



*Government Purchasers Saving You Money*

**Founding Co-Sponsors**



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***U.S. COMMUNITIES***

U.S. Communities is a nonprofit instrumentality of government that helps public agencies reduce the cost of purchased goods by combining the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. Competitively soliciting quality products by a single lead public agency and making the resulting contract available to other public agencies nationwide accomplishes this objective. U.S. Communities' Founding Co-Sponsors include the Association of School Business Officials, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, the National Association of Counties, 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:

Allegheny County, PA; Baltimore, MD; City of Charlotte / Mecklenburg County, NC; City of Columbus, OH; Cobb County, GA; Dallas County, TX; Denver, CO; Detroit Public Schools, MI; Elk Grove USD, CA; Fairfax County, VA; Harford County Public Schools, MD; Hennepin County, MN; Houston, TX; Los Angeles County, CA; Maricopa County, AZ; Miami-Dade County, FL; Naperville, IL; San Antonio, TX; San Diego County, CA; Seattle, WA; Wichita Public Schools, KS

### ***PRODUCTS AVAILABLE***

Carpet and Flooring  
Comm/Data  
Electrical  
Janitorial Supplies  
Office/School Supplies  
Office Furniture  
School Furniture  
Tools & Material Handling  
Computers

### ***Coming Soon***

Computers  
Office Machines  
Procurement Cards

## **WHY USE?**

Competitively solicited contracts by a lead public agency  
Most favorable public sector pricing  
No cost to participate  
Non-exclusive contracts

## **WHO CAN USE?**

Counties  
Cities  
School Districts  
Universities  
Colleges  
Special Districts  
States  
Towns  
Villages  
Burroughs  
Non-Profit Agencies

## **HOW TO USE**

Public agencies register to participate at [www.uscommunities.org](http://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 some limited states, this power is not passed on to localities. Each state's authorizing statute is shown on the "*authorizing statutes*" tab at [www.uscommunities.org](http://www.uscommunities.org).

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 the subsequent contract 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.

## **COST TO USE**

There are no costs or 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.

## **NEXT STEP**

Go to [www.uscommunities.org](http://www.uscommunities.org) to Register to Participate and obtain documentation on each competitive solicitation and product available.