

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is U.S. Communities™?

U.S. Communities is a **nonprofit government purchasing cooperative** that assists public agencies in reducing the cost of purchased goods and services through pooling the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. This is accomplished through competitively solicited contracts for quality products through lead public agencies.

What are the advantages of participating in U.S. Communities?

- Competitively solicited contracts by a lead public agency
- Most favorable public agency pricing
- No cost to participate
- Nationally sponsored by leading associations and purchasing organizations
- Broad range of high quality products
- Aggregates purchasing power of public agencies nationwide

- Managed by public purchasing professionals

Does U.S. Communities have professional public purchasing advisors?

Yes. The Advisory Board consist of public purchasing professionals that provides leadership and overall direction for the U.S. Communities. Click [here to view the list of Advisory Board members](#)

Can my public agency use the program without going out for solicitation?

Yes, in most states. 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, which 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" Authority. Although each government may have different purchasing procedures to follow, applying these competitive principles satisfies the competitive solicitation requirements of most state and local government agencies.

What is a Joint Powers or Cooperative Procurement Authority?

[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. 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 states, this power is not passed on to localities.

How can I obtain copies of the legal documentation associated with each competitively solicited contracts?

Contract and Master Agreement, Amendments, Extension, RFP and Solicitation documents are available for download and viewing at the [Competitively Solicited Contracts](#) page.

What does a public agency

Public agencies must [register to participate](#). There are no

do to participate?	restrictions on the amount or size of a public agency order.
How much does it cost to participate in U.S. Communities?	There are no costs or fees to the local agency to participate.
How is U.S. Communities funded as a nonprofit?	Each contract supplier pays a 1% - 2.5% administrative fee to participate in the program and such fees fund operating expenses and offset costs incurred by national and state sponsors.
Can agencies other than public agencies use the program?	Yes, nonprofit agencies providing a service on behalf of a governmental entity can use the program in addition to counties, cities, special districts, schools, universities and colleges, towns, villages and state agencies.
If there is a performance problem with a supplier what step do I take to resolve the problem?	First speak to the supplier representative, but if this does not work, ask to speak to the U.S. Communities national account manager or contact U.S. Communities .
If our agency wants to use the contracts and buy from other contracts is that permitted?	Yes, all U.S. Communities public agency contracts are non-exclusive.