

# Case Study Toronto Community Housing Corporation



**Customer Profile:**

Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) provides clean, safe, affordable, well-maintained homes to 60,000 low-income households across the city.

- Largest social housing provider in Canada, 2nd largest in North America
- 110,000 residents, 2,100 buildings, 50 million sq. ft. of residential space – a \$12 billion public asset
- 23-member procurement team
- \$250 million budget in 2016 for building capital repairs (materials and services)
- A 10-year plan to spend \$2.6 billion on capital repairs to aged buildings

**Key Challenges:**

- 100% manual procurement system
- Small procurement team challenged to achieve more with less
- Incredibly time-consuming to manage and track all documentation
- High cost to store massive paper volume for 2 to 7 years
- Labour- and paper-intensive process for TCHC and its many providers
- Severely limited access to, timely, accurate data

On an average workday, Toronto Community Housing's 23-member procurement team spent hours double-checking, copying, scanning, filing, uploading and tracking the many dozens of 10- to 150-page responses to RFQs, RFPs and RVFQs that were time-stamped and dropped into the submissions box at the main entrance to its head office.

"The sheer amount of paper had gotten absolutely ridiculous – a single job might have 70 boxes crammed with up to 80 bids," says Paul Dhillon, Manager, Procurement Systems and Processes, Toronto Community Housing Corporation. "On procurement projects, we have to keep the submission documents for seven years. Imagine the storage space we require on site and at outside storage facilities in view of the projects, the number of submissions, and pages per submission."

While the cost of that storage space was an issue, the primary concern was the extraordinary amount of staff time devoted to handling that paper and converting it into digital files, particularly in view of the fact the team was expected to manage a far larger spend without additional employees.

"The paper system not only pulled my team away from their core competences, which are sourcing and purchasing, it made it virtually impossible to accurately assess and compare the various bids in a timely manner," says Dhillon, who notes a staff member had to be on-site to ensure vendors respected the 11 a.m. deadlines and protocols. "As a public agency, it's crucial that our procurement processes are fair, competitive and transparent and that was more difficult than it needed to be because of the paper."

Purchasing and sourcing automation, a municipal and provincial best practice, became the most obvious solution after Dhillon and his team first encountered BravoSolution at a procurement services seminar designed to launch such best practices across Ontario.

"BravoSolution was the vendor of choice for all of Ontario, and we selected the BravoSolution platform, the Ontario Tenders Portal (OTP), knowing our peers and colleagues had done their due diligence and followed the competitive evaluation process before making the commitment and endorsing it," says Dhillon. "To date, we're not mandated to use OTP but over time, we fully expect BravoSolution will be the sole option for all of Ontario's government agencies."

While TCHC still has the submissions box, which eventually required wheels due to the weight, at least 90% of all bids are now received digitally, eliminating the need to copy, scan, upload and store the paper files. Vital staff resources and valuable commercial real estate are freed up but as importantly, TCHC is better able to adhere to protocols, such as the two-tiered, bid opening process. For example, staff must not see the financials and pricing component before viewing the technical phase.

"BravoSolution's automated system will open the bids and allow access only in that order, so it's impossible to break protocol," says Dhillon. "We no longer have to think about following protocol because OTP is set up to do that for us."

Thanks to the BravoSolution platform, TCHC also knows exactly which bids arrived at precisely what time, tracks the bids as they're received and tallies the final numbers. Bravo also makes it incredibly



**Solution:**

- Bravo Solutions – the Ontario government's preferred supplier
- Implemented BravoAdvantage Sourcing (eTendering) in March 2015

**Benefits:**

- Virtually complete switch to digital: just 10% of all documentation is now paper
- Staff freed up to focus on value-added tasks and core competencies
- Accurate, real-time data and reporting provide visibility and transparency, which are vital for a public non-profit corporation
- Drastically reduces the future need for storage space
- Seamless implementation and superior training and onboarding
- Intuitive, easy to use – embraced by staff/suppliers

easy to determine which jobs a vendor has bid on, how many jobs a vendor has won and much more. It allows TCHC purchasing staff to summarize the bids received in five minutes rather than a day or two, all while knowing that Bravo automatically rejects bids that missed the deadline.

“Reports play a key role in effective purchasing and sourcing, but manually producing accurate, relevant reports in a timely fashion was virtually impossible due to the sheer quantity of data, the size of my staff and the possibility of human error around data entry,” says Dhillon. “BravoSolution produces the reports we need in minutes versus days.”

In another example, previously TCHC staff manually created and individually emailed the single letter to the successful bidder and the 10 to 80+ “Regret Letters” to the unsuccessful. Staff manually typed in each vendor’s company name and address and obtained the necessary signatures.

“One click and the bid is awarded and the regrets letters are sent. It’s all done accurately in seconds not hours or days,” says Dhillon.

Dhillon’s TCHC staff were thrilled to turn over the endless, routine administrative tasks to BravoSolution’s automated systems, essentially allowing them to focus exclusively on their core competencies – purchasing and sourcing the best products and services at the right

price. Likewise, vendors welcomed BravoSolution as it slashes their paper, printing, copying and courier/delivery hassles and costs while guaranteeing the process is completely fair and transparent.

“Vendors love that they’re never worried about missing a deadline because they’re stuck in traffic or can’t find our building,” says Dhillon. “The investment in the \$750 licensing fee per vendor actually reduces our vendors’ total costs.”

Both TCHC and vendors appreciated the fact that the BravoSolution team now offers powerfully simple and short but highly effective online and hard copy training guides that can be used in conjunction with Bravo’s webinars.

“When it comes to information technology training guides – the shorter and simpler the better – particularly when you’re dealing with the construction industry,” says Dhillon.

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