



## How to Comply with the Inuktut Protection Act for the Private Sector, Federal Institutions and Municipalities

November 2025 version

Since July 9, 2017, **all public and private sector organizations** in Nunavut **must provide their communications and services to the public in Inuktut** as well.

This includes:

- Public signs,
- Posters and commercial advertising,
- Reception services,
- Customer or client services.

These requirements also apply to private sector organizations providing services to Nunavummiut.

This document provides information on complying with section 3 of the Inuktut Protection Act (IPA) and outlines the process to ensure compliance.

### OBLIGATIONS

Every organization (*including territorial and federal institutions, municipalities, and private sector bodies*) operating in Nunavut **must display, publish, and offer** the following in Inuktut:

- Public signs, *including emergency and exit signs*
- Posters and commercial advertising
- Reception services and customer or client services

The Inuktut versions of signs, posters, and written documents must be at least equally as prominent as those in other official languages used.

### **REMINDER:**

*Inuktut, English and French are the official languages of Nunavut. Inuktut refers to Inuinnaqtun in Kugluktuk or Cambridge Bay, and to Inuktitut in the other communities.*

### ADDITIONAL OBLIGATIONS

#### Do you provide any particular services?

If your organization provides any of the following services, then it falls into the category of **organizations delivering particular services**:

- **Essential services**, including:

- **Emergency, rescue or similarly urgent services** or interventions (including **intake or dispatch services**)
- **Health, medical or pharmaceutical** services
- **Household, residential or hospitality** services, including:
  - **Restaurant, hotel, lodging, residential or housing** services
  - **Basic services** to a household (including the supply of **electricity, fuel, water** and **telecommunications**)

If your organization provides those services, then it must, **in addition** to the obligations respecting signage, posters and commercial advertising and reception/client services, ensure that the following **written and oral communications** are offered in Inuktut:

- All notices, warnings or instructions directed to users or consumers of the service.
- Monthly bills, invoices, and similar demands directed to persons who may be Inuktut speakers.
- Other prescribed communications under the IPA

## What am I expected to do?

Organizations must meet their language obligations and comply with the *Inuktut Protection Act*.

To manage your compliance with the *Inuktut Protection Act*, you can prepare an Inuktut Language Plan. Your organization initiates its transition to compliance with the law by doing it.

## INUKTUT LANGUAGE PLAN

### What is an Inuktut language plan?

The Inuktut language plan is a tool that private organizations can use to manage their compliance with the *Inuktut Protection Act*. This plan helps organizations monitor the fulfillment of their linguistic obligations.

The Inuktut language plan is a form that includes specific, time-bound objectives. These objectives form stages in your progression toward meeting your compliance obligations. A plan contains information on the following:

- The category to which your organization belongs and your corresponding compliance obligations.
- The measures, policies and practices proposed for satisfying your compliance obligations.
- An implementation schedule.

- The way you will publicize both the Inuktut Language Plan and the availability of your communications or services in Inuktut.

## What kinds of actions or measures should organizations include in the Inuktut language plan?

There are various actions or measures that you should consider when planning your compliance initiatives to your obligations. For example:

- Translating and publishing advertisements, brochures, posters, etc.
- Offering online customer or client services in Inuktut
- Translating and displaying signs
- Offering Inuktut training to staff
- Teaching basic greeting words in Inuktut to reception staff
- Developing a procedure to offer Inuktut services and communications.
- Including the ability to speak Inuktut as a hiring qualification.
- Partnering with an on-call interpreter/translator
- Adapting software for syllabics
- Advertising the availability of services in Inuktut

## Is it mandatory to prepare an Inuktut language plan?

Your organization may be required to prepare an Inuktut language plan if a complaint is filed with our Office regarding your organization's non-compliance with your language obligations.

However, preparing an Inuktut language plan voluntarily is a process that will help your organization comply with the *Inuktut Protection Act*. The plan is helpful because it allows your organization to figure out and plan future actions necessary for compliance. Also, the Official Languages Commissioner has the authority to discontinue any ongoing investigation after the approval of the Inuktut language plan under section 30(4) of the IPA.

## What is the process?

Your organization can complete the Inuktitut language plan and return it to the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut (OLCN) using the contact information included in the template.

At any time, the Language Commissioner's office is available to provide you with advice regarding your language obligations and how to comply with them.

When the OLCN receives an Inuktut language plan, it will review it to determine whether the following criteria are met:

- All the obligations are addressed.
- The proposed measures are relevant and will ensure compliance with the IPA.
- The proposed timelines are reasonable.

During that review, the OLCN may seek additional input from the organization. The initial review can take up to a month.

After the **initial review**, the OLCN will either approve the plan or suggest amendments.

Once the Inuktut language plan is approved, your organization will receive a letter from the OLCN. The organization must implement the plan. Checks usually occur at least once a year.

## ACCOMODATION

**Can an organization request accommodation from any of the Inuktut language obligations?**

Under section 3(5) of the **Inuktut Protection Act**, accommodation may be granted **only** in limited circumstances and primarily for **private sector bodies**, when:

- Compliance would cause **undue hardship**, or
- The organization primarily serves or protects a non-Inuit linguistic or cultural community

Accommodations are evaluated on a **case-by-case basis**, based on evidence provided in the ILP process.

There are **no general exemptions** under the IPA.

## ASSISTANCE

### Office of the Languages Commissioner

The Office of the Languages Commissioner can assist you with the development and implementation of your organization's Inuktut language plan upon request.

Phone: 867-975-5080 / Toll-free: 1-877-836-2280

Website: <https://langcom.nu.ca/en>

Email: [langcom@langcom.nu.ca](mailto:langcom@langcom.nu.ca)

### Department of Culture and Heritage

The Department of Culture and Heritage provides funding to the private sector. It also has publications on best practices.

Phone: 867-975-5500 / Toll free: 1-877-212-6438

Website: <https://www.gov.nu.ca/en/culture-language-heritage-and-art>

Email: [info@gov.nu.ca](mailto:info@gov.nu.ca)

## **Inuktut Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiiit (IUT)**

Inuktut Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtuit (IUT) can provide expertise on the correct use of Inuktut and its terminologies. It does not provide translations.

Phone: 867-975-5545 / Toll-free: 1-855-232-1852

Website: <http://www.taiguusiliuqtiit.ca/>

Email : [iut@gov.nu.ca](mailto:iut@gov.nu.ca)

FAQ

## OBLIGATIONS

## What if I am a contractor doing work for the Government of Nunavut? Do I have to communicate with the public in Inuktut?

Yes. Section 4 of the IPA describes the obligations for contracts with the Government of Nunavut and public agencies. Every contract must include a requirement on the contractor to communicate with and provide services to the public in Inuktut.

## What does it mean to publicize my organization's Inuktut language plan and the availability of communications and services in Inuktut?

You must make your organization's plan available to the public (i.e., it may be posted on your organization's website or be on display in the reception area) and create an environment where customers and clients know they can use Inuktut (this might be accomplished by posting signs, using Inuktut in greetings at the reception desk, Inuktut available stickers, etc.).

## **What happens if a complaint is reported to the Office of the Languages Commissioner about my organization?**

The Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut will investigate all eligible complaints raised. These could be complaints about a document, sign, or notification that is not in Inuktut, or about services offered by a business only in English.

If your organization has submitted an Inuktut language plan, the Office will review the plan and monitor its implementation.

If your organization has not submitted a plan, the Office will ask your organization to prepare one. This plan will define how and when you will meet the requirements of the law.

## CHALLENGES

## How can my organization offer reception and customer service in Inuktut when it does not have bilingual staff?

The OLCN understands that offering reception and customer services in Inuktut might be difficult for some to achieve. Your organization must implement this, but compliance can be gradual.

Depending on the situation, your organization could provide training to your employees, translate essential documents, hire Inuktut-speaking employees and rely on on-call interpreters, depending on your organization's capacity.

## TRANSLATIONS

## What items does my organization need translated into Inuktut?

- Public signs, including emergency and exit signs.
- Posters and commercial advertising

If your organization offers particular services (see page 1 for more information), you must translate:

- Monthly bills
- Invoices
- Warnings
- Notices
- Drug use instructions
- Restaurant menus
- Hotel room instructions
- Instructions on services

***IMPORTANT NOTE:***

Ensure that the Inuktut text (syllabic or roman orthography) on public signs, posters and commercial advertising is at least equally prominent with any other language used.

### Does my organization need to publish in both Inuktitut and Inuinngaktun?

It depends. Your organization needs to provide both Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun only if you are providing services throughout all of Nunavut.

Otherwise, your organization must publish in Inuinnaqtun if it conducts business in Kugluktuk or Cambridge Bay, or in Inuktitut if it only conducts business in the rest of Nunavut.

## I own a retail business. Am I required to have receipts and labels in Inuktitut?

No, unless your organization provides specific services (see p. 1 for more information).

However, you may want to include in Inuktut the store's contact information, a friendly "Thank you for shopping..." message, and any other public messages printed on your receipts.

## RESOURCES

**Having everything translated and offering my services in Inuktut might be costly. Is there help available?**

The Department of Culture and Heritage has a funding program geared towards the private sector. You can find more information online at:

- <https://www.gov.nu.ca/en/culture-language-heritage-and-art/grants-and-contributions-private-sector-inuktitut>

## Do you have a list of translators?

Yes, we have a list of translators. However, we cannot guarantee the quality of the translations.

To obtain the list, you have to write to us at [langcom@langcom.nu.ca](mailto:langcom@langcom.nu.ca) or call us at 867-975-5080 or 1-877-836-2280 (toll-free)

## Is there language training available to employees?

Yes. The Pirurvik Centre and the Nunavut Arctic College periodically offer courses to the public.

## **Pirurvik Centre**

Phone: 867-979-4722

Email: [info@pirurvik.ca](mailto:info@pirurvik.ca)

Website: [www.pirurvik.ca](http://www.pirurvik.ca)

Also, their “Tusaalanga” website is a valuable tool to learn basics in Inuktut: [www.tusaalanga.ca/](http://www.tusaalanga.ca/)

## **Nunavut Arctic College**

Phone: 867-857-7200 / Toll-free: 1-866-979-7222

Email:

- [nunatta@arcticcollege.ca](mailto:nunatta@arcticcollege.ca)
- [kivalliq@arcticcollege.ca](mailto:kivalliq@arcticcollege.ca)
- [kitikmeot@arcticcollege.ca](mailto:kitikmeot@arcticcollege.ca)

Website: <https://www.arcticcollege.com/>