

Request for Waiver

Agency Name

Nebraska Department of Economic Development
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509

Contact Person

Kate Ellingson
Director of Marketing and Public Relations
kate.ellingson@nebraska.gov
402-471-3749

Title of NITC Standard and Guidelines

NITC 7-104: Web Domain Name Standard

Description of the problem or issue

We request waivers for the custom URLs associated with our Department's websites.

Description of agency's preferred solution, including additional information and justification showing good cause for the requested waiver.

- ***Established programs and existing marketing materials.*** We have invested substantial time and money in marketing the state of Nebraska and all of our programs. Materials feature existing custom URL websites. We've been using these custom URLs for many years. Many of our partner organizations, including overseas businesses would be adversely impacted by this change. We also have numerous marketing materials in other languages that would all be affected.
- ***Helps with image recognition.*** Our custom URLs help our clients remember the different web addresses easier.
- ***Helps make our programs more visible in search results.*** It's easier and more convenient for clients to find us when they can type the program name into a search engine and the website is similar to the program name. This also significantly improves our position in search rankings which is critical for economic development marketing efforts.
- ***Better for Search Engine Optimization (SEO).*** It's crucial for SEO because any of our Google rankings and the links to our site are all tied to our domain. If we switch domain names, we may encounter SEO implications and experience potential damage to our search engine rankings. Switching domain names may cause international issues, example firewall issues in China.
- ***International access would be impaired by a ".gov" URL.*** The Department maintains offices in Japan and China. Our International Trade and Investment work requires a robust web presence. Specifically ".gov" URLs are difficult to access (often blocked) for individuals seeking to access our site and materials from these and other foreign locations.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider and understand why we have custom URLs.

Thank you.