



U.S. COMMUNITIES™

GOVERNMENT PURCHASING ALLIANCE



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

U.S. COMMUNITIES

U.S. Communities is a nonprofit government purchasing cooperative that helps public agencies reduce the cost of purchased goods by combining the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. This objective is accomplished by competitively soliciting quality products by a single lead public agency and making the resulting contract available to other public agencies nationwide. U.S. Communities' founding co-sponsors include the Association of School Business Officials, the National Association of Counties, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors. These founding co-sponsors also serve on the Governing Board.

PROCUREMENT PROFESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

U.S. Communities is managed and operated in cooperation with nationally recognized public procurement professionals representing the following public agencies. **Click here to view the Advisory Board list:**
<http://www.uscommunities.org/about-us/advisory-board.aspx>

PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

Specialty Solutions

New! Auto Parts & Accessories | **CARQUEST**
New! Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Solutions | **Safeware, Inc./Mallory**
Foodservice Solutions | **Premier/US FoodService**
Uniform & Work Apparel | **Servicewear Apparel**
Equipment & Tool Rental Services | **Hertz**

Office & Classroom Solutions

Office Supplies | **Independent Stationers**
Art, Classroom & School Supplies, and Related Products and Services | **Office Depot**
Office Furniture | **Haworth, Herman Miller, Knoll**
Education Furniture | **Virco**
Science/Labware Supplies & Equipment | **Fisher Science Education**

Technology Solutions

Technology Products, Equipment & Services & Solutions | **Insight**
Technology Products & Equipment | **Tech Depot**
Technology Services & Solutions | **GTSI**
Office Machines | **Ricoh Americas Inc.**

Facilities Solutions

Maintenance, Repair and Operating Supplies | **The Home Depot, HD Supply Facilities Maintenance, Applied Industrial Technologies**
Electrical and Data Communications | **Graybar**
Janitorial Supplies | **Zep**
Elevator Maintenance | **Kone**
Roofing Supplies, Related Products & Services | **Garland, Design-Build Solutions, Inc.**

Recreation & Athletic Solutions

Park and Playground Equipment | **GameTime, Kompan**
Athletic Equipment & P.E. Supplies | **BSN Sports/US Games**
Synthetic Turf and Other Athletic Surfaces | **AstroTurf USA**

WHO CAN USE?

Cities • Counties • Schools • Universities • Colleges
Special Districts • Boroughs • Towns • Villages • Nonprofits • States

WHY USE U.S. COMMUNITIES?

- Competitively solicited contracts by a lead public agency
- Best government pricing
- No cost to participate
- Non-exclusive contracts
- Over 44,000 participating agencies
- Aggregated purchases in 2010 exceeded \$1.6 billion

HOW TO USE

Public agencies and nonprofits register to participate at www.uscommunities.org. The registration includes consent to a master intergovernmental cooperative purchasing agreement with the various lead public agencies and is intended to meet the legal formalities of participation in the program. A single registration allows participation in all lead agency contracts. There are no restrictions on the amount or size of a public agency order.

AUTHORITY TO USE

Generally, a public body may participate in, sponsor, conduct or administer a cooperative procurement agreement with one or more other public bodies, or agencies of the United States, for the purpose of combining requirements to increase efficiency or reduce administrative expenses. In a few states, this power is not passed on to localities. Each state's authorizing statute is shown on our website:

www.uscommunities.org/purchasing-resources/state-statutes.aspx.

All U.S. Communities contracts have been **competitively solicited by a lead public agency** in accordance with their public purchasing rules and regulations. Each solicitation contains language that advises all suppliers of the subsequent contract that may be used by other government agencies throughout the United States. This language is based on the lead jurisdiction "Joint Powers Authority" or "Cooperative Procurement" program. Although each government may have different purchasing procedures to follow, applying these competitive principles satisfies the competitive bid requirements for most state and local government agencies.

State statutes and, if applicable, local ordinances generally allow one government agency to purchase from contracts competitively solicited by another government agency ("Lead Public Agency"). This, of course, would require the consent of all parties including the supplier, the Lead Public Agency and government agency purchasing from the Lead Public Agency contract. U.S. Communities contracts are established to meet both the competitive solicitation and consent requirements. Public agencies accessing U.S. Communities consent to a Master Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement (MICPA) with the various lead public agencies that have competitively solicited and awarded available contracts.

COSTS TO USE

Public agencies pay no costs and are charged no fees to participate. The suppliers, who pay a minimum 1% administrative fee to participate, fund U.S. Communities. This pays for operating expenses and offsets costs incurred by national and state sponsors.

BEST GOVERNMENT PRICING

U.S. Communities does not have a most favored customer requirement. Suppliers are required to match pricing lower than U.S. Communities only for agencies that would otherwise be eligible for lower pricing through another contract vehicle. This requirement ensures that agencies are offered the best government pricing through U.S. Communities. Contracts are non-exclusive and discretionary, so an agency can choose to use any contract that, in their sole discretion, is in their best interest.

NEXT STEP

Go to www.uscommunities.org, Register to participate and obtain documentation on each competitive solicitation and product available.