



# RESOURCE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 41 OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*: OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under section 41 (Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*), the Government of Canada is committed to:

- Enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development
- Fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society

We strongly recommend the use of the [Self-assessment tool](#) designed to help federal institutions analyze their institutional practices in order to develop a clear picture of their situation with respect to section 41 of the Act and to make progress in its implementation.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS:

- Ensure that positive steps are taken to implement the federal government's commitment.<sup>1</sup>
- Make employees aware of the needs of official language minority communities and the promotion of both official languages in Canadian society (community organizations).
- Consult with community organizations when planning and implementing policies, programs and services or when changes in the way services are delivered could affect them.
- Determine whether policies, programs and services have an impact on the promotion of both official languages and on the development of official language minority communities, from the early stages of development through to implementation.<sup>2</sup>
- Ensure that decision-making processes and procedures related to official languages are documented.
- Submit, when requested, a Part VII Review to Canadian Heritage (PCH).

<sup>1</sup> The obligation of each federal institution to take positive measures is enforceable and applies to all federal institutions. This means that members of the public and the Commissioner of Official Languages can have legal recourse if they consider that this obligation under Part VII of the Act has been breached.

<sup>2</sup> Official languages obligations must always be considered at each stage of the development or revision of a program, service or policy. In other words, the context (impact on Official language minority community's and the promotion of both official languages) must always be assessed with a "Part VII lens".



## WHAT THE 41 COORDINATOR CAN DO WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

\* Please note that the activities below are provided as examples only. Each 41 Coordinator works within a unique organization with a specific mandate and organizational reality.

### RAISING AWARENESS AND IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE

- ✓ Conduct internal activities to educate and increase employee and senior management knowledge regarding the implementation of Section 41 of the Act.
- ✓ Know, create and/or promote information tools to educate employees and managers about the institution's responsibilities.
- ✓ Ensure that impacts on community organizations are included in [Memoranda to Cabinet](#) and planning documents for any new departmental initiatives.
- ✓ Work with the Official Languages Champion to provide greater leadership on section 41.

### CONSULTATIONS

- ✓ Establish mechanisms (advisory committees, roundtables, working groups, etc.) to identify and address the priorities of community organizations in the development of new programs and services.
- ✓ Periodically consult community organizations on initiatives of the institution that may be of interest to them.
- ✓ Participate in activities organized by various community organizations.

### COMMUNICATIONS

- ✓ Provide information to community organizations about the activities, programs and policies of federal institutions that may be of interest to them.
- ✓ Include community organizations in the distribution list for external communications.
- ✓ Provide visibility to programs of interest to community organizations.
- ✓ Ensure that those responsible for purchasing advertising do so in both official languages and take into account the media consumption habits of official language minority communities.

### COORDINATION AND LIAISON AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- ✓ Network, cooperate and participate in liaison activities (joint research, meetings, etc.), within the federal institution, with other federal institutions, or with other levels of government.
- ✓ Where appropriate, establish a network of regional/sectoral coordinators for the implementation of section 41.
- ✓ Participate in Network 41 meetings and obtain support from the Interdepartmental Relations and Accountability Directorate at PCH when required.

### FUNDING AND PROGRAM DELIVERY

- ✓ Ensure that the federal institution, alone or in collaboration, delivers programs, services and funding to community organizations.
- ✓ Integrate the needs of official language minority communities into the planning of programs and services of the federal institution.
- ✓ Ensure that official language clauses are included in grant and contribution agreements or intergovernmental agreements, as appropriate.
- ✓ Identify potential barriers to accessibility of programs and services and work with program and service delivery administrators to identify courses of action or solutions.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

- ✓ Develop or participate in the development of internal official languages action plans, official languages reviews, internal evaluations, policy reviews and departmental processes of the federal institution.
- ✓ Apply a Part VII lens to departmental planning and reporting processes.
- ✓ Coordinate the data collection exercise for the annual review on Part VII.