



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FISCAL YEAR 2013

HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCE: NATIONAL
INFORMATION EXCHANGE MODEL GUIDANCE**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

NIEM Grant Guidance

Purpose

This document provides Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant recipients with an overview of the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) and guidance on how to utilize FEMA award funding for information exchange and interoperability activities. The NIEM planning, information exchange development, governance, and training activities described below will often be performed within the context of a larger information exchange development effort.

To support government-wide information sharing, all recipients of grants for projects implementing information exchange capabilities using XML technology are required to use NIEM and to adhere to the NIEM conformance rules.

Background

The National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) is a community-driven, government-wide, standards-based approach to exchanging information. By enabling interoperability among the national, state, local, tribal, and non-governmental emergency management community, NIEM improves decision making and the ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency situations.

NIEM is a collaborative, intergovernmental effort. It's a consistent starting point—which provides a data model, governance, training, tools, technical support services, and an active community—that assists users in adopting a standards-based approach to exchanging data. It's available to everyone. All 50 states use NIEM in some capacity, and at differing levels of maturity.

The NIEM data model is used nationally to facilitate information exchange among partners in various disciplines and across jurisdictions. It's about achieving interoperability: Partners come together to identify what data needs to be exchanged, then agree to exchange that data in a standards-conformant manner.

NIEM is a standard way of defining the contents of messages being exchanged. It's not a system or database; nor does it specify how to transmit or store data.

NIEM was designed as a set of building blocks that are used as a consistent baseline for creating information exchanges. With NIEM, the sender and receiver of information share a common, unambiguous understanding of the meaning of that information. Conformance to NIEM ensures that information is well understood and carries the same consistent meaning across various communities, thus allowing interoperability to occur.

For example, there is a NIEM-conformant information exchange that describes the status of a hospital, its services, and its resources—such as bed capacity and

availability, emergency department status, available service coverage, as well as the status of a hospital's facility and operations.

Allowable Uses of NIEM Funds

The list below includes a description of each funding type and how these funds can specifically be used in support of NIEM. They are organized in categories based on the NIEM process or lifecycle activity associated with the allowable funding, including a more detailed description of the NIEM activities and processes. Additional information about NIEM can be found on the NIEM website: [NIEM.gov](https://niem.gov).

A. Information Exchange and Development Activities

Funds used for planning activities refer to all NIEM strategic planning activities, including the creation of documentation to support domain and/or governance activities, meetings with key stakeholders, and creation of artifacts in the first two phases of the NIEM Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD) lifecycle.

In addition, funds are used for the development of exchanges, specifically the last four phases of the IEPD lifecycle. For detailed descriptions of these phases within the IEPD lifecycle, visit [NIEM.gov](https://niem.gov).

All IEPDs must be assembled in accordance with and adhere to NIEM conformance rules, which can be found on the NIEM website: [NIEM.gov](https://niem.gov).

B. Governance and Communications Activities

Funds used for governance purpose(s) refer to participation in NIEM governance, IEPD projects, NIEM standards development, or NIEM committee activities and/or supporting committees that enhance the mission of current and future NIEM domains. This includes meetings, training, workshops, conferences, events, and development of committee and/or domain materials in support of these committees and groups.

C. Training and Travel Activities

NIEM community members can get involved in a number of NIEM training and travel activities. Funds used for training pertain to the costs associated with virtual and in-person participation in NIEM training courses; NIEM-related workshops, conferences, and events; and the National Training Event (NTE). For more information, please contact NIEMPMO@niem.gov.

Funds used for travel must pertain to allowable costs associated with the activities outlined in the above Allowable Uses of NIEM Funds section. Travel costs can include accommodations, transportation, meals, and mileage for these activities. These costs must be reasonable and conform to the General Services Administration (GSA) schedule regarding all per diem travel expenses.

References

If you are new to NIEM and not sure how to get started, leverage the online NIEM Engagement Process, a reusable framework that organizations can use to:

- Assess information-sharing capabilities and readiness to adopt NIEM.
- Evaluate the potential costs and benefits of NIEM.
- Develop a NIEM adoption roadmap and tactical implementation plan.

For specific information on resources referenced in this guide or for more information about NIEM, please visit the NIEM website: [NIEM.gov](https://niem.gov).