

New Language Requirements and Support Systems

Who does the *Act* apply to?

The *Inuit Language Protection Act* was unanimously approved in September 2008 by the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Its public communications and services provisions apply to every private sector and government organization operating in Nunavut, including: businesses, societies, community organizations, Inuit organizations, cooperatives, unions, and non-governmental organizations, along with municipal, territorial and federal governments.

What does the *Act* mean for the private sector?

Now that the *Act* is in force, every organization in Nunavut will have to ensure customer services are available in the Inuit language, as well as signs, posters and advertising directed to the public.

In addition, those providing essential, household and hospitality services will have to ensure the Inuit Language is included on monthly bills and invoices, as well as on any notices, warnings or instructions directed to users of these services. These requirements apply both to verbal and written communications.

Does the *Act* require providing services in other languages?

No. The *Inuit Language Protection Act* requires every organization in Nunavut, including the private sector, to make information and services directed to the public available in Inuktut, whereas Nunavut's *Official Languages Act* applies only to Territorial government institutions.

What help is available for your business?

- The Office of the Languages Commissioner can help you prepare an Inuit Language Plan, outlining the services, timelines and resources needed for compliance.
- The Inuit Language Authority, known as the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit, develops and standardizes Inuktut terms. It can help you ensure correct use of Inuktut on signs and other information directed to the public.
- The Department of Culture and Heritage has developed a fund to support organizations in easing the financial burden of offering services in the Inuit language.

- Outstanding achievements by business leaders will be acknowledged. The Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit will present awards to organizations or individuals whose actions contribute to the use, protection and promotion of Inuktut.

What will happen in cases of non-compliance?

The Languages Commissioner will investigate complaints about language practices, order remedies and work with organizations to find solutions.

- If the new requirements cause excessive hardship to a particular business, the Languages Commissioner has the option of substituting alternative requirements.
- Exceptions to the requirements can also be made for private sector organizations that serve a single linguistic or cultural minority.



For more information, please contact:

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