



NLC Enterprise Programs at Congress of Cities: Bringing Value-Added Solutions to Cities

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by Sandi Burtseva

City officials attending the Congress of Cities in Phoenix next month will have a unique opportunity to learn about NLC Enterprise Programs, which offer innovative and cost saving solutions to meet the needs of cities and their residents. The programs were developed with input from city leaders and build strategic partnerships with private companies and nonprofit organizations to bring top-quality products and services to cities.

“During tough economic times our budget is extremely tight and we look for every opportunity to save. NLC Enterprise Programs offer practical and affordable solutions that save our city time and money,” said James Hunt, council-member, Clarksburg, W.Va., and NLC past president.

Conference attendees can learn how cities can save on purchasing and procurement, receive technical assistance on downtown development, enhance city websites, offer programs to benefit residents and more by visiting the NLC Enterprise Programs booths in the NLC Pavilion in the Exhibit Hall on Thursday, November 10 and Friday, November 11.

NLC Prescription Discount Card Program

This program, administered by CVS Caremark and open to NLC member cities only, helps city residents cope with the high cost of prescription drugs by offering savings to residents who are without health insurance or those who have prescriptions not covered by insurance. Participating cities are provided with customized discount cards with the city name and logo, as well as sample press releases and a sample web page to promote the program at no cost to the city.

The program can save city residents an average of 23 percent off the retail cost of prescription medication. The discount card is accepted at more than 60,000 pharmacies nationwide, including all major pharmacy chains and most local independent pharmacies. Currently, more than 500 NLC member cities are participating in this program. Cities of all sizes have seen big savings — from nearly \$500,000 for Clarksburg, W. Va., to more than \$325,000 for Detroit.

NLC Service Line Warranty Program

This program, administered by Utility Service Partners, Inc. (USP), is an affordable home protection solution that helps city residents save thousands of dollars on the high cost of repairing broken or leaking water or sewer lines. The program gives residents the opportunity to obtain a low-cost warranty that will provide repairs to utility lines located on their property for a low monthly fee, with no deductibles or service fees.

Not only is there no cost to cities participating in this program, they actually receive a share of the revenues collected. Implementation is easy and USP provides all of the required services. Cities sign one-year contracts to participate in the program, affording residents the opportunity to individually opt in. The program was launched in December 2010 and will be offered to all cities in the 48 contiguous states by March 2012. Almost 100 cities have already signed up for the program, and hundreds more have inquired.

NLC Procurement Card Program

The P-Card program, administered by Public Financial Management Services LLC (PFM), simplifies the traditional requisition process and lowers costs associated with purchasing products and services through an easy-to-use online system at no cost to the city. P-Cards substantially reduce administrative costs, offer enhanced internal controls, protect against fraud and misuse and expedite payments to vendors.

Cities can save significantly by using the card for any purchase. Once a supplier agrees to accept the card, a city can pay for countless supplies and services, as well as other overhead expenses, equipment and service purchases, such as travel and food services. PFM helps cities maximize the card's efficiency by showing city leadership how to get back optimal rebates.

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance

The U.S. Communities program is the leading national government purchasing cooperative for cities, counties, school districts, higher education institutes and nonprofits. The program features the best government prices on thousands of quality products from office supplies to playground equipment and much more.

Last year, the U.S. Communities program saved participating public agencies over \$215 million, with an average savings of 15 percent.

NLC Community Showcase Video Program

This free web service program, administered by CGI Communications, Inc. (CGI), provides unique video programming to enhance city websites. Through the program, CGI works directly with cities to create a Video TourBook comprised of one-minute videos designed to optimally showcase each city to businesses, tourists and residents.

Videos, which are hosted by CGI and linked directly on city websites, typically include messages from mayors and other city officials and address various facets of the city, such as education, economic development and recreation.

The National Citizen Survey

Provided in partnership with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the National Research Center (NRC), the National Citizen Survey (NCS) gives city leaders a priceless tool for effective performance management by accurately gauging residents' experiences.

The NCS is a low-cost survey that helps local governments determine what a statistically valid sample of residents thinks about the quality of local government services, giving local officials public input from an important, often insufficiently represented voice.

The NCS will also be featured in the NLC Leadership Training Institute (LTI) seminar as a special add-on program to the Thursday morning seminar, "Engaged Listening: A Crucial Skill to Collaboration." LTI participants will have the oppor-

tunity to receive a first-hand look at a real-life citizen survey and walk through important considerations for conducting such surveys. Lunch will be provided during the seminar from noon to 1:30 p.m.

NLC America Downtown Program

This highly successful, fee-based, comprehensive technical assistance program provides direct, hands-on help to city officials who want to start, refocus or energize their downtown enhancement efforts.

The downtown expertise of partner HyettPalma, Inc., allows NLC to offer a combination of strengths and individualized assistance not available anywhere else.

The program offers a customized game plan featuring a variety of implementation-oriented services, effective for revitalizing a downtown economy.

The NLC America Downtown program will also offer free 30-minute onsite consultations on a first-come, first-served basis.

Additionally, America Downtown will be presenting a highly interactive 45-minute Exhibitor Solutions Theater “American Downtown: A First Step to Local Economic Recovery” on Thursday morning from 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Stop By, Save and Enjoy!

While attending the Congress of Cities, officials are encouraged to stop by the Enterprise Program area in the Exhibit Hall to meet NLC’s Enterprise Programs Partners and learn how to bring these solutions and savings to their city.

Attendees can have their Enterprise Program Passport stamped by each of the program partners for the opportunity to win a daily prize. There will also be a Popcorn and Lemonade Social on Thursday, November 10, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., sponsored by the NLC Prescription Discount Card Program, the NLC Procurement Card Program and the NLC Service Line Warranty Program.

Details: For more information on NLC Enterprise Programs, visit www.nlc.org/enterpriseprograms.

Affordable Help for Downtowns

As part of its successful America Downtown technical assistance program, NLC has created a new, low-cost service that will be unveiled at this year's Congress of Cities and Exposition in Phoenix. NLC has created the new service in recognition of the fact that the nation's downtowns have been hit hard by the economic downturn, losing businesses and jobs and generating less and less in tax revenues for their local governments. At the same time, local governments have found themselves less and less able to address the economic woes of their downtowns, due to disappearing state and federal funding and declining city revenues. This is a very serious situation, since a downtown and its small businesses often form the core of a small city's economy.

According to NLC's recently released 26th annual City Fiscal Conditions report, general city revenues are continuing to fall for the fifth straight year, with probable further declines in 2012. (See the story on page 1 for more information about the report.)

NLC's new, highly affordable downtown service offers local officials an innovative way to identify the path of action necessary to lead their downtowns to a new economic future.

NLC's new downtown service will be unveiled in an Exhibitor Solutions Theater on Thursday, November 10, at 10:00 a.m.

In addition, attendees will learn where and how to generate private sector funds that can be used to bring the new service home — making this assistance even more affordable and practical for local governing bodies.