Independent Stationers is proud to partner with U.S. Communities in promoting environmentally sustainable business through our “Green Matters” program. We recognize that being a sustainable organization is about a lot more than just buying green office products; it is a way of looking at the business world in general and often times can lead to cost savings for your organization as well as healthier local communities.

The mission of the Independent Stationers organization is to embrace sustainability and the fact that it is interconnected with organizational success. We recognize that sustainability is not an end result, but a continual process of improvement toward the goals of reducing our impact on the natural environment, engaging with our stakeholder communities, and promoting a healthier economy. Independent Stationers, as a dealer-owned value-added cooperative is by nature a green organization and our dealer owners across the United States are working to reduce their carbon footprint through lowered structural footprints, reduced transportation costs, and enhanced business partnerships. We are a true “Buy Local” sustainably-minded office supply provider. Independent Stationers has teamed with the largest wholesalers of office supplies in the industry, who currently offer over 10,000 green office supply items encompassing all major categories of office supplies purchased by U.S. Communities. Through our partnership with these wholesalers, and our relationships to direct green product manufacturers, we are able to offer the industry’s largest assortment of green and sustainable products. We offer an annual “Green Book” which highlights the “best of the best” in available green and sustainable products, and are constantly working to introduce new items into our product assortment, and make sustainable changes to our infrastructure.

The Independent Stationers “Green Matters” program allows our locally-owned office supply dealers to partner with U.S. Communities membership, lead your organizations to “Greener” office practices, and assist you in creating an Environmental Procurement Program (EPP) that is best suited for use by public agencies. The following is a sampling of how we at Independent Stationers can partner with your organization to promote overall sustainability in your offices. These campaigns are led by our on-staff “Sustainability Strategist” who will work with your public agency as well as the locally-owned Independent Stationers office supply dealer in your market:

- **Outreach**
  - How & why to create office green teams within your organization
  - Benchmarking of current organizational green levels
  - Staff engagement and green education practices
- **Operations**
  - Identification and implementation of energy management, waste management programs
  - Recycling programs can be created or enhanced for ink/toner, batteries, CFL bulbs, electronic waste
  - Developing a program to foster competition and best practices between state employees and departments with annual awards sponsored by Independent Stationers
• Purchasing
  - Detailed analysis of current U.S. Communities purchasing behavior and establishing of a baseline of current green product spend
  - Provide a list of all items purchased by the U.S. Communities member and recommend an available green alternate item
  - Create Online “Green Shopping Lists” to make it easier to find and purchase green products that provide cost savings
  - Provide “Lunch and Learns”, interactive webinars, and other training methods to make sure all U.S. Communities users are familiar with the true cost of the supplies they purchase (total life cycle analysis), and explore new ways to save money through green supplies
  - Independent Stationers also offers a webinar based training program for our customers/partners to show all of the ways to save money with greener office supplies including transactional cost savings, operational cost savings, energy cost savings, waste cost savings and cost saving achieved through higher quality items and ergonomic items.

Independent Stationers has also created a list of recommendations to assist your overall sustainability transformation:

**TOP 8 TIPS FOR A GREENER OFFICE**

1. **Buy Local** – Buying local is about more than just the higher level of customer service they provide, and supporting your local economy.
   - Studies show that buying from a local business keeps up to three times more money in the local economy.
   - Local businesses have lower carbon footprints by reducing urban sprawl and having lower electrical consumption than “Big Box” retail stores.
   - Local businesses give back up to their communities up to 250% more than “Big Box” retailers and participate in their local communities.

2. **Reduce energy consumption** – Energy costs have skyrocketed over the past decade so implement energy savings policies to reduce your costs and your carbon footprint.
   - Invest in an efficient technology items such as Energystar and EPEAT.
   - Switch to energy-saving settings such as sleep mode and turn off your computer whenever you are not using it.
   - Utilize power strips with an on/off switch or unplug items when not in use for long periods of time.

3. **Less is more with paper** – Reduce your paper costs and increase employee productivity by going as paperless as possible.
   - Keep copies of important emails, files, manuals, etc. on your computer or in the cloud, and send company memos through email.
   - Review any documents online instead of printing them out, and use document sharing software.
• Double side print (duplex printing) wherever possible and use scrap paper for note taking;

4. **Purchase greener office supplies** – There are thousands of green products available, and often these greener items are competitively priced with more traditional office supply items.

- Buy office supply items with high recycled content or those made from renewable materials, and paper made from sustainable forestry programs.
- Look into remanufactured toner programs…quality has drastically improved and cost savings is significant.
- Look for products with third party eco certifications, and products with fewer harsh chemicals.

5. **Recycle** - There are many things in your office that you can recycle. Work with your property manager if existing programs are not sufficient to meet your goals.

- Paper products like copy paper, envelopes, magazines, cardboard boxes and anything that is made from plastic or metal (soda cans).
- Ink and toner cartridges.
- Investigate composting options for organic waste.

6. **Implement clean air policies** – Indoor air pollution and “sick building syndrome” is a leading cause of sick days and reduced productivity. Make clean air a priority in your office spaces.

- Open your windows to increase air flow and place plants in the office to purify air naturally.
- Use nontoxic cleaning chemicals (Green Seal, Eco-logo).
- Use Greenguard certified products (low VOC’s, and other toxins) to reduce off gassing of toxic chemicals.
- Don’t smoke in or near the office and use an air purifier to get rid of contaminants.

7. **Invest in quality** – The old way of doing things is to look for the lowest price item, change your procurement policies to look for items with lowest life time cost.

- Ergonomic furniture is an investment in your employees’ health and wellness that increases productivity and reduces sick days.
- Purchase quality items with a long life, instead of items that break or need to be replaced often. They might cost more up front, but have a lower full life cost.
- Switch out old incandescent bulbs to CFL or LED lights, and upgrade lighting fixtures to T-5 or T-8 bulbs to reduce energy costs and provide better quality lighting.

8. **Engage your stakeholders** – You never know where the next great idea will come from, and companies are finding their people are their greatest resource to cut costs and go green.

- Create an office “Green Team” to promote your environmental programs, engage with all departments and assist in training all staff.
- Make it fun by creating a competition between departments, offices, and other companies in your market.
- Reach out to all of your stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, customers, non-profits and your communities to tell what you are doing and ask for their input.