

THE
OTTAWA
HOUSING
STORY

A social
procurement
case study

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Good Nature Groundskeeping (GNG) is an employment social enterprise created by Causeway Work Centre and is presently contracted by Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) through a competitive bid process to provide landscaping services on OCH's properties. This relationship initially began as 3-year pilot project to test the quality of services by GNG and to assist GNG in building its capacity to bid on large competitive tenders issued by Ottawa Community Housing (OCH).



2003

Causeway Work Centre initiates Casual Jobs, a social enterprise that provides part-time casual work in basic odd-job commercial and residential work.



2010

Ottawa Community Housing initiates a 3-year pilot project using discretionary funding to hire GNG to provide landscaping for a few of their properties. Over the 3 years, funding increases from \$56,000 to \$100,000 as GNG proves itself capable of increasing its capacity.



2010



Good Nature Groundskeeping replaces Casual Jobs as a more financially sustainable social enterprise. GNG invests in equipment, training, and a vehicle to serve commercial properties.

GNG targets local businesses and non-profit organizations already familiar with Causeway's work to incorporate social impact into their landscaping procurement decisions.

2016



OCH adds a "value-added social enterprise" component to their procurement policy, equally weighting financial and social value, allowing GNG to compete for tenders.

GNG is successful in winning a 3-year contract, with an additional 2-year option, despite private sector competition. With this, GNG is able to invest in more capital to further increase its capacity. The total value of this 5-year contract is \$1.5 million.



Learning Opportunities



Use **discretionary funding** to support early-stage social enterprises without having to go to tender.



Have a clear vision of **moving to a competitive bidding process** for procurement once a social enterprise has had a chance to test and grow its capacity.



Both parties involved need to make a **clear commitment** to making the social procurement relationship work.



Weight social value heavily enough to provide opportunity for social enterprises to compete.



Challenge Overcome

To participate in the pilot project, Good Nature Groundskeeping needed to make a **significant initial capital** investment.

A 1-year pilot project was not sufficient to cover these fixed costs without the assurance of continued work.

As a result, Ottawa Community Housing responded by proposing a **3-year pilot project** instead.

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Buy Social Canada works with social enterprises to increase their business opportunities and grow their social impact.

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