

A Veritable Buffet of Procurement Options, Resources, and Savings for Your Agency

Save Time, Save Money, and Boost Your Revenue

Schools, cities, counties, churches, nonprofits, and a host of other public agencies across America are reaping substantial savings, rebates, and efficiencies in their procurement processes through the national cooperative purchasing alliance, U.S. Communities.

Sponsored by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC), the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), The United States Conference of Mayors, (USCM), over 70 state and regional organizations and under the oversight of key public procurement professionals, U.S. Communities administers contracts that have been competitively-solicited by lead public agencies on behalf of agencies across the nation. The end result is a combination of best supplier overall, government-priced products and services to choose from and huge savings on time and resources agencies would normally spend on their own solicitations. Types of goods and services offered under the contracts include office supplies, sports and athletic equipment, uniform and work apparel, janitorial supplies, technology services and equipment – even roofing supplies! Here's a closer look at the contracts and what participating agencies stand to gain.

Rebate! Did Somebody Say, 'Rebate'?

Yes. Agencies can optimize their purchasing power through various rebate incentives made possible through contracts administered by U.S. Communities. The Tech Depot, an Office Depot company, contract provides a useful example. Under this contract, which provides various technology services and equipment, participating agencies have access to rebates via one of, or all of three, purchasing incentives in a given year (see table below).

Tech Depot Contract Rebates

Type of Purchasing Incentive	Purchase Amount/Volume	Rebate
E-commerce Transactions	50% of Orders and 50% of Volume	0.5%
Annual Purchase Amount	Over \$2.5M / Over \$5M	0.5% / 1.0%
Individual Purchase Amount	Over \$2,500	0.25%

Jeff Wierenga, Senior Sales Manager with Tech Depot, says these kinds of rebates are very rare in the technology industry and are likely what makes the contract unique compared to others.

"You could be a county, a non-profit, or a government agency....through this contract we bring agencies the solutions and savings opportunities they need, including e-commerce options and free shipping."

The Tech Depot contract isn't the only one offering agencies more bang for their buck through rebate incentives. With Home Depot's contract, agencies with purchases between \$25,000 and \$99,999 earn a rebate of 1%, while purchases of \$100,000 and over earn a 2% rebate. The BSN Sports/US Games contract delivers a 1% rebate on annual volume purchases of sports and athletic goods between \$100,000 and \$199,000 and up to a 3% rebate on annual volume purchases valued at \$300,000 or more.

Time (and Labor) Really is Money – Now Agencies Can Save More of Both

Rebates aside, another critical feature of U.S. Communities' contracts is the savings on time and resources agencies would normally spend on procurements. Now agencies can take advantage of contracts that have already undergone a fair, transparent, and competitive solicitation process. They can save time, money, and labor for other critical areas of their business instead of tying up those resources in processing and preparing RFPs, bids, or bid reviews, and having to endure lengthy solicitation waiting periods.

Sharon Brause works in the purchasing division at the City of Chandler in Arizona and explains how her agency utilizes the Home Depot contract to optimize its procurement needs.

"We've utilized several contracts with U.S. Communities, but the specific one that I use is with Home Depot for general maintenance supplies and building materials. This contract is great for helping us fulfill the needs of our various city departments because they [Home Depot] have such a wide variety of product." Brause says. "By using this contract, we eliminate the cost of going out for a bid, reduce the lead-time it takes for us to obtain products, and receive an annual rebate back to the City. We're also part of a larger buying group and typically receive a discounted price because of the volume expenditures that the contract provides. I think it also helps that we have a great partnership with our local Home Depot Pro Account Manager as well!"

In some cases, the contracts even allow agencies to do some one-stop shopping. "Typically an agency will get a different contract for lumber, another for paint, or possibly turnkey labor etc [for a particular job]," explains Keith Vos, Director of National Sales/Renovation Services at Home Depot. "With U.S. Communities, all material and labor can all be included under one contract."

John Bals, Senior VP Sales for Sports Supply Group, echoes Brause's and Vos's sentiments while explaining how national cooperative purchasing contracts are benefiting other agencies and organizations like schools, local parks and recreation, or camps that purchase sports and athletic equipment.

"It's like going into a mall and having everything at your fingertips," Bals adds. "Now agencies have access to products from a number of significant vendors, some of which are national, but also have a local presence."

That local presence and point of contact, like the local manager Brause noted, adds a nice touch for customer service and also shows how even nationally-led cooperative purchasing contracts can engage and benefit local businesses and economies.

Thomas Pollock, procurement specialist with Virginia Beach City Public Schools, uses the Sports Supply Group contract offered through U.S. Communities. While the agency certainly benefits from the contract, what matters most is the win-win for all involved, especially the tax-payer and end-consumer Pollock says.

"We are very pleased with the Sports Supply Group contract, but we still do our own competitive solicitation with other vendors and even evaluate other national cooperative agreements for the best solutions," he says. "We are committed to doing our due diligence and fulfilling our obligations

to taxpayers. So we look at all procurement options – but the contract with U.S. Communities is another tool in our toolbelt and provides lots of resources for us. It's a win-win for everybody."

Get in On the Savings and Benefits!

Thousands of agencies have similar stories to share like the ones here. Isn't it time you looked at other ways to optimize your procurement program, find more savings, and add more revenue to your bottom line? Visit www.uscommunities.org today for more information.