



PROPOSAL TO THE TORONTO FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SERVICES IN FRENCH AT CITY MUSEUMS

Proposal

- That the 10 Toronto History Museums offer services in French.
- That services in French be gradually implemented in City museums at a low cost.
- That one or two museums be used as a pilot project for implementing services in French in Toronto's municipal museums.

Background

- The City of Toronto is home to over 65,000 Francophones. That is in addition to Torontonians who speak French as a second or third language. According to Statistics Canada, 9% of Toronto residents are bilingual (English and French).
- Toronto's Francophones view the City's museums as Anglophone institutions.
- Toronto has many French-language public and Catholic schools as well as many immersion schools.
- The primary beneficiaries targeted by this proposal should be schools, given the immeasurable potential benefit for French-language schools. Learning the city's history in a proactive way, such as through visiting a museum, is very valuable. It should also be noted that a large proportion of Toronto's Francophone community is made up of new Canadians. Visiting these museums would one of the ways for them to adjust to their new country.
- Immersion schools could also benefit from the significant educational resource provided through free municipal museums.

Implementation

- Taking the first steps towards offering services in French should not be very costly. For example, the first step could be publishing a brochure in French for Francophone visitors. Translation costs would be minimal.
- Next steps could involve hiring bilingual students for the summer (and taking advantage of student employment grants).
- Museums could also try to actively recruit bilingual volunteers.
- Over the longer term, hiring bilingual employees should be considered.
- From the start, however, museums need to be ensuring they actively offer services in French.

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