



Ottawa West Four Rivers Ontario Health Team (OHT) Winning Strategies: Implementation status (2024-25)

Project overview:

Winning Strategies is a project launched in December 2023 to improve services for Francophone clients and patients in Eastern Ontario. It was developed in response to recommendations from a research project that identified gaps and inequalities in access to French-language services.

The project is a partnership between Kids Come First (KCF) Health Team, the French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario, and eight OHTs (Archipel, Ottawa, Ottawa West Four Rivers, Great River, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Ottawa Valley, Hastings Prince Edward). The project is made possible thanks to funding from the Société Santé en français (SSF) and Health Canada and relies on the voluntary participation of organizations.

The main steps achieved to date include an evaluation framework, two well-followed webinars explaining the project, the identification of Champions within the health organizations, several training opportunities in English and French for the Champions, organizational self-assessments and work plans. KCF and the Network continue to provide proactive support for the implementation, integration and coaching of organizations in their work.

1. Contextual actions

The number and percentage of people who speak French in the population provide an idea of the level of need and potential challenges. The number and percentage of organizations already designated or identified under the *French Language Services Act* is a basis upon which the Winning Strategies are built.

	OW4R	All participating OHTs
People with French as their mother tongue (as a % of the total population) ¹	34 155 (7.8%)	266 435 (13.2%)
People speaking primarily French at home (as a % of the total population) ²	36 150 (8.3%)	270 965 (13.4%)

¹ Includes people with more than one mother tongue. Estimates based on the 2021 census, for the population living in the official geographical areas of the OHT.

² Includes people with more than one mother tongue. Estimates based on the 2021 census, for the population living in the official geographical areas of the OHT.

Member organizations, including those that are members of several OHT	72	407
Member organizations identified or designated under the <i>French Language Services Act</i> (as a % of partner organizations funded by Ontario Health)	5	53

2. Project participation status (as of March 2025)

Engagement, participation and planning are key steps in implementing the Winning Strategies.

	OW4R ³	All participating OHTs ⁴
Member organizations having attended one or both webinars (as a % of all OHT partners) (Excluding OHT and Le Réseau participation and organizations that are not part of an OHT)	17 (24%)	78 (19%)
Member organizations participating in WS (as a % of all OHT partners) (Excluding OHT and Le Réseau participation)	0 (0%)	24 (5%)
Member organizations that have developed WS work plans (excluding member organizations identified or designated under the French Language Services Act)	1 (%) /65	2 (0.6%) /354
Member organizations with identified Champions	5 (7%)	57(14%)

OW4R's partner organizations that participated (in March 2025)⁵

Organization	Sector	In-person meeting March 18, 2025	Participation in one or more webinars	Participant in WS
Bayshore Home Care	Private	√	√	√
Bruyère Continuing Care	Long term care		√	√
Carefor Health and Community Services	Community health center	√	√	√

³ Includes organizations that are also members of other participating OHTs.

⁴ Member organizations of several OHTs are counted once in this column.

⁵ Member organizations that have completed at least one action of the Winning Strategies: identifying a Champion, completing the organizational self-assessment, participating in the Champions training or developing a work plan.



Organization	Sector	In-person meeting March 18, 2025	Participation in one or more webinars	Participant in WS
Children's Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville	Mental health and addictions		√	√
CommuniCare Therapy	Community health center			√
J.W. MacIntosh Community Support Services	Community health center		√	√
Kemptville District Hospital	Hospital		√	
Hospice Care Ottawa	Long term care		√	
Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit	Public health		√	√
Royal Ottawa Health Care Group	Hospital	√		
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre	Community and social services			√
Phoenix Centre for Children and Families	Mental health and addictions		√	√
Ottawa Public Health	Santé Publique	√	√	
Parents Lifelines of Eastern Ontario (PLEO)	Family Peer Support	√	√	
Pathways Alcohol & Drug Treatment Services Inc.	Mental health and addictions		√	√
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre	Community health center		√	
Queensway Carleton Hospital	Hospital	√	√	
The Dementia Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County	Mental health and addictions	√	√	
Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services	Mental health and addictions		√	√

Organization	Sector	In-person meeting March 18, 2025	Participation in one or more webinars	Participant in WS
Renfrew County and District Health Unit	Public health		√	
Saint Elizabeth Health Care	Private		√	√
Seniors' Community Services	Community and social services			√
Ottawa Valley Family Health Team	Primary care		√	
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre	Community and social services		√	

Status for the basic implementation of the Winning Strategies (as of March 2025)

The following indicators are derived from the self-assessment survey. Given that only a small percentage of the organizations chose to complete the survey, their responses may not be representative. Indicators were selected to align with the six strategies (identification of Champions, active offer training, identification of staff language proficiency, identification of Francophone clients, matching of clients with Francophone staff, orientation of Francophone clients).

	OW4R	All participating OHTs
Number of member organizations that have completed self-assessments	10	38
Members providing active offer training to their staff	2 (20%)	10 (26%)
Members measuring their staff's French language proficiency	3 (30%)	21 (55%)
Members with an up-to-date inventory of their employees' French language skills	3 (30%)	17 (45%)
Members with mechanisms to ensure that Francophone employees are easily identifiable by clients ⁶	1 (10%)	9 (24%)

⁶ The following elements were considered "easily identifiable": "Je parle français", "Bonjour" or similar ID cards and/or the fact that all staff speak/write French. The following were not considered "easily identifiable": bilingual electronic signatures, bilingual voice messages, clinicians identifying themselves or speaking French when customers identify themselves as French-speaking or need French.

Members who ask clients about their mother tongue and/or ask clients about the language in which they are most comfortable receiving their services ⁷	8 (80%)	31 (82%)
Members whose patient/client records include language preference ⁸	7 (70%)	20 (53%)
Members who match their French speaking clients with employees who have French language skills ⁹	6 (60%)	31 (88%)
Members aware of similar providers in their region offering services in French	3 (30%)	19 (50%)
Members who make referrals to other providers offering the same service in French	5 (50%)	10 (26%)
Members who have developed formal referral arrangements with another organization	0 (0%)	5 (13%)

Conclusion and next steps

Winning Strategies was launched 15 months ago. In collaboration with partner OHTs, many health service providers have been engaged, influenced and supported to improve their active offer of services in French. There is still a lot of work to be done in 2025-26, including:

1. Expanding partnerships: Increase the number of partners involved in the initiative.
2. Supporting development: Assist all partners in developing or improving their plans to improve access to French language services.
3. Implementation: Ensure effective implementation of these plans using the Winning Strategies.
4. Evaluation: Evaluate the process and impact of the Winning Strategies program to identify areas for improvement and support the development of the future strategy.

It is through ongoing collaboration with the Kids Come First Health Team and eight OHTs (Archipel, Ottawa, Ottawa West Four Rivers, Great River, Frontenac, Lennox and

⁷ Organizations that simply stated that patients “identify themselves as Francophone” without specifying a mechanism were excluded.

⁸ Only organizations actively documenting language preference in patient records were included. Organizations that simply stated that their welcome message was written in both languages were not included.

⁹ These are all organizations that match their customers with French-speaking staff, whether frequently or infrequently.



Addington, Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Ottawa Valley, Hastings Prince Edward) and their partners that we can collectively improve equitable access to French-language services for our Francophone population.