# Commercial Skills Test Information Management System Final Report and Self-Sustainability Plan

The Commercial Skills Test Information Management System (CSTIMS) was developed to address the fraudulent issuance of commercial driver's licenses (CDLs) across the United States. CSTIMS was developed as a Web-based, software-as-a-service system to prevent and deter fraud perpetrated by third-party CDL examiners in the portion of the CDL licensing process involving the skills test. This report documents and depicts the overall objectives and scope of the CSTIMS project, in addition to summarizing all enhancements and improvements made since the original system pilot test in 2008. The report also contains a self-sustainability plan, which provides a recommendation for how to maintain the system without Federal funding once the development stage is completed.

## BACKGROUND

The CSTIMS project was prompted by a 2002 U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Office of the Inspector General report on the nationwide problem of the issuance of fraudulent CDLs. Large-scale fraud had been identified in the CDL programs of 4 States, and criminal activity had been identified in at least 16 jurisdictions. In one State alone, nine deaths could be directly traced to crashes whose drivers who were issued fraudulent CDLs.

To address these issues, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) initiated the CSTIMS project. The goal was to develop an automated CDL anti-fraud system with the capability to register and monitor CDL examiners, schedule CDL skills tests, record test results, and generate reports and alerts. The initial two phases of the project (requirements, specifications, and design and prototype, pilot testing, and evaluation) were completed with funding from the USDOT Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office. Following Phase II, FMCSA supported the CSTIMS project with internal funds specifically designated for the development of technology with the means to reduce the number and severity of accidents, injuries, and fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles (CMVs).

## PARTICIPANTS

In September 2012, there were nine States using CSTIMS (as shown in Figure 1). An additional 13 States are considering using or are in the process of implementing CSTIMS.

**Figure 1. Image. States participating in or considering participation in CSTIMS as of September 30, 2012.**
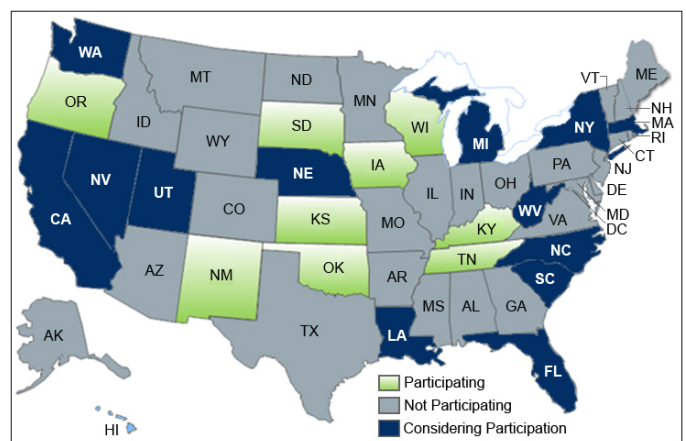


## BENEFITS

CSTIMS serves its original purpose of detecting and preventing fraud in skills testing during the CDL process. The system provides the ability to register third-party, State, and jurisdictional examiners, record information on examiners (i.e., sanctions), schedule CDL skills tests, and record CDL skills test results, among other things. The other benefits that CSTIMS offers are numerous. In addition to streamlining the entire skills-testing management process, CSTIMS:

- Enables scheduling of skills tests in advance. This facilitates oversight and covert monitoring.

- Enables calendar viewing of all schedules in one place. Users can filter the view to reduce clutter.

- Is capable of tracking examiners who work for multiple testing organizations.

- Can accommodate certification control documents.

- Generates automatic alerts for events that are out of the norm (i.e., an examiner who is scheduled to be at two different sites at the same time).

- Can generate reports (i.e., pass/fail reports) that can be viewed at the State, testing organization, or examiner level.
- Is a Web-based software-as-a-service. This means that States do not have to worry about development costs, and they do not have to make adaptations if they are using legacy information management systems.
- Is integrated with the Electronic Commercial Driver's Licensing Program (eCDL). eCDL uses a global positioning system (GPS) to record in real time the test result of each maneuver in a skills test, along with the corresponding time and location. The integration of eCDL with CSTIMS allows data to be automatically transmitted between the two tools, eliminating the need for manual re-keying of data.
- Reduces—and could potentially eliminate—the amount of paper used as a media for recording and transmission of test results between the examiner in the field and the motor vehicle clerk in the office. Not only is this more cost-effective and environmentally friendly, but it reduces fraud by minimizing opportunities for changing tests results or test conditions. However, CSTIMS is also capable of accommodating those States that still must use paper.

**SELF-SUSTAINABILITY**

CSTIMS has been developed and maintained using Federal funds. Participant States have not had to pay any fees to use the system, which costs an estimated $700,000 to maintain annually. FMCSA was tasked to assess the self-sustainability of CSTIMS and to create a transition plan to determine what fees should be charged to the States to make CSTIMS self-sustaining.

One example of a self-sustaining information system originally funded by the Federal Government is the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS). CDLIS has been very successful in operating as a self-sustaining system. The fundamental difference between the two applications is that CDLIS is a Federally-mandated system that all States are required to use and CSTIMS is not. CSTIMS is a voluntary system, and the majority of States have in-house systems that attempt to provide similar functionality.

Despite the challenges discussed above, three approaches to allocating fees were considered based on: the number of CSTIMS users in a State, the number of CDL applicants in a State, and the number of CDL holders in a State (represented by the number of Master Pointer Records [MPRs] in CDLIS). Table 1 presents the variability in fees among these three options. The most practical fee allocation approach is one based on the number of CDL holders in a State because that number is most easily obtainable, is known to all States before they make the decision to begin using CSTIMS, does not require a separate audit, and presents the least potential

for error in calculating fee allocation. The number of commercial drivers in each State is represented by the number of Master Pointer Records (MPRs) in CDLIS.

**Table 1. Variability in fees among the three fee allocation approaches for States currently using CSTIMS.**

| Participating CSTIMS States[*] | User-Based[†] Fee | Applicant-Based[‡] Fee | MPR-Based[§] Fee |
|---|---|---|---|
| Iowa | $97,382 | $91,323 | $90,281 |
| Kansas | $32,461 | $132,803 | $64,628 |
| Kentucky | $26,072 | $90,670 | $90,477 |
| New Mexico | $108,901 | $50,844 | $32,559 |
| Oklahoma | $84,293 | $16,775 | $87,127 |
| Oregon | $91,099 | $67,708 | $65,910 |
| South Dakota | $50,262 | $45,647 | $29,420 |
| Tennessee | $81,675 | $157,319 | $124,473 |
| Wisconsin | $127,225 | $46,912 | $115,126 |
| **Total** | **$700,000** | **$700,000** | **$700,000** |

[*] As of September 30, 2012.
[†] Based on CSTIMS user count by State as of May 2, 2012.
[‡] Based on 2011 CDL applicant count by State (no data available for Kentucky; estimate derived from 2012 data).
[§] Based on CDLIS MPRs owned by the State for March 2012.

While participating States indicated in a survey that CSTIMS is effective in combating fraud, the majority of them also noted that economic conditions and budgetary restrictions would prevent them from being able to pay user fees. It should be noted that if the States are unable to contribute enough fees to sustain the system, and FMCSA cannot provide additional funding to bridge the gap, it may be necessary to discontinue operation of CSTIMS.

**CSTIMS GRANT ELIGIBILITY**

CSTIMS is eligible to participate in the Commercial Driver's License Program Improvement (CDLPI) grant program. This could offset some of the financial burden that States may experience related to CSTIMS. If and when a fee is charged for participating in CSTIMS, a State may apply for a CDL grant from FMCSA to be reimbursed for that fee.

For more information, please visit:
http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/research-and-analysis/publications?keywords=&title=&author=&year=&to=&page=0.