

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN MUNICIPAL PROCUREMENT

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If there's one thing that all municipalities across Canada have in common, it's the mandate to serve their residents as well and as cost-effectively as possible. Many taxpayers want to know what their tax dollars are paying for and how that money is being put to the best use possible. If that weren't enough pressure, the provincial and federal governments regularly ask municipalities to find ways to do more with less. Throw in the often-complex world of trade legislation compliance and it's no wonder that many municipal staff find procurement stressful.

Fortunately for many municipalities, the large volume of certain purchases puts them in the advantageous position of being able to negotiate better pricing and, in some cases, better service. To expand this advantage further, organizations that have similar procurement needs can work together to leverage their combined purchasing power. These steps can help municipalities realize increased cost savings and effectively 'do more with less'.



Of course, combining purchases is not a real option if the process isn't compliant with relevant trade legislation. No organization is interested in risking fines or prosecution just to save a little money. Legal counsel can provide guidance to ensure the details are correctly in place ahead of any group buying activity.

While there are many municipalities that have formed local cooperative purchasing agreements on specific goods and services, there are also procurement groups that may be able to fill in the gaps. However, as not all group purchasing organizations are created equal, it may be beneficial to consider certain factors such as (1) whether or not the organization supports local dealer networks, (2) if it works with the local municipal association, (3) how open its procurement process is, (4) if it has representatives available to meet and provide answers or support, and (5) if it's able to provide peace of mind in legislative compliance.

At the Canoe Procurement Group of Canada, we're proud to be a not-for-profit buying group focused on the municipal, not-for-profit, and public sectors. Because of our municipal roots (we were formed from the collaboration of municipal associations across Canada, including NSFM), we have grown our municipal-focused offerings to over 200 suppliers in more than 60 categories, the majority of which are used by municipalities every day. Construction equipment, office supplies, bulk fuel, tires, snow removal, playground supply, and more are available via cooperative contracts that have already been tendered on behalf of our members.

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