U.S. Communities: The Gold Standard in Public Procurement

As those responsible for procurement know all too well, the task of balancing budget dollars and needs is challenging at best. To help address this challenge, utilizing a cooperative purchasing program has long been an established best practice. With recent legislation changes, the opportunity to leverage the buying power of cooperative contracts is now available to park and recreation professionals throughout New York.

Most purchasing cooperatives deliver value by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies to lower costs and increase services. Using a cooperative contract can also save time by eliminating the need to go through a lengthy solicitation process.

The very best cooperatives, however, offer more.

The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance partners with public agencies to find solutions that benefit procurement professionals — including professionals responsible for recreation and park purchasing. Simply put, U.S. Communities was founded by public agencies for public agencies.

U.S. Communities is the only purchasing cooperative founded and co-owned by five distinguished sponsors: the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC), the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO). In addition, over 90 state associations show their support for the U.S. Communities program with sponsorship.

The founding mission is to provide participating agencies access to competitively solicited contracts with national suppliers offering a broad line of top-quality products and services. There are no fees to participate and no purchasing minimums, allowing maximum flexibility for participants.

Each supplier commits to provide their most competitive government pricing to all participating agencies. Regularly scheduled internal and third-party audits ensure compliance with contract pricing, terms and conditions, while benchmarking analyses evaluate the overall value. Contracts are also reviewed quarterly by the Lead Public Agency, and all documents pertaining to contract solicitations are publicly posted on the U.S. Communities website for complete transparency.

U.S. Communities goes beyond providing outstanding contracts. They work with their supplier partners to offer comprehensive business solutions that help recreation and park professionals maximize cost-control while also improving operational efficiencies and performance. Since its founding in 1991,
U.S. Communities has generated millions of dollars in savings for participating agencies.

The U.S. Communities Cooperative Purchasing Alliance truly is the gold standard when it comes to honest and effective public procurement, as well as partnerships dedicated to providing best-in-class procurement solutions. With over 500 new registrations each month, the continued rapid growth is testament to the program’s record of integrity and unparalleled value.

U.S. Communities welcomes the opportunity to partner with NYSRPS Members to support your purchasing needs. To see the specific U.S. Communities contract solutions specific to recreation and park professionals, visit www.uscommunities.org/parkrec.

Editors note: Three Commercial Members of NYSRPS have shared their experience as a member of US Communities for this publication:

**BSN SPORTS** contract through US Communities for Athletic and Recreation Equipment provides peace of mind to our customers that they are receiving the best value and service when ordering with us. Our customers know they will be taken care of regardless of how they order with us, but the added benefit of being a US Communities supplier enhances our reputation as the nation’s leading sporting goods supplier.

**GameTime**, represented by MRC Recreation, is proud to have won the US Communities bid and will continue to bring innovation and the best value and service to our New York State Customers. Because the US Communities Advisory Board includes key New York State Procurement professionals on their board, members can be assured that all NYS laws are being properly met. The contract has been endorsed by both NYCOM (New York State Commission of Mayors) and by NYSSBA (New York State School Board Association). MRC looks forward to continuing to provide current and new customers with top quality products and service.

**Kompan** is committed to providing quality playground design, installation and equipment while offering great value to its customers. It was natural for us to join US Communities. By selling through US Communities we can guarantee a significant savings up front because public agencies don’t have to commit all those resources to preparing the RFP. But the greatest value for our public agency customers comes in being able to direct purchase the products they want at the lowest negotiated contract price, and that’s why Kompan joined with US Communities.