

NARA Records Management Assessments

What is a Records Management Assessment?

Based on the statutory authority outlined in 44 U.S.C. 2904(c), NARA's Oversight and Reporting Division established the Records Management Assessment (RMA) process in 2018 as a way to evaluate how specific issues affect records management (RM) programs, policies, processes, and procedures across the Federal government. **A Records Management Assessment is a concise study and evaluation of a particular topic as it relates to Records Management within Federal agencies.**

Role of Participating Agencies

Unlike RM inspections that focus on agency compliance and corrective actions, RMAs were designed to focus on the real-life experience agencies have with the specific assessment topic. Hence, assessments are shorter in duration and require less effort from participating agencies than inspections.

RMA Objectives

1. Evaluate a specific topic, activity, tool, or requirement's impact on Federal RM programs, policies, processes, and procedures
2. Understand the real-life experiences of Federal agencies with regard to the assessment topic and RM
3. Gauge the efficacy of Federal agencies' implementation of RM policies, and compliance with relevant Federal RM regulations and NARA guidance
4. Analyze assessment data to identify agency successes and challenges related to the assessment topic and the agency's RM policies, processes, procedures, and tools
5. Publish a comprehensive report that summarizes NARA's treatment of the assessment topic, outlining findings and recommendations, as well as highlight any best practices from participating agencies

Requirements of Participating Federal Agencies

1. Receive RMA notification letter and confirm participation;
2. When applicable, respond to a yes/no pre-assessment interview questionnaire;

3. Provide copies of any relevant agency documentation;
4. Schedule a 60/90-minute interview at a predetermined time;
5. Identify and make available the appropriate agency stakeholders for the assessment interview.

RMA Process Overview

- Identification and NARA senior management approval of RMA topic
- Background research on assessment topic
- Identification and NARA senior management approval of agencies to participate in the assessment
- Agency notification and confirmation of participation
- Request relevant agency documentation, and when applicable, agency responses to a yes/no pre-assessment interview questionnaire
- Receipt and review of agency documentation and pre-assessment interview questionnaire responses
- Conduct 60/90-minute assessment interviews
- Analyze data and draft RMA comprehensive report
- NARA senior management review and approval of RMA comprehensive report
- RMA comprehensive report published on RMA website and closing notifications sent to participating agencies

Since its inception, RMAs have proven to not only be an efficient way for NARA to quickly evaluate the impact of specific topics on Federal RM programs, but assessments have facilitated invaluable engagement with participating agencies to promote a better understanding of the unique experiences that exist across Federal agencies. This straightforward process also provides NARA with new vantage points to develop more accessible RM standards, guidance, and training.