French at all levels and discover the various Francophone cultural communities.

Ministry of Advanced Education and the Ministry of Skilled Trades and Professions

H. Fund a Francophone education continuum through to post-secondary education, including addressing the bilingual labour shortage.

[70] Addressing the labour shortage is one of the most important factors contributing to the province's economic growth and recovery. The shortage is prevalent in almost every sector and region of the province. Post-secondary education can help address this shortage.

H (1). Provide stable and equivalent funding for Campus Saint-Jean.

[71] Campus Saint-Jean is the only francophone post-secondary institution west of Manitoba. It serves not only the French-speaking population of Alberta, but also those from across Canada and internationally. The institution welcomes close to 1000 students.

[72] Campus Saint-Jean is also recognized as one of the best francophone post-secondary institutions in the West to study education and nursing.

[73] In addition, Campus Saint-Jean is home to the Centre collégial de l'Alberta, the only francophone college in Alberta. Its programs are market-driven and offered in collaboration with industry partners.³¹

²⁹ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate Letter for the Minister of Education, the Honorable Adriana LaGrange.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/990fa607-be10-45ea-b823-af8f4626e8a7/download/educ-mandate-letter-education.pdf>

³⁰ Government of Alberta, "Official Languages in Education Programs." <https://www.alberta.ca/official-languages-in-education-programs.aspx>

³¹ University of Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean. <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-saint-jean/programs/college-studies/index.html>

[74] The Early Childhood Education, Health Care Aid, and Business Administration Technician programs are areas of high labour need across the province.

[75] A dedicated investment in Campus Saint-Jean would be one of the best ways to address the education, early childhood development and health workforce shortage. Increasing the number of seats, modernizing the facilities, and ensuring the institution's sustainability are just a few examples to ensure that Campus Saint-Jean remains a destination of choice for students from across Canada and worldwide.

[76] For example, Campus Saint-Jean is underfunded in terms of its number of seats. Our understanding is that since at least 2014, Campus Saint-Jean's full load equivalent (FLE) student quota for to calculate its share of the Campus Alberta Grant (CAG) has not been maintained based on enrollment. For example, in 2019-2020, CSJ received CAG funding for 534 FLE on an enrollment of 752 FLE. Regarding its infrastructure, the most recent structure at Campus Saint-Jean will soon be celebrating its 20th anniversary.

[77] An investment to expand the Campus Saint-Jean has a direct link to the objectives of the Government of Alberta. In his mandate letter, the Minister of Advanced Education was directed to "Expand the Targeted Enrolment Expansion program **to increase spaces in high demand programs in economic and medical fields of study.**"³²

[78] As for the Minister of Skilled Trades and Professions, his mandate letter includes the directive to "As the lead, work with the Minister of Advanced Education to invest in **innovation in the skilled trades** with a focus on ensuring **journeypersons obtain the needed skills in the modern economy.**"³³

Ministry of Forestry, Parks and Tourism

I. Encourage the development of tourism in French in the southern part of the province (e.g. thematic tours, signs, etc.).

[79] Since the pandemic, the tourism industry has stalled. Many businesses have had to close their doors, including francophone businesses, as they had little or no revenue.

[80] Francophone minority businesses (outside Quebec) represent almost 20% of Canada's GDP, according to a recent study.³⁴ The offer of services in French in the tourism industry is an "added value."³⁵

³² Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate Letter to the Minister of Advanced Education, the Honorable Demetrios Nicolaidis. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/e9c06b90-21b2-4cc2-8d37-157c57b0a8a3/download/ae-mandate-letter-advanced-education.pdf>

³³ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Skilled Trades and Professions, the Honorable Kaycee Madu. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/f57ecb95-06c2-4905-a708-553a1338a550/download/stp-mandate-letter-skilled-trades-and-professions.pdf>

³⁴ Joël-Denis Bellavance. "Les entreprises francophones jouent un rôle crucial pour la survie de la langue française." *La Presse*, September 26, 2022. <https://www.lapresse.ca/affaires/entreprises/2022-09-26/en-milieu-minoritaire/les-entreprises-francophones-jouent-un-role-crucial-pour-la-survie-de-la-langue-francaise.php>

³⁵ Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta. "Tourisme." <https://lecdea.ca/tourisme/>

[81] Overall, the tourism industry in Alberta accounted for almost \$8.4 billion of the province's GDP in 2019 before the pandemic³⁶.

[82] While there are still difficulties in the tourism sector, the government should invest in stabilizing tourism businesses. In fact, the Minister's mandate letter directs him to "work with the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, Miranda Rosin, to **develop** and begin implementing a **long-term tourism strategy**."³⁷

Ministry of Justice

J. Continue to designate bilingual French/English justice positions to ensure that French-speaking Albertans have access to services in French in their interactions with the justice system. / Translate laws.

[83] French-speaking Albertans have the right to access justice in the official language of their choice.

[84] Bilingual positions help French-speaking Albertans who need services in French to access justice without undue delay, compared to what is available in English. In addition, the law is very complex and challenging to understand; Francophones need access to advice to assist them in their language.

[85] To ensure equitable access to justice for Francophones, several positions should include bilingual French/English personnel. Examples include crown attorneys, court clerks, judges, mediators and administrative staff. In particular, there is a need for a French language legal counsel and interpreter position in the Provincial Court system.

[86] Certain laws could also be translated since they provide an important foundation for the daily life of Francophones in Alberta. Funding should be provided for this purpose. The laws are the following: (1) Occupational Health and Safety; (2) Alberta employment standards rules; (3) Clare's Law; (4) Early Learning and Child Care Act; (5) Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act; (6) Education Act; and (7) Human Rights Act.

[87] These proposals link to the Minister's mandate letter, which directs him to "Conduct a strategic review of provincial resourcing to the courts and advance recommendations to ensure that enough funding is in place to ensure that **Albertans have a fair and accessible justice system**, including without limitation, modernizing court services and increasing the availability of remote hearings for lawyers and their clients"³⁸.

³⁶ Travel Alberta. "Economic Impact: Tourism Related GDP and Taxes." <https://industry.travelalberta.com/research/tourism-indicators/economic-impact>

³⁷ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism, the Honorable Todd Loewen. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/43c281f8-1e76-4f63-965a-4839e3c63c5f/download/fpt-mandate-letter-forestry-parks-and-tourism.pdf>

³⁸ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Justice, the Honorable Tyler Shandro. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/81609211-2b5a-4979-88ca-498ade617342/download/jus-mandate-letter-justice.pdf>

Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services

K. Provide funding for employment services by and for Francophones in areas of high Francophone density that are currently unserved.

[88] The employment services currently available in the province, except for Edmonton and surrounding areas and the Northeast of the province (St. Paul, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche and Plamondon), where "Accès Emploi³⁹" offers services by and for Francophones, offer only an English service or a partial service in French. In addition, employment service providers need to be aware of the reality and the specific needs of the Francophone population to better serve this population.

[89] Currently, several cities and regions with a strong Francophone population density do not have access to French language employment services (e.g. Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray). This can cause challenges for Francophones seeking employment support.

L. Work with the Fédération des aînés franco-albertains (FAFA)⁴⁰ to plan and implement initiatives and programs that enable Francophone seniors to age safely in their communities and homes, including hiring of French-speaking social workers.

[90] Seniors have reduced ability to use their second language; for example, due to medical conditions such as hearing loss or neurological disorders. In these cases, it would be preferable that they have access to services in French.⁴¹

[91] Therefore, hiring bilingual health and social workers is a priority to meet the needs of Francophone seniors. During the pandemic, the FAFA noted a substantial demand among this population for support from their loved ones or social workers. There is also a need for staff to be present in the Francophone community to understand their situations better.

[92] As well, there are four retirement homes that can serve the Francophone senior population; Manoir Saint-Joachim, Manoir Saint-Thomas and Centre de santé Saint-Thomas in Edmonton and Centre de santé Sacré Cœur in McLennan. However, these sites are near capacity. In Edmonton, *La Société des Manoirs*⁴² is currently working on ways to meet the need.

[93] In his mandate letter, the Minister was directed to "Work with the Minister of Health, who is the lead, to develop a strategy to expand seniors lodges and seniors' facilities to keep up with growth and

³⁹ Accès Emploi. <https://accesemploi.net/en/home/>

⁴⁰ Fédération des aînés franco-albertains. <https://www.fafalta.ca/fr/fafa/fafa/mission>

⁴¹ Emily Seale et al. 2022. "Patient-physician language concordance and quality and safety outcomes among frail home care recipients admitted to hospital in Ontario." *CMAJ*, 194: E899-908.; Marie Drolet et al. 2017. "Enjeux de l'accessibilité et de l'offre active des services sociaux et de santé au sein de la francophonie canadienne en situation minoritaire." Dans *Santé et services sociaux en contexte linguistique minoritaire* sous la direction de Marie Drolet, Pier Bouchard et Jacinthe Savard, University of Ottawa Press, pages 14-32.; Mwali Muray et al. 2022. "L'accès aux soins de santé des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire (CLOSM) au Canada : une recension des écrits." *Minorités linguistiques et société/Linguistic Minorities and Society* 19 : 62-94.

⁴² La Société des Manoirs. <https://www.msjsj.ca/home>

increased demand."⁴³ This directive is especially important for the Francophonie, as the Francophone population in Canada, including Alberta, "is aging faster than the Anglophone population of Canada."⁴⁴

Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

M. Increase the offer of services in French in regions with strong Francophone population density.

[94] According to one study, language is a "determinant of health," and therefore, when health services are not available in the patient's first language, it creates negative consequences for the patient.⁴⁵

[95] The ACFA and the Réseau Santé Alberta have submitted a brief to the Ministry of Health as part of the "Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System (MAPS)" initiative. This brief outlines the specific issues facing Francophones in minority communities and the need for access to French language health services, as well as possible solutions.⁴⁶

[96] In addition to the recommendations submitted by Alberta's Francophonie under MAPS, the Minister's mandate letter contains the directive to "Work with municipalities, doctors and allied health providers to identify strategies to **attract and retain health care workers to rural Alberta.**"⁴⁷

[97] To implement this directive and thereby increase the offer of services in French, the strategies identified to attract and retain health care workers should include a component for French-speaking staff to ensure that services are available in rural areas with a strong Francophone population density.

N. Maintain funding and ensure quality services in French-language retirement homes and long-term care facilities.

[98] As mentioned above, the population of seniors will continue to grow. The need for French-language retirement and long-term care homes will only increase. Therefore, the infrastructure currently available (mentioned in paragraph 94) will need to be maintained and expanded to provide the services that will be required in the context of an increase in the number of people needing to use them.

⁴³Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services, the Honorable Jeremy Nixon. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/a3dc22d6-053e-4b58-afdb-b71d576b799e/download/scss-mandate-letter-seniors-community-social-services.pdf>

⁴⁴ Mwali Muray et al. 2022. "L'accès aux soins de santé des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire (CLOSM) au Canada : une recension des écrits." *Translated from French*.

⁴⁵ Alexandra Ethier and Annie Carrier. 2022. "Accessibilité des services sociaux et de santé chez les minorités de langue officielle." *Minorités linguistiques et société/Linguistic Minorities and Society*, 18 :198-234. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1089185ar>

⁴⁶ ACFA and Réseau santé Alberta. 2022. "Modernizing Alberta's Primary Health Care System: Health Services that Consider Alberta Francophonie's Language and Cultures as Determinants of Health." https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/20221221_Memoire_ACFA-RSA_MAPS_FR_compresse-1.pdf

⁴⁷Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Health, l'honorable Jason Copping. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/80f58d18-bd94-45d9-9954-6df0fb8ae3c4/download/hlth-mandate-letter-health.pdf>

[98] In addition, staff working in these facilities will need to continue to be trained in the specific language and cultural needs of francophones and be prepared to provide the necessary level of care to a growing population of francophone seniors.

[100] These two elements link to the Minister's mandate letter in which he was directed to "**Improve provision of care to seniors** through implementing recommendations coming out of the Facility-Based Continuing Care Review and the Advancing Palliative and End-of-life Care in Alberta report. This **includes continuing to add continuing care congregate spaces as well as supporting seniors** to stay in their homes longer with additional supports and focus on providing appropriate home care."⁴⁸

Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services

O. Maintain and expand the availability of police services in French throughout Alberta.

[101] As the Government of Alberta is reviewing the creation of a provincial police service, it is important that the level of service to which French-speaking Albertans are accustomed remain or be increased. The ACFA prepared a brief to this effect with several recommendations as part of the government's consultations for the creation of a provincial police service.⁴⁹

[102] These recommendations link to the mandate letter the Minister received. In the mandate letter, the Minister is directed to "Work with the Minister of Justice, as the lead, and Municipal Affairs to launch an Alberta Police Services (APS)."⁵⁰

[103] The ACFA has already met with the Minister of Justice, Tyler Shandro, and public servants responsible for the study of the provincial police service to discuss its recommendations and thank them for their openness. The ACFA will continue to work closely with the Government of Alberta to ensure that the future provincial police service provides adequate services in French. Financial support will be required for the ACFA to play its advisory role in this anticipated transition.

Ministry of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction / Ministry of Technology and Innovation

P. Include a French option when the registry is being modernized, to improve access to information and services provided through MyAlberta eServices, and ensure these services receive adequate resources, both in terms of people and materials.

[104] The government is currently surveying Albertans for their views on how to modernize the Government of Alberta's online and digital options as part of Alberta's Digital Strategy.

[105] Now is the time, while the system is under review, to make improvements by ensuring French translation of services that will be offered online or digitally (e.g. websites and other pages) to serve the

⁴⁸Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Health, the Honorable Jason Copping.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/80f58d18-bd94-45d9-9954-6df0fb8ae3c4/download/hlth-mandate-letter-health.pdf>

⁴⁹ ACFA. 2022. "A Provincial Police Service that Responds to the Rights, Safety, and Needs of Alberta's Francophonie."

https://acfa.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/20220330_Memoire_police-provinciale_FR.pdf

⁵⁰ Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, the Honorable Mike Ellis.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/f95ed5fb-d356-43e3-81b0-428ad2dee82a/download/pses-mandate-letter-public-safety-and-emergency-services.pdf>

community better. Planning for this translation at the outset, rather than after the modernization process, will minimize the associated costs.

Ministry of Children's Services

Q. Ensure that an amount is allocated to Francophone daycares in the agreement with the federal government / Maintain family daycare agency status for an officially designated Francophone association to secure core funding.

[106] The Government of Alberta and the federal government have reached an agreement under the *National Affordable Child Care Program*. However, the agreement does not explicitly provide funding for Francophone child care.

[107] The Francophone education continuum begins with a quality early childhood system. It is crucial for the education of Francophone children that parents have access to affordable spaces in Francophone daycares across the province. The early childhood period plays an important role in the future of our community.⁵¹

[108] There are difficulties in finding trained French-speaking early childhood staff, especially in rural areas, as well as a lack of infrastructure and space for minority language daycares.

[109] In fact, the Minister, in his mandate letter, was directed to " Work with the Minister of Affordability and Utilities to continue (sic) **promote affordable and accessible child care for parents** by ensuring the **equitable inclusion** and incentivization of both private and not-for-profit **child care operators** in our mixed market child care system, and by reducing unnecessary red tape and administrative costs for all providers."⁵²

R. Increase funding to existing Family Resource Networks (FRNs) so that services in French can be provided to children, youth, and families across the province, targeting unserved and high-density Francophone areas, thus improving the well-being, safety, and development of French-speaking children and youth.

[110] The province's Family Resource Networks provide high-quality support and prevention services to children and youth. Within Alberta's Francophonie, two FRN exist, namely the *Institut Guy-Lacombe de la famille*⁵³ based in Edmonton and serving the northern part of the province and the *Centre d'appui familial du Sud de l'Alberta*⁵⁴ based in Calgary and serving the southern part of the province.

[111] Moreover, offering services to families in their mother tongue is of paramount importance to getting to the root of the problem and helping children and their families in need. The two Francophone

⁵¹ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. 2016. "Early Childhood: Fostering the Vitality of Francophone Minority Communities." <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/publications/other/2016/early-childhood-report>

⁵² Premier of Alberta. 2022. Mandate letter to the Minister of Children's Services, the Honorable Mickey Amery. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/71ebe02e-bda3-46f3-8ddd-6bf3a0d3d7ca/resource/717fe075-77d6-4274-bc91-f8350b0bf36f/download/cs-mandate-letter-childrens-services.pdf>

⁵³ Institut Guy-Lacombe de la famille. <https://institutguylacombe.ca/?lang=en>

⁵⁴ Centre d'appui familial du Sud de l'Alberta. <https://centredappuifamilial.ca/en/>

family resource networks need additional financial support to be able to serve Francophones in their vast territories.