

Producing Regulations for Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*: English-speaking Quebec's Stake in the Process

Part VII of Canada's *Official Languages Act* 'breathes life' into Section 16(3) of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, that permits Parliament "to advance the equality of status or use of English and French". It outlines the Government of Canada's commitments to this aim and lays out the duties of institutions subject to the Act to ensure these commitments are implemented.

Part VII is critical legislative lifeline between the federal government and Canada's English and French linguistic minority communities. It is also the principal Act through which federal resources are provided to the provinces and territories to fund services in the minority language. Among other things, these investments by the federal government help fund community sector organizations and support the Government of Quebec's funding of our school system, and the provision of health and social services in English.

Part of the process that modernized the *Official Languages Act* was a commitment to produce regulations around Part VII. Regulations are more specific than laws, and "are the rules used to carry out the intent of statutes enacted by the Parliament of Canada.

The Treasury Board of Canada and the Official Languages Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage will work together on the process of drafting options for the new Part VII regulations and manage the statutory consultations with English and French linguistic minority communities. The QCGN has met with this team and will help English-speaking Quebec navigate the development of the regulations. There are three steps in the process:

1. Step 1 (Winter – Fall 2024)
 - a. Collection and analysis of stakeholders' positions on Part VII
 - b. Development of regulatory options
 - c. Drafting (Justice Canada)
 - d. Statutory consultations with English and French linguistic minority Communities
2. Step 2 (Fall 2024 – Spring 2025)
 - a. Parliamentary Process and Statutory Consultations
 - i. Submission to Treasury Board
 - ii. Tabling in the House and study by Parliamentary Committees
 - iii. Publication of draft regulations in the Canadian Gazette

1. Period of further consultation with English and French linguistic minority communities and the general public
- iv. Analysis of feedback received. Consultation report provided to President of the Treasury Board
3. Step 3 (Spring 2025)
 - a. Drafting of final regulations by Justice Canada
 - b. Submission of final regulations to Treasury Board
 - c. Publication of approved regulations in the Canadian Gazette

The timeline is our 'best guess'. Note that the next federal election is schedule to take place on or before October 20, 2025, which may affect the timeline.

To learn more about how new regulations are created, [check out this excellent article](#) by the Department of Justice.