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Law Offices of Rajiv S. Khanna, PC
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DHS Increases Funding For REAL ID Grant Program and Extends Applications Deadline

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Office of the Press Secretary
Contact: 202-282-8010

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today announced an increase in the total amount of funding available for REAL ID implementation and an extension in the deadline for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 REAL ID Demonstration Grant Program applications. REAL ID sets uniform standards that enhance the integrity and reliability of state-issued drivers' licenses and identification cards, strengthens issuance capabilities, and increases security at drivers' license and identification card production facilities.

DHS is making an additional \$48.5 million available to assist states with REAL ID implementation. Previously funded at \$31.3 million, the additional grants funding was authorized on Dec. 26, 2007 with the signing of the Omnibus appropriations bill. These dedicated grants are now available to help states improve driver's license and identification card issuance capabilities and facilitate collaboration among states in the development of more secure systems that verify an applicant's identity while protecting their personal privacy.

DHS recognizes that states will need sufficient time to apply for this increased funding opportunity and is extending the REAL ID grant applications deadline until March 7, 2008. States competing for REAL ID grants are encouraged to submit proposals that demonstrate how other states will benefit from REAL ID compliance. For example, through capabilities like enhanced verification systems that check the validity of documents presented at Department of Motor Vehicle counters.

REAL ID was a core 9/11 Commission finding and mandated by Congress in the REAL ID Act of 2005. DHS announced the REAL ID final rule on Jan. 11, 2008.

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