

Doing business with the City of Ottawa

A bidder's guide

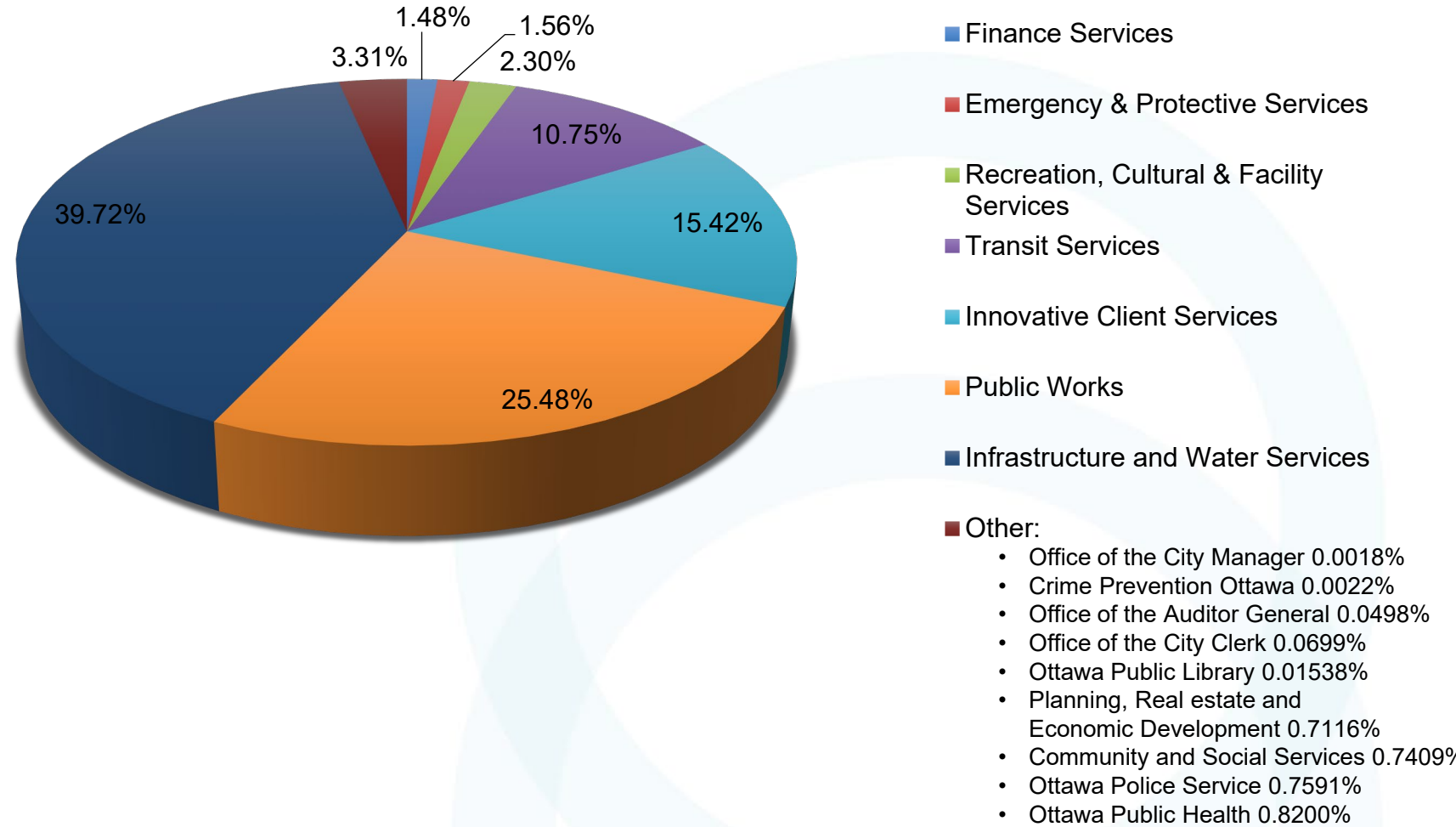
January 2023



Annual purchases

Annually, the City of Ottawa buys approximately \$1 billion worth of goods, services and construction for the City of Ottawa, Ottawa Police and Ottawa Public Library

Annual purchases by department (2021)



Supplier community

- The City has a strong commitment to supporting the local supplier community, spending approximately 94% of its annual procurement dollars on goods and services from the local community (2021)
- This figure has been calculated after adjusting overall purchasing to remove goods and services which are not available locally, such as the manufacture of transit buses or the mining of winter rock salt

City of Ottawa – Who we are

- The City of Ottawa's organizational structure is comprised of City Council, the City Manager and the following [City departments](#)

Supply Services'

Objectives & Guiding Principles

- Supply Services provides centralized procurement services and advice to all City departments when they need to make purchases
- The goal for every procurement is to:
 - Obtain best value for taxpayer dollars;
 - Ensure fair, open and equitable treatment of all suppliers; and
 - Ensure that the competitive process is cost-effective and used whenever possible.
- The [Procurement By-law](#) and associated policies and procedures are informed by applicable trade agreements and case law

Bidding opportunities (2021)

- At the City of Ottawa over 500 bid solicitations issued annually on average
 - This includes Requests for Tenders, Proposals, Standing Offers, Quotes etc.

Standing offers

- Standing offer lists facilitate procurements when departments repeatedly order or anticipate a need to order the same goods or services and the demand is not known in advance
- There are different ways in which a standing offer can be activated, this is dependent on the standing offer and the type of project or procurement
- Standing offer opportunities are advertised on merx.com
- 150+ standing offers in place with 600+ vendors

City of Ottawa procurement thresholds

\$2500 and Under	\$2501-\$15,000	\$15,001 and Over
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Extensive use of standing offer call-up	Two competitive options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Standing offer call-up•Three quotes	Many options, including Request for Procurement (RFP), Request for Tender (RFT), Request for Quote (RFQ), Request for Standing Offer (RFSO), and Request for Information (RFI)
Purchases are made by the department	Purchases are made by the department	Departments must consult procurement

Purchasing strategy (1 of 3)

1. Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Requirements are fully defined and awarded to the lowest responsive bidder

Informal process involves getting electronic quotes from suppliers

Advertised on merx.com or via an invitational process

Approximately 100 advertised annually

2. Request for Tender (RFT) >\$100,000

Requirements are fully defined and awarded to the lowest responsive bidder

Formal process – tender document, confidential bids, firm closing time

Advertised on merx.com

Approximately 275 advertised annually

Purchasing strategy (2 of 3)

3. Request for Proposal (RFP) > \$100,000

Requires bidders to propose a solution or meet an objective

Weighted evaluation criteria

Awarded on best value and total effectiveness of proposed solution

Advertised on merx.com

Approximately 65 advertised annually

4. Request for Standing Offer (RFSO) – any value

Used to create arrangement to purchase frequently used goods/services

Specifications can be determined but quality needed and timing unknown

No obligation or contract until a call-up

Advertised on merx.com

Approximately 50 advertised annually

Purchasing strategy (3 of 3)

4. Request for Qualifications (RFQual)

Process to pre-qualify suppliers to bid on high-profile, high value projects to ensure a capable group of bidders

Advertised on merx.com

Approximately 20 advertised annually

5. Request for Information (RFI)

Supply can issue an RFI to help better understand market offerings before a purchase

Advertised on merx.com

Less than 20 advertised annually

Procurement site ottawa.ca

- [Procurement | City of Ottawa](#)
 - Standing offers
 - Ethical Purchasing Policy
 - Supplier Code of Conduct
 - Procurement year in review reports (contracts awarded)
 - Terms and conditions
 - Procurement By-law
 - Key contacts

Merx - eProcurement

- The City uses merx.com to advertise, publish and accept bids. Using merx.com, bidders can:
 - Search and view opportunities and award notices
 - Order bid documents and attachments electronically
 - Submit bids online
 - Review open and closed solicitations
 - View bid results/awarded solicitations
 - Review frequently asked questions about merx.com
 - Submit inquiries related to a solicitation
 - Set up automatic notifications of addenda
 - Receive alerts for contract opportunities

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Need help?

The MERX Customer Support Team is here to help.

☎ 1-800-964-6379

✉ merx@merx.com

Before you bid

To be a responsive, competitive bidder make sure you have the following:

- Past experience in delivering projects of similar scope and complexity that are described in the solicitation document and specifications
- Read and understood all the solicitation documents including published addenda and General Terms and Conditions (for example, to ensure that you have the correct insurance certificates)
- Meet accessibility and ethical purchasing requirements

Tips for success

- Potential bidders should read and understand all solicitation documents, including any addenda
- Questions about any of the solicitation materials should be asked during the inquiry period and submitted through merx.com
 - Responses to inquiries are published on merx.com as addenda to the solicitation
 - For example, circumstances where the bidder doesn't have sufficient insurance, questions about evaluation criteria, unavailable products, etc.
- It is important that assumptions aren't made about solicitation materials. If you aren't sure, submit an inquiry
- Understand bid deposits/e-bonding requirements
- If you are having problems submitting a bid, contact merx.com directly

Social and sustainable procurement

- “Sustainable procurement” contributes towards the City’s strategic environmental, social, economic, ethical and cultural objectives by considering and incorporating these impacts into project plans and procurement processes
- “Social enterprises” are businesses that have an embedded social, cultural or environmental purpose into the business, and reinvest the majority of profits into their social mission
 - Since 2019 the City has awarded an annual average of 18 contracts to social enterprises each year for an annual average spend of \$578,225.
 - All solicitations are now accompanied by a notice encouraging vendors to seek certification, if they are eligible.
 - It is important that bidders explain how their goods and/or services provide value to the community as many solicitations have a community benefit focus (for example, workforce development investments, working with diverse vendors, etc.)

Accessibility in procurement

- [The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 \(AODA\)](#) [Accessibility Standard for Customer Service \(ASCS\)](#) and the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#) requires all contractors and their employees who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the City to receive training on these standards and on the Human Rights Code as they pertain to persons with disabilities
- Records must be kept for all training
- The online [Accessibility Training for External Contractors / Consultants](#) includes the Province's ACSC and IASR training. It is easily available to City contractors for free

Lobbyist registry

- Lobbying includes communications from anyone representing a business or financial interest, aimed at influencing a decision on any matter that will be before Council or under staff's delegated authority and outside of normal processes
- Vendors must register any lobbying activity
- The City maintains a Lobbyist Registry and related by-law available on Ottawa.ca
- Contact lobbyist@ottawa.ca with any questions

Vendor Performance Management (VPM) program

- Scoring framework applied to eligible construction and engineering/architectural projects to assess performance
- Improves communication between project managers and vendors, factoring performance scores into contract awards and holding vendors accountable for quality goods and services delivered on time
- Evaluations are completed online through merx.com and vendors are notified once complete
- It is important to read solicitation documents as a portion of the VPM score may be allocated to total bid scoring
- Since inception (2015), the program has evaluated over 3800 contracts for over 300 vendors

Contact us

- To contact Supply Services, visit [Procurement - Contact Supply Services](#)
- For each solicitation a contracting authority will be identified in the inquires/question section