

U.S. Communities

Goverment Purchasing Alliance

| # | Cooperative Organization Questions | Response |
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| 1 | Are your organization's cooperative contracts available for use by Arizona public entities? If so, do you have any local representation? | Yes, We have a local Program Manager Rob Fiorilli out of Tucson and also Maricopa County sits on the U.S. Communities Advisory Board |
| 2 | What is the legal formation of your cooperative organization (public, non-profit, for profit, etc.)? How long have you been established? | U.S. Communities is a non profit entity owned by National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, US Conference of Mayors and ASBO international we have been in existence since 1996. Also, the AZ Association of Counties and the League of AZ Cities and Towns is a sponsor of the program |
| 3 | Does your organization conduct its own procurements with in-house personnel or does it enlist a public agency to conduct the procurement? If a public agency is utilized, please identify that agency or agencies and briefly explain how those agencies are selected. | U.S. Communities does not conduct our own solicitations, they are done by a lead public entity. Those agencies are: Maricopa County, AZ, Fairfax County, VA, Los Angeles County, CA, San Diego Unified School District, CA, City of Charlotte, NC, City/ County of Denver, CO, City of Mesquite, TX, North Carolina State University, NC, Harford County Public Schools, MD, Fresno Unified School District, CA, Cobb County, GA, Barron County, WI, City of San Antonio, TX, Washington County Public Schools, MD, City of Chicago, IL, Dane County, WI, Port of Portland, OR, City of Kansas City, MO. The lead agency is selected by their need for the specific product or service going out for solicitation and their ability for use of that contract once awarded. |
| 4 | If your organization handles all of the contracting functions in-house please explain if you periodically have a 3rd party audit firm review your internal contracting procedures. | All U.S. Communities contracts are owned and maintained by the Lead Public Agency, as a service U.S. Communities does hire a 3rd party audit firm to validate the pricing is following the contract guidelines |
| 5 | What governing procurement laws does your organization follow in the soliciting, evaluating and awarding of cooperative contracts? (Please be specific.) Also, what state is noted as the legal venue within your contracts for dispute resolution? | All procurement laws are governed by the state the lead public agency resides in, but through the U.S. Communities Master Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing agreement, (MICPA) which an agency agrees to when registering on our program, it states that their terms and conditions and local laws supersede those of the lead agency. All disputes are resolved within the participating agencies jurisdiction as per the MICPA |
| 6 | Does an agency need to register or sign an agreement with your organization in order to purchase from your contracts? If so, please attach the registration form or agreement. Also, is the agency charged a fee to join your cooperative organization? | An agency needs to register on the U.S. Communities program at which time they agree to the MICPA, the program is strictly voluntary and by registering in no way binds the agency of using any or all U.S. Communities contracts. An agency can choose to use as many or as few of the U.S. Communities contracts as they choose. Or they can decide to use none of US Communities contracts. There are no user fees for an agency to use the U.S. Communities contracts. |
| 7 | Where can your organization's cooperative solicitations and resultant contracts be viewed? Describe what documentation is available at this site. | All contract documentation is on the U.S. Communities public website. All documents consist of the intial solicitation, the contract award documents, any amendments to the contract, who the lead agency is, the contract number, the terms of the contract, how many companies responded to the solicitation, and where the solicitation was advertised. |

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| 8 | Do you periodically perform audits to ensure your contractors are fulfilling the contracts to include charging the correct price? If so, please briefly describe your internal audit program and explain if that program includes any benchmarking to ensure pricing stays competitive over the term of agreement. | U.S. Communities hires a 3rd party auditor to perform these functions. The contracts are normally audited within the first two years after usage has built up. We also require the suppliers to do benchmarking to ensure they are providing their best overall price. There are quarterly reviews with U.S. Communities staff, the Lead Agency and the Supplier Executives to make sure there are no issues and the supplier is in compliance. All of the audits and benchmarking documents are available to an agency through their specific log in to the U.S. Communities website |
| 9 | What is the total employee count for your cooperative organization? How many employees perform specific contracting functions (solicitation development, bidding, evaluation and awarding of contracts)? | There are 25 employees at U.S. Communities, The only involvement that staff has is there are Product Managers who research contract ideas to see if there is a benefit nationally and they will also see if the product or services being considered have companies with a national reach . Staff goes out and promotes the program and we also have administrative functions for reporting, marketing and management. |
| 10 | Describe your approach to customer service and include any response time commitments. | U.S. Communities has 13 program managers that deal directly with the participating agencies to educate them on the offerings and connect them with those suppliers they are interested in. The program managers also help in any issues that arise between the participating agency and the supplier and will engage the lead agency as needed. |
| 11 | How do you generate your bidders' list for any particular solicitation and what steps do you take to ensure Arizona companies are included in your notice? | The bidders list is comprised from research on that specific product or service, the solicitation is advertised nationally and we also ask that our Advisory Board advertise it on their website. In the case of AZ we ask that Maricopa County advertise which would give AZ companies a chance to respond. A lot of the contracts that are on the U.S. Communities program are awarded to manufacturers who in turn use local dealers within that specific state to fulfill the sale to public agencies |
| 12 | How do you evaluate contractor performance? Do you have a process that allows agencies to report vendor deficiencies? | Contractor performance is done through quarterly reviews with U.S. Communities staff, the lead agency and the contractor. We encourage participating agency feedback either directly with the lead agency or the U.S. Communities program manager. |
| 13 | Indicate any national cooperative coalitions/associations to which your organization is a member. | None |
| 14 | How do you track the usage of contracts to ensure you are accurately conveying order volume within your solicitations? | Suppliers report the sales from participating agencies to U.S. Communities on a monthly basis. We use sales history from that particular contract to convey potential volume. If it is a new contract our product managers do market research to estimate potential volume for that product or service on a national basis. Also, through a participating agencies specific log ins on the U.S. Communities website they can track their spend through each supplier used. |