

Nebraska seeks to implement REAL ID security plan

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The state of Nebraska **Department of Motor Vehicles (NDMV)** is looking to establish a REAL ID security plan in compliance with the **REAL ID Security Act**. The state released a formal **solicitation** on October 13 for a Comprehensive Driver's License and Identification Card Issuance Security Plan.

REAL ID is a nationwide effort to improve the integrity and security of state-issued drivers' licenses and identification cards to assist in the fight against terrorism and reduce fraud. In January 2008, in response to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, Global War on Terror, and the 2005 Tsunami Relief, the **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** issued a REAL ID **final rule** to establish "minimum standards for driver's licenses and identification cards acceptable by federal agencies for official purposes." The rule contains a set of regulations for states to meet requirements of the REAL ID Act, including a security plan as part of its REAL ID certification program. States were expected to be in full compliance with the REAL ID Act by May 11, 2011, but many states had trouble meeting the requirements due to budgetary issues. A final rule was issued on March 7, 2011, changing the date to January 15, 2013.

The DHS has been working with states to implement the requirements of the act and has awarded grant funds to help meet those requirements. Since 2008, DHS has awarded states 150 separate grants that collectively total approximately \$175 million. Nebraska's REAL ID security plan project is being federally funded through a Homeland Defense grant expiring in May 2012. The state received a small portion of the **overall Driver's License Security Grant Program (DLSGP)** administered by **FEMA**.

Nebraska currently has a contract with L-1 Identity Solutions through 2016 for the production and issuance of drivers' licenses and state identification cards. The NDMV needs a REAL ID security plan to comply with security requirements and ensure REAL ID compliance certification. The security plan will act as a check list for the review of enrollment, production and issuance processes for security recommendations found in the DHS REAL ID security plan handbook.

The solicitation is looking to establish a final report including plans for physical security such as facilities for driver's license and ID production as well as a gap analysis tool that will organize security information necessary to assess compliance with the Nebraska REAL ID security plan. A fixed-price contract is expected to begin on December 9, 2011, and run for one year. Proposals are due November 10, 2011.

Analyst's Take

Dwindling state budgets due to severe economic downturn have caused many states to not fully comply with the requirements of REAL ID. The implementation of REAL ID is a costly investment, and many states are not able to conjure up the resources. It is important for vendors to help states find and apply for federally-funded **grant programs** to assist in meeting the requirements. Vendors should research which states have been applying for grants and which grant programs have proven successful. It is important when looking for grants to analyze their components in order to figure out what the grant specifically outlines because it may only fund certain aspects of the project. In addition, vendors should be aware of when a state's contract is due to expire in order to begin planning their proposals.