



POSITION STATEMENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS BY AND
FOR THE FRANCO-ONTARIAN
POPULATION

2019

APRIL 2019







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VISION 2025 : Creative, united and committed to its well-being, Ontario's francophone community enjoys sustained growth, is proud of its language and its culture and thrives on its rich diversity all across the province. Welcoming and open, the community contributes to Ontario's vitality, in a bilingual province and grows in an environment where living and socializing in French has become an accepted norm. As a recognized leader, the community is active in the Canadian and international francophonie.

PILLARS	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF ACTION
 Growth and Vitality	Provide members of Ontario's francophone community an environment that promotes well-being, personal growth and quality of life in their language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development and Employability Accessibility and use of French language services
 Attraction and Retention	Recruit, attract and retain dynamic forces across the province to provide the means to live in French in an environment that meets their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration/Newcomers Children and Youth
 Participation and Celebration	Confirm and strengthen the sense of belonging and pride, as well as the active participation of Ontario francophones in the life of our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment and Participation Construction of Identity
 Cooperation and Organisation	Encourage a greater alignment of community efforts and strengthen its capacity to interact with government, private sector and non-profit sector representatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation and Organisation Capacity Development



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For a prosperous and flourishing Franco-Ontarian community

The Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) is the umbrella organization and the political voice of the province's 744,000 Franco-Ontarian citizens. We pursue the vision of an Ontarian Francophone community united in its diversity, working in solidarity and collectively engaged in ensuring its well-being.

Franco-Ontarians want to flourish as an official language minority community and to have access to French language services that are equal in quality to the services provided to the Anglophone majority. Much still needs to be done to attain that goal. In this regard, the AFO has prepared Position Statements on key issues that the community has identified as essential to its vitality.

Organizationally, the AFO develops its policies from the bottom up. The recommendations you will read in these Position Statements originate from our organization's base. They were adopted at our annual general meetings, by our board of directors or at the request of our members.

This document contains proposals targeting health, education, the economy, communications, immigration, language rights, and arts and culture. Your careful consideration of the priorities expressed herein will help to ensure the well-being of Ontario's Francophone and Francophile citizens, who have always been active players in the social and economic development of our province and country throughout their history.

Along with my best wishes, I express the hope that these Positions Statements will fuel your reflections on the issues facing the Franco-Ontarian community, the largest Francophone community in Canada outside of Quebec.

Carol Jolin

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carol Jolin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carol" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Jolin".

President



HEALTH

The recommendations made by the AFO and key players in the Franco-Ontarian health sector are not “simply a matter of identity politics.” More fundamentally, these demands are concerned with the direct impacts that variables such as “language barrier” and “minority setting” can have on the overall performance of the health system. They are fundamentally issues of quality, security and efficiency of care.

For further information on the AFO's recommendations in the area of health, please consult our White Paper on French Language Health Care in Ontario. To obtain a print copy, please email your request to bmichaud@monassemblee.ca.

1

FOR STRONG PLANNING ENTITIES WITHIN A STRONG HEALTH SYSTEM

The French Language Health Planning Entities (the ‘Entities’) have proven their worth since their inception in 2010. The Government of Ontario has the opportunity to maximize their potential in this time of transformation of the health system.

- The Government of Ontario, as part of its proposal for structural reform of the health system, should maintain the goal of improving access to French language health care services by preserving the community governance of the French Language Health Planning Entities, giving them a clear mandate and providing additional resources.

2

MENTAL HEALTH, HOME CARE AND PRIMARY CARE: THREE IMPORTANT AREAS

Francophones need a planning approach that is adapted to their needs. A safe and efficient system of quality health care cannot be achieved if the concrete needs of an important segment of the population are not understood and integrated into the global offer of services.

- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should develop a strategy and an action plan for Francophones and provide the funding needed for mental health care, home care and primary care. These strategies should be adapted to local realities in collaboration with the Entities.

3

FOR INFRASTRUCTURES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF FRANCOPHONES

One of the best ways to provide good service to the Francophone clientele is to establish infrastructures in which the patient knows that it is possible to obtain French language services. Examples are hospitals such as Montfort and Hawkesbury General and the Francophone and bilingual Community Health Centres. In regions with low numbers of Francophones or where it is difficult to recruit staff with proficiency in French, the government should exploit the possibilities provided by telehealth.

- The Government of Ontario should support and fund the creation of integrated models of French language health services, such as multiservice hubs and community health centres, as well as innovative service delivery models, such as telehealth.





EDUCATION

A French language educational continuum managed by and for Francophones from early childhood education to the post-secondary level is essential to counter assimilation in the Franco-Ontarian community and to ensure its future.

1

FOR GOVERNANCE BY AND FOR FRANCOPHONES AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Over the past decades, Francophones have demonstrated their ability to manage their network of elementary and secondary schools. Francophones govern their educational institutions from the early childhood level to the college level, but they are still without a French language university governed by and for Francophones. The significant lack of French language university programs in the Toronto area provides a perfect opportunity to establish the province's first French language university governed by and for Francophones.

- **The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities should support the creation of an independent French language university with a provincial mandate and governance by and for Francophones.**



2 TO HELP STUDENTS IN OUTLYING AREAS

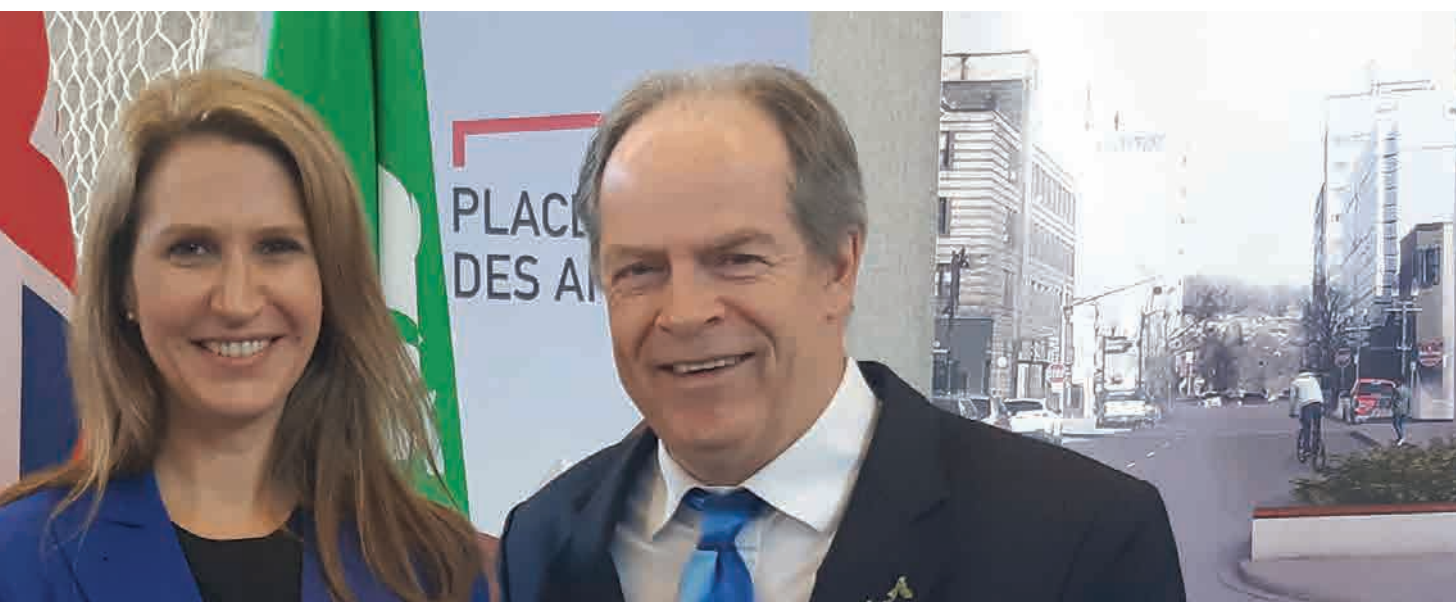
The Government of Ontario's grant for French language studies was eliminated in 2012. This cutback has in no way helped the province's fiscal situation, but it has contributed to limiting access to post-secondary education in French. Young Francophones, especially those who live in outlying areas, must often move away from home to continue their post-secondary education in French.

- **The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities should establish a grant program to encourage Ontario's Francophones in outlying areas to pursue their post-secondary education in French.**

3 TO HELP FRANCOPHONES WITH WEAK READING SKILLS TO ENTER THE LABOUR MARKET

Illiteracy and the lack of adult education and training programs are key challenges to address so that the Franco-Ontarian community can fully achieve its employment potential. About one in two Francophones in Ontario face literacy challenges and 78% of the province's adult Francophones face challenges in the area of digital literacy. They must be provided with tools so that they can maximize their potential in today's job market.

- **The Government of Ontario should support the actions of its partners in education and training, namely the literacy centres, the twelve French language school boards and the two French language colleges, La Cité and Boréal, who are engaged in implementing the province's Adult Education Strategy for Francophones.**





ECONOMY

Ontario has 1.5 million French-speaking citizens. The province could use this pool of Francophones to expand its economy by entering new markets. After geographical proximity, language is the second stimulating factor for trade and French is now the third language most spoken in business around the world. According to a Conference Board study sponsored by the AFO, we could do better in our economic exchanges with Francophone countries.

1

FOR FRANCOPHONE PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

The French presence in Ontario generates \$1.4 billion dollars in imports to Ontario's economy, but a mere \$58 million in exports. Approximately 83% of our international trade is with the United States, so our economy is not very diversified. Our balance of trade with the member countries of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), in which Ontario has observer member status, is negative. We can and must do better. Ontario's Francophones want to build the Ontario of today and tomorrow, as they have in the past.

- **The Government of Ontario should commit two full-time resources to working on Organisation internationale de la Francophonie initiatives aimed at strengthening economic ties with Francophone countries and creating partnerships to increase the number of Francophone immigrants to Ontario.**

2

FOR FRANCOPHONE PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Franco-Ontarians are present in all spheres of Ontario's economy. The government's role is not to create jobs directly, but it must help to create favourable economic conditions. Ontario is open for business. Let's help our businesses to reach out to new markets and prosper.

- **The Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade should propose initiatives to stimulate private businesses, social enterprises, co-operatives and Franco-Ontarian entrepreneurship at the local, regional, provincial and international levels.**





COMMUNICATIONS

French language media in Ontario have been greatly impacted by the sharp drop in government advertising revenue. All media are struggling to adapt to the advent of social media and the Internet and many have simply closed their doors. The industry needs support to survive. Our media are part of the social fabric of our community.

To learn more about the AFO's recommendations regarding media, please consult our White Paper on Francophone Media in Ontario. To obtain a print copy, please email your request to bmichaud@monassemblee.ca.

1

FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Publishing French language advertising in Franco-Ontarian media allows the Government of Ontario to hit two birds with one stone: making its programs and services known to Francophones and supporting our media.

- The Government of Ontario should establish a funding program for Franco-Ontarian media through the advertising budget of the Advertising Review Board (ARB), similar to the existing program aimed at ethnic media and proportional to the demographic weight of Ontario's Francophone community (5%).

2

SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO'S FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY MEDIA

Through their financial support to Franco-Ontarian community media, the governments of Canada and Ontario contribute to the development of the province's Francophone community.

3

CREATE A FRENCH LANGUAGE MEDIA OBSERVATORY IN ONTARIO

Who are the consumers of our media? How many media are there? How many people use them? All media need to know who their clients are and to what extent they are using their product. But no independent audience measurements are being done to define or to adequately measure these factors in minority settings. Our media need answers to these questions.

- The Government of Canada should fund the creation of an independent Media Observatory made up of a board of directors and a small staff tasked with tracking media use and monitoring the restoration of government advertising levels.



IMMIGRATION

In 2003, the Government of Canada set out an ambitious target: by 2023, Francophones immigrants to bilingual and Anglophone provinces should represent 4.4% of total immigration. Eleven years later, the Government of Ontario set out a target of 5% for Francophone immigration. Both governments are still far from reaching these goals. There are not enough resources to ensure that newcomers are welcomed effectively and to inform them of available French language resources.

To find out more about the AFO's recommendations regarding Francophone immigration, please consult our White Paper on Francophone Immigration in Ontario.
To obtain a print copy, please email your request to bmichaud@monassemblee.ca.

1

TO ESTABLISH A CONTINUUM OF IMMIGRATION SERVICES “BY AND FOR” FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES

If they are to meet their objectives for Francophone immigration in Ontario, governmental and community partners need to commit to completing and harmonizing the continuum of Francophone immigration services through an approach based on true equality for official language communities.

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, should provide adequate funding for infrastructure governed “by and for” Francophone communities to support a comprehensive and effective continuum of services to Francophone, allophone and Francophile immigrants. To achieve true equality of services, the number of welcome centres and providers of French language settlement services should be increased in every region of Ontario.

2

TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANTS ACROSS ONTARIO

Attraction and recruitment are vital to attaining the targets of both levels of government for Francophone immigration. A key step is to inform potential Francophone immigrants that it is possible to live in French in Ontario. This requires a proactive and targeted approach to reach out to potential Francophone immigrants in their country of origin or transition.

- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services should develop and implement a proactive strategy to promote Francophone communities and to carry out an annual mission, “Destination Ontario francophone,” in collaboration with the Franco-Ontarian community.

3

TO BUILD WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

To be able to adequately welcome and retain Francophone immigrants, municipalities and their community partners must have the necessary resources to offer such services to their clientele.

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada should implement and adequately fund the Welcoming Communities initiative through an intergovernmental, interministerial and intersectoral approach.





LANGUAGE RIGHTS

Without language rights, minority language communities would most probably be no more than a vestige of the past. As the saying goes, “a language that does not evolve will die.” The same can be said for language rights: they have to evolve in step with society’s evolution.

1

FOR LEGISLATION THAT REFLECTS THE 21ST CENTURY

Two laws are vital to the Franco-Ontarian community: the Official Languages Act (OLA) and the French Language Services Act (FLSA). The OLA was last updated in 1989; the FLSA came into effect that same year and has not been updated since. These laws speak of fax machines. We think they should also speak of social media.

- **The Government of Ontario should immediately begin to overhaul the French Language Services Act in partnership with the Franco-Ontarian community and should prioritize the issues identified by the Franco-Ontarian community at the AFO’s 2017 convention.**
- **The Government of Canada should overhaul the Official Language Act in keeping with the draft bill put forward by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes.**

2

BECAUSE ONTARIO DESERVES ITS FAIR SHARE

Ontario’s community organizations receive 22% of the funds awarded under the Action Plan for Official Languages, yet Franco-Ontarians count for approximately 55% of all Francophones outside of Quebec. For French language services, the Government of Canada transfers \$2.78 per Francophone to Ontario, while the national average is approximately \$10.21. Though it may be normal that Ontario not receive the same per-capita amount as other provinces, the AFO believes that an adjustment is required. The average salary, the cost of infrastructure and the cost of living are higher in Ontario than in other provinces.

- **The Government of Canada should award to Franco-Ontarian organizations one third of the funds devoted to Francophone organizations in minority settings.**
- **The Government of Canada should increase its share of funds provided to the Government of Ontario for French language services.**

3

TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS

History has taught us that the preservation of Franco-Ontarian language rights is never a given, but an everyday struggle. The governments of Canada and Ontario must do more to protect the rights of Franco-Ontarians.

- **The Government of Canada should enshrine the rights of Franco-Ontarians in the constitution.**



ARTS AND CULTURE

By improving their financial support to Franco-Ontarian artists and arts and culture organizations, the governments of Canada and Ontario contribute to our economy and to the development of Francophone arts and culture, while also ensuring that Francophones and Francophiles can share enriching artistic and cultural experiences.

To find out more about the AFO's recommendations regarding arts and culture, please consult our White Paper on Francophone Arts and Culture in Ontario. To obtain a print copy, please email your request to bmichaud@monassemblee.ca.

1

FOR FLOURISHING FRANCOPHONE CULTURAL CENTRES

If nothing is done in the near term, it is quite possible that only three major centres, namely Toronto, Ottawa and Sudbury, will enjoy the benefits of having a Francophone cultural centre. Across Ontario, times are hard, due to the lack of stable annual funding.

- **The Government of Ontario should award \$50,000 in base funding to every Francophone cultural centre in the province.**

2

TO PROMOTE OUR FRANCO-ONTARIAN ARTISTS

Year after year, member organizations of Réseau Ontario welcome twice as many performers from Quebec and other Canadian provinces than Franco-Ontarian artists. This surprising situation is due to the fact that public funding from other sources provides better support to out-of-province performers. Moreover, the Government of Canada requires that Ontario's concert presenters welcome artists from at least two other provinces in order to access funding from the Canada Arts Presentation Fund.

- **The Government of Ontario should double its investments to support touring by Ontario performers and to help Ontario's artists and arts organizations tour in other provinces, and should prioritize its support to Franco-Ontarian artists and arts organizations.**
- **The Government of Ontario should negotiate with the Government of Quebec to add a reciprocity agreement on the exchange of arts and culture to its Agreement Regarding Culture.**

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