

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC KEY INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS**

May 9, 1997

Introduction

The National Association of State Information Resource Executives (NASIRE), the [National Association of State Purchasing Officials \(NASPO\)](#) and the National Association of State Comptrollers (NASC) seek creative proposals from independent organizations to accomplish the objectives listed below by December 31, 1997.

Participating Parties

The following organizations and states (known as "participating parties") are cooperating in connection with this initiative: NASIRE, NASPO, NASC, California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

Background

Digital signatures play a key role in electronic commerce by helping to ensure that electronic documents are accurate and have not been forged. Parties to electronic transactions need a common method of accreditation of certification authorities, the organizations charged with issuing and verifying digital signatures. NASIRE, with support from NASPO and NASC, is taking the lead on this issue to avoid each state developing its own accreditation process, thus slowing down the process for cross certification and accreditation that is necessary for national and international electronic commerce.

Description of Project

The project objectives include:

1. The organization is asked to propose an approach to develop and implement a self supporting (financially sustainable) entity whose function would be to set and maintain operating standards and rules to be used by subscribing members of the entity.

2. The organization shall provide a forum and process for interested government representatives and private sector parties to conduct a joint demonstration project for accreditation of certification authorities. For purposes of this solicitation, a "certification authority" (CA) means an organization that issues a certificate that relates to the validity of an electronic or digital signature.
3. The organization shall survey a representative sample of existing certification authorities to develop a benchmark for assessing technical and legal issues of accreditation.
4. The participating parties shall determine what criteria, including technical, business and legal requirements or standards, shall be applied to certification authorities whose certificates will be accepted by the parties for an online transaction. To the extent practicable, the criteria shall consist of reference to existing sets of standards and other non-proprietary suitable information.
5. Once the criteria is set, the organization shall procure, through an open, fair and competitive process, the services of a neutral party to act as an accreditor. The accreditor shall evaluate more than one CA according to the criteria and shall issue a rating for each CA based on the evaluation.
6. The participating parties shall assess the effectiveness of the rating system by conducting a series of electronic transactions using certificates issued by CAs with various ratings.
7. The organization shall evaluate the process, the criteria, the ratings and the test transactions and write an analysis report which maps a path forward for parties who wish to use CA ratings or accreditation as a basis for relying on certificates in the future. This report shall be submitted to each participating party in the project.
8. All work products, including rating criteria, methodology, and rating scheme, will be in the public domain.
9. Personnel commitments identified shall be considered material to the work to be performed. Staffing must include those individuals as proposed.
10. Interested organizations may not have any interests that would substantially conflict with the requirements of this solicitation or that would impair the organization's independent professional judgment. Specifically, certification authorities and their parent organizations will not be considered.

Requests for Proposals

Proposals shall include:

- a) relevant experience possessed by the organization that shows an ability to organize this type of public/private forum and technical project;

- b) resumes and qualifications of all proposed staff and/or subcontractors, their role(s) in the project and the expected percentage of time they will participate in the project;
- c) indication of how the process would be funded, how much the process would cost, who would pay and how the finances would be accounted for;
- d) definition of the time lines for completion of the project;
- e) description of what additional public and/or private sector parties should be included in the process.

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will include representatives from NASIRE, NASPO and NASC, as well as other government and private entities who may also join the solicitation process.

Timeframe for Responses

Responses will be accepted until the end of the business day on **Monday, June 9**. The Selection Committee will meet to consider the responses and expect to award the project by the end of June.

If you are interested in responding to this Request for Proposal, please send your response of no more than ten typewritten pages to the attention of Angela Crouch, Program Manager, National Association of State Information Resource Executives, 167 West Main Street, Suite 600, Lexington, KY 40507. You may also fax your response to (606) 231-1928 or e-mail to <acrouch@iglou.com>. If you have questions, please contact Angela Crouch at (606) 231-1925.

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News for the week of May 12, 1997

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NASIRE Seeks Proposals for Creation of Digital Signature Standards

Three state information management and finance associations last Friday invited industry proposals to set common standards for accrediting organizations that would certify digital signatures, an important first step in creating a national, and even international, electronic commerce infrastructure.

The National Association of State Information Resource Executives (NASIRE) is spearheading the project, with backing from the National Association of State Purchasing Officials and the National Association of State Comptrollers.

"Industry and government need to agree on a basic set of standards for certification authorities before the potential benefits of electronic commerce can be realized," said Carolyn Purcell, executive director of the Texas Information Resources Department and president of NASIRE, in a statement.

"Today, we require some documents to be notarized, certification authorities serve a role similar to that of a notary for electronic transactions of the future. We must have a common set of standards for rating the trustworthiness of these certification authorities and the electronic verifications they issue. A common set of standards will save resources and promote secure and reliable electronic commerce."

The solicitation came out of a series of meetings among chief information officers from around the country during the past year. "Sometime ago a group of NASIRE members got together as a group of interested parties in San Francisco to explore the states' need for a public-key infrastructure and certification for digital signatures," said Clyde Poole, team manager at the Texas Information Resources Department's oversight and operations division. Poole worked closely with Purcell on the solicitation.

NASIRE involvement is designed to "explore how certification issuing organizations might group together to self-regulate standards for business practices," he added. "That way a state could rely on a certificate without building its own certification process, in which case there could end up being 50 different processes." Those likely to respond to the solicitation are "mostly neutral trade associations" active in the certification authority field, Poole said.

Interested parties will have 30 days to respond. Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee composed of CIOs from California, Massachusetts, Georgia, Washington, Pennsylvania, Utah and Texas. Also participating in the evaluation will be Jane Smith Patterson, senior adviser to the North Carolina Governor for Science and Technology and chair of the Electronic Commerce Task Force of the U.S. Innovation Partnership.

To become a part of an electronic list on this topic, send an e-mail to majordomo@lists.state.tx.us. In the body of the message, type: subscribe digsig.

-- [Jennifer Jones](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 1997

Contact: Angela Crouch, NASIRE Staff
(606) 231-1925 or acrouch@iglou.com

NASIRE, NASPO AND NASC SEEK ORGANIZATION TO DEVELOP DIGITAL SIGNATURE STANDARDS

Lexington, Ky.--The National Association of State Information Resource Executives (NASIRE), the [National Association of State Purchasing Officials \(NASPO\)](#) and the National Association of State Comptrollers (NASC) are seeking creative proposals from industry to establish accreditation standards for certification authorities that issue digital signatures. Digital signatures play a key role in electronic commerce by helping to ensure that electronic documents are accurate and have not been forged. Parties to electronic transactions need a common method of accreditation of certification authorities, the organizations charged with issuing and verifying digital signatures. NASIRE is taking the lead on this issue to avoid each state developing its own accreditation process, thus slowing down the process for cross certification and accreditation that is necessary for national and international electronic commerce.

"Industry and government need to agree on a basic set of standards for certification authorities before the potential benefits of electronic commerce can be realized" according to Carolyn Purcell, NASIRE President and Executive Director of the Texas Department of Information Resources. "Today, we require some documents to be notarized, certification authorities serve a role similar to that of a notary for electronic transactions of the future. We must have a common set of standards for rating the trustworthiness of these certification authorities and the electronic verifications they issue. A common set of standards will save resources and promote secure and reliable electronic commerce."

The solicitation will be released to interested parties on May 9. Organizations responding to the solicitation will have 30 days to return a proposal to the NASIRE office. The Selection Committee will include the following state Chief Information Officers: John Thomas Flynn, California; Louis Guiterrez, Massachusetts; Mike Hale, Georgia; Steve Kolodney, Washington; Larry Olson, Pennsylvania; Gordon Peterson, Utah; and Carolyn Purcell, Texas. Jane Smith Patterson, Senior Advisor to the North Carolina Governor for Science and Technology and chair of the Electronic Commerce Task Force of the U.S. Innovation Partnership, will also participate on the Selection Committee. The Committee will be expanded to include representatives from other government and private entities who may also join in the solicitation process.

NASIRE is the leading forum for addressing the opportunities, implications, and challenges of improving the business of government through the application of information technology. NASIRE represents information resource executives and managers from the 50 states, six U. S. territories, and the District of Columbia. Representatives from federal, municipal, and foreign governments also participate in the organization as associate members. Corporations, private universities, and non-profit organizations may participate as corporate members.

NASPO is a non-profit organization through which member purchasing officials provide leadership in professional public purchasing, improve the quality of purchasing and procurement, exchange information, and cooperate to attain greater efficiency, economy and customer satisfaction. The association's office is located in Lexington, Kentucky.

NASC is the professional association of the comptrollers and chief accounting and financial reporting officials of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The association's main office is in Lexington, Kentucky and the Washington, D.C. office is located in the Hall of the States in the nation's capital.

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