

Tips and Best Practices: *Plan* bilingual services (English/French)



Key success factor :

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Define linguistic profiles and explicit roles of bilingual positions

Many health organizations attempt to recruit bilingual staff, one position at a time, without any preparation.

Good planning allows adequate preparation and an increased success rate.

A more complex process

- Limited number of qualified candidates which becomes more restricted when position requirements increase;
- Recruitment process includes an additional step of assessing language skills;
- Majority of managers are not able to evaluate the quality of French in a work setting;
- Significant community expectations regarding accessibility and quality of services.

Given these difficulties, it is not uncommon to observe bilingual positions remain vacant or filled by persons lacking French language skills.

Recruitment strategies

- Create a pool of future candidates by means of bilingual students and interns
- Build bilingual capacity by means of external recruitment
- Identify/evaluate bilingual human resources within the organization

These strategies are complementary, have been the object of experimentation, and have generated meaningful results in the field. The choice depends upon the determination of the organization, the opportunities which exist within the environment and upon the links the organization has created with the Francophone and Acadian community.

How to prepare

- ☞ Have a global vision and plan for the development of French-language services and the recruitment of bilingual human resources
- ☞ Assess priorities related to health services and bilingual human resources
- ☞ Know and measure your internal capacity with regards to bilingual human resources
- ☞ Plan recruitment taking into account local labor market issues
- ☞ Include an out-of-region strategy, where applicable

Designation of bilingual positions : a good organizational practice

A position is designated bilingual when knowledge of both French and English is required.

Management must determine the level of bilingualism required for each of the communication skills (speaking/understanding/reading/writing). Designation allows for:

- Predetermining the linguistic competencies required for a given position or for all of the provider's services
- Rendering a transparent recruitment process for all candidates
- Ensuring service continuity when the position becomes vacant
- Signaling to candidates, partners and to the community that the position is there permanently

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