



Official Languages and Members of a Visible Minority Group

In Canada,

- English and French are the two official languages.
- Members of a visible minority group are persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-white in colour or race, regardless of their place of birth.
- An allophone is a person whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.
- Some members of a visible minority group are allophones; others have a mother tongue that is either English or French.

Members of a Visible Minority Group

- As at March 31, 2004, close to 8% of public service employees had identified themselves as members of a visible minority group.

Members of a Visible Minority Group and First Official Language

As at March 31, 2004:

- 85% of the members of a visible minority group identified English as their first official language compared to 68% of federal employees;
- 15% of the members of a visible minority group identified French as their first official language compared to 32% of federal employees.

Members of a Visible Minority Group and Language Training Access

In the 2002 *Public Service Employee Survey*, some employees indicated that lack of access to language training had significantly affected their career over the last three years:

- 11% of the members of a visible minority group compared to 8% of all public service employees;
- 12% of the Anglophone members of a visible minority group compared to 9% of Anglophone public service employees;
- 9% of the Francophone members of a visible minority group compared to 6% of Francophone public service employees.

Members of a Visible Minority Group and Access to Development Programs

Development programs such as the Career Assignment Program (CAP), the Accelerated Executive Development Program (AEXDP), and the Management Trainee Program (MTP) offer participants full- or part-time language training. Language training costs are covered by the employer.

CAP has an employment equity (EE) component to help create, among executive ranks, a better reflection of the diversity of the Canadian population. In March 2004, 34% of participants in the program were members of a visible minority group.

In January 2001, AEXDP introduced an EE program to increase the representation of members of visible minority groups to 20%. In March 2004, 25% of program participants were members of a visible minority group.

MTP supports employment equity program objectives and aims to recruit a pool of future managers that reflects the Canadian labour market. Employment equity is an integral part of its recruitment, marketing and promotion activities. Special attention is given to attracting members of employment equity groups to improve their representation in management. Between 1990 and 2004, 13% of MTP graduates were members of a visible minority group.

Members of a Visible Minority Group and Access to Public Service Jobs

In 2004, 39% of public service positions were designated as bilingual and most of these were in the National Capital Region, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. In Western and Northern Canada, in general, only positions providing services to the public in both official languages where there is a significant demand for this type of service are designated as bilingual positions. In regions designated as bilingual for language-of-work purposes (i.e. the National Capital Region, New Brunswick and parts of Ontario and Quebec), several positions are bilingual in order to provide supervision and other services to employees in the official language of their choice. There are no regions in Western Canada designated as bilingual for language-of-work purposes.

The new official languages policies that came into effect in April 2004 are not intended to increase the number of bilingual positions; they simply ensure a progressive use of imperative staffing for bilingual positions, meaning that the candidate must meet the language requirements of the position upon appointment. To address concerns raised about access and advancement, especially for members of visible minority groups, non-imperative staffing for the executive entry level (EX-01) and for recruitment from outside the Public Service at all levels remain possible.

In addition, the new policies encourage a proactive approach to language training in order to facilitate access to bilingual positions. By making language learning an integral part of career planning, employees interested in learning a second official language, including members of a visible minority group, can proactively develop the language skills required to undertake a leadership role in the Public Service.

The Official Languages Innovation Program enables institutions and regions to develop original projects in the area of official languages. The objective of the five-year program (2003 to 2008) is to ensure that the Public Service is better equipped to implement the *Official Languages Act*. Innovative ideas for the development of approaches to training and testing for members of visible minority groups may qualify for funding. For more information, visit the Official Languages Branch Web site of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC) at: <http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/ollo>. In addition, departments may wish to work with the Employment Equity Branch of the PSHRMAC to access funding set aside in the fiscal framework to support sustainable initiatives for establishing a more representative and inclusive Public Service. For more information, please call (613) 952-3025.