

About the York Plan

The York Plan was the collaborative effort of York County industry, working together to meet the production demands of World War II. The plan was derived from the Manufacturers' Association of York, which organized its Bits and Pieces Committee, responsible for gathering information to connect companies and pool their resources.

Starting in the late 1930s the Manufacturers' Association commissioned a survey of all machinery, skilled labor, and raw resources in all companies in York County. This information would then allow the Manufacturers' Association to pair companies that could help each other gain larger contracts. Primary contractors, like York Corporation, York Safe & Lock, etc., would pool resources with sub-contractors, who provided work, machinery, and resources towards the main contract. This allowed primary contractors to win these big contracts, since they could report all of the resources of not only their own company, but also the resources of the sub-contractors they would be working with. These companies lived up to the motto of the York Plan, coined by the Manufacturers' Association: "To do what we can with what we have," following the 15 principles of the plan:

1. To make use of our present facilities in regards to tools.
2. To get idle tools and idle men working.
3. To make a survey of the tools outside the metal trades.
4. To study the type of work we could do, with the facilities at our command.
5. To make a decided effort to explain and sell the Defense Plan to the community.
6. To assist in educational work as it pertained to educating new employees.
7. To study housing.
8. To study workers' health
9. To establish the costs of the sub-contractor to the prime contractor.
10. To study deliveries of sub-contractors so that the material would be supplied to the prime contractor as needed.
11. To impress on the minds of the sub-contractors the necessity for accuracy of work so as to assure Federal

acceptance of the parts being furnished to the prime contractors.

12. To study supplying needed labor if and when working three shifts.
13. To study labor potentials in York.
14. To take steps to apply this additional labor when and where needed.
15. To enter into all local activities that dealt either directly or indirectly with the present emergency.

This model for industry was game changing for areas like York County. With this model, smaller industrial sectors, without big names like Ford and Chrysler, could pool together and snag large military contracts. For this reason, York County paved the way for American industry to band together for the war effort. Many York County companies were awarded the Army/Navy “E” award, a prestigious award given to businesses for their contributions to the war effort. The companies that received the award are highlighted in the story map below.

The York County History Center recently conducted preliminary research to map out the companies that participated in the York Plan initiative. This map is meant to give a window into the various companies that participated in the York Plan, and where in the county they were located at the time. More than 400 companies participated in the York Plan. However, many were not sufficiently documented to display. Therefore, these 78 primary and sub-contractors are pinned, to tell the story of York County industry in World War II and the dramatic shift in production and organization that was made by participating companies for the betterment of their country.