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|  | **EMPLOYEE POLICIES**  Category: **Language Translation** | |
| **Implementation:** September 1 2013  **Reviewed / Revised / Approved**:  February 2021 | Number:  AG-AL-T0001 | **FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES** |

**POLICY**

In accordance with the French Language Services Act, individuals will have the right to access Agency services in French or English according to their language preference. Accordingly, the Canadian Mental Health Association - Sudbury/Manitoulin is dedicated to providing comprehensive high quality services and care to individuals in the official language in which they are most comfortable.

**PROCEDURES**

Responsibilities to ensure effective implementation of requirements of the French Language Services Act are overseen by the Director, Programs and Planning in collaboration with the Management representative(s) to the Agency French Language Services Committee.

**Identification of Client Linguistic Identity**

The Agency will ensure the implementation of mechanisms to determine the linguistic identity of all clients from the moment of first contact and throughout their care trajectory. This will be achieved by**:**

* Informing the general public of the services offered in French through active offer;
* Reception and intake services greet clients in person and by phone and provide active offer of services in French;
* Bilingual brochures are available, detailing bilingual programs and services;
* The Agency client database will capture information related to linguistic identity to ensure that preferences for French language services are known and maintained throughout each care trajectory.

**Human Resources and Permanency of French Language Services**

The Agency will ensure that the Leadership team and Board of Directors includes representation of French speaking members, in accordance with the French Language Services Act.

Based on designation criteria established by the Ministry of Francophone Affairs, CMHA-S/M has developed criteria to identify the number of positions designated to require a minimum of advanced French-language skills. Positions are designated in order to ensure access to French language services that are guaranteed and that follow the principal of active offer. The Agency will employ French speaking employees in accordance with designation criteria (refer to Job Posting and Hiring Policy, AA-AG-P0026).

**Criteria for Designation of Positions**

An established proportion of positions in service areas are required to provide French language services shall be identified as designated. The designation shall belong to the position(s) and not to the staff member(s) occupying the position(s), as per below:

**Reception Services:** It is of utmost importance that French language services are available to individuals and the general public at their point of initial contact with CMHA-S/M and that the active offer of French language services is provided. All reception positions are designated **(minimum required for designation: 100%).**

**Intake Services:** Intake services provide a point of entry to CMHA-S/M Mental Health and Addiction services. It is essential that active offer of French language services is provided at intake. All intake positions are designated **(minimum required for designation: 100%).**

**Pools of staff with common job descriptions:** Where there is a pool of staff with a common job description that provides direct individual care, the number of positions designated will be determined based on a percentage reflective of the Francophone population within the CMHA-S/M catchment area **(minimum required for designation: 40% of total number of positions with a common job description).**

**Single Incumbent Position:** Where a position offers direct individual care and it is a single-incumbent position, that position is automatically designated bilingual, unless an effective alternative is readily accessible, i.e., the service can be provided by another staff member who is bilingual and this will not result in a loss of quality or an unreasonable waiting time for the individual **(minimum required for designation 100%).**

**Positions where no direct services are offered:** Positions that do not provide direct services or care to individuals are assessed to determine the level of contact with individuals and the general public. Designation of these positions is determined on a case by case basis.

**Management Positions:** The criteria for designation of Management positions is based on a percentage reflective of the Francophone population within the CMHA-S/M catchment area (**minimum required for designation: 40%).**

**Coordinator Positions:** The criteria for of Coordinator positions is based on a percentage reflective of the Francophone population within the CMHA-S/M catchment area **(minimum required for designation: 40%).**

**Staffing gaps:** Where there is an identified gap in providing French language service to an individual, the service will be provided by another qualified staff member who is bilingual so long as this will not result in a loss of quality or an unreasonable waiting time for the individual.

**Recruitment:**

1. Advertisements for all positions that provide direct service to individuals shall be posted both internally and externally in English and French stating that proficiency in conversational French at the advanced level is essential for 40% of the positions.
2. If no bilingual candidates meet the qualifications for designated positions, unilingual English speaking candidates may be considered. The position remains a designated position and the same efforts are made to recruit a bilingual candidate once the position becomes vacant and is again advertised.
3. For non-designated positions, postings will indicate that Fluency in French is an asset.
4. The organization promotes its external job postings simultaneously in English and French on employment websites, in print and social media platforms.

**Hiring:**

1. The French language proficiency of candidates is evaluated prior to the interview during the review of resumes and employment application packages.
2. Candidates for designated positions are evaluated for French language proficiency. Every effort will be made to ensure that testing is completed prior to official offers of employment being made.
3. All new employees receive a comprehensive and structured orientation to the organization which includes:
   1. reading the policies and procedures regarding French language services;
   2. reading the French language Active Offer for Employees Fact sheet.
4. All employees are required, as part of the annual agreement process to acknowledge:
   1. that they have read the policies and procedures regarding French language services;
   2. that they have read the French language Active Offer for Employees Fact sheet.

**Use of Third Party Labour Suppliers:**

CMHA-S/M integrates French language service requirements into the purchase of direct services to individuals and into the Request for Proposal process by including a clause requiring that third parties guarantee the offer of French language services. The evaluation of Requests for Proposals includes a demonstration of the third parties’ capacity to offer French language services.

**Agency Supports for Provision of French Language Services**

**French Language Training for Employees:**

CMHA-S/M encourages all staff to participate in French as a Second Language training to maintain, upgrade, or obtain the level of proficiency required for a designated position.

Information about French language training and courses is made available to all staff via email by following the following link: <https://www/reseaudumieuxetre.ca/en/helath-service-providers/active-offer-information-kit/rembursement-program-french-language-courses/>. French language resources are available on the agency portal.

**French Language Testing:**

Designated bilingual staff will maintain their bilingual designation through a testing process. Staff who score at the advanced level will be re-tested every two years. Staff who score at the superior level will be tested every three years. This is indicated as part of the Annual Employee Agreement.

**French Language Services Committee:**

The purpose of the French Language Services Committee is to establish and maintain effective French language health services within the agency and to ensure the continued availability, permanence and quality of French language health services. The committee is responsible for reviewing and providing advice to the Director, Programs and Planning in collaboration with the Management representative(s) on the implementation and provision of high-quality French language services.

The French Language Services Committee Terms of Reference are reviewed annually.

**Support Tools:**

Staff providing service to French speaking individuals, caregivers, and members of the public have access to reference and technological support tools such as bilingual keyboards, French language software (Antidote) and interpretation guides for healthcare professionals.

**Signage:**

All signs shall be bilingual and must be approved by the Director prior to display.

**Forms, Documents and Questionnaires:**

Forms, documents and questionnaires intended for use by Agency service recipients and the general public will be available in French and English.

**Communication and Information Services:**

* Information Services and communications materials destined for Agency service recipients and the general public (such as the Agency website, stationary, speeches, written news releases, advertisements and exhibits) shall be made available in English and French.
* Business cards for employees with French language proficiency will be printed in both official languages.
* The Agency website is available in both official languages.

**Identification of Employees Proficient in French:**

Employees who are proficient in French have identification badges that include the statement “Je parle Français”. This clearly identifies them as French speaking to Francophone individuals or the general public.

**Continuous Quality Improvement:**

Individuals will be regularly invited to complete a survey which assesses the quality of French language services offered by CMHA-S/M. This survey will be visible and easily accessible through the Agency website. Results of the survey will be regularly reviewed by the French Language Services Committee, (which includes Management representation), in order to assess opportunities for improvement.

**Translation: English-French and French-English:**

Any approved requests for translation of written materials from English to French or French to English will be submitted to the Health Promotion Coordinator according to the resource, *CMHA Translation Processes and Timelines*. CMHA-S/M has access to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care funded translation services.

**Correspondence:**

All French language correspondence will be answered in French. French correspondence will be coordinated by designated French languages services employees at the Agency. Employees required to draft letters in English for a response in French shall forward translation requests to the relevant Program Coordinator who, upon approving the correspondence, will forward the request to the Health Promotion Coordinator according to the resource, *CMHA Translation Processes and Timelines*.

**Governance and Accountability:**

The French Language Services Committee will provide an annual report to the Agency Board of Directors regarding the effectiveness and implementation of the French language services policy.

In CMHA-S/M’s annual report, a French language services section is incorporated outlining the status of French language services.

**Complaints Management:**

Individuals who have expressed a language preference and have not been served in the official language of their preference may initiate a complaint through the Agency complaint process. The Director, Programs and Planning is responsible for managing all FLS related complaints.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

CMHA-S/M Board of Directors By-laws; 4.3 (b) Powers and Responsibilities, French Language Services

The French Language Services Committee Terms of Reference

Request for French Translation Form

Active offer of FLS Employee Fact Sheet

Translation Processes and Timelines

Job Posting and Hiring Policy, General Personnel, AA-AG-P0026

AUTHORITY: CEO