

## Toolkit for Contract Award Winners

Congratulations on your successful bid to carry out work at York University. Your work will benefit generations of students to come. In order to help achieve that success, we want to make sure you have the resources and support you need.

You're likely here because there is a social procurement requirement we have put in place and perhaps you have questions about the program or are wondering where to start. Well, you're in the right place. This toolkit will provide step-by-step instructions on how to successfully deliver on the social procurement objectives on your project. But just in case your question isn't answered here or you'd like to discuss social procurement in greater detail as it pertains to your project please be rest assured, we're here to help. We've had a lot of experience in social procurement on our projects and we're happy to help as best we can.

This toolkit will be broken down topically. We hope that you'll read each section, but if you have a particular question regarding implementing your social procurement plan, feel free to jump to the topic that best addresses your query. And as always, if you have any questions that aren't answered here, please reach out.

### Social Procurement – What is it and Why is it so Important to Us?

Social procurement considers how procurement, the process of buying goods and services, can positively impact the social well-being of communities and assist to reduce poverty, promote economic and social inclusion, and support local economic development and social enterprise.

We hope that this definition conveys why social procurement is so important to us at York University. Every purchase we make has the potential to yield considerable benefits in our community. Think about it: spending locally or from a business that creates social value goes towards hiring local people, catalyzing local supply chains and granting community members considerable purchasing power and agency in their own lives. If you have an apprenticeship requirement in your contract with us, know that similar factors are at play too: by hiring a local apprentice from an equity-seeking community, we can ensure that community members who might not traditionally have access to these opportunities have them and can take major steps towards achieving a meaningful career in the trades.

All this is to say that York takes very seriously our social procurement requirements and the impact and responsibility we have to our community. We value our place as an anchor institution and we want to make sure that as we benefit our community does as well. Your participation is vital to seeing us realize this.

For more information see: [Social Procurement Policy | Secretariat Policies \(yorku.ca\)](#)

### Step 1: Assembling the Team

In order to be successful and to ensure consistency in reporting, we suggest you designate one staff person who is primarily responsible for ensuring you are able to stay on top of the social procurement requirements.

Because every company delegates responsibilities differently, we don't have any recommendations for who this point person should be. But to help you make that decision, here are a few key responsibilities that are *usually* required of the social procurement liaison:

- Work collaboratively with your HR department to collect apprenticeship hours worked
- Complete regularly scheduled reports which includes collating qualifying expenses from vendors
- Manage relationships with subcontractors to ensure their participation in the social procurement
- Act as a liaison with York University's Procurement Services Department to report on social procurement activity

Depending on the length of the process, we would recommend having someone who will be involved on the project for the project's duration. This will ensure knowledge retention for processes that will be developed and better allow you to reflect on lessons learned once the project is complete.

Once you have a person identified, their first order of business will be to connect with Strategic Procurement Services to work on a social procurement plan and reporting schedule.

### Step 2: Meeting with York University

With a staff person in place, their first order of business will be to connect with York's Senior Procurement Analyst and Project Lead. This staff member is responsible for overseeing York's Social Procurement implementation and deliverables and will be your primary contact for all matters related to social procurement throughout the course of your project. In this meeting you'll have a chance to ask any questions you have as you begin to get the project planning in order. But there are a few items that will be established at this meeting:

- 1) Frequency of meetings to discuss Social Procurement activities
- 2) Establish timeline for submitting monthly reports
- 3) Confirm understanding of the social procurement deliverables
- 4) Go over schedules of work and how social procurement will be integrated into work packages
- 5) Go over existing tools and community partners who can assist with recruitment of apprentices and local supports

Remember, York is prepared to help you achieve and ideally exceed the social procurement requirements put in place in the contract. Please ask questions when they arise and if you're experiencing difficulties, please reach out. This is a collaborative exercise, and we are all on the same side in seeing our communities benefit as much as we can.

### Step 3: Social Procurement Plan

Depending on the project, you may end up combining step 2 and 3 to create your Social Procurement Plan as you go over the Social Procurement requirements with the Senior Procurement Analyst and Project Lead. But in any event, it is important that you carefully review the information in this step. The Social Procurement Plan is a document that we will agree to with you to ensure there is a pathway to success and that every opportunity will be explored to maximize social procurement spend and apprenticeship opportunities. You'll notice that we use the word *minimum* prior to any targets set in the contract. This is intentional – we want you to exceed the target as much as possible and we're prepared to help.

We've prepared a template that you are welcome to use to help put your plan together. You'll find this tool listed in the other You can use it in its entirety, or you can modify it – the choice is up to you. Whether or not you choose to use this form, there are a few points that this plan needs to include, and the descriptions below will help you understand what we're asking for and why:

**Section 1** needs to indicate your understanding and commitment to the project. If the Tender Document referred to any geographic locations or equity-deserving groups and qualifying business types, you need to indicate as such here. You should also clearly establish how you are going to begin to identify qualifying businesses and how you will find qualifying apprentices i.e. which union halls or community groups you'll engage.

**Section 2** refers to the mechanics of the community benefits plan. If your project requires trade unions you'll need to identify which trade unions you will consult to recruit your apprentices. Please identify the relevant unions. You are also welcome to include further details on how you will require subcontractors to contribute to the overall totals. It might be helpful to forecast how many apprentices each trade will have on site to ensure the minimum requirements are met. This also helps your subcontractors get a better sense of how they can contribute to the social procurement deliverables.

If you have a spending target, you should provide details as to how you will encourage your subcontractors to spend within the parameters of the social procurement qualifications. If you have local partnerships with any BIA or a diverse-owned or community business network, please mention them here. York will also provide you with access to its Social Procurement Vendor Portal. We strongly recommend you connect with businesses listed as the majority will likely qualify for your project's deliverables.

**Section 3** is a commitment to tracking. Please indicate your commitment to tracking the information requested of you in the Tender Document. This need not be detailed, but we want your written commitment to tracking the information we have asked for. We have templates that we highly recommend that you use that will allow you to simply and accurately collect the information we require.

### Step 4: Mapping the Spend

As soon as possible, and ideally before you issue any work packages, you'll want to ensure proponents take seriously the social procurement requirements. To give any subcontractors who might want to

work with you the chance to integrate social procurement opportunities, it's important to make two things abundantly clear:

- 1) That you have a contract with York University and social procurement is a deliverable of the project
- 2) That they need to do a thorough analysis of their supply chain to examine potential opportunities to satisfy their contribution towards the social procurement objective.

### *Spending Troubleshooting*

In our experience, this has been one of the key areas where subcontractors encounter the greatest difficulties in the social procurement process. Fortunately, nearly every hiccup in this process can be solved through communication and ensuring that the messaging is on-point, so subcontractors are able to maximize their social procurement contributions. So here are the most common issues that we've encountered AND how to remedy these probably challenges.

- 1) *Subcontractors only focus on their critical spend* – sometimes, due to the specified nature of the contract, their major purchases fall outside the scope of the social procurement program. For example, the specified work is only sourced from a vendor outside the targeted areas. But it is important for the subcontractor to look at other purchases they will need to make, however small they might deem it to be. Renting tools and buying commonly used electrical and building supplies are great places to start. So it's important for them to look at the entirety of the spend.
- 2) *Only using their existing suppliers* – Typically this occurs when subcontractors either aren't aware of the social procurement requirements and traditionally source their goods; or when subs submit cost estimates that are based on their usual suppliers. In both cases, the solution is early communication. Failure to do so often leads to unfruitful exchange between you and your subs to try and find matches with existing purchasing. Doing this often leads to frustration and bottlenecking.
- 3) *Trouble finding suppliers* – This challenge is one that we do encounter from time to time. Sometimes this occurs as a result of a subcontractor looking only to track spending from big-ticket or highly tailored items. But occasionally, if a subcontractor is performing work out of their customary markets, this concern can also ring true. To help subcontractors identify opportunities York has built a database of local vendors, diverse-owned vendors and social enterprises. Businesses listed on this Portal will count towards any Social Procurement spending requirements: [Social Procurement Vendor Directory | Social Procurement \(yorku.ca\)](#) Please consult this directory often as new vendors are added regularly. Subs are strongly encouraged at the earliest possible instance to connect with vendors regarding product availability and pricing.

York has carefully prepared some tools that you are welcome to send to your subcontractors and even use for yourselves. Each toolkit addresses some of the lessons we've learned in our social procurement

journey. We've also created guidance notes that you can send along too. We hope that these resources will help you and your subcontractors maximize potential social procurement spending opportunities.

The first is the Social Procurement Spending Map. This map will help subcontractors in their planning stage as they prepare their quotes or it can be used after contract award. The subs are encouraged to look at everything they need to buy and identify which supplier they hope to use. The subs can then evaluate whether their preferred vendor may be a suitable match or if they need to explore other vendors to supply their goods. This tool is not exhaustive and it will require the subs to add relevant categories.

#### Step 5: Securing Apprentices

If you have secured a construction contract, it's also likely you'll see in your deliverables section, a requirement to hire on apprentices from the equity-deserving community. Sometimes, depending on the project, we might instead ask for local and/or equity-deserving hiring if the project is unlikely to require apprentices on site. Whether you are sourcing your apprentices from a union hall or require non-unionized workers, York has existing relationships with union halls and community groups to help you source workers.

Depending on which campus your work pertains to, you'll also see some geographical parameters placed on where the apprentices should primarily reside. These will usually be identified by the first three digits of their postal code. The reason why we provide postal codes is it is the easiest way to clearly identify individuals from communities that are most impacted by our presence in their community. Put another way, we want them to be able to benefit from our activity.

#### *Apprentice Tracking Tool*

To monitor your apprentices and/or local workers, we have a template for your use. You can find it in the additional tools section. These reports are typically submitted monthly to York University's Senior Procurement Analyst and Project Lead. Vendors might also wish to provide a summary of apprentice work activity to date. This is often helpful to keep track of your running totals, but this is not necessary.

In the first column we are asking for an apprentice reference number. We take confidentiality very seriously. We understand that some of the information we ask for is sensitive, so we do not want to put any worker's privacy at an undue risk. Balancing privacy and data, we permit our vendors to use a code known only by your HR department that uniquely identifies an apprentice. Please ensure that someone in your organization maintains a record of which code pertains to an apprentice. York may require verification on the claims submitted so we need to make sure the information can be provided should it be needed. Please note that any further information we might require will of course maintain the confidentiality of the apprentice's information. The format of the code is entirely up to you but in the past, vendors have used numbers or on larger projects, identifying the apprentice's trade and number: Electrician 1.

The second column pertains to the postal code. You need only state the first three letters of the apprentice's postal code, for example: M3J. Please ensure that the postal code is the apprentice's primary residence.

The next two columns pertain to self-identifying questions, and we understand that there may be some trepidation in asking for these characteristics. Have a conversation with your HR department. You might be collecting this information already. Alternatively, we suggest working with either a trade union or community group who is helping you source the apprentice. Those organizations are often in a much better position to have this information at the ready. To do this, it is important that you state exactly what you are looking for in an apprentice as it pertains to the project's requirements. Many trade unions are aware of and support social procurement outcomes so it's unlikely you'll face much opposition here. But the key is to be clear in your ask and to give the unions or community groups as much time as possible for them to source an apprentice who meets the requirements. If you have concerns or are encountering difficulties, please reach out to York. We're more than happy to help.

The next column asks for the trade of the apprentice. Please refer to the Ontario College of Trades website for the proper naming conventions: [Ontario College of Trades » Trades in Ontario](#) For example, instead of writing 'general labourer' please use Construction Craft Worker. The reason why we ask for this information is we want to be able to have a better picture on what trades our social procurement program is currently serving. We also like to analyse what percentage of the jobsite requirements for completing an apprenticeship are earned on a York University project. This helps us measure our impact.

The remaining three categories are fairly standard accounting. Please indicate whether the apprentice has been hired full-time or part-time on the project and the number of hours logged for the month. The final category asks you to report on the wages paid to the employee. For this value, please indicate the hourly wage pre-tax the apprentice receives. Do not include union dues, transit allowances or other expenses in this value.

### *Apprenticeship Troubleshooting*

Finding an apprentice and one that fits our requirements, can sometimes require some out of the box thinking. Every social procurement project that has required apprenticeship quotas has been successful in achieving the apprenticeship component. This is not say there haven't been hiccups but we've documented our key learnings. Please have a look at some of the challenges we've encountered on previous projects and the steps you can take to ensure they don't creep up on your project. But in the event you experience any difficulties, please, reach out to York as soon as possible. We're happy to help and work with you to find a solution.

- 1) *I can't find an apprentice within the postal codes.* Sometimes this is the case where the union hall doesn't have an apprentice available. We've often found that earlier notice to the union halls of your requirements helps the union find a suitable candidate. If the union hall is unable to source someone, please let us know. We have many connections with community groups and social enterprises who work with local community members who are preparing for an apprenticeship and could meet your requirements. If you require union affiliation for an apprentice, many of these groups will help the apprentice register with a union as well. So the

more notice you can give the union halls and/or us, the better chance we have of finding someone who will benefit from the opportunity.

- 2) *We've tried everything and we're still having an issue is there any flexibility regarding the apprentice location requirements?* If the labour market is not able to supply an apprentice, York will work with you to determine where we could broaden the requirements such as the apprentice's location. Please note that this is a last resort and approval should not be assumed. But again, communication with York is key. We'll work together to find a solution that balances the project's needs and timelines and community impact.

## Conclusion

Congratulations again on your contract award at York University. We hope that the information contained in this toolkit will set you well on your way towards successfully delivering on your social procurement deliverables. If you have further questions or want to see more information on a given topic, please contact [purchase@yorku.ca](mailto:purchase@yorku.ca). We're always looking to provide more resources and support for our vendors!