



FOR RELEASE
March 27, 2013

A new way forward for French language services

WHITEHORSE—As of April 1, the Government of Yukon is investing \$289,000, pending legislative approval, to introduce three pilot projects to strengthen French language services in the health and social service sector and to begin developing a corporate four-year plan on French language services.

The government will also establish the French Language Services Directorate as a stand-alone entity, with its own budget, rather than being part of a department. Elaine Taylor will remain the minister responsible for the directorate.

"We are embarking on a renewed relationship with the French community through its representative organization, Association franco-yukonnaise," Minister responsible for French Language Services Directorate Elaine Taylor said. "In the coming year, we will work closely with the Francophone community to develop tools to better meet the needs of French-speaking Yukoners."

The directorate will be hiring a full time employee to help implement the three pilot projects, which include: active offer of services that are available in French; implementing a robust interpretation service; and developing an implementation plan for designated bilingual positions in the health and social service sector to be in place by April 2014.

"These pilots offer us the perfect opportunity to improve our services to the Francophone community in ways that realistically respond to the needs of French speaking citizens," Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham said.

The four-year plan will ensure there is a corporate approach to providing improved levels of frontline French language services throughout the Yukon government.

"We are happy to be involved in the development of a more dynamic and concrete approach to the continued improvement of French language services in Yukon," Association franco-yukonnaise president Angélique Bernard said. "I believe this renewed collaboration will have a positive impact on the lives of French-speaking Yukoners and help resolve outstanding issues raised by our community throughout the years."

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See backgrounder attached.

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