

Procurement and Purchasing Policy

This policy applies to all YWCA Hamilton Employees, Contractors, Students & Volunteers

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, transparent, and compliant procurement and purchasing practices for YWCA Hamilton. This policy ensures adherence to the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive, promotes accountability and value for money, and provides guidelines for decentralized procurement supported by Finance and Records Management to ensure oversight and audit readiness.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all procurement activities and purchasing decisions undertaken on behalf of YWCA Hamilton, whether or not they result in a formal signed contract. Departments are responsible for initiating procurement within their delegated authority and maintaining documentation to demonstrate compliance with the BPS Procurement Directive.

3. DEFINITIONS

Procurement: The process of acquiring goods, services, consultants, or construction through purchase, lease, or other means.

Competitive Procurement: A fair and open process inviting qualified vendors to submit bids using a RFQ or RFP, evaluated against pre-established criteria. Competitive procurement includes **Invitational Competitive Procurement** and **Open Competitive Procurement**.

Invitational Competitive Procurement: A procurement method where a limited number of suppliers (usually a minimum of three) are invited to submit bids or proposals. Used for purchases below the open competitive procurement threshold but above the single-quote threshold, in accordance with the BPS Procurement Directive.

Open Competitive Procurement: A competitive procurement process that is publicly posted and open to all qualified suppliers, used at or above the open competitive procurement threshold set out in the Procurement Threshold Schedule.

Non-Competitive Procurement: Sole-source or single-source purchases requiring documented

justification and approval as per the DOA Policy.

Sole-Source Procurement: A procurement awarded without a competitive process where only one supplier is capable of providing the goods or services due to unique qualifications or exclusive rights. Requires documented justification and approval in accordance with the DOA Policy.

Single-Source Procurement: A procurement where multiple suppliers may exist, but only one supplier is approached for reasons such as compatibility with existing equipment or continuity of service. Requires documented justification and approval in accordance with the DOA Policy.

Consultant: An individual or firm providing expert advice or professional services under a contract for a defined deliverable or outcome. Consultants are considered a subset of services and are subject to the BPS Procurement Directive and this policy's competitive procurement rules.

Purchase Splitting: Dividing a procurement into multiple smaller purchases to avoid the application of procurement thresholds or required procurement methods. Purchase splitting is prohibited.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vice President, Finance & Asset Management is responsible for:

Owning this policy, ensuring compliance with the BPS Procurement Directive, providing strategic oversight of procurement, approving sole/single-source exceptions, and ensuring contract approvals follow the DOA Policy.

The Director of Administration (Policy Steward) is responsible for:

Maintaining and updating this policy, providing procurement templates and tools (RFP templates, evaluation checklists, contract templates), overseeing compliance, conducting post-procurement audits, and monitoring purchasing activities. Ensuring all procurement templates include Procurement-approved standard wording for domestic content or 'Buy Ontario' considerations only where permitted under applicable trade agreements and funder requirements.

Purchasing and Procurement Specialist

Ensures procurement activities are conducted with fairness, transparency, value for money, and risk mitigation, while supporting operational and strategic organizational needs. The incumbent provides procurement advisory services, manages competitive procurement processes, oversees supplier performance, and maintains audit-ready procurement documentation.

The Central Administration (Records Management) department is responsible for:

Maintaining the centralized procurement repository, ensuring timely submission of documentation from departments, providing Finance with the contracts, and following up with departments to ensure compliance with this policy.

The Finance Department is responsible for:

Accessing contracts from Records Management for financial tracking and audit; reviewing departmental records for purchases without contracts.

Departments (Supervisors, Managers, Directors, VPs) are responsible for:

Initiating procurement, engaging with the Purchasing and Procurement Specialist, ensuring DOA approvals, adhering to the Procurement Thresholds, using templates, submitting signed contracts to Records Management, and retaining documentation for purchases without contracts.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

Approving this policy and ensuring that high-value contracts and procurement activities comply legislation and with the DOA Policy.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

YWCA Hamilton is committed to ensuring that all procurement and purchasing activities are conducted in a manner that is fair, transparent, and compliant with applicable laws, the Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive, and relevant trade agreements. All contracts and commitments must align with organizational needs and budgets and be signed strictly in accordance with the Delegation of Authority (DOA) Policy. Procurement activities may incorporate domestic content or 'Buy Ontario' considerations only where permitted under applicable trade agreements and funder requirements. All procurement and purchasing, whether resulting in a formal contract or not, must comply with this policy and BPS requirements.

6. POLICY

- Procurement is decentralized; departments manage purchasing within their DOA limits using Finance-provided tools and templates.
- All procurement, with or without a signed contract, must comply with the BPS Procurement Directive and the Procurement Thresholds Schedule.
- All competitive procurements must follow a documented competitive process RFQ or RFP (as appropriate) to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with the BPS Procurement Directive.
- Invitational competitive procurement should be used for mid-range purchases in line with thresholds.
- Where a non-competitive procurement, single-source or sole-source procurement is used in place of a competitive or invitational competitive process, documented justification and approval from the VP Finance & Asset Management are required.

- Purchase splitting to avoid procurement threshold is prohibited.
 - Where non-competitive procurement is used, departments must document both (i) the rationale for using sole/single source and (ii) evidence that pricing is reasonable (e.g., benchmark, rate card, comparable quotes, prior competitive results, or other market evidence)
- Consultant engagements must be procured in accordance with this policy and are subject to the requirements of the Consultant Use Policy to ensure BPS compliance.
 - Executed contracts must be forwarded to Records Management for centralized storage. For purchases without a signed contract, departments must retain, at a minimum: the quote(s) or pricing evidence, approval evidence as per the DOA policy, rationale for vendor selection, and proof of receipt/confirmation of delivery or service completion (as applicable), and make these available for Finance review.
 - Both invitational competitive and open competitive procurements may be conducted using an RFQ or an RFP; the choice depends on the nature and complexity of the requirement.

7. PROCEDURE

Step 1: Initiate Procurement

- Supervisors, Managers, Directors, and Vice Presidents may initiate procurement within their delegated authority, defining scope, specifications, and budget. Engage the Procurement and Purchasing Specialist at the start of the Procurement process to ensure compliance is met. All competitive procurements must use the Purchasing and Procurement -provided RFQ/RFP templates (as appropriate) and evaluation checklist template.

Step 2: Approval

- All procurement and contracts must be approved and signed strictly in accordance with the Delegation of Authority (DOA) Policy.

Step 3: Competitive Process

- Departments must use a documented competitive process using an RFQ or RFP (as appropriate) in accordance with the Procurement Threshold Schedule. Evaluations must use Procurement's standardized evaluation checklist/scorecard and retain scoring documentation for audit purposes.

Step 4: Invitational Competitive Process

- Departments must invite a minimum of three suppliers for purchases between the single-quote and open-competitive thresholds and document all decisions.

Step 5: Non-Competitive Process

- Non-competitive procurement (sole-source or single-source) is permitted only when it is used in place of a required competitive procurement process under the Procurement Threshold Schedule. In such cases, departments must complete the appropriate justification form and document the rationale, including evidence that pricing is reasonable (e.g., benchmark, rate card, comparable quotes, prior competitive results, or other market evidence). The requesting department must obtain approval from the appropriate executive leader responsible for the area (i.e., the relevant VP, or the CEO where the Director reports directly to the CEO) prior to submitting a sole/single source request. The next approval must be obtained from the VP, Finance & Asset Management (or designate) before proceeding. Contract award and signing authority must be completed in accordance with the Delegation of Authority (DOA) Policy. Departments must also confirm that procurement is not being structured to avoid thresholds (purchase splitting is prohibited).

Step 6: Contract Review

- VP, Finance and Asset Management provides contract review support for high-value, high-risk, or consultant contracts to ensure DOA, funding, and financial compliance.

Step 7: Contract Execution

- All executed contracts and procurement documentation must be sent to Records Management within 10 business days for centralized storage. Records Management will provide Finance with copies of high-value and high-risk contracts upon receipt and maintain all other contracts for Finance to access as needed.
- All competitive procurement documents must include a statement of compliance with the BPS Procurement Directive and use Finance-approved standard wording for domestic content or 'Buy Ontario' considerations only where permitted under applicable trade agreements and funder requirements.

Step 8: Documentation

- Procurement records resulting in a contract must be retained centrally by Records Management for a minimum of seven years (or longer if required by legislation, funder requirements, audit requirements or litigation hold). Departments must retain all procurement records for a minimum of seven years.

8. REFERENCES

Broader Public Sector (BPS) Accountability Act.
Buy Ontario Procurement Directive.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Delegation of Authority (DOA) Policy
Consultant Use Policy
Expense and Travel Policy
Procurement Threshold Schedule

10. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The following documents may assist in the implementation of this policy. This is just a guide and should not be considered prescriptive:

Procurement Process Templates

- Purchase Requisition Form
- Sole Source Justification Form
- Single Source Justification Form
- Competitive Procurement Checklist

Competitive Procurement Templates

- RFP (Request for Proposal) Template
- RFQ (Request for Quote) Template
- Evaluation Scorecard template
- Conflict of Interest Declaration Form
- Procurement Process Summary Sheet

Contract Management Templates

- Contract Template – Goods and Services
- Contract Template – Consultant Engagements
- Contract Change Order Template
- Contract Close-out Checklist

Records Management & Compliance

- Procurement Documentation Submission Checklist
- Procurement File Naming and Storage Guide
- Procurement Records Tracking Log

- Procurement Compliance Review Checklist

Training and Guidance

- Department Procurement User Guide
- Quick Reference Flowchart
- Annual Training Materials

Approved by:

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