

## **CBP Securing Our Borders: Biometrics Assessment Event Q&A Session**

**September 12, 2025**

1. **Q:** What biometrics does DHS want to collect? The assumption is face.  
**A:** Face is the primary biometric, but fingerprints and iris are also relevant. DHS is looking for new and novel methods, especially at speed and distance. OBIM currently supports face, finger, and iris, and is open to other modalities such as palm or gait to support mission needs.
2. **Q:** Can we submit more than one technology?  
**A:** Yes, multiple technologies may be submitted. Each one must be submitted separately in Submittable.
3. **Q:** Can the proposed solution be multimodal (e.g., face and fingerprint)?  
**A:** Yes, multimodal solutions are acceptable if they meet performance requirements. Single modalities may also be sufficient. Integration into existing infrastructure requires that each modality produce individual outputs, as proprietary fused outputs make integration more difficult.
4. **Q:** What is the estimated number of subjects processed per hour?  
**A:** CBP processes approximately 1 million individuals daily across all ports of entry. Numbers vary by environment, port, and time of day. Arrivals alone account for about 1 million per day, and including departures, the total could approach 2 million daily. These numbers are distributed across different ports and times.
5. **Q:** How many ports of entry will the system integrate into, and what's the duration for full integration?  
**A:** There are roughly 328 ports of entry. For this effort, the focus is on proof of concept for research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E). Full integration would occur later if CBP chooses to adopt the solution, depending on priorities and contracting mechanisms.
6. **Q:** Is there an API or data schema available?  
**A:** Yes, APIs and schema exist, but they will not be provided at this stage. Data access and integration details would be addressed in later phases, after initial proof-of-concept demonstrations.

7. **Q:** What is the relationship between this RFI and the vehicle biometric capability evaluation?

**A:** They are complementary. Multiple DHS and CBP initiatives are underway, each addressing different environments and levels of technology maturity. Some technologies are more ready for procurement now, while others may require further research and development. The goal is to identify what can be used immediately and what should be prepared for future use.

8. **Q:** Is CBP interested in secondary screening against non-DHS databases such as Interpol?

**A:** Nothing is off the table, but using non-DHS or non-government databases presents significant legal and privacy challenges. DHS typically avoids third-party databases, though capabilities may still be considered.

9. **Q:** Is DHS only interested in matching faces to known lists, or also in attribute analysis without identification?

**A:** Both are of interest. Matching to lists is well established, but attribute analysis is more complex and could raise privacy concerns. The value of such analysis depends on whether it supports CBP's mission without introducing unnecessary or sensitive information.

10. **Q:** Does DHS want fixed or portable devices for biometric capture?

**A:** Both. Needs vary by environment, and flexibility is important. Fixed infrastructure and portable devices each have advantages across different DHS components.

11. **Q:** What is the definition of high throughput for biometric capture?

**A:** Throughput varies by port and time. For example, San Ysidro processes about 11 million pedestrians annually. Buffalo is also considered high throughput but at a different scale. Specific numbers may be shared later.

12. **Q:** What are acceptable performance metrics (false acceptance and rejection rates)?

**A:** Metrics depend on the modality and use case. Rough benchmarks include:

- **One-to-one matching:** false accept rates ranging from 1 in 100 to 1 in 100,000.
- **One-to-many matching:** performance depends on gallery size and use case, with focus on minimizing false positives.

Mature technologies are expected to have very low tolerance for impostors.

13. **Q:** Quantitative metrics for speed of commerce and real-time identity confirmation?

**A:** For pedestrians: capture should occur at walking pace, ideally without stopping, though brief pauses may be acceptable on entry.

For vehicles: speeds range from 15 to 50 mph for exit, with potential pauses on entry. The goal is to align biometric capture with the natural flow of movement.

14. **Q:** What TRL level is DHS targeting?

**A:** Both early-stage (TRL 3–4) and more mature prototypes (TRL 6+) will be considered, depending on the technology and its potential impact.

15. **Q:** What are the technical/IT standards for integration with current facilities?

**A:** Standards and requirements exist within CBP but are not being shared publicly at this stage. This effort is for evaluating solutions, not for acquisition or installation.

16. **Q:** Hardware vs. software solutions—what is DHS seeking?

**A:** Both. Hardware must be ruggedized to withstand extreme environments (dust, heat, cold, terrain). Software is essential regardless of hardware design. For portable hardware, durability is a key consideration.

17. **Q:** Is FedRAMP or other certification required?

**A:** Not for proof of concept. Certifications such as FedRAMP may become relevant if the solution progresses to integration with operational CBP systems.

18. **Q:** Will the solution only collect biometrics, or also provide matching?

**A:** Both. Collection must ultimately support matching to databases. Solutions that can handle less-than-ideal data (e.g., partial faces or challenging environments) are of particular interest.

19. **Q:** Must the system include stationary or handheld components?

**A:** Open to both. Both approaches are valuable depending on the operating environment.

20. **Q:** Does the solution need to be on the FBI certified products list?

**A:** Not at this stage. For fingerprint technologies, FBI certification is desirable long term. For face technologies, certification is not required. DHS can evaluate pre-certification solutions.

21. **Q:** What is the scope/format of one-on-one sessions at the assessment event?

**A:** Sessions are virtual, typically one hour, with equal time for presentations and Q&A. All selected vendors receive the same amount of time. Specific requirements are shared once an organization is selected.

22. **Q:** Will the assessment event be limited to a set number of solutions?

**A:** No. Selection depends on the evaluation team's interest and the value of submissions, not on a fixed number.

23. **Q:** Will the solution be used only for matching, or also for enrollment?

**A:** Both are possible. Matching and enrollment often occur together, depending on the modality and use case. For example, face photos are typically matched and enrolled simultaneously. Fingerprints may be searched and matched, and enrolled when necessary. Enrollment processes must meet relevant standards, such as FBI certification for fingerprints.

**24. Q:** What are the limitations or challenges of existing capabilities?

**A:** Key challenges include:

- Processing large volumes quickly.
  - Capturing high-quality images, especially in vehicles.
  - Capturing groups effectively.
  - Ease of use for frequent travelers.
  - Human behavior and compliance.
  - Matching with less-than-pristine biometrics.
- These challenges drive DHS's interest in new technologies.

**25. Q:** What are the timelines from selection to live pilot?

**A:** It depends on contracting mechanisms and next steps after proof of concept.

Proof of concept comes first, followed by further action depending on CBP and DHS priorities.

**26. Q:** At what distances does DHS want to capture biometrics?

**A:** Relatively short distances:

- Pedestrians: within a few feet, typically inside facilities.
  - Vehicles: within a few yards, depending on capture volume.
- DHS is not seeking long-range surveillance. Collection occurs in controlled, defined environments.

**27. Q:** Should the system flag subjects not in the database for enrollment?

**A:** Flagging may be useful, but enrollment typically requires a CBP officer to verify identity. Whether flagging leads to enrollment depends on DHS business rules, which would be defined later in the process.

28. **Q:** What is the ideal flow for a citizen crossing the border?

**A:** The process must always include:

- Identity verification.
- Eligibility (documentary requirements).
- Purpose and intent of travel.

DHS is seeking creative industry ideas for how technology can best support these requirements without prescribing the exact process flow.

29. **Q:** Could a mobile app be used for biometric verification during crossing?

**A:** Yes. DHS is open to mobile applications and already has some capability in this area. Mobile solutions could streamline processes and increase efficiency.

However, enrollment generally requires officer confirmation of biometric capture.