



DHS Announces \$79 Million in State Grants for REAL ID



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Real ID Demonstration Grant Awards

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced today Fiscal Year 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant awards totaling nearly \$80 million to assist states in improving the security of state-issued driver's licenses (DL) and identification documents (ID). Grants will fund state-specific projects like improving the physical security of licenses, upgrading facility security, and modernizing document imaging and storage. Funding will also be provided for the development and testing of a verification hub that will enable states to query federal and non-federal document-issuing authorities and verify applicant source documents.

"Americans overwhelmingly want secure identification, and this funding will help those states working to provide it," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "We've made it more affordable for states to implement REAL ID by dramatically cutting costs and providing various and considerable funding options, and we're requesting additional funding next year."

The REAL ID Program addresses a key recommendation of the 9/11 Commission to enhance the security, integrity and protection of licensing and identification systems across the country. More than \$58 million has previously been allocated for state-specific implementation projects that facilitate REAL ID compliance.

Each of the 48 states and territories who applied for Fiscal Year 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grants will be awarded a portion of the available funding. Awards are based on an application's overall effectiveness in meeting criteria identified in the grants application kit, and the number of DLs and IDs issued. Projects will focus on achieving material compliance, such as collecting applicants' photos at the start of the application process and incorporating additional physical security features into DLs and IDs. Other funded projects that advance REAL ID implementation, include transitioning to centralized DL and ID production, improving data records for driver's licenses, and upgrading source document imaging and storage.

The department has also pledged to fund in this grant cycle the implementation of a verification hub to be built and governed by the states. The hub will act as a central router to provide timely, accurate, and cost-effective verification to motor vehicle departments of an applicant's source documents. States will be able to seamlessly verify the identity, lawful status and social security number of an applicant through this common interface.

The department has awarded \$17 million to Missouri to lead the development of the verification hub. Four other states – Florida, Indiana, Nevada, and Wisconsin – will each receive \$1.2 million to partner with Missouri for verification hub testing and implementation. Other states and territories will eventually connect to the verification hub and have the capability to verify applicants' source documents.

These investments are essential to reducing and impairing the use of stolen, borrowed, altered, or counterfeit source documents widely used to obtain state-issued documents. For more information on the REAL ID Demonstration Grant program, or to learn more about REAL ID, please visit www.dhs.gov/realid.

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