



Language Rights in Ontario

Note: This table was created by the Language Rights Support Program (LRSP). This table is intended as an overview (not exhaustive) of language rights in Ontario, and does not constitute a legal opinion.

Rights	Examples	Implemented by	Reference
Right to use French and English during parliamentary debates, for printing and publishing laws, as well as Records and Journals of Houses of the Parliament of Canada	<p>All statutes and regulations adopted by the federal government must be written and published in both official languages.</p> <p>Members of parliament can use English or French during parliamentary debates.</p> <p>A person may testify in the language of his or her choice in courts.</p>	Federal government (constitutional right)	Section 133 of the <i>Constitutional Act, 1867</i>
Right to use English or French in any debates and other proceedings of Parliament.	Members of parliament can use English or French during parliamentary debates.	Federal government (constitutional right)	<p>S. 17(1) of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom</i></p> <p>For more details, see the <i>Official Languages Act</i> and <i>Official Languages Regulations</i></p>
The statutes, records and journals of Parliament shall be printed and published in English and French and both language versions are equally authoritative.	All statutes and regulations adopted by the federal government must be written and published in both official languages.	Federal government (constitutional right)	<p>S. 18(1) of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom</i></p> <p>For more details, see the <i>Official Languages Act</i> and <i>Official Languages Regulations</i></p>
Right to use French and English in any pleading in or process issuing from, any court established by Parliament.	A person may testify in the language of his/her choice before the federal courts. The definition of “court” is interpreted broadly and liberally; meaning that it includes the federal courts created by a federal statute. For example: Public Service Staffing Tribunal.	Federal government and federal courts (constitutional right)	<p>S. 19(1) of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom</i></p> <p>For more details, see the <i>Official Languages Act</i> and <i>Official Languages Regulations</i></p>

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<p>Right to receive services and communications from the federal government in both official languages where there is “significant demand”</p> <p>Active Offer: The active offer concept means that the service providers publicize the availability of services in both languages, and ensure that people feel equally comfortable in dealing with the designated service centres in the language of their choice.</p> <p>Right to services of “substantive equality” offered by the federal government to official language minority communities</p>	<p>The government has the obligation to communicate in both official languages when communicating with the public. Ex.: communications from Ministers to the population</p> <p>Central offices of the Federal government have the obligation to offer services in both official languages. Ex.: Windsor Port Authority, Great Lakes Pilotage Authority.</p> <p>Obligation to offer in both languages equal service (ex. Comparable waiting time, equal quality of service) such as the Passport Service, the postal service.</p>	<p>Federal government (constitutional right)</p>	<p>S. 20(1) of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom</i></p> <p>For more details, see the <i>Official Languages Act</i> and <i>Official Languages Regulations</i></p>
<p>Right to education and management of school boards</p>	<p>French-language school boards in regions where the number of citizens warrants it.</p>	<p>Provincial government (constitutional right)</p>	<p>Section 23 of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom</i></p> <p><i>Education Act</i></p>
<p>Right to services in French from the provincial government in government offices in designated areas of the province</p>	<p>There are currently 25 designated areas under the FLSA. Available on line at : http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/flsa-mapdesig.html</p> <p>For an area to obtain designation, Francophones must make up at least 10% of its population OR in urban centres - at least 5000 Francophones.</p>	<p>Provincial government</p>	<p>S. 2 of the <i>French Language Services Act</i></p>
<p>Right to use English or French in any debates and other proceedings of the Legislative Assembly</p>	<p>Members of legislature can use English or French during legislature debates.</p>	<p>Provincial government</p>	<p>S. 3 of the <i>French Language Services Act</i></p>
<p>Public Bills of the Legislative Assembly shall be introduced and enacted in both English and French</p>	<p>Laws enacted by Ontario legislature must be written and published in both official languages. Both versions have equal force of law.</p>	<p>Provincial government</p>	<p>S. 3 of the <i>French Language Services Act</i></p>
<p>Translation of statutes enacted before the 31st day of December 1991, and translation of regulations that the Attorney General considers</p>	<p>Adoption of regulations of public interest in both official languages by the regulation-making authority.</p>	<p>Provincial government</p>	<p>S. 3 and 4 of the <i>French Language Services Act</i></p>

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appropriate and shall recommend them for adoption	<p>E.g. Ontario Regulation 398/93; Designation Of Public Service Agencies</p> <p>E.g. Automobile insurance regulation adopted by the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, a regulatory agency of the Ministry of Finance</p>		
Right to use French and English in trials in criminal and quasi criminal matters	<p>Criminal and quasi criminal trials in the official language chosen by the accused.</p> <p>E. g. Trial for traffic offence (quasi criminal matter)</p>	Provincial government	<p>S. 530 <i>Criminal Code</i></p> <p>S. 126 of the <i>Courts of Justice Act</i></p>
Right to use French or English in civil cases before the courts under certain conditions	<p>E. g. If a person satisfies certain conditions, he has the right to a bilingual trial in designated areas, like Essex, Prescott and Russell, Renfrew, Simcoe.</p> <p>E.g. A person can file documents to the Court in French in designated areas like Chatham Kent, Great Sudbury, Toronto.</p> <p>Elsewhere in Ontario, other than the designated areas, a party may file documents in French if the other parties consent.</p>	Provincial government	S. 125 and 126 of the <i>Courts of Justice Act</i>
Right to receive services and communications in both official languages from designated agencies	<p>There are 217 designated agencies</p> <p>The names of the designated agencies are available on line at: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elsaws_regs_930398_e.htm</p>	Provincial government	<p><i>French Language Services Act</i></p> <p>For more details see <i>Ontario Regulation 398/93; Designation Of Public Service Agencies</i></p>
Long-term care homes services (as defined in the <i>Long-term Care Homes Act, 2007</i>) in both official languages in long-term care designated homes	<p>Some long-term care homes are designated under the <i>French Language Services Act</i>. This means that staff members who speak French provide care and services to French language residents.</p> <p>E.g. Foyer Garry J. Armstrong, Ottawa</p>	Provincial government	<p>S. 1 of the <i>French Language Services Act</i></p> <p><i>Long-term Care Homes Act, 2007</i></p>

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Receiving municipal services in both official languages	E. g. Municipality of Prescott-Russel offers services in both official languages.	Municipal	Municipal by-law
Receiving municipal services in both official languages	E. g. Sudbury offers some services in French	Municipal	(No by-law on services in French)

This document was updated on February 24th, 2012. Please note that laws may have been modified since the update.