



By Act 409, the Louisiana legislature created the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) in 1968 “...to do any and all things necessary to accomplish the development, utilization, and preservation of the French language as found in Louisiana for the cultural, economic and touristic benefit of the state.”

CODOFIL operates as an umbrella organization for French-speaking Louisiana. Many organizations, festivals and activities have been launched from the CODOFIL offices but now have their own separate lives and identities. Most of our activities are done in partnership with other governments, universities, organizations and individuals. Some of our partners include the State Department of Education, the French Consulate in New Orleans, the French Community of Belgium, the Consortium of Immersion Schools (launched by CODOFIL) and the Consortium of Colleges and Universities (launched and administered by CODOFIL.

Here is an overview of some of CODOFIL’s past and current activities.

1) Education - CODOFIL started the foreign language programs in the elementary schools. The Louisiana elementary foreign language program is often cited as a model.

We offer a visa program to foreign teachers of French to supplement local teachers

- Welcome and welcome back over 200 teachers from Europe and Africa, several Canadian provinces, the Caribbean and even Vietnam, every year to teach French in the primary and middle immersion and French as a second language programs.
- US Information Agency requests that all states use the CODOFIL model in signing agreements with foreign governments.

We maintain a scholarship program for Louisiana and foreign students –

- All of the money comes from foreign governments and universities and the Fondation Louisiane.
- Over 3,000 Louisiana students and teachers have studied abroad, including 4 of us in the CODOFIL office.
- Offer tuition exemptions to French and Belgian students,
- Entire program administered by the CODOFIL Consortium of Universities and Colleges, which brings together represents of every university French department in the state.
- Developed an exchange with a university consortium in Paris which allows students on either side to study abroad without paying further tuition fees.

Some of the educational programs impacted or supported by CODOFIL:

- State mandate of 1984 for foreign languages in conjunction with the Dept. of Education,
- Launched and support the Louisiana High School French Club Association,
- Summer French immersion programs in Belgium and at the Collège Jonquière in Quebec were started in response to requests from CODOFIL to provide French language learning programs.
- Establishment of over 26 immersion programs in 9 parishes around the state,
- Established the Consortium of Immersion Schools,
- Work directly with the State Department of Education to hire and train foreign teachers.

2) Community Outreach –

Some of the things we do on a daily basis:

- Serve as a tourist information center for French-speaking tourists,
- Translate thousands of phrases for names of restaurants, birthday banners, tombstones, etc.,
- Publicize French-speaking events,
- Publish monthly bilingual e-newsletter with news and information, with a circulation including Louisiana, the East Coast of the US, Canada, France, Belgium and other parts of the French-speaking world.

- Resource and networking tool for individuals and organizations,
- Work with individuals and communities in developing new projects and jump-start already established projects.

Some of the projects we have supported and helped develop –

- The establishment of the Acadian Memorial and the African American Museum in St. Martinville, as well as their twinning with Goree Island in Senegal,
- Developed a joint film and community discussion project with Louisiane à la carte and the Acadian Cultural Centers of the Jean Lafitte National Park and Preserve,
- Re-establishment of ties between Louisiana and Maine,
- ABC 2000, literacy classes in French,
- Festivals Acadiens, Festival International de Louisiane,
- Franco-Fête, Congrès Mondial Acadien – Louisiane 1999,
- Action Cadienne, Théâtre Cadien,
- Creation of the Association France-Louisiane in France which made Louisiana known to the French-speaking world and opened the door for tourism,
- Alliance Française de Lafayette,
- French programming on KRVS, received its permit to enlarge its viewing area to allow for French programming; French programming on Acadiana Open Channel,
- Louisiana Public Broadcasting was started to support French programming.
- numerous French tables around the state.

Other projects started because of the work done by CODOFIL:

- The establishment of the 1st Louisiana publishing house in French since the 19th century at Centenary College, Éditions Tintamarre,
- The publishing of the Creole dictionary,
- C.R.E.O.L.E, Inc.
- The approaching arrival of a comprehensive Cajun dictionary, as well as Father Daigle's Cajun dictionary
- The establishment of the Cajun Studies minor program at LSU,
- The summer French immersion program of Université Ste-Anne in Nova Scotia at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux,
- The UL Lafayette Francophone Studies doctoral program,

We serve as an umbrella organization for Francophone Louisiana. The phenomenon of French-speaking tourists in Louisiana is the direct result of the work done by CODOFIL.

3) International Ties

- Observer status at the International Francophone Summit. We have attended the last 3 of 4 summits, in Vietnam, New Brunswick, Canada and most recently in Romania.

- We have received foreign dignitaries from French-speaking nations, including the Ambassadors of Belgium, Canada and France to the United States and a President of France, and the Ambassador from the International Francophone Organization to the United Nations

- We have assured Louisiana's participation in the international Association of French-speaking parliamentarians, internationally and with the North American section.

-For at least 30 years, we have signed educational and cultural accords with the French Community of Belgium and France. In the past, we have had educational agreements with Quebec, the Maritime Provinces of Canada, Haiti and Tunisia.

Solely because of the presence of CODOFIL: the French Community of Belgium has maintained an office in Baton Rouge and a permanent representative for over 30 years, the government of Quebec maintained an office in Lafayette through 1990, and the French Consulate General remains in New Orleans.