

Nebraska State  
Records Board  
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John A. Gale  
Chairman

## APPLICATION FOR STATE RECORDS BOARD GRANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Nebraska State Records Board is sponsoring a grant program for Nebraska government agencies for the development of programs and technology to improve electronic access to state government information and services. Grants will be awarded for one time funding of small projects. No grant request shall exceed \$25,000.00. 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. Nebraska government agencies wishing to apply for these grants may want to first contact Nebraska.gov to establish feasibility and scope of the project.

**Applications received by May 6, 2013 will be considered for funding by the NE State Records Board at their meeting on July 31, 2013.**

**NOTE:** Loss of Funding. The NE State Records Board may be unable to award grant funds, in whole or in part, in the event funding is no longer available.

### Grant Criteria

Grant projects requesting funding must meet criteria #1-3.

1. Enhance the delivery of local government agency services and improve the public and business access to those services.
2. Meet the all applicable Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines. 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: <http://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/cgi/domestic.cgi?/osbraapplication/init/init/None>.

In addition, the following criteria will be considered when reviewing applications:

- Does the project enhance the delivery of state/local government agency services and improve the public, government and business access to those services?
- Does the project reduce the amount of reliance on human capital, paper, and office overhead?
- Does the project span more than one office or agency?
- What is the size of the customer base for this service and the geographic impact?
- Is there financial and or in kind contribution from other partners?
- Is there documented community support for the project?

***Responses are required to all questions in Parts I , II & III in order to be considered for funding:***

### **Part I. Grant Summary**

1. Name of agency applying for grant Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA)
2. Title of project On-line license and fee application payment system
3. Brief description of project:

NDA is looking to expand the services that are available online. NDA wants to provide a venue so businesses and individuals can pay various license fees and remit other fees due NDA. Currently NDA has in place several applications with Nebraska.gov and would like to expand to areas of auction market, milk, feed, fertilizer, and nursery that are statutory areas of responsibility placed with NDA. For each area identified, NDA currently has on-line applications in place in which the entity can pay other license and fees to NDA. If NDA can get to a point where all statutory fees can be remitted via an on-line application we would be able to promote and require all individuals and businesses to utilize and remit payments on-line using e-commerce. This would enhance the delivery of services NDA provides to the public.

4. Grant amount requested \$25,000. Total project is estimated to cost \$50,000 with matching dollars from NDA.
5. If the grant is to create an application, is the application to have a fee associated with its use for accessing public records, or is the application free for use by the public, businesses and other governmental agencies? The users of the services are required to submit the reports to NDA. There are fees associated with filing the reports. The fees vary depending on the type of report.

The funds collected by NDA are deposited with the State Treasurer into specific funds to offset cost to regulate the industry and are disbursed to other government agencies.

6. Answer the following questions if the grant application is for a Geographic Information System / Geospatial project. If your answer to any of these questions is “no”, please explain.
- a. Do you and the agency you represent agree to provide the data created through the project electronically by means of a geodatabase collected in your project, without costs, with other government agencies in the State that may have a need for such data?

A complete set of data in the form of a geodatabase (spatial, attribute, and metadata) will be provided to the NE Office of the Chief Information Officer within 30 days of completion of project. The data provided will need to meet the Land Record Information and Mapping Standards outlined in the supplemental questionnaire. Future updates to the geodatabase, after implementation of the project, will also need to be made available to the NE Office of the Chief Information Officer at no cost.

- b. If your project incorporates web mapping services, are you willing to make use of current state resources by linking your project to web and data services that are maintained through other online state agency repositories? This would be for data not created by your project but is needed for your project to be effective (ie, base maps such as aerial imagery, street centerlines, and other authoritative base map data provided as a service through NebraskaMAP.gov).
- c. If your project will be creating web mapping services, are you willing to make available the web services (ie, REST service), without costs, by registering the web service through the NebraskaMAP.gov metadata portal?

## **Part II. Grant Detail**

1. Please describe the project in detail, to include your vision for the project. (You may attach this description).

NDA would like a uniform on-line application for all statutory fee and license issued by our agency. Currently NDA has approximately 50% of our applications on-line. Our goal is reach 100% so we can promote all industry fee payments and licensure to be available on-line and we can go to a post card renewal reminder. Currently with an entity paying multiple types of fees, some are required to mail a renewal form and check and others can be transacted via the internet. Once we get 100% of the applications available on-line entities will be required to go on-line, to complete their renewal and have the option to pay online or print the material and remit with a check. NDA through many statutes touch most industries and many of the agriculture producers located in Nebraska.

For the applications NDA wants to incorporate into an on-line application:

Approximately 50 auction markets are located in Nebraska, pay an annual license fee and pay monthly an inspection fee for number of animals sold through the market.

There are over 200 milk producers in Nebraska that sell their milk to processing plants. The milk processing plants, haulers and handlers pay an annual license fee. In addition the milk processing plants pay a per hundred weight fee on all milk purchased, processed in Nebraska and on milk components used in processing.

For both feed and fertilizer, there are approximately 500 entities that pay a firm license fee, and also a tonnage fee on all feed and fertilizer produced/utilized in Nebraska. Tonnage fees are statutorily collected semi annually.

Nursery has over 1,200 growers and dealers that pay annual license fees to NDA. In addition to the license fee, they pay for inspection services that enables them to move products interstate and for export.

2. Please describe who the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be.

The beneficiary of reaching our goal of having all fees collected on-line would be industry and individuals going to one computer site to transact business with NDA and also to NDA not having to mail various fee forms out and handling remittances. This will affect the livestock industry for the business transacted through auction markets, feed and fertilizer industry, milk industry and nursery industry. NDA will be beneficiary as we would no longer incur the cost of printing forms, postage, and processing the completed forms and payment. For the industry/individual they would have one-stop shopping in transacting business with NDA, eliminating check writing and form preparation.

3. What is the projected activity for access or use of the proposed service?

For the proposed application there will be the potential for thousands of applications to be processed on-line. License and fee applications affect many industries and individuals. NDA would like to market to the industries e-commerce and require processing and payment on-line. Currently with only certain applications it is not possible to require participation. Question #1 provides an estimate of the potential number of users and frequency of use.

4. Timeline for implementation of the project (a specific completion date (MM/YYYY) must be provided). Grant funds may lapse if not expended prior to completion date.

The NDA has a goal to have the above listed applications on-line by June, 2014. It will be necessary to work with Nebraska.gov on specific timelines.

5. Please specify in detail your, or any other Subdivision(s) contribution to the project (financial, labor, equipment etc.). Provide specific dollar amounts.

The funding for the project will depend on the legislated appropriation for the next State biennium, but if this grant is approved would match the grant dollars to make a total project cost of \$50,000.

NDA will provide staff time to dedicate to the different phases of the project. Our IT specialists will work with Nebraska.gov to provide the needed information in order to make the application as efficient as possible. Other agency staff who are directly impacted by the on-line process will be available for all phases of the project, including answering questions, discussing specifics related to statutory requirements, current practices, etc., and to perform testing of a new application to make sure it meets the standards established during the planning meetings and will function properly for the users.

6. Is other funding available for this project (explain)? Please explain what efforts your agency has made to obtain funding.

Any NDA funding would have to be found within existing State appropriations. NDA will commit to a match to any grant dollars received.

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

No

8. 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) and describe the relationship, if any, between a vendor and you or your agency.

Grant funding will be used for Nebraska.gov project computer software development cost to incorporate onto NDA's web site and electronically interact with NDA existing data bases.

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

NDA does not have the resources in our existing budget to finish this project. Once developed any changes will be a coordinated effort between Nebraska.gov and NDA. Cost should be minimal.

10. Should available fund not allow the NSRB to grant the full amount requested, but a reduced amount, would this project still be financially feasible?

It depends on level of State appropriation received. Most likely NDA would pursue adding those that funding would be available for.

11. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of government agency services and improve the public and/or business access to those services.

The project will enhance delivery of government services by creating efficiencies in handling mail and data entry of information from license renewal and fee forms. This will be a benefit for the industry/individual paying the fee, allow NDA to be 100% e-commerce compliant and create staffing efficiencies for NDA. The State and NDA has made it a priority to have available to taxpayers of Nebraska the ability to transact business via e-commerce. Currently they have to type or hand write information on forms, perform manual calculations, write checks and incur postage cost to mail. NDA will realize a cost savings in printing forms, postage cost, and staff time handling paper forms.

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

See question 11 above.

13. Please describe how this project will facilitate collaboration between either local, state, federal and/or other public or private institutions.

For this project collaboration would be between the State of Nebraska and the private businesses across the state.

14. 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, located at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business>, and the One-Stop Online Business registration system located at: <https://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/index.cgi>

Yes, this on-line application involves the regulation of business.

NDA currently use NOL's business portal for on-line fee remittance. This proposal would expand what is currently used and be consistent with what other State agencies are doing. The new application will provide a link to one-stop on-line business registration service. It would allow for users to have access to the resources available by being taken directly to the website.

15. Community Support. Please include letters of support to document the public expression that has caused you to implement this application.

It has been the governor who has made e-commerce a priority for the benefit of taxpayers who do business with the State. In various industry meetings and occasional letters received we have been asked when NDA will have electronic payment options available.

### **Part III. Technical Information**

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

No additional hardware would be needed to carry out this project. Grant funding would be used to do software programming to set up the website and electronically transmit information.

The same systems and database that were used for the other on-line services will be essential for the development of this new project.

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, geospatial data and web services network) must meet NITC technical standards and guidelines. (The 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).
- Sustainability (ability to manage future maintenance)
- Items in non-compliance or becoming outdated after completion of project

Nebraska.gov will meet all standards and guidelines established, by working with employees for NDA and Department of Administrative Services.

3. Describe how the project will comply with the State's Technology Access Clause: meet all applicable Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines. A copy of the Standards are available at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html>. under 2. Accessibility Architecture. describe how technical support will be provided.

Nebraska.gov will verify that the current guidelines and standards are continued to be met for this project. Contact information for Nebraska.gov will be provided within the application, so users can reach staff by e-mail or phone should any technical issues occur.

#### **Part IV. STATE LAW COMPLIANCE**

Nebraska law, sections 4-108 through 4-114 state that no political subdivision of the State shall provide public benefits, to include grants or contracts, to a person not lawfully present in the United States. If this application is awarded in whole or in part, and during the time the grant is in effect, the undersigned, on behalf of the political subdivision grant applicant, by signing this grant application, affirmatively states and acknowledges that the political subdivision will comply with this law.



# Nebraska Interactive, LLC.

An NIC Company

DATE: May 6, 2013

TO: Bob Storant, Administrator Finance & Personnel, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

FROM: Brent Hoffman, President, Nebraska Interactive

SUBJECT: Proposal for Online license and fee application payment system

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Mr. Storant,

Our office has received your request to continue to add services to the online suite that has previously been developed. It is our understanding that you wish to expand your online services so that users may have the ability to report and pay all fees owed to your agency by electronic means.

You have requested that the following services be added:

- Auction Market
  - This service would involve the monthly reporting of the number of animals sold and payments associated with that report. In addition, you would like a system created that allows the user to pay the annual license fees related to the auctioning of animals.
- Milk
  - This service would allow for the reporting of all milk purchased and the fees involved for the milk processing plants. In addition, you would like the system to allow for the collection of the annual license fees for the milk processing plants, haulers and handlers.
- Feed and Fertilizer
  - Fees are collected semi-annually for the feed and fertilizer that is produced and utilized within Nebraska. You have requested that Nebraska.gov create an online system for reporting the amounts produced and collect the fees associated with those reports.
- Nursery
  - It is being requested that Nebraska.gov build an online system that will allow for all growers and dealers to pay the required annual license fees online. There is also an inspection service that is needed for those same people to move the product within and outside of Nebraska. Any license fees related to that service will be able to be reported and collected online.

Every project that is developed in our office goes through an established project process. We have found this methodology to be efficient for all parties involved. The project processes are as follows:

#### *Concept*

The concept phase is where the scope of the project is determined. The basic functionality is established and discussed. A concept document will present to specifics of the scope for the project. The document needs to be approved and signed prior to moving to the next phase of the project.

#### *Planning*

The planning phase is where the details of the online process are defined. The process will take into consideration the involvement and flow for not only the external users of the system, yet the Nebraska Department of Agriculture staff as well. Functional specifications will be written to provide the specifics of the flow for the service. It is used as the guide for the developer to create the online service. A prototype will be created to demonstrate how the online service will look and function. The director must approve and sign the functional specification before the project can move to the development phase.

#### *Development*

The development phase is when the actual functionality is built for the online service. The developer uses the prototype and functional specifications to create a working online service.

#### *Testing*

Once the online service has been developed, it must be thoroughly tested prior to being made available to the public. The testing phase is used to verify that the application has been built as agreed upon in the functional specifications. Internal testing of the application is completed prior to turning it over to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture staff for their testing. It is important to identify possible issues in the testing phase, so it can be resolved prior to release. A document will need to be approved and signed by the director, to verify that testing has been completed and that approval is given to launch the service. When approval is received, the project can move to the rollout phase.

#### *Rollout*

The rollout phase involves internal preparations by our staff to verify that the application is ready to be made available to the users. A rollout date will be pre-determined and agreed upon by our staff and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture staff at an earlier phase in the project.

Per your request, we have provided the proposed the costs that would be incurred by our staff, for all phases of the project process. We have taken into consideration our past experiences with working with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Below is an initial estimate of the staff time and costs involved to build one of the proposed projects. We estimate that the same pricing structure would be in place for each of the four different projects that you are requesting.

Phase	Hours	Expense
Concept	5	\$ 625.00
Planning	30	\$ 3,750.00
Development	150	\$ 18,750.00
Testing	40	\$ 5,000.00
Rollout	5	\$ 625.00
Total for each project	230	\$ 28,750.00
Total for all (4) projects	920	\$ 115,000.00

Using Nebraska Interactive to build the additions to the online suite of services demonstrates the significant cost avoidance to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture will be able to continue to provide custom online services that create efficiencies to all parties involved, including staff and users.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the estimate provided.

Sincerely,  
Brent Hoffman