



April 30, 2009

Mr. John Gale, Chariman  
Nebraska State Records Board  
440 South 8th St, Ste 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508

Re: Nebraska State Records Board  
Electronic Technology Grant

Dear Mr. Gale:

Thank you for considering our grant application for the "Enhancement of Richardson County Land Record Information Management and Access" project.

Although Richardson County is applying for this grant, the new digital land records management system and web site will serve not only county offices, but local towns and villages and the public too. Access to the information will be available on the Internet with no cost to those accessing the information, be it other government agencies, businesses or the general public. By providing web-based access to Richardson County land records, we believe we are enhancing access to public information and government services without increasing direct and indirect staffing costs.

We request the committee's kindness in considering and approving the Richardson County grant application so that we may enhance public service in the 21st century. Thank you for your time and we appreciate your effort in helping the county. Should you have any questions or need more information, please free to contact me at the above address, phone number or e-mail at richcoassessor@sentco.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Regina D Cummings".

Regina D Cummings  
Richardson County Assessor

Nebraska State  
Records Board



John A. Gale  
Chairman



440 S 8<sup>th</sup> St Ste 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 471-2745

## **APPLICATION FOR STATE RECORDS BOARD GRANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION (Local Government Agency)**

The Nebraska State Records Board is sponsoring a grant program for county and municipal governments for the development of programs and technology to improve electronic access to public records by citizens and businesses. The grants may be used for the creation or enhancement of electronic access and delivery of government services and information, but not to fund ongoing operations. One of our highest priorities is to encourage collaboration and projects which can ultimately be used in multiple jurisdictions with minimal modification. Collaborative projects may be awarded grants in the amounts not to exceed \$25,000.00; single jurisdiction projects have a \$10,000.00 limit.

A collaborative grant must have more than one jurisdiction involved or be a project or application that can readily be shared and utilized by more than one jurisdiction. A single jurisdiction, in order to qualify as a collaborative grant, must provide a plan of how the application will be made available and shared with other jurisdictions at no charge.

### **Grant Criteria**

*Projects requesting funding must meet criteria #1-3. In addition, criteria #4-6 will be considered when reviewing funding requests:*

1. Enhance the delivery of local government agency services and improve access to those services.
2. Meet the state's technology access clause for providing equal access to services for persons with disabilities. A copy of the technology access clause is available

at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html> under 2. Accessibility Architecture.

3. If the project or service created or improved pursuant to the grant application involves the licensing, permitting or regulation of businesses, then the project or service must allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business> and the One-Stop Online Business Registration System at: <https://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/cgi/domestic.cgi?OSBRApplication/init/init/None>
4. Improve the efficiency of agency operations.
5. Facilitate collaboration between local, state and federal agencies and other public institutions (if applicable).
6. Support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services through the Official State portal, Nebraska.gov.

Grant applications will be considered by the Board at their quarterly meetings. For application due dates, Board meeting dates and any other questions about the process, please contact Cathy Danahy, Executive Director, at [cathy.danahy@sos.ne.gov](mailto:cathy.danahy@sos.ne.gov) or (402) 471-2745.

Local Agencies desiring grants from the Nebraska State Records Board for projects to create or improve electronic access to government information must complete the following application and follow any procedures outlined.

**NOTE: All successful candidates will be required to submit a written project report to the State Records Board at the conclusion of their project.**

If you need additional space for your answers please attach any documentation necessary. *Applications not completed in full will be returned to the requesting agency for completion and resubmission.*

## **I. GRANT SUMMARY**

1. Name of agency applying for grant Richardson County, NE
2. Title of project "Enhancement of Richardson County Land Record Information Management and Web Access"
3. Brief description of project:  
Richardson County is planning on modernizing its land record management

information system through the replacement of paper based cadastral mapping with GIS technology. In addition, intra county office, local government (towns villages, etc) and public access to these map data and associated land record information will be made available via Internet.

4. Grant request amount \$ 25,000
5. Will there be a fee for accessing records associated with this project? If yes, provide any statutory reference or authorization for fee.

No

## II. GRANT DETAIL

1. Please describe the project in detail (you may attach this description).

Richardson County has signed a contract with GIS Workshop, Inc., of Lincoln, NE in September of '08 for a Geographic Information System providing layers for parcel identification and land use in a digital format. This system will completely overhaul our current land record information management system. The new digital land record information will be interfaced with our existing CAMA database and access to other county departments, city agencies and the public will be granted via the Internet.

The cost for the project is \$76,000. For this project to be possible in the county's extremely tight budget it was necessary to negotiate a three-year financing option with the final payment being due on July 2010. The next logical step would be to make this data readily available to the public. With this project, anyone with Internet access will have the capability to search real estate information without having to contact the assessor's office.

The system will be hosted on GIS Workshop, Inc. servers, making the county information constantly available. The design will give users access to the assessment database by name, address or parcel ID numbers. If those elements are unknown, the user will be able to pan the site map and manually select a parcel. Once the user has found the parcel they are interested in, they may view the assessment data connected with it.

The Richardson County Web Site will contain a hyperlink to direct users to this web site. This funding request is being made by a single entity, however, many other jurisdictions will benefit. The city or village office for the communities in the county have been most anxious for this type of information. The county seat, Falls City, feel this mapping system would be helpful to the villages & other offices in our Courthouse will be able to benefit as well. The Noxious Weed Dept. will have access to property owners and address information when they

have to issue notices or spray for weeds. The County Sheriff will have access to ownership information as well as photos and aerial photos of the land to determine if they have the correct location. The clerk should be able to have voter precincts by maps. Tax information will be included on the site, which will reduce counter and telephone traffic to the County Treasurer's office.

Everything included on the web site will be public information. While we are very willing to comply with the request we receive, having this data available on-line will be a more convenient and efficient way to disseminate the information especially to the public.

Data regarding the assessment and taxation of real property in Richardson County is currently available to the public by calling and then, our office faxing the requested information, by written request or visiting our office in the county courthouse. The past several years we have seen an increased demand for this information from appraisers, realtors, banks, insurance companies and the public. Recently the Nemaha Natural Resource District and the Farm Service Agency have made requests for ownership, deed information and assessment data. Most out of state request cannot believe we don't have a Web Site with this information available. There is a Richardson County Web Site but only has general information on it through the Richardson County Clerk's site, not for particular parcels or legal information. We receive many requests as to when we will have this information available.

**2. Please describe who the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be and projected activity for access or use of the proposed service.**

Richardson County property owners will have access to their valuation and assessment information at any time. Realtors, appraisers, banks and insurance companies will also have access to real estate information needed for their business-related activities. Assessment information is requested on a daily basis and we are asked if the information is available over the Internet, which it is not at this time. The public will be notified of the web site by mailings, newspaper articles and informing anyone who comes into the office.

**3. Timeline for implementation (*a specific completion date (MM/YYYY) must be provided*). *Grant funds lapse if not expended prior to completion date.***

The completion date will be no later than July 2010.

**4. Subdivision contribution to project (labor, equipment etc.).**

Richardson County will be making a considerable investment for the base technology and computer upgrades to implement the GIS system. The project will require approximately \$3,000 of needed hardware equipment, which is not purchased yet. The Richardson County Assessor's office staff will contribute labor

to compile information, with continuing updates to assure an accurate and up-to-date result. GIS will be scanning maps, setting up the web site, and training the assessor & staff.

**5. Is other funding available for this project (explain)?**

No. Budget cuts and limitations have not allowed for the funding of a project of this size. Thus, the reason for not having any money set aside to start such an endeavor.

**6. Does the project require additional statutory authority (explain)?**

With limited budget increases, projects that are not mandated by law are the last to be considered. If grant funds are not received, this project will be delayed for several years and other financing will have to be sought. After the project is completed the County Commissioners have pledged to cover an annual fee for hosting the project on GIS Workshop, Inc. servers. They will, also, cover the cost of programming updates for Arc View GIS software & licensing.

**7. Specify (in detail) what the grant money will be used for. Include a complete cost breakdown of the project. Please attach bids from vendors (if applicable).**

Private citizens, businesses and other governmental agencies will have access to real estate ownership, assessment and taxation information, plus soil maps continually, via the internet. Citizens of Nebraska have a right to have their property valued uniformly and proportionately with similar property. When doing research, property owners sometimes wish to remain anonymous. This project will enable them to do their research without having to come to or call the assessor's office.

It is not economical for every user to have Arc View GIS software and licensing, especially in a smaller county. The server uses ERSI Arc IMS (Internet Mapping System) software, which enables the user to access the data with standard computer software.

**8. Why is the grant money needed for the project, and, if applicable, how will the service be sustained once the grant money is expended?**

This project will reduce both telephone and counter traffic to the county Offices. Staff members researching assessment data due to the requests we receive will spend much less time on these requests. Plus, the public will appreciate the ease and capability of having the information readily available. It will open up the office time to keep review of properties and assessments up to date.

**9. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of agency services or access to those services.**

Other county offices benefiting from the project will be the county road department, county sheriff, county clerk, county treasurer, noxious weed department & others. Various other entities benefiting from the project would include but not limited to: The cities & villages in Richardson County, the fire districts, Farm Service Agency and the Nemaha Natural Resources District.

The information will be available to anyone with Internet access, at no charge to the user and with no need for special computer software. Those seeking service from our office will no longer need to telephone or come into our office only when the courthouse is open.

**10. Please describe how this project will improve the efficiency of agency operations.**

By switching to a digital cadastral mapping system, Richardson County will achieve greater efficiency both in the maintenance of land records (GIS will allow us to digitally manipulate and update the maps instead of drawing with pencils) and in our ability to service information requests (we will no longer have to reference a separate computer database or card file to find the right paper map). The web site further enhances our ability to provide access to these data.

**11. Please describe how this project will facilitate collaboration among other local, state and federal agencies and other public institutions.**

Land records information (property ownership, property boundary location, etc) are in demand on a daily basis by most other city, county and state agencies. For example, the NDOR might wish to know who owns a property adjacent to a state highway because they will be limiting access because of road construction. Or, the weeds supervisor might need to know who owns a property so that they may send them a notice. By making these data available via the Internet, we are supporting collaboration by sharing our key land record information.

**12. Please describe how this project will support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services through the Official State portal, Nebraska.gov?**

This project will directly service the delivery of public services via the Nebraska.gov site because the County web site will be linked directly off the PAD web site at <http://pat.ne.gov/counties/index.html>.

**13. Does the project involve the licensing, permitting or regulation of business? If yes, explain how the project or service will allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal and the One-Stop Online Business registration system.**

No

### **III. TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

- 1. Describe the hardware, software, and communications needed for this project and explain why these choices were made.**

We will leverage our existing investment in computer hardware and networking technology. Access to the public system will be through the Internet. For those who do not have Internet access in their home or business, our local library offers computer services and the Internet at no charge to the user, as well as most of our schools.

- 2. Address any technical issues with the proposed technology including:**

- **Conformity with general accepted industry standards. Projects which interface with other state systems (such as distance learning systems) must meet NITC technical standards and guidelines (NITC standards and guidelines are located at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/>).**
- **Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.**
- **Reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation).**

The new mapping system will follow all applicable NITC GIS Council guidelines for parcel mapping and metadata. The primary technology will be ESRI based, thus ensuring compatibility with surrounding counties and most state agencies.

- 3. Describe how the project will comply with the State's Technology Access Clause: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html> under 2. Accessibility Architecture.**

Because the technology is primarily map and requires interaction with such maps, our ability to comply with this clause is limited, but the system will comply where applicable.

This technology is currently being used by over 20 counties in the State of Nebraska, nine of which are counties where the Nebraska Department of Revenue. Property Assessment Division handles the county assessment function. The web site will be patterned after other sites developed for this same purpose, to assure compliance with the standards set by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. This project will be designed to allow access to users with disabilities.

**4. Describe how technical support will be provided.**

GIS Workshop, Inc. employs ERSI certified instructors for training the county staff, and for follow-up telephone support. GIS Workshop, Inc. will host and maintain the web application.

**IV. CONTACT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE**

**Contact person for any questions regarding this application:**

REGINA D CUMMINGS  
COUNTY ASSESSOR

Phone # (402) 245-4012

E-Mail: richcoassessor@sentco.net

Signed this 1 day of June, 2009

*Richardson County Assessor's Office*  
Agency Director  
*Regina D Cummings*  
Assessor

**Please return to:**

**Cathy Danahy**  
**Nebraska State Records Board**  
**440 S 8<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 210**  
**Lincoln, NE 68508**  
**(402) 471-2745**

*(Last updated 04/28/2008)*