

Office of the Procurement Ombudsman e-newsletter

# OPO Perspectives du BOA

e-Bulletin du Bureau de l'ombudsman de l'approvisionnement



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Bureau de l'ombudsman de l'approvisionnement



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Canada



In 2013, we launched a series of Town Halls which took us across the country to meet with Canadian businesses selling goods and services to the federal government. We gained valuable insight into procurement related issues and their implications on firms, particularly small and medium sized enterprises. As we continue these Town Halls in 2014, we will use this newsletter to highlight upcoming events as well as provide updates on issues being raised to us. For example, one recent issue is the requirement for suppliers to purchase liability insurance which one business spoke of as unnecessary and costly for smaller firms providing services that don't require coverage. Others suggested it is limiting the number of suppliers selling to government as well as unnecessarily increasing government costs. Since hearing these concerns, we have raised the issue with senior officials at Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) and Treasury Board Secretariat. PWGSC explained that they have created a working group through their Supplier Advisory Committee (made up of several business associations) to examine issues related to risk and liability. Businesses may wish to raise their concerns with their business association who may be involved with this committee. We will continue to monitor this issue.

We encourage you to [contact us](#) with any procurement concerns or to share your thoughts on federal procurement via our [website](#).

### Fairness in Federal Contracting? There's an Ombudsman for that!

It's inevitable. Any corporation with 100-plus franchises issuing hundreds of thousands of contracts to purchase \$20 billion of goods and services every year is bound to run into contracting issues with suppliers. The federal government is no different... except companies experiencing difficulties selling, or trying to sell, to the feds can turn to the Procurement Ombudsman. Firms suspecting competitors have been inappropriately awarded a contract can ask the Ombudsman to look into the issue.

Companies experiencing a contract administration problem with a department can contact the Ombudsman who, depending on the nature of the issue, can either investigate the complaint or provide dispute resolution services. This is a no cost service that can result in a legally binding agreement. The Ombudsman's services are part of the Government of Canada's accountability agenda introduced to ensure federal procurement is undertaken in an open, fair and transparent manner. So while it is inevitable that issues will arise in federal procurement, the Ombudsman provides a unique avenue to have these issues addressed.

(As published in the Toronto Board of Trade ONBOARD magazine, [Winter 2014 edition](#) pg. 41. Feel free to add this article in your next member newsletter or magazine)

### UPCOMING EVENTS



- Feb 20: Montreal Town Hall
- Feb 20: [Toronto Town Hall](#)
- March 10: Victoria Town Hall
- March 11: Vancouver Town Hall
- March 13: Edmonton Town Hall

[Calendar of events](#)

### Latest Reports

- ✓ [Excessive criteria for the work to be done?](#)
- ✓ [Department Did Not Indicate the Basis of Selection to Award a Contract](#)

### In the Works!

- Our **Vendor Performance Analysis Report** will be released in winter 2014.



Share your thoughts on federal procurement