



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

# STATE OF NEBRASKA

**NEBRASKA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**  
**Greg Lemon**

*Director*

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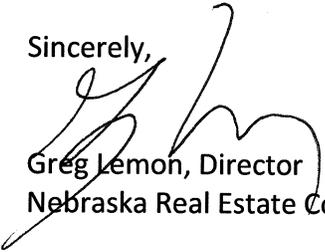
May 6, 2013

Cathy Danahy, Executive Director  
Nebraska State Records Board  
440 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508-2294

Dear Ms. Danahy,

Attached is the Nebraska State Records Board Grant Application for the Nebraska Real Estate Commission's Online Continuing Education Submission project. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need anything further with regards to this application.

Sincerely,

  
Greg Lemon, Director  
Nebraska Real Estate Commission

## REAL ESTATE COMMISSION MEMBERS

**Robert E. Dover**  
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**Nebraska State  
Records Board  
440 S 8<sup>th</sup> St Ste 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 471-2745**



**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 Real Estate Commission
- 2. Title of project:** Online Continuing Education Attendance Submission
- 3. Brief description of project:**

The grant is for the development of a web based interface for the import of continuing education and broker approved training completion records for Nebraska Real Estate Licensees.

This project is part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to enhance our online services. Last year's implementation of the online renewal grant helped our online renewal numbers grow from less than 10% of all renewals to 90% and increased the speed and accuracy with which the renewals were processed. We would like to achieve similar efficiencies and continue our efforts to automate and streamline processes for those education entities with whom we do business.

- 4. Grant amount requested:** \$25,000

- 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?**

No, there will be no fee associated with this service.

**If there is to be a fee, provide any statutory authorization for assessing the fee.**

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. NA

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).

This online import option would provide real estate brokers, education providers and staff an automated process in which data can efficiently be updated in the Commission's database and applied to each licensee's education screen. Real Estate licensee's are unable to renew their licenses without first meeting the education requirement. There is a delay in updating the licensee's education screen due to the volume and multiple provider lists being submitted to the Commission office close to deadline dates. Therefore, the licensees may be potentially unable to renew their licenses in a prompt manner.

The Commission currently does accept digital submission of Continuing Education (CE) information in the form of Excel spreadsheets. Due to the ongoing difficulty in getting providers to submit the information in the proper format, and data entry errors by the providers, this digital submission often takes more time than paper based filings. An online interface would provide uniformity in format in addition to being able to double check entries, such as license numbers, for accuracy before submission. This system would allow the Commission to further its goal of creating great efficiencies in processing the continuing education updates.

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

- a. Our services would be enhanced to the real estate licensees in that their education requirements could be processed in a much more timely manner reducing any delays in the renewal of their real estate licenses.
- b. The licensees' on-line education records would be able to provide the most current and accurate record for their reference and the Commission's.
- c. This project would support education providers who are currently frustrated with the process of reporting education attendance to the Commission. By creating a new system for reporting data would not be compromised by the various versions of software being used by our educators and the auto-fill would allow fewer keystrokes and, thus, fewer chances for error and more efficient use of time.
- d. The public would benefit by the enforcement of the education component of the Real Estate License Act resulting in a more knowledgeable real estate professional.

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

Each licensee has to take 18 hours of continuing education every two years, which results in four to ten record and/or imports per licensee within that time period. There are approximately 6,700 licensees, therefore, we get approximately 26,800 to 67,000 different records that need to be imported to Commission's database over each 2 year renewal cycle. While those records are imported into the database, the licensees are also required to submit paper verification certificates to the Commission office which need to be filed in the licensee's file. Should this project be as successful as anticipated, the volume of both paper and imports would be reduced dramatically. At this time it is anticipated there will be less paper to file, reduction in the need for filing cabinets, and a maximum of 365 imports each year. This project would potentially affect 6,700 licensees, 76 Continuing Education Providers, 300 Instructors, 40 Broker-Approved Training Providers and 1,360 designated brokers. In total this project would benefit a total of 8,436 people not including staff. The Commission will experience the creation of efficiency by no longer having to transfer the data, collect paper records and file it at the Commission. This system would eliminate the need for additional temporary staff added just for the purpose of assisting

with tasks related to the Education requirements.

- 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.**

Initial project definition has begun, and we plan to begin development as soon as the grant is awarded (if we are fortunate enough to have the grant awarded). The Commission's goal is to have the new system in place and ready to accept records by September 1, 2013. This is an aggressive goal that may need to be altered depending on the various stages of the project.

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

Nebraska Real Estate Commission Staff time:

Development of project specifications and communication of those specifications to Nebraska.gov 60 Hours @ \$27.91hr plus benefits = \$1,674.60  
Project testing 30 @ \$27.91hr salary plus benefits = \$837.30

Total: \$2,511.90

Agency time will be absorbed by agency, and is not part of the grant request.

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

No, funding is available. This project was conceived and developed after the deadline for submitting the agency biennial budget requests.

- 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.**

Please see attached cost estimate from Nebraska Interactive.

Nebraska.gov was chosen as the partner to develop this project because they currently provide our other web based services and are familiar with our business processes.

- 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?**

As previously noted, other funding is not available for this project. The Nebraska Real Estate Commission received a 5% budget cut in the 2009 special budget cutting legislative session, and the operating budget (other than money for salary and health insurance increases) has not been increased since then. Ongoing maintenance and enhancement costs are anticipated to be minimal, but will be absorbed within existing budgets and resources.

- 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?**

The Commission is respectfully requesting money to assist with the funding of this project. It is believed that this project will have an impact for all levels of people involved with the process of submitting CE information.

- 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.**

Our services would be enhanced to the real estate licensees in that their education requirements could be processed in a much more timely manner reducing any delays in the renewal of their real estate licenses. The online submission would benefit designated brokers and those they assign to provide broker approved training, as well as traditional continuing education providers.

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

With regard to human capital, the Commission currently hires a .50 FTE seasonal temporary employee during the renewal cycle to deal with the high volume of education certificates. It is anticipated that this position would no longer be necessary when the project is completed. Also, the education secretary, supported by other staff positions, spends a majority of her time manually inputting education from November 11 through January 11 of each year and importing multiple records daily. In addition, for six weeks after that, she spends at least 50% of her time reconciling these individual reports with annual reports. The current high level of error introduced by educators on these reports make this a time-consuming process that is expected to be reduced tremendously. It can only be imagined how much time educators are spending on a cumbersome process on their end.

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

This project would impact real estate licensees; educators, who include private sector providers, state colleges, Universities and Community Colleges as well as

the Commission office allowing all a greater level of efficiency in relaying these course credits to individual licensee data files.

- 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 CE reporting system allows for the regulation of real estate licensees and the requirement to obtain continuing education hours.

The renewal system is currently available through the Business Portal.

Users will be provided a link to the One-Stop Online Business registration system within the service. It will take the user directly to the site, should they need to access any of the resources available through this service.

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

Letters in support of the project attached. In addition, the Commission has had numerous complaints from those required to submit the spreadsheets to our office stating that the Excel spreadsheet currently used is not user friendly or does not correspond with their current record keeping systems. This past year the Commission received complaints from licensees that their records were not being updated promptly which caused a delay in renewing their license in a prompt manner.

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

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

The CE system would be a newly created application. No additional hardware, software, or communications systems would be required.

The same tools and database used for automating the renewal process will be valuable for the development of this 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 work with the contracted employees of the Department of Administrative Services to meet all standards and guidelines.

- 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.**

Nebraska.gov will verify that the current guidelines and standards are met for this project.

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

If there are any technical issues that occur, Nebraska.gov staff will be available by email and phone, with contact information provided within the application. Staff will be available to respond to issues that may occur with the system.

#### **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.

#### **Part V. CONTACT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE**

**Contact person, and title, for any questions regarding this application:**

Greg Lemon  
Printed Name

Director, Nebraska Real Estate Commission  
Title

**Phone #** 402 471-2004    **E-mail** [greg.lemon@nebraska.gov](mailto:greg.lemon@nebraska.gov)

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

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Greg Lemon  
Printed Name

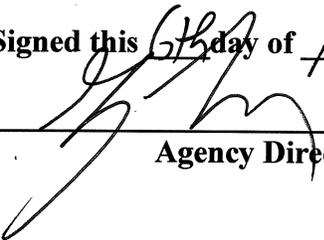
Director, Nebraska Real Estate Commission  
Title

Phone # 402 471-2004 E-mail greg.lemon@nebraska.gov

Physical Address: 1200 N St., Suite 402, Lincoln, NE 68508

I, the Authorized Representative of the Nebraska Real Estate Commission, certify to the Nebraska State Records Board that the applicant/agency has the necessary authority to undertake the proposed project, will comply with Affirmative Action requirements and provide a drug free workplace environment.

Signed this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2013

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Director

**Please return completed application to:**

**Executive Director  
Nebraska State Records Board  
440 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508-2294  
(402) 471-2745  
(402) 471-2406 (fax)**

<b>Board Staff use only, do not fill in below this line</b>	
Grant Request Number: _____	Date Request Received: _____
Grant Amt Requested: _____	Grant Request Score: _____
Technical Comm. Recommendation: _____	
Grant Disposition: _____	Date of Mtg Minutes: _____

(Last updated 02/15/2013)

# Nebraska Interactive, LLC.

An NIC Company

DATE: April 19, 2013  
TO: Greg Lemon, Executive Director, Nebraska Real Estate Commission  
FROM: Brent Hoffman, President, Nebraska Interactive  
SUBJECT: Proposal for Online Continuing Education Attendance Submission

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Mr. Lemon,

Our staff has reviewed the information provided regarding your request to build an online Education Attendance Submission system.

The project that is being proposed does not have user fees associated with it. You have expressed that there are no future plans to charge a fee for users to submit the information that is needed by the Commission.

This proposed online application would follow the established project phases.

### *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 Commission 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 Commission 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 Real Estate Commission 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 Real Estate Commission and review of the initial project questionnaire when proposing the hours involved for this new project. The following is an initial estimate of the staff time and costs involved to build the new online system.

Phase	Hours	Expense
Concept	5	\$ 625.00
Planning	15	\$ 1,875.00
Development	200	\$ 25,000.00
Testing	15	\$ 1,875.00
Rollout	5	\$ 625.00
Total	240	\$ 30,000.00
Grant Request*		\$ 25,000.00

Using Nebraska Interactive to build this new online Education Attendance Submission system demonstrates the significant cost avoidance to the Nebraska Real Estate Commission. The Commission 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

\*Nebraska Interactive feels the indirect benefits of this project to services such as online renewal, which Nebraska Interactive also provides for the Nebraska Real Estate Commission, merit the completion of this project, even though not fully funded, in order to enhance the total package of the NREC's online services.

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 01, 2013 4:33 PM

**To:** Hoffman, Teresa

**Subject:** RE: Endorsement Request

To Whom it May Concern:

Right now when a provider submits rosters in an Excel format to the Nebraska Real Estate Commission it is very cumbersome. You have to make sure that you are using the correct format and all the fields are filled in properly before you can submit the roster. When you have 200-250 agents in one class that gets to be a little time consuming for the provider and for the Commission. If the provider could upload the file right to the Commission's website it would be so much easier for everyone. An automated process would be so much nicer.

Christie Bevington

Professional Development Director

Nebraska REALTORS® Association

800 South 13th Street, Suite #200

Lincoln, NE 68508

402/323-6506

800/777-5231

[christie@nebraskarealtors.com](mailto:christie@nebraskarealtors.com)

[www.NebraskaRealEstateEducation.com](http://www.NebraskaRealEstateEducation.com)

**From:** Craig Larabee [<mailto:craig@craiglarabee.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 01, 2013 4:36 PM  
**To:** Hoffman, Teresa  
**Subject:** Endorsement

I believe the increased accuracy from a more user friendly software program to import student data or rosters would be a great organizational help to both the Real Estate Commission and Providers. Compatibility with various programs containing Excel or the like and the auto fill capability would save both Providers and your employees valuable time in verifying accuracy of the course provided, course content ID, course credit hours and student identity. This would be a win/win situation.

Thank you,

Craig Larabee  
7130 Culwells Ct  
Lincoln, NE 68516  
402-802-1037 Cell  
402-805-4714 Home  
888-687-7937 Fax

Janet Larabee, President  
JMSK Corp: A Real Estate Education &  
Development Company  
285 S 68th St Pl, Suite 325  
Lincoln, NE 68510  
402-858-1553

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May 1, 2013

Nebraska Real Estate Commission  
1201 N Street STE 402  
Lincoln, NE 68509

RE: Endorsement & Testimonial for Upgrading the Reporting of Educational Curriculum

Teresa,

As a high volume user, as it relates to the reporting and record keeping for Continuing Education and Broker Approved Training, I strongly endorse and recommend that the funding be secured for the upgrading of the Nebraska Real Estate Commission's computerized record keeping.

Three main reasons and testimonials for my endorsement...

First...the time involved in submitting and retrieving duplicate data and agent information in several data bases is unnecessarily expensive in both time and administrative requirements.

Second...trying to micro manage the massive amount of data and information without confusion, redundant data entry, and errors is virtually impossible in the present "Excel"- to- "Notes" environment now in use for such essential record keeping.

Third...as our real estate market expands, and with the legislative increase in real estate educational requirements increasing from 12 to 18 hours of required continuing education, our present antiquated system is limping along with decade old software (Excel 2003)! This means that unless we bring our reporting and record keeping in step with present day technology, this 33% increase in continuing education requirements will be more expensive in the long run, in both administrative and staff accountability as the need for accurate processing and storage of the data for the legally required record keeping grows.

It is with my utmost enthusiasm that I endorse the need for bringing the Nebraska Real Estate Commission's educational reporting and record keeping programs and systems in step with today's technology.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark T. Wehner".

Mark T. Wehner, CEO  
REResults Coaching  
CE/BAT Provider for the Nebraska Real Estate Commission  
402.676.0101  
mwehner@reresults.net

May 1, 2013

Teresa D. Hoffman, Deputy Director  
Nebraska Real Estate Commission

Dear Teresa,

I am writing to endorse the proposal that the Nebraska Real Estate Commission design an online process which would allow education providers to download course completion reports on templates provided at the Real Estate Commission website. Standardization of this sort should result in uniform reporting procedures for the education providers, allowing the Commission to track completions more efficiently and help students receive credit for their course work in a more timely manner.

Sincerely,

Susan Geschwender  
Randall School of Real Estate