

6/22/21 - June BRIDG Meeting

>> ARIAN: Good morning everyone and welcome to the June BRIDG meeting my name is Arian. I'll be serving as your moderator for the meeting.

As a reminder the Office of Agency Services at the National Archives and Records Administration hosts these bi-monthly records and information discussion groups BRIDG meets to present information relating to federal records management. BRIDG is a co-produced by the office of chief records officer for the United States and the Federal Records Center Program. And this live stream to the audience by our YouTube channel.

Generally, BRIDG meetings consist of a scheduled program of presentations with an open forum at the end of each meeting to ask questions of the presenters or of any related federal records management topic of interest. Our viewers are encouraged to post questions in the chat or sending an email to [RMCommunications@NARA](mailto:RMCommunications@NARA.gov) with the gov.

Our staff will be monitoring the email box during the meeting. You're also welcome to make comments during this meeting in the YouTube chat. However, keep in mind, that all comments are subject to moderation. So we ask you keep the comments relevant to the topics being discussed.

Topics of the presentation slides can be found in the information box below and on the BRIDG page of the archives web site. That web page is where you will also find links to the transcript of today's meeting, when it is available and, as well as links and information, about previous BRIDG meetings.

If you have any general questions about the BRIDG or suggestions for future topics, you can use that same email address -- RM.communications.nara.gov, for communications we welcome your feedback. With that I would like to start today's meeting introduce Laurence Brewer to open the meeting. Good morning Laurence.

>> Good morning and thank you. Ah, good morning, good afternoon to everyone out there, watching BRIDG today, happy summer and welcome to the June meeting we have a lot to talk about today.

Really interesting agenda if we could flip the slide I'm not going to waste much time kicking thing off, I'll walk you through what we're going to get to in our time together we'll start with updates from the federal records centers then I'm be back to talk about a few updaters from the records management side of the agency.

And then, um, we have -- um, a couple of other new topics and interesting presentations where, Lisa Sandor as part of the FRCP update will talk about life at the national personnel records center what they have been doing over the past several months and then, we're going to close with a special -- panel discussion on cap stone from 3 experts, at the National Archives giving you 3 different perspectives on cap stone email management and how we have been, handling it and working it, um, throughout the life cycle.

So we have a lot to cover, I know you'll have a lot of questions and I want to make sure we have all the time that we need to get through that but I also wanted to note that, we always close our meetings with a general Q&A session, so I encourage you to put your questions in the chat, as you're listening to panels, but if we do in the get to your questions we will hold them over for the general Q&A, hopefully at the end of the meeting we'll have some time to talk about any questions, specific to that panel discussions or previous presenters or anything else ob your mind before we adjourn.

With that I would introduce the special guest -- Jay Trainer, the executive for agency services to join us for a couple of remarks and announcement, Jay over to you.

>> Thank you Laurence, happy to be here.

So as Laurence said, I'm the executive for agency services which is NARA's outward facing component to work with federal agencies, about 40% of NARA's staff, is, um, resides within agency services which is the information security officer sight office, the office of government information services, the national declassification center and as Arian said your host today the chief records officer, and the federal records center's program.

Last February, um, the Director of the FRCP, David Weinberg retired and, we kind of limped our way through the pandemic like a lot of you but here in May, we were able to, elevate Gordon Everett, as Director of the program.

Gordon is familiar to you through these BRIDG meeting and a variety of other meetings engagements he hosts with the federal customers within the federal records center program.

He has had over ten years as the Director of our customer relationship management branch where he had to tackle some of the, unpopular things like agreements and billings he has gotten to work with, all of the customer agencies on projects, initiatives and other activities.

So, I'm very much looking forward to working with Gordon and seeing, his leadership of the program, that he has been a member of.

And I would like to welcome you Gordon to your new role and turn it over to you.

>> Okay.

All right thank you.

(echoing)

And -- good morning to everyone. It is great to be with you, as the Director of the federal records centers program, as Jay said many of you engaged with me over the years and may or may not, may or may not know me, you will get an opportunity as we hopefully one day, soon go back to live BRIDG meetings.

I wanted to talk briefly and quickly, all of our federal records center programs I'm happy to say are open, however we're either in phase 1 or phase 2 operations, which still has, us with limited capacity of staff working but we're still handling your, any requests that you deem as an emergency, we try to make sure we can get in and take care of those requests for our customers.

But like all agencies, NARA is really working in completing their reentry plan for our staff, to return on site safely. That's not been fully approved or done yet for the federal records centers it's not done. You know we're getting there. But as always we'll keep you informed, ah, once that has been approved, um, you can expect our services, to phase in and hopefully get back to very normal operations. So I'll just leave it at that today.

We'll communicate that through, a note from myself or the account managers to let you know, when we're ready you know, to get going once these plans are all approved. So, with that, are there any questions about the federal records centers program that myself or Chris may be able to answer for you?

I would hope in the next ah, 4-6 weeks we'll have, looked at more, um, concrete information for you on the operations any questions for us?

>> SPEAKER: Ah hello Gordon we have a couple that have come in, first one, how do I find the FRC emergency contact information for my local records center?

>> GORDON: That information is, we did provide emergency contact information for all of the FRCs to the agency records officer. If, for any reason, someone still needs that, they can reach out to an account manager or send us an email we can make sure you have that list, if you have something in the next few weeks that if you have an emergency on you can reach a person within the FRC.

We have specific contact people that will work with you on that emergency request so, if you have -- reach out to the agency records officer that has that list. For some reason you can't reach them, reach out to your agency account manager.

>> Thank you Gordon, the second question that came in, can we submit new records transfer requests, to the federal records center program, in ARCUS

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>> GORDON: that can still take place, yes. We have folks who are teleworking who are reviewing requests and approving requests obviously you would have to work with specific center, in getting a date in time for that request to come into the facility due to the limited resources at this point but you still can submit your request and they are still being reviewed for approval.

>> SPEAKER: We have another one that's come in, are the FRCs planned to be fully open in calendar year 2022?

>> GORDON: In calendar year 20 -- would they be? Yes. The FRCs will be open in 2022.

Calendar year 2022. We hope to be fully open before the end of this fiscal year, as I said, you know, we're, we're open we're working in phases right now and that could open up a little bit more as we get another few weeks under our belts.

>> This one has also come in, maybe Laurence would want to weigh in on this one as well.

Since the FRCs have been mostly closed or barely open for more than a year, has there been any recent consideration of extending the -- the December 31, 2022 deadline for paper records storage?

>> GORDON: So --

>> If you don't mind Gordon I knew this question was going to come up part of what I was going to talk about when I get to my update I'll just cover it now and then we can do follow-up later when I come back to the program. So, um, as I said before, I talked to a number of agencies, and a number of different forums, we are, fully aware of, the impact this pandemic had on all of you whether you needed to transfer records to FRC that was closed or needed to get on site to digitize records, clearly

the pandemic, has set us back, as a government, working towards those 2022 goals.

We understand that, we had had a number of conversations within NARA, um, and, we are certainly, um, motivated at this point to consider those it deadlines and provide some relief and flexibility for agencies going forward.

One of the things that I do want to say is, nothing has been determined, we are considering where we are, with those targets in coordination with our own strategic planning work as most of you, in your agencies are also doing your own strategic plan for in the next five years. So, in coordination with that, we are, planning out what the next five years looks like which has to take into account what, the new targets, need to be.

So at this point, 2022 is still, the deadline. I would encourage you to review NARA bullet continue 2020-01 the guidance we released after M1921, which provides information about exceptions, or extensions from that goal and those targets I would encourage you to do work now, keeping in mind the 2022 is the goal and, if we do end up extending the targets you would still need to do that work and, it would just give you a sense of what records series what processes, you know, need to be accounted for if you're going need an extension.

So whether that extension is, two years, 3 years, four years, whatever it is, ah, it has not been determined yet, we're still going to need to do that work unless, you don't need you know a multiyear or longer term extension or exception.

So, that's where we are, it is in process we're having the discussions and we hope to have some more information back to all of you soon.

>> GORDON: Okay.

>> Thank you.

>> GORDON: Yeah if I could say something when will the FRCs be able to accommodate shipments of pallets of boxes from agencies instead of a few boxes at a time, due to reduced staffing at the federal records centers programs?

>> GORDON: Yeah.

>> Did you finish?

>> That's basically the question.

Yes.

>> GORDON: You know I have Chris our Director of operations is on the line I would have, I would have to say it is going to be after we get additional staff, in the facilities, able to -- to take on that work. I mean, you know as we speak today, we still have limited staff in the FRCs in the facilities, we want to make sure we bring, we bring our folks back safely you know bring those numbers up safely. And once we have that, am pretty confident we can operate in a safe manner you'll be able to, to send us pallets not just a few boxes I think if you work with your, your TD folks at that specific center, and all centers are totally different with the number of resources are currently. So, make sure you, talk to that, T & D supervisor or Director of that center this they can work with you on those transfers.

>> Okay I'm just checking one more time. There's a question kind of builds off that one. Is there a

process for coordinating transfer of new boxes to the FRC, you hit on those already.

>> GORDON: With would be with someone at the center, TD or the center Director.

>> LAURENCE: Here's another one will the FY2022 FRCP rates be provided to federal agencies customers in FY2021, quarter four?

>> GORDON: I'm going to go out on a limb to think we will have those rates for you sometime in Q4 of this year. They have not been finalized but, they're going through the review, there's a whole process we go through to make sure the rate establishment, it is correct or where it should be and, that's not complete yet.

But we certainly would do everything we can, to make sure that you have those in, some time in Q4 and have those, all in, approved and out to you folks in due time.

>> LAURENCE: Thank you Gordon I believe that covers all the questions we have right now. As reminder to our viewers please, if you still have questions, put them in the chat, we can get them to in the general session in the end I'll turn it back over to you Gordon.

>> GORDON: One of the things I did want to mention, during the pandemic, there were times where, we did receive emergency requests involving our veterans.

We had over 100 volunteers from our national personnel records centers staff, who came into our facility to volunteer to ensure we took care of our veterans.

There's some number around 59,000 Burials medical emergencies to almost 30,000, dealing with 12,000 plus homeless vets we wanted to share some information this morning on that.

You know, there is, there were real emergencies that our folks, volunteered to make sure that we handled to take care of our veteran folks during this critical time during the pandemic. And, we wanted to thank all of the volunteers, on our staff, who does come in and do that.

Lisa Sandor who is a manager of our COR 1 reference in St. Louis in the military records center she will take us through that and show us, how all that took place.

Lisa?

>> LISA: Thank you Gordon. Good morning, I'm happy to be here with you today to discuss and NPRC's commitment to our veterans and their families during the pandemic.

Next slide. This is a graphic representation of our pre-pandemic work flow. As you can see it's based upon our goal of the 10 day turn around time we do receive requests through the mail or online, our mail room has two days to enter them into our case management system.

Our technician has one day to process it, outgoing mail has another day. Um, the record has to be searched and given to a technician before it goes in the mail all that creates a ten day turn around that's our goal. Next slide.

Immediately upon having to reduce capacity because of the pandemic, many volunteers came forward and continued coming on site to ensure our veterans and families were served.

The number of burial and medical emergency requests never decreased as the pandemic went on. We started out with a back log of 56,000 requests, which for us at NPRC is actually works in progress.

We moved to phase 0 we never closed at the beginning of the pandemic we just moved to working emergency requests only.

Unfortunately, our current backlog is over 500,000 requests. We have been in phase 2 operations, since April 5th and we have been able to expand our emergency requests pool from only burials and medical emergencies, to also add, homeless vets, home lone guarantees, White House requests, congressional requests, court orders and VA loan and transfers.

Next slide.

We currently have a remote work flow process. Where, besides getting mail requests we are also getting requests online, in a portal call EVET RECS, they come in they are processed we have an option for digitally delivering responses to the requestors via a digital output.

It saves us a lot of time with mailing and having to send out copies of documents.

Next slide please. Since the start of the pandemic we have responded to over 234,000 requests over 58,000 of those were burials, almost 29,000 medical emergencies, almost 12 requests seeking shelter for homeless veterans and, 132,000 others for total of 234,000.

Next slide please.

We were able to achieve those numbers because of the number of processes, that we have in place. We issued laptops to our technicians. We created digital delivery of record documents. We instituted scanning pods, scanning record documents. We stood up a remote call center for our customer service phones.

We started digitizing our paper requests coming in through the mail and, we increased staffing.

Next slide.

First and foremost was issuance of laptops. Over 500 laptops had been issued along with the necessary peripherals, prior to March 2020 very few staff had laptops or were working remotely, employees can notify connect to NARA private network and access multiple online resources to perform their remote work.

Since deployment of the laptops our production has increased by 2500 cases per week, to over 10,000 consistently per week this was the first time our staff had laptops in their possession to get them out during a pandemic with so many restrictions was a huge accomplishment.

Next slide please.

Another big accomplishment was digital delivery of record documents this was nonexistent prior to the pandemic the system was deployed in April 2020.

Digital delivery dramatically decreased the time it takes us to respond to burials, medical emergencies and other urgent cases, as well as follow-up requests.

It allows the response to be delivered electronically to the requester through a dedicated online portal.

We also added emergency request submission to our eVetRecs portal on archives.gov, previously emergencies could not be submitted online. They had to be faxed in.

We also revised eVetRecs to accept digital signatures before the pandemic a wet signature had to be affixed to a piece of paper and faxed into us. So we have really come into the next century.

Next slide please. So this is just a small sample of what our technicians see in our case management system when digitally delivering the documents.

We add the documents to a digital envelope and then the digital envelope, is emailed to the requester. The requester uses the case number, which is randomly generated by our case management system. Their email address and either a phone number or zip code to authentic indicate their identity they can then view, print and save the documents.

Next slide please.

We also introduced scanning pods. Currently we have two teams of technicians scanning military personnel files, to be added to the digital registry and then processed remotely.

We have more than 90 million official military personnel files they're all paper. So this is a big chance for us to get them digitized, we're scanning about 18 records per week and, we intend to deploy more pods. We have also partnered with the VA to enable high-speed scanning of our modern records.

Next slide please.

Remote call center stood up. Illustrates the number of calls taken in the DMPR stands for military personnel records. That's our acronym. Last week as you can see we answered over 4400 calls, asking how to submit a request, what the status is of a pending request and asking for an explanation of a response received and calls from congressional offices.

Next slide please.

We have around interagency agreement with the department of debt vans affairs and about half of our backlog of incoming paper requests has now been digitized. Our mail room staff along with other remote workers are working to digitize all of the paper requests.

I believe at last count there was 250,000 of them we're averaging about 7500 requests digitized weekly at this point but that number will grow because we're continuing to add remote staff? From this point forward, digitization will be handled locally for all these paper requests. We have also established a fifth reference core.

The reference core is where the technicians reside who actually answer all of the incoming requests we get for information from the military records. We're hiring about 100 new technicians to process these requests. We have been offering overtime most Saturdays and Sundays. We have about 50 VA staff detailed to us right now to assist with searching records.

We have also expanded our contract labor in our records retrieval branch to search and refile the necessary records. We have added a second shift, in order to double our capacity within our staffing limitations.

And NPRC staff were designated as critical infrastructure and arrangements were made for vaccine priority for any staff who wanted to receive a vaccine.

Next slide please. No matter what technical innovations we introduce we're completely dependent upon the over 300 staff members who continued to come on site throughout the darkest days of the pandemic to ensure emergency requests were processed. This includes 66 days when we had exposures or potential exposures to COVID-19 on site.

These are the super heroes of the national personnel records center we're deeply indebted to them, we're very grateful for everything that our staff has done over the past year and a half almost. That's the end of my presentation. I thank you for having me. And are there any questions that I can answer at this point?

(pause for questions)

>> Thank you for sharing the innovations you've undertaken at the NPRC we have a couple of questions have that come in. The first one I noticed on your chart that you were delivering veterans records, via mail and then, electronic delivery during COVID. Will you continue electronic delivery post COVID.

>> LISA: Absolutely we're trying to expand it the more records we can get scanned, that's our biggest obstacle, is that as I said we have about 90 million, military personnel records in our facility but they're all paper.

So the biggest obstacle is getting those scanned into a digital format so we can continue to deliver them electronically.

>> ARIAN: Thank you and second question has come in, my father is deceased is there a cost to get his military records?

>> LISA: Um, that depends on when he was in service.

We do have a group of records that are called ARCHABLE there may be a charge of copies of documents, from those particular records.

We can't -- I can't actually answer that question unless I know the specifics.

>> ARIAN: Thank you for that. And question has come in, there is a new -- there was a news story about NARA asking the department of defense for volunteers to assist in the FRCP, is there any update to that?

>> LISA: I don't believe we've gotten a response from DoD yet. Um, that's, I have not heard any, any new information on that one yet. We're still waiting for them to respond if they have any interest in doing it.

>> ARIAN: Okay. Thank you I will also point out we've got a couple of people in the chat when Kudos to the NPRC team in working under these pandemic conditions great job.

>> LISA: Thank you.

>> ARIAN: Very well received on this end.

>> LISA: We appreciate that.

>> ARIAN: Okay. At this time, I don't think there are any further questions.

Again if you have any questions, for Lisa and her team, please drop them in and we'll try to get to them at the end of the presentation. Now I would like to turn it back over to Laurence for updates from the updates from the chief records over updates.

>> LAURENCE: Thanks Arian. So I'm back, I've got a few updates and some things going on I wanted to tell you about the first one and I'm sorry I don't have the slides I'll just talk, put your questions in the chat if you can.

One of the thing that, um -- is a fairly new initiative, really excited about it -- um, is -- managing records in virtual investment. So you know here's a topic that, that -- we're all, very familiar with. So, um, this is a fairly recent initiative, so I mean, we go back to, probably four weeks ago, early May in a working group of the CIO council, also, working with GSA asked to talk to us, about potential gaps, in records management guidance related to agencies using virtual clocks tools or platforms to conduct business -- the council was looking at it from a perspective of the tools and, um, fortunately, there were colleagues ours who were, um, working with that group, actually the thought maybe we should, talk to National Archives about, um the records management implications of using these tools and we know, you know, over the past year, we're working through the pandemic, more and more of these kinds of tools have been implemented, a lot of them -- brought into the way the agencies operate at a much more rapid pace than we might have seen in the past out of necessity, obviously.

So, um, we're very excited to talk to the group a current guidance we have. We have a 2009 Bulletin agency records is environments we talked to them about that, but, that guidance was not, exactly on point for what they were looking for.

So, you know, we agreed with them, that you know given the importance and relevance of the topic and really made sense to look at it, you know not only from the technology perspective but from a records management perspective and do it this year. So one of the thing we'll be doing, and some of you, listening today may already be aware of this, that we are going to -- work with the CIO council working group with GSA to engage with you, the agencies, gather some information and, try and determine, based upon the data, what we need to develop from the National Archives in terms of new and revised guidance so we are going to, this month, later this month in June and in July, participate in focus groups with a number of agencies to talk about the topic to gather data and see where agencies are, and what tools they're using and how they're managing the records and those tools. And we are also, going to separately do a formal records management assessment which is not an inspection where we will reach out to a number of agencies to conduct interviews, collect documentation, um, specifically on this topic with the goal of providing findings and recommendations, based upon the data, that we find.

So we will, be using so that assess and to determine whether or not we need new guidance or, revised

guidance. But it is a very exciting project that I think is going to be really important for all of us going forward as we continue to use these tools and platforms making sure there's no records management gaps we have guidance out to you, the implementers to make sure that we can close those gaps.

The second thing I wanted to talk about is, give a quick update where we with the regulations and the standards for digitizing permanent records back in April my office completed the review and adjudication of the comments and concerns that came into us from the public review of the regulation.

So, we are, right now -- expecting that the revised draft, will be submitted to OMB and I, IRA for the review of month, does he pending important the outcome of the review, we're hoping it will become a final rule later this year it's very hard to predict the time line, but -- it depends not only, on OMB's reaction to our adjudication of the comments but whether or not we might need to, engage with agencies on, um, a comments that we may receive from the public that would need to be discussed.

So, um, we're hoping that it will, it will be a more streamlined review and we can get that, final rule out to you later this year. I will say that, the public comment period and the comments that we were able to review and adjudicate which were related to topics like the definitions, quality management, some of the technical requirements we got really good feedback from the vendors, from other agencies. And from digitalization policy counterparts in the public domain and in other countries.

So all of the feedback really has helped us, create a better version which will hopefully result in a more implementable standard and regulation. We, um, also heard some concerns which we have -- taken to heart related to implementation and the, public did have some concerns about, whether or not we could ah, if from a NARA perspective and the agency perspective, implement the standards as they are drafted.

One of the things that we have acknowledged at the National Archives is that we will need to do some follow-up guidance we're already planning on doing some check lists related to scanning legacy documents and FAQs.

Success criteria documents and other kinds of practical tools that will be issued after the finalization of the rule that will hopefully help you the agency's implement the standards.

Couple of other things that I wanted to, let you know, about some activities that are going on internally within records appraisal. So hopefully most of you are aware of the court decision Crew versus the National Archives and ICE, immigration customs enforcement, where the Judge in the case determined that there was additional work we would need to do -- and, look specifically at -- as we are appraising and processing in the schedules, that came to light in that court case.

So, one of the things we're doing pursuant to that is continuing the work that we really started last year to review our own appraisal policy, practices and procedures and really to look at ways on how we can improve and explain our appraisal decisions within our appraisal reports for the public commenting on schedules.

So key part is, looking as it was noted in the court decision, looking specifically, at how we assess research value and separately, how we then consider and respond to all of the public comments that we get on schedules that we post on REGs Gov, we're specifically looking at those areas, with the outcome hopefully later this year.

Um, after having clearer, more specific guidance for our own staff appraisers including revised appraisal SOPs, new guidance around documenting decisions and administrative record and new guidance for adjudicating public comments to make sure that we are responding to the court's decision to consider all of the comments that come in, from the public.

So, a lot of work going on internally, some of you as you work with your appraisal Archivist may, may, come across, some changes and requests, we want to make sure that we have everything that we need so we can be fully responsive to answering questions about research value and documentation, for the administrative record.

So I think it's good for you to be aware what we're doing we'll keep you informed week talk to you a little bit more about, some of the changes we'll be making as this year goes you don't know. Then last just a quick update from the records management training program.

So, um, in May we implemented a cohort approach for new agency records officers who are seeking to get their agency records officer credential.

Um, we have a couple of cohorts currently under way and we're preparing for our next cohort of newly designated agency records officers which we right now expect will start in late July.

Um, the cohorts are usually you know around 25 agency records officers, we think it's a great way to sort of interact with your colleagues. Um, and really be part of a group as you work through the content.

We are tracking designations and we are doing our best to notify the designated records officers make sure that you are up on your requirements to get the credential and slot you into an upcoming cohort but if you have not been contacted if you're a newly designated records officer by all means reach out to us our group email he will mail orders RRMT1@NARA.gov, RMT1@NARA.gov I'll pause and -- um, and ask Arian any questions on any of those topics so far?

>> ARIAN: Thanks Laurence there are a couple of the first one -- comes in and says -- what is an example of the collaborative tools referring to the GSA work?

>> LAURENCE: So I mean that's a really good question, that is one of the thing we're going to be collecting data on -- obviously Microsoft teams -- is -- very common we're using right now -- Google meet is another tool but -- it runs the Gamut, from you know communication, um, you know, apps -- and you know other, other newer kinds of you know technologies that agencies have turned to during the pandemic have been using for years but you know to be Frank we have not issued guidance on this topic and, in many years there's a lot for us to work on.

And one of the things that we're going to do we'll be able to come back and talk to you about after we've done our assessment and focus groups is we'll have a much more specific -- inventory of what the tools are from there, then we'll focus on the records management implications of use of those tools.

So I would say stay tuned and we will, certainly, be looking forward to sharing some of the results of this work at upcoming BRIDG meets.

>> ARIAN: Thank you. Question about digitization any idea when we'll see digitization standards for

special media, AV transparencies et cetera.

>> LAURENCE: That's a really good question, it is certainly -- within -- um, certainly on our Radar as the next phase of the digitization standards we know we need to work on I can't give you a time line, honestly we're really focused on trying to get these to final and get these out, because we feel like the standards that we're working on right now, for, um, for paper records is going to cover the largest percentage of the legacy holdings out there and agencies that need to be digitized, we know there are other special needs for those kinds of records and we have it on our radar we're planning it out it's something we'll be work on next fiscal year.

And, hopefully our experience working through these Regs will, um, result in maybe -- um, quicker to market on the next phase but, thank you for the question it is something we're working on we'll have, an update for you in the, in the coming months.

>> ARIAN: Thanks Laurence there's been an interesting discussion on YouTube I imagine the activities of the chief data officer and the data analysts and scientists will have an impact on records appraisals.

Since the CDO and data folks require large amount of data so just throwing that out there if you wanted to comment on that or follow-up on that.

>> LAURENCE: That's a great point it's something that is both exciting and challenging for all of the records managers you know on the call today.

The volume the complexity, um, it is, is, overwhelming and it is really a challenge I think for our agencies trying to get a hold of the all the various types of information data and records and agencies.

Um, one of the things we've been doing is, um, building relationships with the chief data officers counsel we had representatives from the CDO counsel come to the federal records center at the last meeting.

And we have an ex Officio spot, on the council itself, where we regularly attend the monthly meetings so what we're trying to do right now is really stay engaged with them and be aware of the issues and challenges that they're talking about and then trying to think through the records management side of things.

And then, to the extent that we can -- point out, as we're, as we're part of those CDO council meetings issues, specific to records management that is really why we're there and what we're hoping to do -- to the conversation.

So there's going to be a lot more discussion about that and it is certainly fitting into our larger approach of really pushing information governance within agencies, in making sure that records, data you know, privacy, FOIA other information management disciplines are coordinated within agencies that includes the challenges that we see in that space.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Laurence. As a reminder again, I will, we'll keep the chat open if there's any questions for Laurence please, submit those at this time, we would like to -- pivot to our cap stone panel.

Over the last few months we received a lot of questions about cap stone and cap stone implementation,

so we thought for today's BRIDG meeting we would put together a cap stone panel of experts if you will try to answer those questions to go through those -- lead us through that discussion, first I would like to introduce the panelist, Margaret Hawkins Director of records management operations in the office of the chief records officer she oversees the four appraisal teams permanent records capture team, team that handles the GRS and the teach researching and providing guidance on the appraisal issues.

Hannah Bergman an attorney in the NARA's information policy counsel. She advises on information policy, including the Federal Records Act. And finally Ted Hull is the director of the electronic records division, this division is responsible for the excising processing and preserving and providing access, to NARA holdings of foreign digital federal electronic records, including email.

So with that I'll welcome 3 of them to the panel and kick it off by asking the first question. Will NARA expand the cap stone guidance and GRS6.1, to cover other types of electronic messaging.

>> Hello this is Hannah, yes. NARA does have a plan, to expand the cap stone bulletin for other types of electronic messages we've got a team that is working on a draft right now, we're trying to -- kind of talk through, what that will look like, um, with the best approach is, to make sure we're capturing -- the, the -- the other types of electronic messages with the updated guidance.

Once we've got that in good shape, um, we'll work on updating the GRS and then other tools to help agencies implement the guidance.

Like all guidance products that we have you know we do seek input through the federal records council and, so -- I would expect that to happen in this case as well it's something you can be on the look out for. Thanks.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Hannah. The next question, do you have any best practices or know of tools agencies are using to track their cap stone officials?

>> HANNAH: I'll take this one as well this is Hannah again. I think that, we have seen, the most success when agencies are able to partner with their human capital office and have some sort of automated tracking system in place.

Quasi-automated would be a better way to put it, getting emails or some sort of updates about, when it is people are coming into positions that have been designated as cap stone officials and, track the turn over at that way.

So, you know, in addition to the, the human capital folks it is important that, agencies partner with other IT team as well there can be a lot of changes that need to happen, on the back end.

So system administrators can and may need, may need to make those changes when it comes to implementation of the schedule you know, people coming and going through positions and et cetera it would be the acting piece would be when someone has been in an acting role for some period of time and as a result, our cap stone official, that is, you know, obviously a very, heavy burden to manage, keeping track of action folks so that's where the partnership was human capital and -- immigration services or whatever agencies call their IT operations folks -- are really important in terms of being able to get those automated alerts make sure someone is able to go in the back end make those changes, when -- a person is in an enacting capacity in a length of time that would trigger the cap stone retention periods.

Um, I think in terms of tools, you know most agencies use, Microsoft for their email services I don't

think that's a surprise or secret. That we do have a lot of agencies that are using, and trying to figure out how best to use the built in E discovery and reference management tools that come with 365, so we have, um, an agency lead users group meeting that, the 365 users group that is the off the chief records officer hosts that is a place where you know, if you're not a part of it you use 365 for any sort of.

Mail records management or E discovery obligations I encourage you to reach out to Laurence's folks join that, join that group because agencies are able to talk through these things bring questions or problems, to the group and, solve them in realtime by hearing how their colleagues and other agencies are handling them. I think otherwise you know we are worries about text messages, obviously that's another kind of electronic message. So it dove tails what I was speaking about earlier but I think the text messaging issue, you know, we do see a lot of agencies conducting business by text message it is important that, if you're are, taking a Capstone approach to those messages you're able to implement that as well.

So, for example, National Archives we have software that forwards any text messages from your phone into your email it is automatically managed like a email if you're a cap stone official it retained appropriately if you're not it is kept for the shorter 7 year period if you have text messaging enabled on your phones at your agency, think about, um, what tools are in place, that you guys have, that can, can do that automated management and then, calendar appointments I think are another issue.

Often that is roiled up in the e male as a problem but to the extent it is not, um, that could be something that, that -- that agency needs to look at more closely. So I think, I think that's kind of it, um, but I'll, turn it back to you Arian.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Hannah, if you're interested in that Office 365 user group that Hannah mentioned just email us at RMpolicy@nara.gov we'll make sure you get the invites. With that, the next question is, probably for Maggie, we have heard about the resubmission process, so when is more information about the cap stone resubmission process going to be coming out?

>> MARGARET: Great question Arian, um, thank thanks Hannah, thanks for talking about implementation, as you know before you get to implementation we have to have a, approved cap stone form and a A1005 as you know, agencies, change organizations change and one of the things we're doing to kind of help facilitate the accurate tracking of positions is, we'll be started a mandatory resubmission process that Arian referred to.

And, what we have right now is we have a project team, working on the bulletin that will address the resubmission process will it be done through NARA bulletin, it is necessary to codify the resubmission requirements in the meantime FAQs have been updated to address questions about, when and how agencies, should resubmit or, otherwise update their NA1005 forms those FAQs are easily obtainable on our web site.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Maggie, will this new form be available in the ERA2.0?

>> MARGARET: Yes. The, um, so Arian mentioned we have a new form which is, in some ways linked to the resubmission process, but some ways separate and, as you all may know from other presentations here at BRIDG and elsewhere we are rolling out a new ERA2.0 and, the plan there is for the system to be rolled out, in summer of 2022.

And we hope to have the ERA, the NA1005 form in ERA, and that is dependent upon a couple of different things and if it is at all delayed we will be having it roll out the same calendar year as the scheduling module will be rolling out. But, so again, the ERA rolling out in summer of 2022 hope physically the cap stone form with it, that's the plan if it is at all delayed it should only be by a few

months and becoming out the same calendar year.

So what be helpful is, um, telling a little bit more about the form itself. As Arian noted it is a new form which is, always -- you know, exciting for all of us to have something that we think will be much easier, currently the form is in a fillable PDF format, which is a fairly user-friendly however after studying in issue for a bit, we have a -- decided to move it to an Excel format.

And this format will have the information across various tabs we think it will be easier to fill out, we have practiced with it, with -- real, cap stone forms seen how it fits to felt it out.

It is much easier to export for various purposes as Hannah mentioned, in her implementation tracking positions is, a pretty, you know, quite intensive process and having it, this data more exportable and manageable should help with that.

That form, should be coming out this later this calendar year, separate from, other parts of the resubmission process and, it is currently going through a formal forms approval process.

>> ARIAN: Thanks Maggie sorry for jumping around, can you remind everyone what the mandatory resubmission requirements are I think you may not have mentioned those.

>> MARGARET: Thanks for reminding me to circumstantial back to that as I mentioned we have a new form coming out we have ERA2.0 rolling out next summer we have the mandatory resubmission process Arian has asked, when is that kicking in?
So, that is going to start in, 2023.

All agencies using the cap stone approach, must resubmit the cap stone form we have to do so every four years thereafter.

Just to kind of, so you don't have to do the math in your head on all of this, so very specifically, the first new resubmission will be due on or about January 2, 2023 the next one on or about January 2, 2027.

I want to point out these dates point to a very specific mandatory resubmissions but in addition, agencies can submit changes to their forms what we call an ad hoc basis.

We get you know a fair number of these and, these would be for major organizational or other changes and, you can talk about those with your appraisal Archivist we have information on our FAQs about that.

And I just wanted to point out that sometimes, if the changes are minor we may ask agencies to save those up for the formal resubmission process, although we also recognize that some agencies have in a good way, been under you know have been concerned about making sure that form which is up there on our public web site is up to date.

So, we have -- you know, we have been for flexible about that as well.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Maggie we have a couple of questions about transfer, once the emails have come to NARA. So I'll turn to Ted. How many agencies have transferred Capstone email to the National Archives?

>> TED: Thanks Arian. I'm answer it very literally first and just to remind everyone, a little bit about the, the lineage of the Capstone GRS since it's implementation and with the 15 to 25 year retention period, and, given that the provisions of M1218 to manage all emails electronically only took effect in 2016, we have seen only once transfer of some legacy emails under that Capstone disposition authority.

The vast majority of agencies indicated on in a 1005 submissions, that they only began managing their emails in 2016 or near around them, around that time period.

So per that was per M1218 again. So, the earliest that we would expect to receive emails under the Capstone disposition authority for the vast majority of agencies, um, would be around 2031 or later. But I should say on the other hand, the electronic records division has excised millions of emails from agencies under approved agency record schedules.

These records include email from the federal components of the executive office of the President, since the Clinton Administration. DoJ senior officials from the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations.

Federal communications Commission, Commissioners, email from officials in a number of temporary commissions and FACAs have gone out of business and, email of the Special Inspector General for Reconstruction.

We have a considerable volume of email, it is just -- we're still waiting for the Capstone retention to, um to work it's way through, and so, sometime in the future we'll be seeing more emails come in, against that disposition authority.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Ted, sort of building on that, has NARA made any Capstone email available to researchers if what we have, and what tools did we use?

>> TED: To addressing that literally we have, received no requests for the Capstone emails that we received, um, under that, that single transfer -- and so, I would like to address that though. I mean we have made emails in the other series I referenced available to researchers. We use a variety of tools, to search emails for responsive, for responsive emails based on the questions received from researchers. We consider all emails to be to, to have a variety of FOIA exemptions applied to them already, when agencies transfer email, we do ask them to specify the FOIA exemptions that we believe that they believe applies to the emails and then, our Archivists in both the electronic records division and our FOIA and special access division, um, will review the content of responsive emails against the FOIA exemption prior to their release, do the appropriate redactions and release the emails, after having undergone that review.

>> ARIAN: Okay. Thanks Ted.

And I sort of, we talked a little bit about ERA2.0 during this session will ERA2.0 being able to ingest Capstone email from federal agencies in the years down the road?

>> TED: Right the expectation is that, ERA2.0 will some day provide the capabilities for agencies to transfer records directly to that system, um, until that time, agencies transfer records to the electronic records division for processing prior to up load and ingest to ERA2.0, which is our digital repository.

Those transfers can come to us at this time on a variety of removable media or via SFTP. So if you're interested if you have records, electronic records eligible for transfer throughout the pandemic, um, we have been receiving, records on media, um, we have individuals going into the building to retrieve the mail. And handle and process electronic records on site and, needed.

Also we've seen a great deal of expansion of our SFTP capabilities we can provide you with additional resources or reach out to the division at Etransfers@NARA.gov.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Ted. Sort of another question, why does my agency have to keep their temporary email for 7 years for anyone not in the 3 year ban? Can you first explain the difference between the 3 and 7 year bans? And then, explain why I would have to keep any email for 7 years? It is very costly and difficult to implement, and I think it should be my agency's choice and responsibility to determine.

>> HANNAH: This is Hannah, I'll take that one. I'm getting a cold I apologize. I think, so the first thing to kind of work backwards from the question, one, you know, the idea of records scheduling at the National Archives and Appraisal Archivist work with the agency records officer to come to a proper retention for email using our experience in the archival profession. Right.

So that is part of why you know this is something that, that NARA has come to determine and we have done that through the GRS right. So agencies do have a lot of discretion how they manage records within their retentions we set and they have a lot of discretion and flexibility working with us to set those retentions but once the retentions are set they are mandatory.

So the GRS6.1 breaks thing into 3 different bands, Capstone, permanent ban we talk about the 7 year ban and the 3 year ban.

The 3 year ban is really focused on employees who are not going to be conducting significant policy work or agency decision-making through email that will require those emails to be kept for a long term preservation.

So if you just look at item 12 in the GRS itself I think the language is very clear that's really where we take our instruction here.

Item 12 says, these -- you know in talking about the 3 year ban, these duties comprised general office or program support activities and frequently facilitate the work of federal agencies in the program.

This includes but is not limited to roles and positions that process routine transactions, provide customer service and involve mechanical craft or skilled or semi-skilled or skilled manual labor, respond to general requests for information, involve routine clerical work and/or primary receive non-record duplicative email those are folks in the 3 year ban, we expect that to be the minority of agency employees.

Item 11 the 7 year ban should be the vast majority of all federal employees and, you know to the extent contractors are creating email records, most, contractor records will fall into the 7 year ban as well.

Um so these are going to be employees like myself, you know, who are, like, it's like Ted, Maggie the other panel members as well, right.

So our emails are, 7 year records under the schedule and we are, providing advice, we are talking about the policy, um, you know, but we're not, that level of Capstone official nor are we doing sort of the routine administrative work that will be 3 year position.

So other types of employees that might fall in the 7 year ban would be, management program analysts,

folks in the human capital office, folks in your budget and finance team.

People who work in the mission area who are doing you know substantive work of the agency.

You also might see SES employees or other leaders, leadership SL appointments in the, in the 7 year ban depending upon the size of the agency, if you're a very large agency, that is certainly might be true.

This 7 year time frame is really kind of meant to look at, what are the retentions across schedules, you know for the types of records that we see in an email, what are the statute of limitations related to claims that might, um, involve those records.

Take that into account and come up with, you know the best, the best thing we can, um, for a uniform retention.

That's how we arrived at the 7 year mark.

So I get that it costs money I get it is hard.

But I also think you know this is the furnished on the premise of the National Archives an the fundamental premise of records management yes it does cost money it ultimately saves you money, saves you time, saves you resources in the long run right.

So the reason, that we, the records disposal act of 1950 was passed, was because agencies were Hoarding records there was no way for them to dispose of information I think we all know that, from -- like our own practices, if you don't have kind of these retention bans that are set and, are enforced, the human tendency is to keep the information let it pileup.

As a consequence you cannot find what you need you spend additional money storing information that you don't need.

Um, and, any time you need to go looking for it, your research, is going to cost more your indexing and all your processing of those records is going to cost more because your involve is going to be so much larger than it needs to be.

So, that is why you know we have come up with the uniform, approach, of the 3 year the 7 year and the permanent bans for email and you know yes it may seem it seems like it cost more money at certain points in time overall compared to what we saw agencies doing before the Capstone approach I do think it is, um a benefit for everyone.

So I kind of -- I hope that addresses the question?

>> ARIAN: Thank you Hannah I think it covered very well. I would like to ask a question that came in, sort of directed towards you.

Can you provide the software that NARA is using to automatically capture text messages in email or talk more about that?

>> HANNAH: Um, sure.

There are a number of software tools out there, that do that.

We happen to, um, be using tele-message which is one of the, um, tools that work with Verizon I know that is a third party tool that integrates with the Microsoft 365 eDiscovery compliance center.

If you happen to use Verizon and Microsoft 365 we do not use 365, we use Gmail, but it is still integrates with that as well.

But there are a number of other tools out there I am no way endorsing tele-message I 578 saying that's the tool we use, please do a full competition if you're interested in procuring it.

>> ARIAN: Noted, noted thank you.

Maggie do you want to say more about the Capstone form or have we covered that?

>> MARGARET: I feel like we have covered it, but, um, if there's been any, follow-up questions --

>> ARIAN: I just wanted to make sure I know we, sort of jumped around a bit.

We have a question I'll just open it up and let you guys tackle it how best you see fit.

What is the best tool agencies are ability to use, to capture all Capstone records not only email but also policy, memos documents et cetera.

>> MARGARET: Imagine Maggie was going to talk about in the scheduling perspective and see if Hannah or Ted had anything about the tools component of it.

So, um first off on the scheduling perspective, I wanted to point out that, it is not a given that all records of all Capstone officials, would be a permanent record.

Email is a discrete body of records.

It is you know account driven I sort of like to think of it as I giant safety net pulling in a lot of, a lot of permanent records.

The number accounts of NARA will excising over the upcoming years is a pretty staggering amount I don't have a count on it, it is a lot.

It is significant.

Once you start going into all of the records, of all of the Capstone officials for an agency you're, it is upping the Ante quite a bit on the, on the volume, the compliance burden, et cetera.

That GRS still may apply to many of those official's records and they're under there maybe appraisal decisions to be made about, whether which of the records are permanent and, which are not.

So I guess I would, caution people on that you may be, um, you know, there maybe an assumption being made there, that it would be, um, dramatically increasing maybe needlessly increasing the volume of permanent records and, when you think about the, the difficulty of applying Capstone to email, one hand it's meant to be simple.

I hear from agencies it is you know, more complex it might seem in the surface you're dealing with June big system in an agency, at very discrete clear accounts once you start getting into all these other records and, I think at least from what I've seen in my many years as an appraiser at, that's a whole different scenario.

So, that's what I would say on the scheduling.

In terms of case the question was more focused on tools to help capture I thought I might turn it over to some of the other panelists?

If they have any thought on tools per se?

>> TED: Um, Maggie, I don't have a specific comment about tools but, your commentary reminded me of the Capstone FAQ and the really excellent section in there about calling.

From a transfer and access perspective, the Moran agency can do to call out non-record personal emails and other materials that, the better it is, for us.

On the review side the better it is.

That, um, we're not having to, um, to review that in the event that we get a request for the email.

>> HANNAH: I can chime a little bit on the tools piece just, kind of echo what I said earlier which is that we do see a lot of agencies using the 365E discovery compliance center to manage other documents that are within the Microsoft environment.

So if your agency has 365 again, join the user group that Arian mentioned I think it's RM, Arian will chime with how to join the group.

That is something that certainly, a number of agencies are, working to implement and have had you know, varying degrees of success and done in different ways we are, too, using a hybrid approach of you know, where we have, records stored in our Google environment and how we get those into, um, permanent records management tool we have outside of the Google environment you know which is a more manual process, that I think we would like.

But I think we're, there are good options for managing any documents are that kind of housed with your email in either a Google environment or cloud or 365 one drive environment.

So definitely join the 365 users group.

>> ARIAN: Email policy is RMpolicy@NARA.gov our team would be happy to add you.

They will be happy to add you to the list.

We had a question come in from DHS, for Capstone records, I understand that it account driven will the person under the Capstone program will be the person's email account or captured in a separate distribution list?

>> MARGARET: I'm not sure I understand the question.

Do the other panelists? (pause)

>> HANNAH: If the question is asking about distribution lists whether or not, would a Capstone list is apart of the distribution list if that makes the distribution list a Capstone record I think we would say, if anything going to or from that person the Capstone official's email and the account, that we're looking at as a Capstone email, as a permanent record.

Which would exclude non-records.

So if the distribution list is, like, agency press releases you think that will be an example of, um, something that, you know the distribution list would not be the record keeping copy of that.

But if the distribution list is like you know, agency executive leadership team right and you have, Laurence on that, that email, the copy that is in Laurence's inbox would be a Capstone record.

Is that the question asking.

>> MARGARET: If that's what is asking I agree with Hannah, that would be the answer.

>> ARIAN: I think that covers the question the landscape of that question, pretty adequately.

If not, please, person who asked it follow-up.

We do have a question, since Microsoft announced they will no longer be supporting PST files, does NARA have a solution to accessing older email files since PST is one of the two preferred formats in the case of having a need to access older PST files in the next few years?

>> TED: I guess I can speak to that if I understand.

So, as the person mentions PST is an acceptable format for the transform of amalgamations of emails I wasn't, I'm not familiar with the scenario that the requester is asking.

We have tools that we use PST viewer again not an official endorsement it is just a tool we use, to crack open PSTs review their contents.

We also use other tools to export individual EMLs or emails from the PST format.

So, the PST is, is certainly a very convenient way to amalgamations of emails and support their transfer, if we're talking about an individual account or an individual group of emails.

>> HANNAH: I would chime in and say I think this question surfaced at the 365 user's group meeting and then we took that back to Microsoft we do have, regular meetings with Microsoft to talk about, records management issues and Microsoft assured us that they are not phasing out support of PSTs they thought perhaps there's a confusion, um, related to the export formats, from the E discovery tool.

But if there was a confusion, PST has been read as a format, from that, from that tool if it -- if something happens so, the bottom line was, there is no phasing out of support from PSTs, according to the Microsoft records management people and they were very confused by that question.

when we brought it to them, there sounds like there might have been some miscommunication around that issue.

Air.

>> TED: That's good to know.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Hannah, thank you Ted.

I'll put out one more call for questions on Capstone, we have one that's come in.

Well NARA accept encrypted emails from Capstone officials or will the federal agency records officer, have to work with their agency IT department, to decrypt those records, those emails?

>> TED: NARA will not accept encrypted emails.

>> MARGARET: No, so we would, um, we have advised agencies. So first off matters whether they're clearly talking about permanent records, if temporary records that's a different question if they're permanent, as Ted noted we won't accept them.

So, um, what we're looking at, is, um, you know, agency may decide to what we call like put it on ice for awhile and see if the technology evolves and if they're ability to eventually decrypt them or if the keys are found, which has happened before, the other option would be agencies would need to schedule them for destruction because technically they would not be covered under any schedule for destruction we would look at the schedule, when this happens we do ask what lengths have people gone to try to decrypt them it's not like a rubber stamping operation.

And, it is I know presents a conundrum one that many agencies will face in the upcoming years I don't know if Hannah maybe you were leaning forward to add something?

>> HANNAH: I was going to say, so I think, first, NARA will not accept any encrypted records.

Regardless of what format they're in.

Not just emails you've got to decrypt it, we don't have to secret decryption capabilities if you can't, we can't decrypt it, why would we take records we can't open.

Like, you know, right.

Ted's team could not process them.

So, that's just, across the board no matter what the files type is.

I would say that, a properly configured email archive or email journaling situation, will allow export of encrypted emails so, you know we have a sign up where we have got our email journals and archives in a separate repository it is encrypted in transit when the email is sent, it is encrypted when it goes to the repository and the repository itself is encrypted you can export the emails, in an unencrypted fashion.

So, that, that is a pretty straight forward set up, um, so, so, make sure that you're working with your IT so that you got that export capability in hand.

And the challenge tends to be when someone might tend an encrypted attachment, in an email and say I'm going to send the password later right.

Like then, hopefully there's an accompanying email with that record which has the password to encrypt the file.

And then the, I think the other challenge can be when, when things have been encrypted with keys, for example, in your PIV card or something that has expired the agency has not maintained that encryption key that's I think a difficult challenge to overcome something we really encourage you to work with your IT folks to make sure, is it going to present itself as a problem in the long run.

>> ARIAN: Thank you Hannah, with that, I want to thank the Capstone panel for some very informative information and answering a bunch of questions that came in.

I do want to now open it up to the general questions to see if there's any outstanding?
We have one is Lisa Sandor available still?

>> LISA: Yes I'm here.

>> ARIAN: I have one question for you thank you Lisa.

Are the digitized records being attached to the veterans records within the online data base?

>> LISA: Um, if by that you mean are our registry, boy that's a kind of a technical question, I'm not sure of the answer we're keeping a digital registry of the records that are being scanned however I don't know if they are attached physically to our registry. I think it's a separate registry of the digital ones.

I hope that answers (laughter).

>> ARIAN: Thank you, that sounds good to me.

I'll leave it at that.

And again I'll put out a last call for any questions acknowledge there's been follow-up conversation on YouTube about encryption and, parallel quantum computing some smart people chatting over there, we appreciate that engagement.

Just checking all the places where we capture all your questions to see if there's anything outstanding.

Having seen none, I'll go to the next slide please.

Okay.

Okay.

So I'll just remind folks, the nexts BRIDG meeting will be on Tuesday August 24th, 2021.

You can always send us comments or questions at RM.communications@NARA.gov you'll see the link to the schedule, the meeting slides transcripts all the information about the past meetings are also available there.

So with that, I would like to thank everyone for attending our BRIDG meeting today.
And wish you all a good afternoon, good day, wherever you are.

Good afternoon.

Again thank you very much.

(session concluded)