

NATIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE MODEL (NIEM)

Emergencies and catastrophic events have consistently exposed the shortcomings of our government computer systems: they fail to efficiently share information across domains and jurisdictions. There are many documented cases in which an event's impact could have been lessened or even averted if the right information had been in the right person's hands. Fixing the problem is not trivial, for each government stakeholder operates with legacy technology, terminology, and data formats. The challenge is clear: how do we cost-effectively build a bridge between these computer systems to share information for the improved public good?

The National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), launched in 2005, is designed to be an answer to this problem. NIEM helps to bridge government information systems and facilitate the sharing of information between them. NIEM provides a common language, a universal vocabulary, and a framework by which state, local, tribal, and federal government agencies may share data in emergency and day-to-day situations. NIEM standards create a cost-effective way to link government computer systems to share and exchange information regardless of the technology in use.

The concept behind NIEM and its core data exchange standards are proven. NIEM has been built upon the Global Justice XML Data Model (GJXDM), which has successfully linked justice and public safety systems for the past several years. NIEM extends the public safety and justice standards to support the intelligence, immigration, emergency management, international trade, infrastructure protection, and information assurance domains. Your agency can adopt NIEM now and begin to build information exchanges around this model.

1. NIEM Is Mature

NIEM 2.0 was released in June 2007 and has been remodeled from top to bottom for improved usability. NIEM is being used by several state, local, and federal agencies, including New York, Florida, Minnesota, and Texas.

2. Documentation and Tools Are Available

The NIEM.gov Web site contains the documentation needed to get started, including an introduction, a concept of operations (ConOps), recently updated naming and design rules, the model itself, useful code tables, and much more. The Web site also has tools to apply NIEM modeling techniques, assist in the migration from GJXDM or NIEM 1.0 to NIEM 2.0, and help in automating the process of developing an Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD), or XML schema, as well as browser tools to explore the model.

3. Training and Technical Assistance Are Available

NIEM has an extensive knowledge base containing answers to questions from many users. In addition, courses are being taught around the nation in the practical implementation of NIEM. Grants have been given to service providers to help state and local agencies implement information sharing practices using the combination of NIEM and GJXDM.

4. Some U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Grants Mandate NIEM Conformance

A number of information sharing grants from DOJ and DHS include special conditions that require grantees to develop information exchanges in conformance with NIEM standards and require the submission of IEPDs to the central clearinghouse to facilitate reuse.

5. Reference IEPDs Are Being Developed

A number of state, local, and federal agencies are collaborating to publish reference documentation to aid others in the development of the schemas and other artifacts to support cost-effective information exchange implementation. For example, DHS is developing a number of counterterrorism-related IEPDs and is in the process of developing many more, while states such as Texas, Florida, and New York are using NIEM extensively to exchange criminal justice information.

6. NIEM Is the Means for Intergovernmental Information Sharing

The President has approved and sent to Congress a declaration that NIEM will be the method by which state, local, and tribal agencies will share information with federal counterpart agencies. The FBI has adopted NIEM as the basis for its National Data Exchange (N-DEx) Program. The DOJ Law Enforcement Information Sharing Program (LEISP) has established NIEM as a basis for interagency information sharing.

www.NIEM.gov

Training opportunities:

www.niem.gov/calendar/month.php

Questions: information@niem.gov

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