



Official Language Policy

Canadian Institute of Planners

Whereas the By-laws of the Institute state that it will provide basic service in French to all francophone corporate members and from time to time shall establish policies with respect to French-language services, and,

Whereas the Council of the Canadian Institute of Planners believes it necessary to describe in as much detail as possible the implementation of such policies, Council hereby adopts the following procedures dealing with basic services offered in either official language.

Introduction

In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognized that English and French are the official languages of Canada. Moreover, recent public opinion surveys show that a substantial majority of Canadians are favourable, in principle, to the proposition that they should be able to receive both government and other services in English and French.

Fundamental Principles

The three fundamental principles of the present policy are:

- Members of the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) should, as a general rule, be able to obtain services from and communicate with their Institute in the official language of their choice.
- Members of the public and/or members of the CIP and specialized audiences with which we deal should be able to receive information from the CIP in their preferred official language.
- CIP should encourage its affiliates to provide their services in both official languages where there is a significant demand.

Assessment of Demand

1. Active Office of Bilingual Services

In practical terms, if CIP agrees that services should be made available in both official languages, such services should be readily accessible and actively offered (for example, by means of bilingual signage and a bilingual greeting), whenever possible. This is particularly true of services offered in person or over the telephone. At the very least, delays in providing services should be handled with common sense of courtesy.

2. Determination of Members'

In order to evaluate the nature of the services the CIP will offer in French, members should be canvassed individually as to their language preferences, and such information should be recorded and kept up to date. Members could be canvassed by means of a bilingual form or document. It should not be assumed that bilingual members are indifferent to the question of language of service.

3. Determination of Language Preferences of the General Public

Any enquiry in a given language plainly constitutes, in itself, a request for service in that language. Ideally, a record should be kept of frequency of requests in the minority official language. In any event a “reasonable person” kind of yardstick should be applied, having due regard for population statistics by mother tongue and local practice in government and business.

Services to Members and to the General Public

The term “service” refers not only to answering the telephone and meeting members, but also to many other activities such as answering letters, distributing forms and organizing meetings and conferences.

Formal Identification

To protect a bilingual image, the CIP will continue the use of bilingual material (letterheads, calling cards, rubber stamps, etc.) and its identification in both official languages on signs, displays and directory boards and in telephone directories and publications. The bilingualism of such “identity” material provides an obvious indication that services can be made available in English and French. Whenever possible, both official languages should be given equal prominence.

Written Material

The CIP should strive to provide written material in both official languages to the extent it is feasible to do so.

a) Correspondence

Correspondence should normally be answered in the language used by the member writing to CIP. If CIP is initiating the correspondence, it should seek to ascertain the language preference of the individual addressed. Forms and publications enclosed with correspondence should be provided in the appropriate language.

b) Forms

All Forms used by members should normally be made available in English and in French, preferably in a bilingual format. If separate versions are produced, the availability of the form in the other language should be noted.

c) Newsletters, bulletins, and publications of a general nature

Newsletters, bulletins, and publications of a general nature and other documents (by-laws and regulations, etc.) should be made available in English and in French, to the extent it is feasible to do so. Publications in separate versions should bear a note indicating their availability in the other language. When a publication is produced only in one language (learned and technical publications, for example), consideration should be given to providing an abstract in the other language.

d) Plan Canada

The detailed policy for Plan Canada is spelled out in the CIP Publication Policy.

e) Information

In preparing press releases and information material, consideration should be given to informing both language communities equally. Whenever possible, material should be provided to the media in its language. If CIP is participating in a promotional activity or event in an area where

French and English are spoken, efforts should be made to project a bilingual image (signs, publications, etc.) or to provide service in person in both official languages.

Person-to-Person Contacts

The commitment to provide service in both official languages doesn't mean that every employee of the CIP must be bilingual, but it is important that employees who are asked for service in an official language they do not speak should call fellow employee who can provide the service without undue delay.

a) Telephone and receptionist services

Ideally, the initial response to a telephone call should be a bilingual identification that indicates that service is available in both official languages. Employees who cannot continue the conversation in the official language chosen by the caller should seek in a politely manner to transfer the call to a colleague who is able to do so.

b) Annual General and Other Meetings

When the AGM meeting, conference or seminar includes members of both linguistic communities, efforts should be made to ensure that members feel free to use the official language of their choice.

c) National Conference

The detailed policy for the preparation of the National Conference is spelled out in CIP's National Conference Organization Policy.

Other Services

In the course of its mandate, CIP provides a variety of specialized services to its members. In establishing and developing such services, CIP should be mindful of the language preference of its members.

a) Library and research facilities

In providing library and research facilities, where feasible, the CIP should review its holdings and acquisitions to ensure that they meet the needs of both English-speaking and French-speaking members. Likewise, in establishing computerized information retrieval systems, consideration should be given to the possibility of using the system in either official language.

b) Education, training and accreditation activities

Since learning through the filter of one's second language constitutes in many cases a serious handicap, when engaged in education, training and accreditation activities, CIP should seek to provide such services to members in their preferred official language to the extent that is feasible to do so. Education materials (textbooks, study guides, syllabus, diplomas, etc.) should normally be available in both official languages. Also, candidates or students should be able to submit work or apprenticeship logs in either English or French.

Applying the Policy

The President-Elect is responsible for ensuring overall application of the policy. However, the President, Councilors, Executive Director and employees at every level should also be held accountable.

Bilingualism of Staff

The provision of bilingual services requires the presence on staff of people able to effectively communicate in one or the other official language or both. Their presence should be such that the CIP has the ability, as a whole, to effectively deal with its members in either official language without undue delay.

The CIP National Office is managed by an Executive Director who is normally assisted by one full-time secretary and occasional part-time help. Guidelines for the recruitment of staff should be as follows:

- The full-time secretary must have complete spoken and written command of both official languages.
- The language requirements for the part-time positions should depend on the type of work to be done.
- The Executive Director should be able to effectively communicate in both official languages. In order to achieve this, at the time of recruitment of an Executive Director, bilingualism will be stipulated as a desirable qualification and advertisements for the position will be published in both the English and French language press. Finally, it will be the responsibility of the President-Elect to guarantee that a fully bilingual person will be a part of the Selection Committee.

Language training

In examining training requests from staff, the CIP should be mindful of the desirability of having employees develop second language skills and should provide incentives to employees who are willing to develop such skills on their own time.

Translation

While the presence of staff able to function in one or the other official language may help reduce the need for translation, recourse to translation will no doubt prove necessary for a number of documents and publications. When translation of material is required, such translation will be carried out, whenever possible, by an accredited translator whose mother tongue is the language into which the translation is being made. An evaluation of the intended distribution can be used as an indicator of when a document should be translated by a professional.

**Adopted by National Council
April 5th, 1987**