



Homeland
Security

Frequently Asked Questions

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REAL ID

Q: What grant funding has been made available for REAL ID implementation?

A: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) made available three grant initiatives to assist state driver's license issuance authorities with REAL ID implementation:

REAL ID Pilot Project - The Commonwealth of Kentucky received \$3 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 to fund a REAL ID Pilot Project. The pilot is being implemented to test and validate birth record verification processes and to develop a common set of standards that states can use during the driver's license issuance process.

REAL ID Vital Events Verification State Project Grant –FEMA awarded Kentucky an additional \$4 million to help state Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMVs) connect to state Vital Record Offices (VRO). The Commonwealth of Kentucky will enable state VROs to access to the Electronic Verification of Vital Events hub (a web based portal) to verify birth and death record information of individuals applying for a REAL ID driver's licenses and identification cards. Kentucky will also use these funds to expand the scope of its REAL ID Pilot Project by comparing U.S. foreign born citizens applying for a REAL ID driver's license with the U.S. Department of State's foreign born citizen birth record information.

FY 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program – FEMA is competitively awarding \$79.875 million in grant awards to assist jurisdictions (50 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 territories) in implementing REAL ID. These funds will serve to enhance state driver's license issuance capabilities and processes necessary to meet the requirements of the REAL ID regulation.

Q: When are grant applications for the FY 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program due? When will awardees be notified?

A: The deadline for submitting proposals for the FY 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program closed April 7, 2008. Forty-seven jurisdictions submitted proposals for FY 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program funding. FEMA plans to notify REAL ID grant recipients approximately 45 calendar days from the date the grant application period closed.

Q: Is/Was the grant award process based on a competitive process?

A: Yes. Beginning April 15, 2008, FEMA convened a peer review panel of experts to evaluate grant proposals and to make recommendations for grant awards to DHS/FEMA. Only jurisdictions that applied for a grant are eligible to receive an award. Criteria for the selection of grantees included the ability of a state(s) to demonstrate innovativeness and a high degree of potential for REAL ID implementation.

Q: Does DHS expect to make additional REAL ID grant funding available to states in FY 2009 and beyond?

A: The President's budget for FY 2009 requests up to \$110 million for REAL ID grant funding out of the National Security and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program.

Q: Will DHS monitor grant funded projects?

A: FEMA's Regional Offices will be responsible for oversight of REAL ID grant implementation and related program management activities grantees undertake in the regions to comply with REAL ID. DHS and FEMA Regional Offices will work closely with REAL ID grant recipients to ensure there is a coordinated approach to effective REAL ID implementation in each region.

Q: What kind of reporting will DHS require from states that receive grant funding?

A: Grant recipients will be required to send FEMA financial status reports and annual program progress reports. These reports will be submitted directly to FEMA pursuant to the terms and conditions of the particular grant award.

Q: If a state receives funding from the current grant can it apply for future REAL ID grant funding?

A: States receiving grant funds in FY 2008 for implementation of REAL ID are not precluded from receiving or applying for future funding for the same effort.

Q: If a state receives a REAL ID grant award, must the state utilize these dollars for REAL ID requirements - as opposed to funding a currently planned initiative that is not related to a requirement in REAL ID? How will states be held accountable for the ensuring that REAL ID grant awards are used on implementing REAL ID requirements?

A: States must utilize grant funding for meeting the requirements of the REAL ID final rule. States will be required to report on their progress in meeting these requirements.

Q: Does DHS consider state legislation prohibiting a state from compliance with the REAL ID Program a disqualifying factor for receiving a REAL ID grant?

A: No, DHS does not consider states with legislation in place that prohibits implementation of REAL ID as prohibited from accepting an award. However, the grant recipient must use these funds for REAL ID implementation, which includes improvements in state driver's license issuance capabilities and procedures that meet the requirements of the REAL ID final rule.

Q: If a state accepts REAL ID grant dollars, and at a later time its state legislature rules the state is not allowed to move forward with REAL ID implementation, does the state have to return the money?

A: Uses of REAL ID grant funding that is not in compliance with the Act and does not enhance REAL ID implementation will have to be returned to FEMA. Once deobligated by FEMA, these funds will be redistributed to other REAL ID grant recipients.

Q: Can a state use Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds for REAL ID implementation?

A: Yes, states are authorized to allocate up to 20 percent of the state's share of State Homeland Security FY 2008 and FY 2009 grants for REAL ID implementation.