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**U.S. Communities Introduces Resource Center for Public Agencies
Help for Local Government Navigating the 2009 Recovery Act**

“Recovery Toolbox” provides public agencies with resources to maximize recovery dollars

(Walnut Creek, CA) May 12, 2009 – U.S. Communities, a national nonprofit purchasing cooperative for public agencies, has introduced an online resource center to help public agencies maximize recovery dollars from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The U.S. Communities “Recovery Toolbox” provides public agencies with easy access to a variety of third-party resources and U.S. Communities supplier programs designed to support agencies with their efforts to reduce the cost of purchased goods and services and maximize funds received through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

U.S. Communities helps agencies save money by combining the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. As lead public agencies award competitively-solicited contracts for low-cost products and services directly with suppliers, U.S. Communities enables participating public agencies with similar needs to access the same contract.

U.S. Communities supplier products and services range from auto fleet management and procurement to office and school supplies, furniture and equipment. The “Recovery Toolbox” details specific supplier programs as well as supplier efforts to help agencies using stimulus funds meet the strict, federally mandated project timeline requirements. The toolbox also includes links to a variety of web sites and reports summarizing different aspects of the stimulus act and providing guidance to public agencies on direct-benefit applications.

“U.S. Communities is dedicated to supporting public agencies in their efforts to reduce the cost of purchased goods and services,” said Chris Mellis, Program Manager of U.S. Communities. “Our Recovery Toolbox was created to help public agencies gather more information on recovery-related programs and identify additional ways to increase value in their procurement efforts.”

“The Recovery Toolbox was a real time and money saver for the Davis Joint Unified School District,” said Rey Reyes, the Director of Operations at the school district. “We used U.S. Communities programs before the ARRA to save money and were able to access recovery resources easily through the toolbox.”

Any public agency or nonprofit organization that serves public agencies may join U.S. Communities at no cost. As of January 2009, U.S. Communities offered participating public agencies access to 18 contracts with 24 suppliers for a variety of purchased and services.

About U.S. Communities

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (“U.S. Communities”) is a nonprofit government entity that assists local and state government agencies, school districts (K-12), higher education, and nonprofits in reducing the cost of purchased goods by offering managed access to competitively solicited contracts between suppliers and lead public agencies. U.S. Communities was designed in cooperation with an Advisory Board of local and state government purchasing officials and is jointly sponsored by the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM). Total aggregated purchases in 2008 exceeded \$1.4 billion, with \$200 million in estimated savings to public agencies that year alone.