



# Intranet Content on the Active Offer of Service

Public Services and Procurement Canada

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# Active offer of bilingual services

Find information about the recommended training and about the active offer of bilingual services—Hello/Bonjour.

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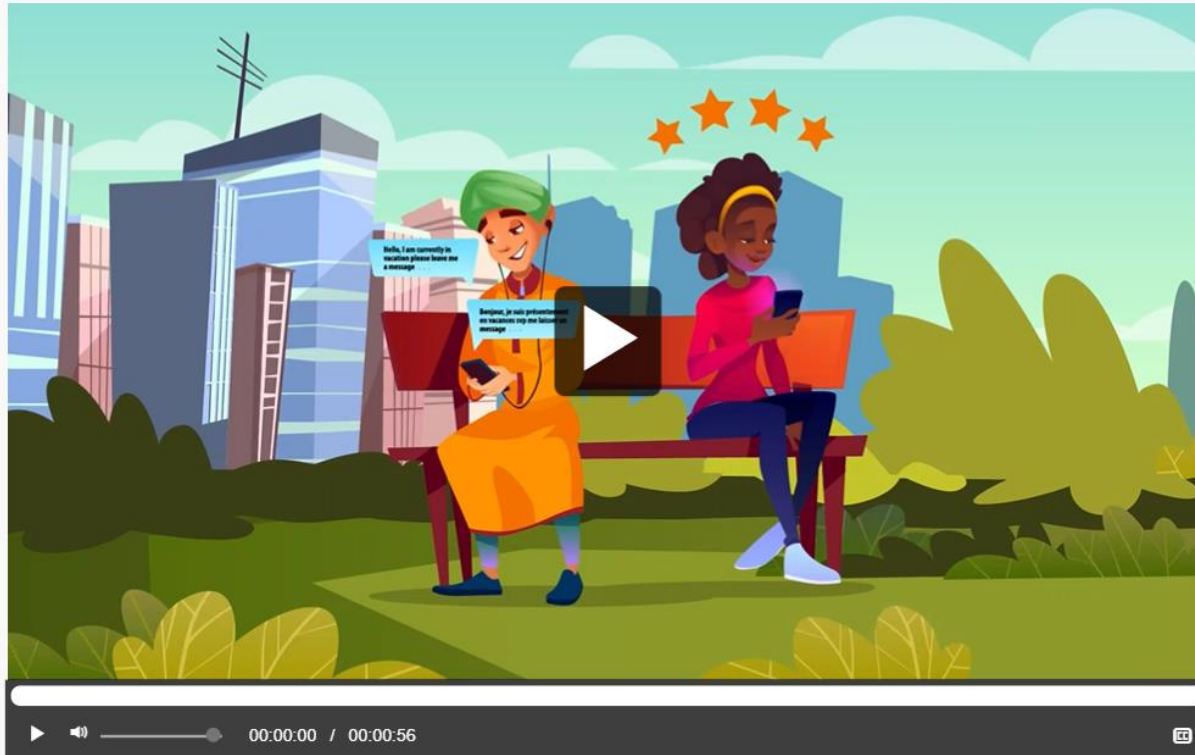
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## Video: Active offer of bilingual services at Public Services and Procurement Canada

At Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), we are required to provide services to our clients (both the employees and the public) in both official languages whether teleworking, at the office or at points of service. When we provide bilingual services, it is important to practise the active offer, which means greeting the clients in both official languages. This way, our clients will know that they can be served in the official language of their choice.



## Active offer of service



Transcript: Active Offer of Bilingual Services at PSC

## course

### Description

At Public Service and Procurement Canada (PSPC), our goal is to provide exemplary service to the public and to continuously improve the quality of our services. This course is free, offered online and is self-paced. It is designed to help participants learn why and how to make an active offer of service and improve their knowledge of the [Official Languages Act](#) by reading through the material and taking the quiz.

### Target audience



Employees offering client services or a public facing services are strongly encouraged to take the course **Active offer of service** that is part of the [Learning roadmaps for Public Services and Procurement Canada employees](#).

### Registration

Registrations for the active offer of service course must be made online via [Alto](#). The creation of a personal account may be required if you don't already have one.

[Active Offer of Service course \(code: 0000006422\)](#)

## Objectives and performance indicators

Here are some suggested objectives and performance indicators that can be used in the performance management agreements. These objectives and indicators are meant to help guide the teams providing services in designated bilingual offices.

For assistance in evaluating expected behaviors with regards to bilingualism in the workplace, you may also consult the [Guide for managers/supervisors: Performance management and official languages behaviours](#).

### Objective for managers

Participate, at all times, in creating a respectful work environment and maintaining excellence in the bilingual services provided. Indicators for this objective:

- employees are informed of their obligations to provide bilingual service and to make an active offer at all times.
- the importance of proactively greeting clients in both official languages is promoted at all times.
- a schedule of employee shifts and absences is established each month to ensure that team members are able to ensure continuous service in both official languages.

### Objective for employees

Develop, at all times, the competency of delivering quality client service, including by providing bilingual service.

Indicators for this objective:



- the employee completed the active offer course available on Alto during the year (evidence provided)
- the employee ensures that his/her voicemail message, absence messages and signature block are bilingual at all times
  - French first when the location of the employee's position—the office they report to—whether working remotely or not, is located in the province of Quebec
  - English first when the location of the employee's position—the office they report to—whether working remotely or not, is located elsewhere in Canada
- the employee ensures that the clients he/she serves are greeted in both official languages (French first in offices located in Quebec; English first in offices located elsewhere in Canada) at all times
  - French first in offices located in Quebec
  - English first in offices located elsewhere in Canada
- the employee ensures, at all times, that clients who speak an official language in which he/she is not proficient are referred to an employee who is able to provide timely service in the client's chosen language

## Tools for making an active offer of bilingual services

Find useful tools and information for greeting clients in both official languages.

### Active offer of bilingual services

Across Canada, our clients (federal employees, retired public servants and the public at large), have the right to receive services in the official language of their choice. At PSPC, we are required to provide services in both official languages, whether teleworking at the office or at points of service.

When we offer services in both languages, it is important that we make this offer active. This means greeting the public in both official languages. This way, our clients will know that they can be served in the official language of their choice.

### Greeting clients

When greeting clients we must consider the following:

- record a telephone greeting that provides the same information in both official languages



- greet clients on the phone or in person in both official languages by first using the language of the majority in the province where the office is located, followed by the language of the minority
- ensure that a bilingual employee is always available to provide services in both official languages

### Note

English is the official language of the majority of the population in Canada except for Quebec where it is French.

### Checklist

Find below a list of best practices to ensure the active offer of service is used efficiently in the work place.

- Telephone greeting is in both official languages respecting the order of the official languages
- In-person greeting is in both official languages respecting the order of the official languages
- Continues the conversation in the official language of the client's choice
- Voice mail message is in both official languages respecting the order of the official language
- Out-of-office assistant message (email) is in both official languages
- Signature block is in both official languages respecting the order of the official languages
- A bilingual employee is always available to provide service in both official languages
- The Treasury Board's symbol is prominently displayed in offices designated as bilingual for service to the public, English/Français in all the provinces except for Quebec where it is Français/English

### Visual aspects

Signage in the customer service areas of our offices must be in both official languages. The official languages symbol should be clearly visible so as to inform members of the public that they can use the official language of their choice.



### Note



The English/Français symbol must be used in all the provinces except in Quebec where the Français/English symbol must be used.

All materials in the displays and display stands must be available in both official languages and respect the equal status of English and French.

Signs identifying the department, programs, contact people and contact information must be posted in both official languages.

For more information, please consult [Appendix 1: Definitions of the Policy on Official Languages](#).

## Verbal active offer

Standard greetings and salutations, such as Hello/Bonjour, must be used at all times, for example every time a client approaches us in person. This must be done in both official languages, beginning with the official language of the majority in the province where the office is located. The purpose of using the bilingual salutation is to inform clients that they can be served in the official language of their choice.

Once a client has been greeted, the conversation must continue in the language the client used.

## Automated greetings

Our automated greetings are very important since it is often the first impression we give people who contact us.

We greet clients by:

- using the language of the majority in the province first
- adding "Bonjour" to our English greeting or "Hello" to our French one so as to indicate to clients that they can use the language of their choice
- recording our greeting message in our voicemail boxes in both official languages
- drafting our automated out of office email message in both official languages

## Tips





- Be courteous: Encourage callers and writers to leave a detailed message and a contact information where they can be reached
- Keep your message current: Be brief and concise. Inform callers and writers that you are away from your desk, on vacation, etc.
  - also indicate when you expect to retrieve your messages
- for voicemails, speak clearly: Background noise and cell phones may reduce the quality of your messages
  - speak slowly and clearly so that your messages are easily understood
- For emails, be concise

Here are some examples of bilingual greetings you can use as a basis for your automated greeting.

### **Voicemail: Daily greeting**

Hello. You have reached the voice mail of (your name) at Public Services and Procurement Canada. Please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.

Bonjour. Vous avez joint la boîte vocale de (your name) à Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada. Veuillez laisser un message et je vous rappellerai aussitôt que possible. Merci.

### **Voicemail: Away for an extended time**

Hello. This is (your name) at Public Services and Procurement Canada. I will be away from the office on (date) **or** from (date) to (date). Please leave a message and I will return your call upon my return. If you would like to speak to someone, please call (colleague's name) at (telephone number). Thank you.

Bonjour. Ici (your name) à Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada. Je serai absent(e) le (date) **or** du (date) au (date). Veuillez laisser un message et je vous rappellerai à mon retour. Si vous voulez parler à quelqu'un, veuillez appeler (colleague's name) au (telephone number). Merci.

### **Email message: Auto-reply**

I will be away from the office on (date) **or** from (date) to (date). Should you have any urgent questions, please call (colleague's name) at (telephone number). Thank you.



Je serai absent(e) du bureau le (date) **or** du (date) au (date). Si vous avez des questions urgentes, veuillez communiquer avec (colleague's name) au (telephone number). Merci.

## Correspondence

All correspondence with members of the public must be in their preferred official language. If you are unable to identify an addressee's preferred official language, the correspondence must be written in both official languages. You must follow the established order, beginning with the majority official language in the region where the sender's office is located: English first anywhere in Canada except in Quebec where French comes first.

## Signature block

Bilingual signature blocks are required. If your office is located in Quebec, the information must appear in French first, followed by the English equivalent. For all offices located in the other regions of Canada, the information must appear in English first, followed by the French equivalent. Please refer to the [Guidelines on email signature block for individuals](#).

## Useful expressions for greeting the public

Hello, Bonjour, (your name) speaking, how may I help you?  
Bonjour, Hello, (your name), comment puis-je vous aider?

One moment please.  
Un instant, s'il vous plaît.

I'm sorry, he/she is busy at the moment.  
Je regrette, il/elle est occupé(e) en ce moment.

The line is busy. Would you like to wait?  
La ligne est occupée. Voulez-vous attendre?

He/she is expected back tomorrow/in 10 minutes.  
Il/elle sera de retour demain/dans 10 minutes.

Would you like to leave a message on his/her voice mail?  
Voulez-vous laisser un message dans sa boîte vocale?



Would you like to speak to someone else?  
Voulez-vous parler à quelqu'un d'autre?

Let me get someone who can help you.  
Laissez-moi trouver une personne pour vous aider.

May I take your name and telephone number?  
Voulez-vous laisser votre nom et votre numéro de téléphone?

Could you please repeat/spell your name?  
Pouvez-vous répéter/épeler votre nom s'il vous plaît?

I'm sorry, you have the wrong number.  
Désolé, vous avez le mauvais numéro de téléphone.

Thank you / You're welcome / Goodbye.  
Merci / Ça m'a fait plaisir / Au revoir.

## Order of the official languages

Ensuring that, when both official languages are used, the order in which they appear is:

- French first when the issuing office is located in the province of Quebec
- English first when the issuing office is located elsewhere in Canada

Examples:

- emails
- letters
- institutional signatures
- signature blocks
- spoken messages



## Related link

- [Official languages in the public service](#)