NSRB Grant Application Template

Agencies desiring grants from the NSRB for projects to improve access to state government information should complete this application and follow any procedures outlined in this application and any accompanying materials.

1. Name of agency applying for grant

Chief Information Officer

2. Title or brief description of the project

Education Portal

3. Grant request amount

$25,000

4. Will there be a fee for accessing records associated with this project?

Specific services may have an associated statutory fee. Any fee approvals that are necessary would go through the normal NSRB review process. There is nothing directly associated with the Education Portal that will have a fee.

5. If yes, provide any statutory reference or authorization for the fee

N/A

6. Please describe the project in detail

Web portals have become a very effective way of integrating access to public information and services across agencies and levels of government. The Official State Portal at www.state.ne.us provides a single entry point for convenient access to information and services for state, local and federal government agencies, as well as appropriate information provided by statewide associations. Nebrask@ Online for Business takes the portal concept to a specific audience, providing information as well as access to forms and services of particular interest to Nebraska's business community.

There are other subsets of the user base for government information and services that would be well-served by the one-stop concept embodied by web portals. Educators and citizens interested in education-related information and services comprise one such group. For example, information can be organized around various events in the course of lifelong learning, from acquiring a child's birth certificate prior to entering kindergarten through planning for higher education. In the near term, organizing information and services around topical areas instead of by institution will provide more

convenient, user-friendly access to a wealth of information. Longer-term, online services such as ordering transcripts and paying tuition online should become possible.

The project will build on the tools and lessons learned in development of the business portal. Application can be made of the forms inventory tool set, as well as the portfolio wizard for personalized service. Lessons learned from populating the forms inventory and maintenance of the information contained therein can also be applied.

While the tools can be adapted for use with the education portal, adjustments will be required that involve programming resources. More substantially, a considerable amount of effort will be required to manage data input to create the inventory of forms used by educators and individuals interested in education-related matters. Resources will also be devoted toward gathering input through the NITC Education Council during the development process to achieve optimal utility from the portal.

Resources from this grant will be directed toward adapting the tool sets developed for the business portal to the needs of the education portal; working with agencies and educational institutions to populate the education forms inventory with the appropriate data; gathering input from potential users regarding the most useful services and features to be included; and marketing the availability of the portal and associated services upon launch.

While unforeseen circumstances may dictate otherwise, it is anticipated that the leverage achieved from work done on the business portal will allow the education portal to be developed and launched within the resources of this grant. Development work, gathering input and marketing will be conducted by Nebrask@ Online with direction from the CIO, the State Records Board, and the Education Council of the NITC.

Key deliverables include the education portal website; the education forms inventory, including data edit/input tools and data entry; customized search capability and portfolio wizard; results of gathering input from potential users; and marketing/outreach efforts.

7. Please describe whom the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be and projected activity for access or use of the proposed service

The education portal should benefit both educators and citizens with an interest in various education-related matters. Activity is difficult to project, but experience with the official state portal would indicate that a well-constructed product will attract considerable use.

8. Estimated timeline for completion

Project planning, website development and customization of tools will begin following approval of the grant in May/June 2000. Data entry into the forms inventory will be conducted during August and September and October. A prototype should be ready for testing by November 15, with the site prepared for launch by January 1, 2003.

9. Agency contribution to the project (labor, equipment, etc.)

The Office of the CIO will take a lead role in project planning, oversight and monitoring of progress for the project. As required, the CIO will assist in securing agency cooperation in areas such as data entry into the forms inventory.

10. A. Has this project every been submitted as a budget request (explain)?

No. This is an initiative that fits well within the statutory mission of the NSRB and its grant funds, which are appropriated to the board for purposes such as this.

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

No.

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

The project falls well within the mission of the State Records Board to improve access to public information and services. The investment of grant funds will support staff resources at Nebrask@ Online to conduct the development and organizational work to bring the education portal online. Once operational, the portal will be maintained within the normal operating resources of NOL.

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

One-stop access to a wide range of service for Nebraska educators and citizens interested in education-related matters will improve the ease and convenience of access to information and services. In addition to providing a one-stop shop for the benefit of those in the education community, citizens should benefit from convenient access to a wide range of education-related information and services.

12. Please describe how this project will 1) improve the efficiency of agency operations; 2) facilitate collaboration among state agencies; 3) facilitate collaboration between state agencies and other public institutions; 4) support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services (you may respond to any or all of these criteria in your answer)

Agency operations will gain efficiencies through a reduction in direct requests for information or services and elimination or reduction of manual data entry. The portal will provide access to information and services across education institutions and service delivery organizations, potentially identifying areas of duplication or opportunities for collaboration. The involvement of Nebrask@ Online continues the ongoing, successful

public/private partnership in enhanced public access to government information and services.

13. Contact person information

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Addendum to NSRB Grant for Education Portal

Deliverables
- A ready-for-launch education portal site, including portal home page, portfolio personalization if appropriate, and links to content of interest to citizens and educators. The site will be reviewed prior to acceptance and launch by such groups as the CIO and NSRB may designate.
- If deemed desirable, development and implementation of a public relations campaign to promote the education portal once it is launched.
- If deemed desirable, a searchable inventory of government forms, or other potential value-added services, useful to citizens for various interaction with government agencies.

Grant Request
- Payment to Nebrask@ Online of $5,000 upon delivery of the complete education portal site, prepared for launch.
- Payment to Nebrask@ Online for actual costs incurred for the public relations campaign, should it be deemed desirable, up to $5,000.
- $15,000 reserved for development and implementation of a forms inventory, or other potential value-added services, should a decision be made to proceed with thoseinitiatives.

Time Frame
- A prototype of the site, based on research of similar sites in other states and other market research, should be ready for review by September 1. Depending on changes required by suggestions from reviewers, the site could be ready for launch by October 15. Should a decision be made to incorporate a forms inventory, the expected launch date would be moved back to January 1, 2003.

Technical Considerations
- The education portal will be designed and constructed with standard web development tools, including HTML and Fireworks graphic design software.
- Portfolio capability, if included, will be adapted from the portfolio wizard module included as part of the business portal. This module was developed in the Perl programming language and is readily adaptable to other uses.
- Should a forms inventory and search capability be added, work from the business portal will be adapted for this purpose. These features incorporate a MySQL database and custom search module built in Perl and readily adaptable to other uses.