



# RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION 2016 SURVEY REPORT

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION AGENCY  
SERVICES  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RECORDS OFFICER

DECEMBER 2016

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# **NARA RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) conducted its seventh Records Management Services Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2016. This voluntary survey helps NARA improve records management services by identifying the most important factors affecting customer satisfaction. This objective is in accordance with Strategic Goal 2 of NARA's 2014- 2018 Strategic Plan - Improve customer satisfaction with NARA records management services, Strategy Objective 1: Improve internal and external customer engagement to cultivate and sustain public participation.

NARA focused the 2016 survey on records scheduling, appraisal services, communications, and records management training. NARA sent a questionnaire to the Records Officer (or designated point of contact) of every Federal agency. Fifty-five percent of respondents reported they are satisfied with NARA's scheduling and appraisal services.

NARA customers provided a broad range of positive and negative feedback. Records Officers indicated that they had good relationships with their appraisal archivists and viewed them as both knowledgeable and helpful. While agencies reported that they are generally pleased with the assistance that NARA offers, the records schedule approval process continues to be a source of frustration for many.

For the 2016 survey results, please see *Appendix A*.

## **PURPOSE**

The customer satisfaction survey helps NARA's National Records Management Program improve scheduling and appraisal services by identifying the most important drivers affecting customer satisfaction. This allows NARA to focus our resources to improve services to the areas that are most important to our customers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

NARA conducted the survey in August and September of 2016, two years after the previous survey. It asks Records Officers, or their designee, how they feel NARA is doing in various areas. Respondents are asked about their overall satisfaction level as well as their satisfaction with various aspects of NARA's records management services.

NARA identified agency Records Officers and compiled and verified their contact information. Like previous customer satisfaction surveys, each Federal Records Officer (or designated point of contact) received the questionnaire by electronic mail. NARA staff followed up with regular electronic mail reminders throughout the survey period.

This year NARA continued to use one version of the survey questionnaire to access its entire customer base. The 2016 survey utilized branching to allow respondents to skip non-applicable questions. New questions were introduced focusing on NARA's records management training and the Annual Move process. The addition of the *No Opinion* response option is also new with the 2016 Survey, which makes difficult any comparisons with previous survey results.

For the purposes of this report, "satisfied" Records Officers are participants who indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with scheduling and appraisal services overall. "Dissatisfied" Records Officers indicated they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied overall.

This year NARA used an online vendor, Survey Monkey, to conduct the survey. Each agency's records management contact received an individual link to the survey via the website. The responses are confidential, providing NARA a means to identify and view individual responses. The online tool provided an analysis of survey results as well as a statistical report (see *Appendix A*).

## **RESULTS**

This report provides a comprehensive listing of the 2016 survey results. The percentages included in this report are rounded numbers. Since each set of percentages must equal 100, the same number in a set may be arbitrarily rounded up or down. This happens when a number falls in the mid-range (e.g. a 1.6 or a 1.5) and the other numbers in the set round strongly up (e.g. 1.7) and strongly down (e.g. 1.3).

### **1. Response Rate**

NARA distributed 265 questionnaires and received 69 surveys for a response rate of 27% and a completion rate of 26 % (68 surveys).

### **2. Demographic Questions (Questions 1-3)**

**Q1.** What is your position?

**Q2.** How long have you worked in records management with the Federal Government?

**Q3.** Is records management currently your primary or secondary responsibility?

87% of survey respondents reported that they hold the position of Records Officer and the majority (86%) reported that records management is their primary responsibility. 78% have been working in Federal records management for more than 3 years.

### **3. Records Scheduling (Questions 4-4d)**

**Q4.** To the best of your knowledge, has your agency submitted a records schedule for approval to NARA in FY 2015 or FY 2016?

61% of respondents reported having submitted a records schedule for approval within FY 2015 or FY 2016.

**Q4a.** I personally have submitted a records schedule for approval to NARA in FY 2015 or FY 2016.

This is also a new question for 2016. Of those who responded, 69% reported having personally submitted a records schedule.

**Q4b.** The time NARA took to approve the submitted records schedule was satisfactory.

Only the respondents who answered “Yes” to question 4a were given the option to respond to this question. Of the 29 respondents who had personally submitted a records schedule to NARA in FY 2015 or FY 2016, 49% were satisfied.

**Q4c.** If you have used ERA to schedule records, how satisfied were you with the way that ERA functioned?

Of the respondents who had submitted an ERA Records Schedule for approval to NARA in FY 2015 or FY 2016, 51% were satisfied with the way that ERA functioned.

**Q4d.** My agency has not recently submitted records schedules to NARA because: (Please select all that apply.)

38% of respondents stated that their current records schedules are adequate. 8% of the respondents reported difficulty understanding NARA's scheduling process and 15 % have difficulty using ERA. Other responses included the re-evaluation of current business processes and the drafting of new schedules. See *Appendix B* for a breakdown of the responses.

#### **4. Scheduling and Appraisal** (Questions 4e – 6)

**Q4e.** I do receive the monthly Report of Records Appraisal Activity from my NARA Appraisal Archivist.

The majority of respondents (62%) do receive the monthly Report of Records Appraisal Activity.

**Q4f.** Is this report helpful?

Of the 62% of respondents who did receive the monthly Report of Records Appraisal Activity, 93% found the report useful.

**Q5.** I have a good working relationship with my agency's NARA appraisal archivist.

84% of agencies feel they have a good working relationship with their NARA appraisal archivist.

**Q5a.** What do you like or dislike about working with your NARA appraisal archivist? What could use improvement?

This was a free text field and the responses varied from “is accessible, courteous, and professional” and “we have an excellent working relationship” to those respondents who felt their appraisal archivist “seems unfamiliar with IT” and that there was a perceived “frequent change or turnover in [their] appraisal archivist.” The overall responses indicated that Records Officers overall liked working with their NARA appraisal archivist. Please see *Appendix B* for the detailed comments.

**Q5b.** When I contact my agency's NARA appraisal archivist for assistance, I receive a timely response.

Less than 7 % of respondents reported a negative response with more than 93 % reporting a timely response when they contacted their NARA appraisal archivist.

**Q5c.** How satisfied are you with NARA scheduling and appraisal services?

The majority of respondents indicated that they were highly satisfied or satisfied with NARA scheduling and appraisal services (56%). 22% of the respondents were *Unsatisfied* or *Highly Unsatisfied*.

**Q6.** Do you have any comments about your satisfaction with NARA scheduling and appraisal services?

This free text field indicated a dissatisfaction with the Electronic Records Archives (ERA), the length of the scheduling and appraisal process, and conflicting guidance. For further information, see *Appendix B*.

## **5. Communications (Questions 7 – 8)**

**Q7.** Are the communications you receive from NARA’s records management program clear (e.g., Records Express Blog, RM communications email)?

Eighty-eight of the respondents indicated that the communications received from NARA’s records management program were clear. No respondents strongly disagreed.

**Q8.** If not, please tell us how we can improve our communications.

Respondents reported “repetitive bureaucratic language”, lack of relevant information, and suggestions about improving the NARA records management web site. See *Appendix B* for the detailed comments.

## **6. Annual Move (Questions 9 – 11)**

**Q9.** How satisfied are you with the support you receive from NARA on the Annual Move process?

Respondents were satisfied (70%) with the support they received from NARA on the Annual Move process. 27% had no opinion.

**Q10.** How satisfied are you with NARA communications on the Annual Move process?

NARA communications on the Annual Move process were viewed positively by 76% of the respondents while less than 3% were unsatisfied.

**Q11.** Please tell us how we can improve the Annual Move process.

The Electronic Records Archives (ERA) was mentioned by several respondents. Others mentioned they wished to see the inclusion of overdue transfers and earlier notifications. See *Appendix B* for specific comments.

## **7. Training and Guidance (Questions 12 – 15)**

**Q12.** Have you taken any of NARA’s records management courses in FY 2015 or FY 2016?

68% of the respondents had not taken any of NARA’s records management courses in FY 2015 or FY 2016.

**Q12a.** How satisfied are you with NARA’s records management training courses?

Of the respondents who had taken some NARA records management courses in FY 2015 or FY 2016, 83% were satisfied.



**Q13.** Have you viewed any of the training materials available on NARA’s records management web site (e.g., such as briefings, web pages, publications, etc.)?

Over 95% of the respondents had viewed the training materials available on NARA’s records management web site.

**Q13a.** How satisfied are you with the training materials available on NARA’s records management web site?

Of the respondents who had viewed the training materials available on NARA’s records management web site, over 89% were satisfied.

**Q14.** How satisfied are you with NARA’s records management guidance products (e.g., bulletins, FAQs, and white papers)?

The majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they were satisfied with NARA’s records management guidance products.

**Q15.** If unsatisfied or highly unsatisfied, how may NARA’s records management guidance be improved?

Respondents indicated that they would like to see “specific guidance rather than generalized guidance” and that “they are too general for practical use.” See *Appendix B* for the full comments.

## **8. General Comments (Question 16)**

**Q16.** Please share any general comments or suggestions you may have for NARA’s records management program.

Comments and suggestions included more resources, better organization of available resources, and “pushing” of resources out to the agencies. One respondent wanted to see RACO return and others suggested NARA be more direct and clear, both in training and in communications with agencies. See *Appendix B* for the full comments.

## **Conclusion:**

The Records Management Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted in FY 2016 provided NARA with information about our customer’s needs and perspectives, thus enabling NARA to continue to improve the services offered to agencies. The statistical questions allow NARA to broadly assess the opinions of agency Records Officers while the free text fields gives agencies the opportunity to address specific concerns. The mix of questions permits NARA to monitor the continuing needs of the agencies as well as uncover new or developing needs. The response rate of 26% did not vary from the FY 2014 Survey response rate.

NARA is pleased to learn that our customers enjoy working with us and value our assistance. 84% of respondents reported that they have a good working relationship with their appraisal archivist and 95% of respondents had accessed the training materials available on the NARA records management web site.

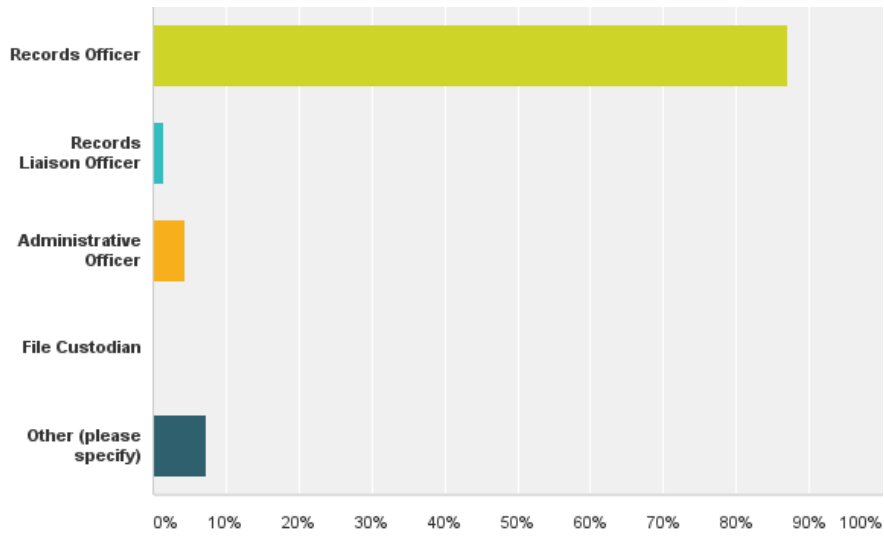
NARA will continue to refine communications with agencies through briefings and meetings, web site and social media delivery, training opportunities, and content development. The Annual Move process questions, new to the 2016 Survey, provide insight into improving the Annual Move process. The 2016 Survey is beneficial to NARA to further assist agencies in meeting their goals.

## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Q1: What is your position?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0

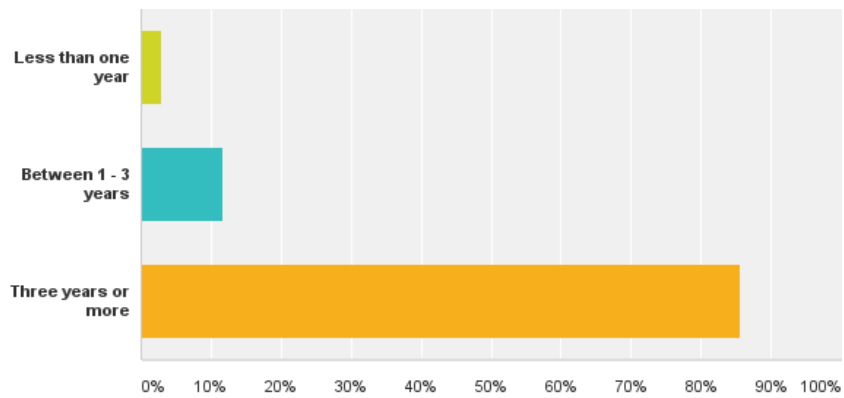


Answer Choices	Responses
Records Officer	86.96% 60
Records Liaison Officer	1.45% 1
Administrative Officer	4.35% 3
File Custodian	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	7.25% 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q2: How long have you worked in records management with the Federal Government?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0



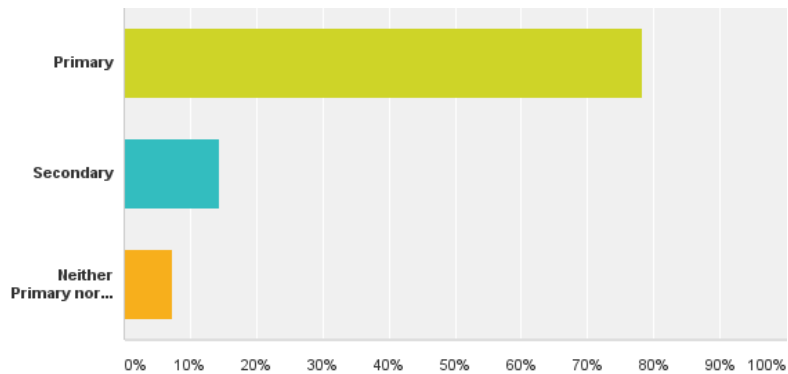
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Less than one year	2.90% 2
Between 1 - 3 years	11.59% 8
Three years or more	85.51% 59
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q3: Is records management currently your primary or secondary responsibility?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0

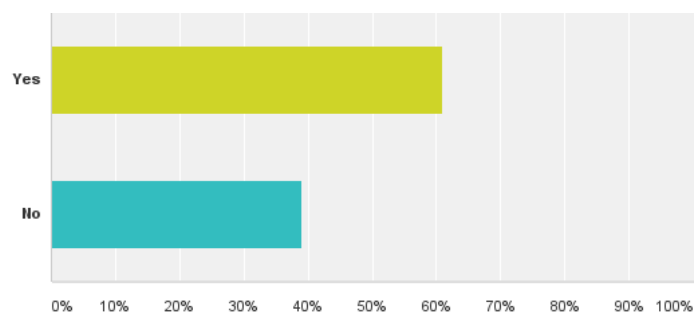


Answer Choices	Responses
Primary	78.26% 54
Secondary	14.49% 10
Neither Primary nor Secondary	7.25% 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q4: To the best of your knowledge, has your agency submitted a records schedule for approval to NARA in FY 2015 and/or FY 2016?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0



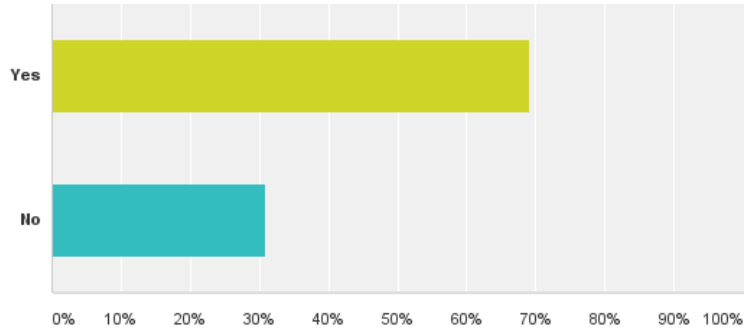
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	60.87% 42
No	39.13% 27
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q4a: I personally have submitted a records schedule for approval to NARA in FY 2015 and/or FY 2016.

Answered: 42

Skipped: 27

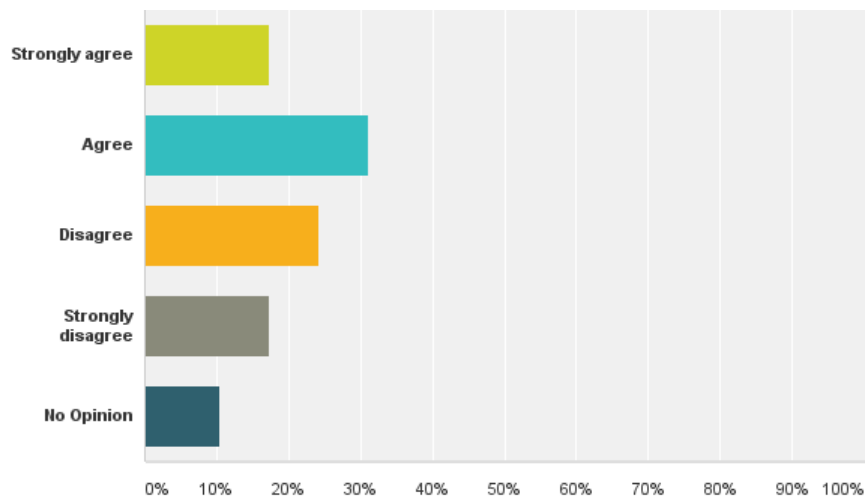


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	69.05% 29
No	30.95% 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>

Q4b. Of those who answered Yes to 4a, the time NARA took to approve the submitted records schedule was satisfactory.

Answered: 29

Skipped: 40



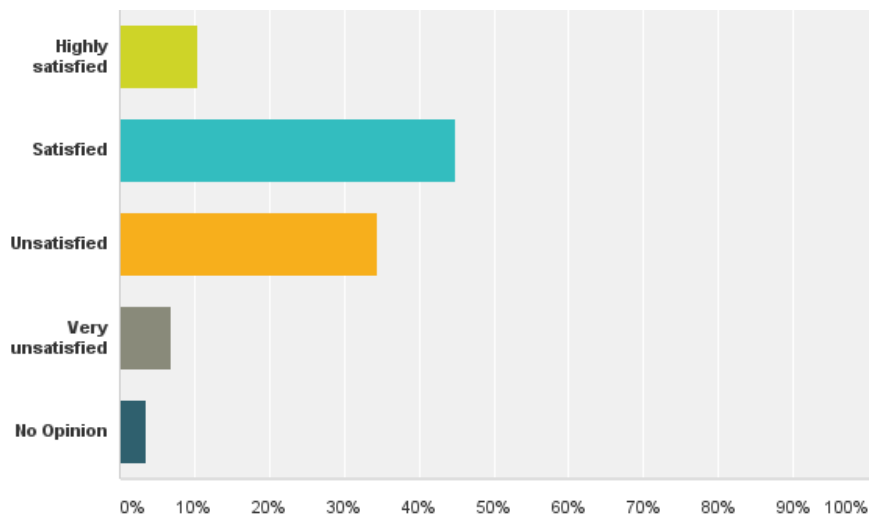
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	17.24% 5
Agree	31.03% 9
Disagree	24.14% 7
Strongly disagree	17.24% 5
No Opinion	10.34% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

Q4c: If you have used the Electronic Records Archives (ERS) to schedule records, how satisfied were you with the way that ERA functioned?

Answered: 29

Skipped: 40



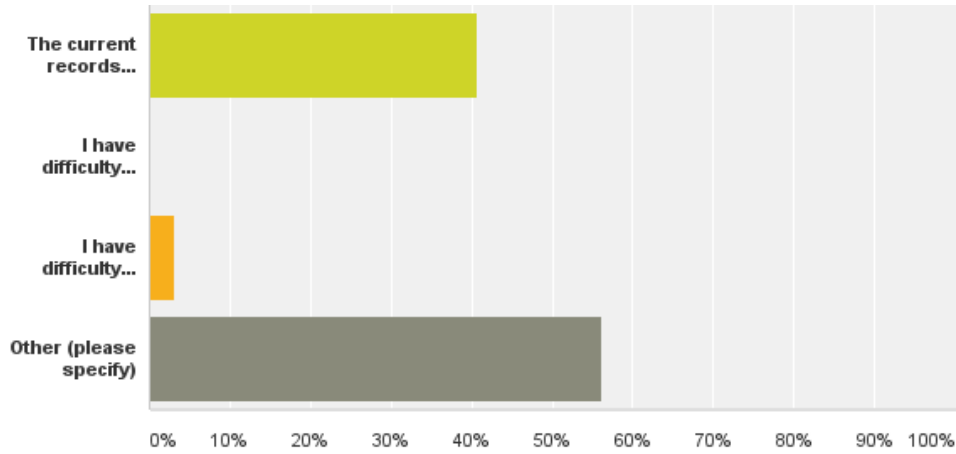
Answer Choices	Responses
Highly satisfied	10.34% 3
Satisfied	44.83% 13
Unsatisfied	34.48% 10
Very unsatisfied	6.90% 2
No Opinion	3.45% 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Q4d: My agency has not recently submitted records schedules to NARA because: (Please select all that apply.)

Answered: 32

Skipped: 37

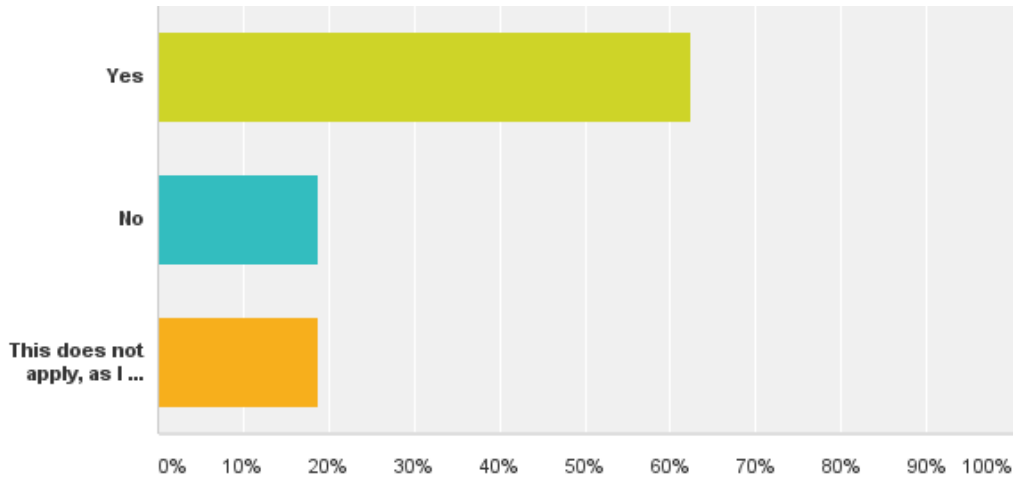


Answer Choices	Responses	
The current records schedules at my agency are adequate.	40.63%	13
I have difficulty understanding NARA's scheduling process.	0.00%	0
I have difficulty using ERA.	3.13%	1
Other (please specify)	56.25%	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>

Q4e: I do receive the monthly Report of Records Appraisal Activity from my NARA Appraisal Archivist.

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0



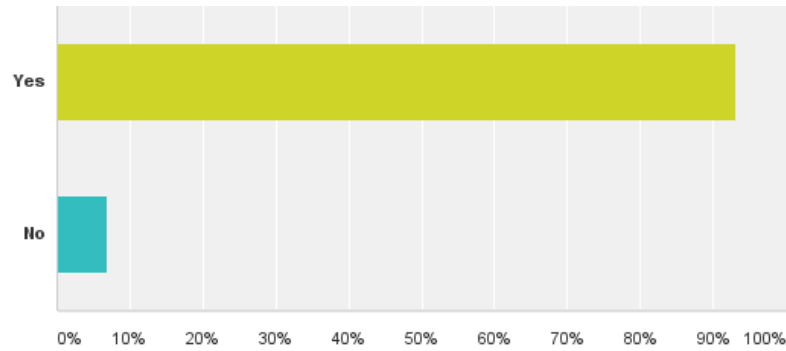
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	<b>62.32%</b> 43
No	<b>18.84%</b> 13
This does not apply, as I do not have any unauthorized disposition cases, registered schedules, or changes to previously approved schedules in ERA.	<b>18.84%</b> 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q4f: Is this report helpful?

Answered: 43

Skipped: 26

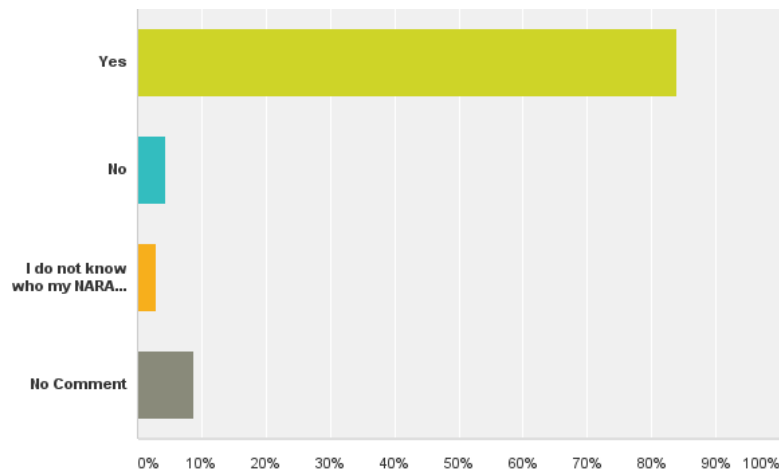


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	<b>93.02%</b> 40
No	<b>6.98%</b> 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

Q5: I have a good working relationship with my agency's NARA appraisal archivist.

Answered: 68

Skipped: 1





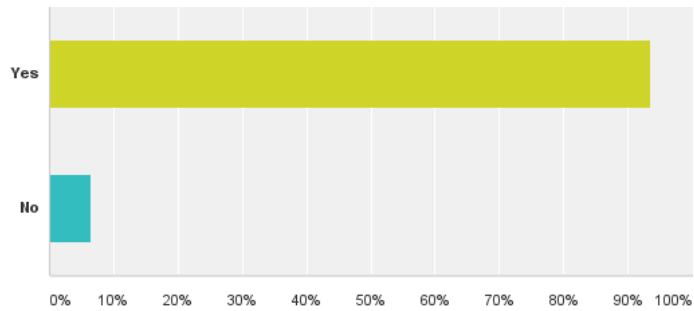
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	<b>83.82%</b> 57
No	<b>4.41%</b> 3
I do not know who my NARA appraisal archivist is.	<b>2.94%</b> 2
No Comment	<b>8.82%</b> 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

Q5b: When I contact my agency’s NARA appraisal archivist for assistance, I receive a timely response.

Answered: 61

Skipped: 8

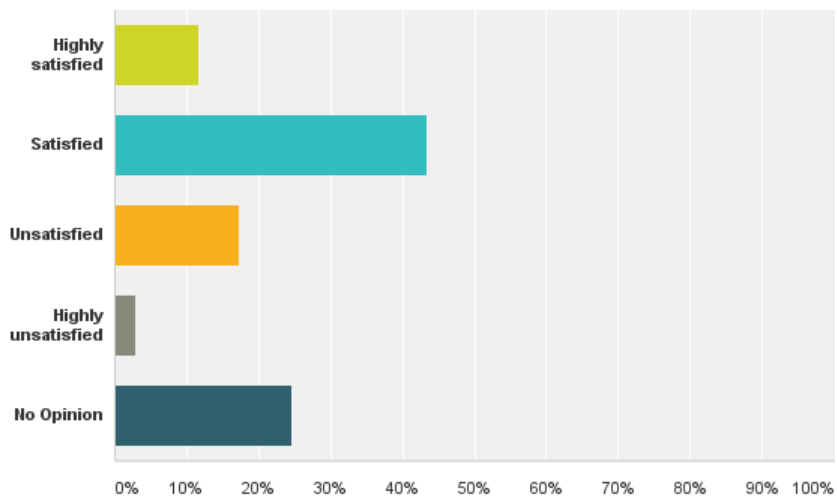


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	<b>93.44%</b> 57
No	<b>6.56%</b> 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

Q5c: How satisfied are you with NARA scheduling and appraisal services?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0



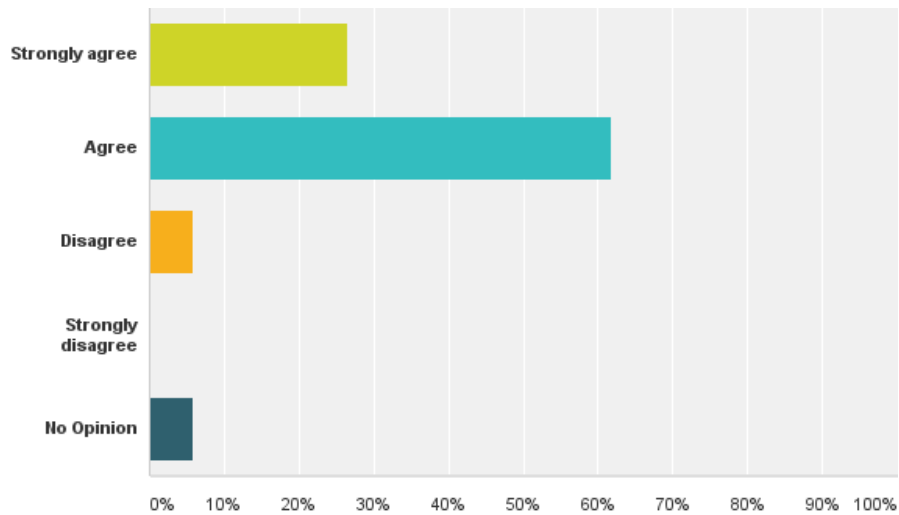
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Highly satisfied	11.59% 8
Satisfied	43.48% 30
Unsatisfied	17.39% 12
Highly unsatisfied	2.90% 2
No Opinion	24.64% 17
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q7: Are the communications you receive from NARA’s records management program clear (e.g., Records Express blog, RM Communications email)?

Answered: 68

Skipped: 1



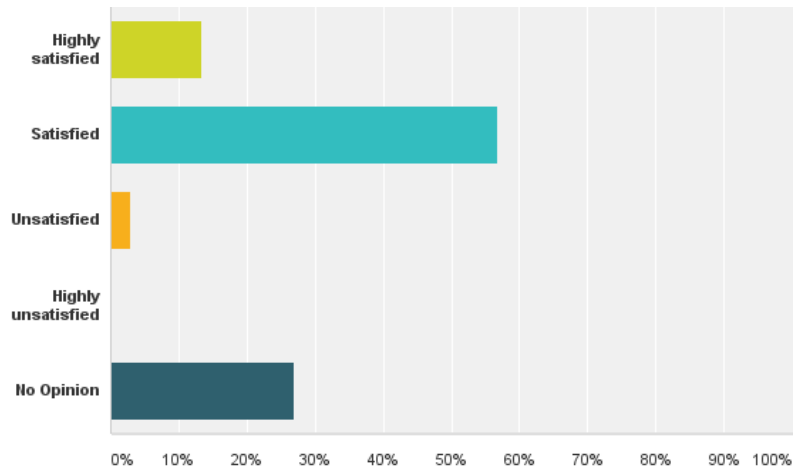
Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	26.47% 18
Agree	61.76% 42
Disagree	5.88% 4
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
No Opinion	5.88% 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

9: How satisfied are you with the support you receive from NARA and the Annual Move process?

Answered: 67

Skipped: 2

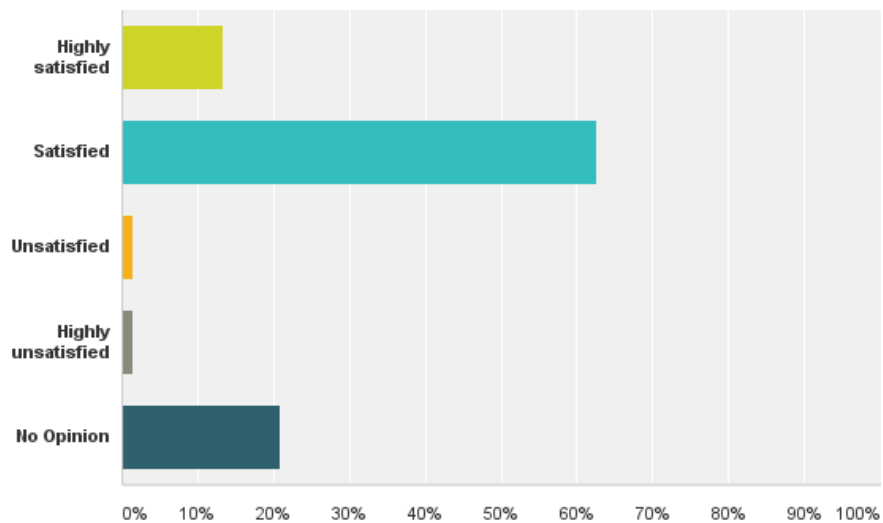


Answer Choices	Responses
Highly satisfied	13.43% 9
Satisfied	56.72% 38
Unsatisfied	2.99% 2
Highly unsatisfied	0.00% 0
No Opinion	26.87% 18
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>

Q10: How satisfied are you with NARA communications on the Annual Move Process?

Answered: 67

Skipped: 2



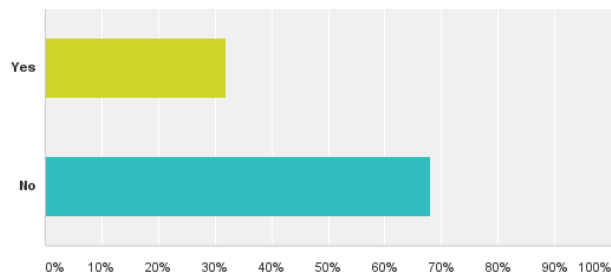
## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses
Highly satisfied	13.43% 9
Satisfied	62.69% 42
Unsatisfied	1.49% 1
Highly unsatisfied	1.49% 1
No Opinion	20.90% 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>

Q12: Have you taken any of NARA's records management courses in FY 2015 or FY 2016?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0

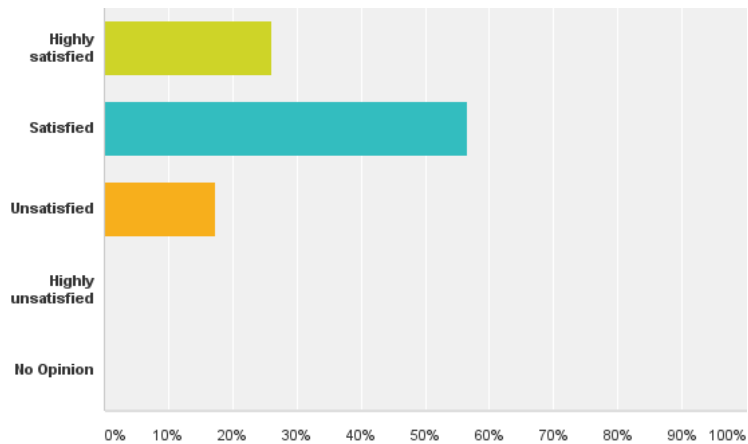


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	31.88% 22
No	68.12% 47
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Q12a: How satisfied are you with NARA's records management training courses?

Answered: 23

Skipped: 46

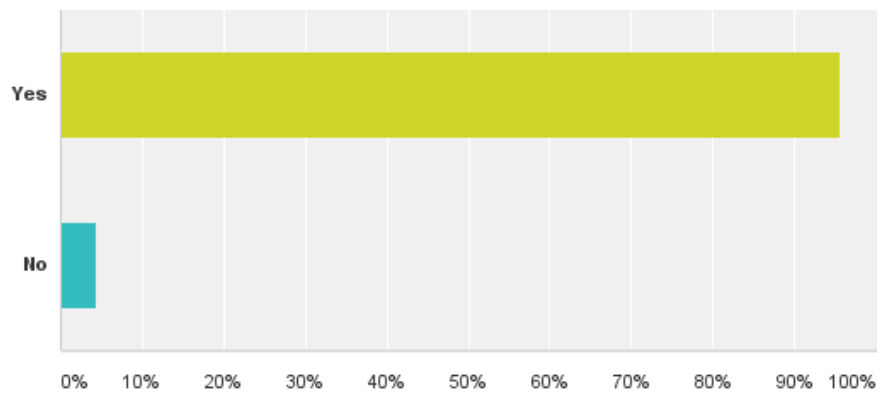


## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Answer Choices	Responses	
Highly satisfied	<b>26.09%</b>	6
Satisfied	<b>56.52%</b>	13
Unsatisfied	<b>17.39%</b>	4
Highly unsatisfied	<b>0.00%</b>	0
No Opinion	<b>0.00%</b>	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>

Q13: Have you viewed any of the training materials available on NARA’s records management web site (e.g., such as briefings, web pages, publications, etc.)?

Answered: 69  
Skipped: 0



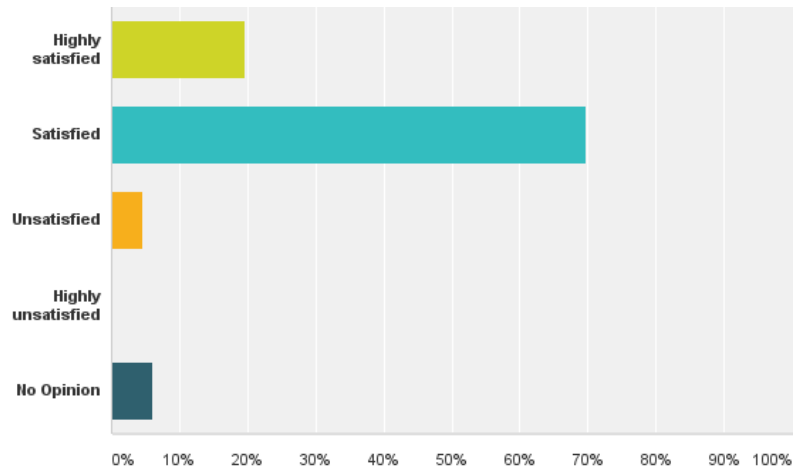
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	<b>95.65%</b>	66
No	<b>4.35%</b>	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>69</b>

Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

Q13a: How satisfied are you with the training materials available on NARA’s records management web site?

Answered: 66

Skipped: 3

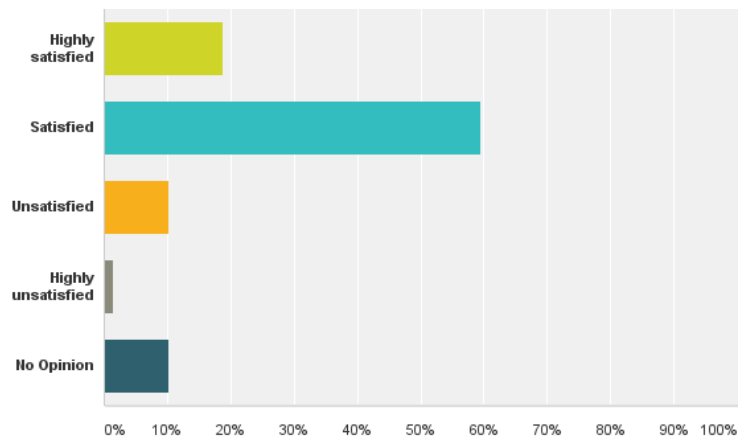


Answer Choices	Responses
Highly satisfied	19.70% 13
Satisfied	69.70% 46
Unsatisfied	4.55% 3
Highly unsatisfied	0.00% 0
No Opinion	6.06% 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>

Q14: How satisfied are you with NARA’s records management guidance products (e.g., bulletins, FAQs, and white papers)?

Answered: 69

Skipped: 0



## Appendix A: Survey Questions and Results

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Highly satisfied	<b>18.84%</b>	13
Satisfied	<b>59.42%</b>	41
Unsatisfied	<b>10.14%</b>	7
Highly unsatisfied	<b>1.45%</b>	1
No Opinion	<b>10.14%</b>	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>69</b>

Appendix B: Detailed Responses

*Note: The following detailed comments are presented as submitted by the agency respondents. Corrections have not been made for grammar or spelling.*

**Q1: What is your position? Other:**

Management Analyst
Records Manager
accountant/rm
SAORM Operational Director
Executive Administrator

**Q4d: My agency has not recently submitted records schedules to NARA because: Other:**

Plan to conduct a comprehensive records inventory.
In the process of drafting schedules to submit to NARA
NA
currently submitting schedules through ERA
We are reaching out to mission units for input
Can't get people on board to review the record schedules
We are in the process of completing an Agency wide inventory and once complete will work to update/replace records schedules
Other pressing projects
I submitted one in FY14 that's not approved.
I have difficulty understanding the scheduling process and receive conflicting information from NARA
Currently placing records in an inventory database. Will review and write/submit schedules for those records not falling under the GRS.
Records schedules are submitted at the department level.
N/A
starting process to get info for schedule if needed
We are currently seeking input from our business units.
N/A we have submitted
We are working to establish and schedule Buckets
We are currently undergoing a full records schedule review.

**Q5a: What do you like or dislike about working with your NARA appraisal archivist: What could use improvement?**

Our appraisal archivist reviews and responses promptly to our requests.
Any concerns I have are addressed and/or questions are answered.
Good customer service, and willingness to provide additional support addressing issues to senior leadership.



Appendix B: Detailed Responses

My NARA appraisal archivist is very knowledgeable, polite and responds promptly to my requests.
more knowledge in general
Our appraisal archivist is wonderful! Very responsive and helpful. Always answers my questions. He is a pleasure to work with.
I have JUST been assigned a new archivist however due to health reasons I have not traveled to meet her.
EXCELLENT! Very available and provide information to assist readily and always provides the right guidance even when matters are complex.
Henry Wolfenger is great. He is very knowledgeable and responsive. I wouldn't change a thing regarding working with him.
N/A
Nothing, absolutely love working with James Cassedy
I dislike the non-availability aspect of this persons position
His attention to records concern regarding FSA/FAS records program.
N/A
Mark is always responsive and has the answers to my many questions since there is not history on the records program here.
I do not contact my appraisal archivist directly. I work through our account manager instead.
I am able to get answers to questions I am unsure about.
Responsive and timely with inquiries.
Always responsive and great to work with because of his experience and Records Management expertise
She is an experienced records manager
Difficult to reach for a question, does not show up to meetings, one on the team has a negative attitude that makes our staff want to avoid them.
I have only been designated as the Commission's ARO and to date Ann Gillette has been extremely generous with her time in helping me acclimate to my new responsibilities.
Mr Rich Noble is accessible, courteous, and professional in our dealings.
I receive quick responses to any questions that may arise.
He's very prompt to return emails and phone calls. I've had no issues with him.
Having a person that is available and responsive.
Provides very frank feedback on what is working and whatg isn't. I really appreciate this approach.
Nothing. Very satisfied with our Appraisal Archivist.
Sean is timely and comprehensive in his responses to my questions.
All work has been satisfactory.
Previously my archivist, Sam Welch, was very hard to get in contact with and took a long time replying to my questions. When I did recieve a response it was a half answer...so I just stopped using him as a resource. In the 3+ years he was my archivist I heard from him a handful of times. I recently received an email from him stating that I have been assigned a new archivist, Robyn Dexter. I have not heard from my new archivist.

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N/A
Responsiveness.
The DOT appraisal archivist is top notch - always very responsive and provides solid actionable guidance
Minimal contact as we are a 2-person agency with no issues
The NARA appraisal archivist is extremely helpful and we have an excellent working relationship.
Rachel BanTonkin is extremely helpful and provides suggestions when needed.
My appraisal archivist is very fast on getting back to me whenever I contact them and is always willing to answer my questions, no matter how strange.
My archivist responds to my request for information.
Tom Cotter is very knowledgeable in Records Management
If he doesn't know the answer, he seeks out guidance within NARA to get the answer for me.
He is courteous and very helpful providing guidance. What I like best is, he can make time to do short notice visits when the agency needs his presence.
Lloyd and the rest of my contacts at NARA are readily available and very helpful.
my appraisal archivist seems unfamiliar with IT, which makes discussions about records and functionality within systems difficult. I am often convinced when speaking with appraisal archivists or attending BRIDG meetings that there is no true understanding of how any agency outside of NARA works, especially when agencies are highly political in nature and/or agencies with highly sensitive records.
More timely processing/approval of schedules.
My Appraisal Archivist is awesome and I wouldn't change a thing. He's very knowledgeable and informative.
Working with Sean Curry is a pleasure. He is responsive, professional, and knowledgeable. There are no areas for improvement at this time.
I like that he makes himself available when we request a meeting.
frequent change or turnover in appraisal archivist.
Like: Knowledgeable; helpful, friendly, approachable Dislike: Work load of our Archivist is very large and sometimes impedes efficient progress on tasks.
I really enjoy working with my appraisal archivist Carly Docca. She is responsive to my questions and provides good, solid advice.

**Q6: Do you have any comments about your satisfaction with NARA scheduling and appraisal services?**

None. The ERA system is awkward and except for the Federal Register process, it seems that it takes a long time for the schedules to go through NARA's approval process.
Have not yet submitted a schedule for this agency
Process of scheduling takes to long.
NARA does an excellent job.

Appendix B: Detailed Responses

Scheduling and appraising is something I plan to discuss with the new Archivist I was assigned July 2016, I need a clear understanding of what I am supposed to do.
The support provided prior to enter into ERA is most valuable so there is minimal or no rework.
May comment is about ERA, which might come up later in the survey. The system needs to be modified to show the transaction dates when search results are shown.
takes too long
None
N/A
I haven't used it yet. But hopefully I can in the next few months.
N/A
Our team is hard to reach, has personalities that are unapproachable, and will give different answers depending on who you talk to. We would rather see NARA adopt an algorithm for determining historical significance of records, to free up archival staff for the borderline and harder cases.
Have not yet used the services.
We have a minimum interaction since we feel our current schedules are adequate.
I wish rejected schedules were rejected a bit quicker
The process/detailed requirements have changed over the years that we have been working on our flexible schedule requiring rework on our end. Also, on NARA's end, the time to review our proposed schedules is taking much longer than expected.
I am hopeful that full staffing of our appraisal unit will improve our scheduling process.
NA
No real basis for opinion yet.
We have found that engaging with our NARA appraisal archivist early in the process before typing anything in ERA is very helpful.
Basic responses are not timely. The whole stakeholder review process takes way too long.
Conflicting guidance or lack thereof causes duplicative efforts.
Cumbersome
None
The approval process can be improved drastically; scheduling of any media should not take 2 years or more to approve.
ERA is horrible and confusing to work with. I log in maybe once a month and everytime I have to call the helpdesk for help logging in. I avoid logging in because I know the pain I have to go through to get into and then the confusion of using it is insane! Could you not just have an online version of the SF115 for scheduling?
n/a
Too slow of a process.
scheduling takes far too long
No
Excellent service. I am not a great fan of the ERA tool for scheduling records. It is cumbersome and difficult to navigate.
N/A

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None at this time
Appraisal process from time of submission to approval takes too long.
No comments.
None
Unless NARA has a legal justification that would delay the approval of the record schedules. Holding up record schedules because the volume of permanent records overwhelms the archives is not really a good reason for delaying agency efforts
No
no comment
Not at this time.
The process to approve a schedule is too long and has impeded progress at our Agency.
No

**Q8: If not, please tell us how we can improve our communications.**

You may have this already but I haven't seen it, a place on your website showing the dates of all the records related meetings and dates, except specific one on one meetings with the agencies.
make sure you always have working links.
Have not yet used the services.
NA
While we understand Section 508 requirements need to be fulfilled, it takes awhile for videos and presentations from NARA BRIDG meetings to be posted.
They're clear, but they don't often provide relevant information.
At times the communication is quite confusing and unclear as to what it is.
I'm really not sure how you can improve the commnications emails that have a wealth of information but sometimes further clarification is still needed.
In those times, I seek additional information from my Archivist who able to answer, if not he seeks out the answer from his superiors or the primary office whose responsible for the content.
There are so many different publications on a topic. For example, email management, there has to be 20 different guides, memos, instructions, and publications on the topic which makes it difficult to look for the information you are looking for.
The new records schedules cause great confusion as they use the old numbering scheme but assign new elements
The emails and bulletins are difficult to read and the important information (including links) are buried deep within messages and bulletins. The subject lines on the transmittal messages are too long, so it takes more time to figure out the subject of the communication. The bulletins and messages contain an excess of repetitive bureaucratic language.
N/A
N/A

**Q11: Please tell us how we can improve the Annual Move Process.**

Need to be more explicit about transfer fees when moving from one FRC to another
We doesn't do the annual move
Have not yet used the services.
Minimize jargon in communications. "Annual move", like many records/NARA terms, is too vague to be meaningful (whether to management, customers, or recently added records staff).
Follow up for those who have not contacted NARA would ensure that we are in fact moving the records.
NA
On a special Annual Move webpage, issue a glossary or an explanation for every entry column on the Annual Move spreadsheet and ERA Transfer Request fields (e.g., "Use Restriction" - list any copyright or trademark issues pertaining to the records to be accessioned"). Even the information can be found in the ERA User Guide and other documentation and even though the Federal Agency Records Officer may know, the subordinate Records Professionals (with high personnel turnover) may not know and that takes precious time to train and educate.
I haven't had to use the Annual Move process so far.
It isn't so much the communication that I have an issue with...It is ERA! I have records needing to be moved from years ago that keep getting rejected by ERA and I dont have the time to deal with the frustrations why this is happening.
n/a
Make ERA more user friendly. The system is still too cumbersome. There should be regular NARA training available on using this system.
N/A for BGSF
Provide agencies with draft list of annual move transfers in May, with reply due in mid-August. This will give agencies time to analyze the list and prepare response.
N/A
more notices, such as quarterly notices
N/A
Add overdue transfers to the Annual Move rather than just including the eligible transfers for a particular year.
I think the annual move process should carry over the listings of those transfers from previous years that are still pending action. The goal should be to get them all transferred regardless of what year they closed.
N/A
The process has improved over the last few years. Much appreciated!

**Q15: If unsatisfied or highly unsatisfied, how may NARA records management guidance be improved?**

Guidance should be more specific, setting forth expectations on federal agencies in more specific terms. Guidance is not effective if it does not clearly convey the types of actions or outcomes that NARA expects
Make it more practical. Also make it less "how to interact with NARA" and more about "how to do records management".
Difficult dilemma – perhaps because they must guide every agency they are too general for practical use
Guidance always seems to wind up with "its an agency decision"
guidance needs to be written not only for the RM community but for the actual owners of records
I believe NARA should provide more specific guidance rather than generalized guidance.
It is hard to find the information using the search engine. In fact, I find more of NARA information using Google. Also, not certain if information is current as some of the material contains outdated processes.

**Q16: Please share any general comments or suggestions you may have for NARA’s records management program.**

Lots of resources. Would like to see if Electronic Toolkit could be updated and more examples related to best practices on Managing an Records Management Program in the 21st Century. Also, to streamline the number of NARA resources to review and find RM content (i.e., NARA Success Criteria on Email Management Capstone Approach).
There are times when information provided is confusing. Clarity and simpler information is better.
Sometimes we have to find items of interest that should be pushed to us. For example, CAPSTONE white paper was on the blog but never pushed to people via RM communications
The YouTube Training videos and the streaming of the BRIDG meetings are a great idea and very useful.
By NARA Training I mean the many YouTube videos. Not all subjects but some of them are difficult to follow. CAPSTONE was difficult. ARCIS is difficult to follow for example.
I would like to participate more in how to face difficult circumstances when agencies pressure ROs to conceal or minimize records problems.
Bring back RACO!!
N/A
I think NARA should be more directive and clear on specific goals. For instance the automotive part of capturing e-mail, e.g. Journaling or archiving is not mandatory, but the goal to keep them an a electronic format is. This creates a challenge in getting resources from senior leadership by having a conflict on what is mandatory and what is voluntary.

Appendix B: Detailed Responses

<p>NARA does a good job of explaining how to talk with NARA, and how we can support NARA. However, it is weak in understanding their customer. Our programs in the agencies have a different focus. We are focused on our customers. Most of their records are temporary, their focus us on their mission. Our challenge is giving the mission areas the right lens to see records management as supporting their mission, rather than an administrative distraction.</p>
<p>The use of the Senior Agency Official as a communicator with sub-components of large Agencies is not as effective as it could be.</p>
<p>remove outdated material</p>
<p>There is such a wealth of information available, sometime it's a bit overwhelming - but I can always find something that helps with whatever the current situation is.</p>
<p>An easier, intuitive way to organize the RM guidance on NARA's website. I appreciate NARA's use of AT&amp;T, which is a much better web conferencing tool than Defense Connect Online! There needs to be more targeted RM training for Records Professionals at levels below the Federal Agency Records Officer but above the Records Custodian level.</p>
<p>A lot of time is wasted negotiating about temporary records on schedules. NARA should be more focused on permanent records.</p>
<p>Training should include clear concise information. At times it seems to be too much and it looses its clarity. For example: electronic records - what should be scheduled and what does not need scheduling</p>
<p>More concrete guidance is always helpful.</p>
<p>PLEASE fix ERA.</p>
<p>n/a</p>
<p>Conduct more formal on-site reviews of programs.</p>
<p>can not continue to assign responsibility to the SAORM for execution and oversight and not provide the tools such as Department-wide schedules and Department wide access to ARCIS and ERA. Just because the SAORM doesn't schedule records, does not mean that the oversight function doesn't need insight into the activities of the agencies it provides oversight of</p>
<p>Would like training session on scheduling electronic relational database information systems. Most records officers are not IT experts and it would help to have a training on how to schedule these systems.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>more hands on training on ERMS, such as training labs</p>
<p>The rolling out of the new GRS has been a little bumpy. It's also been some time since any additions were made and I was under the impression several items were forthcoming.</p>
<p>Ensure that trainers are aware of latest NARA guidance and procedures. For example, I went to an Electronic Records Management course this past April, and the trainers were not aware of the 15-year transfer rule for Permanent electronic records listed on new schedules. They thought that was too long (as I do) for electronic records. Permanent electronic records should be transferred to NARA as soon as possible.</p>
<p>The best the Federal Government has to offer</p>
<p>No comments.</p>

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It would be nice if you could search my dynamically within the controlled record group section of the Records Management part of the NARA website...honestly search capabilities of the entire NARA website should be improved, and there should be an effort to remove more of the outdated information on the site...and the FRC site.

No comments

Overall, thank you!

Would like a single downloaded file of all the vast information provided on NARA's website on Record Preservation and Disaster Recovery. I pulled this together myself but RMOs would benefit to have this as a single resource. In time of disaster, RMOs don't have time to scour the NARA website to find information. ARCIS needs to be updated to include automatic notification when actions have been taken. We have used FRC's scanning service in the past but were told recently they didn't have the bandwidth to take on another job right now - what a shame. Overall, NARA seems to be short-staffed in all areas - this needs to be changed!

I think the records management program is weak as it only focuses on regulations and NARA processes. The guidance documents do not reflect real world situations. NARA does not seem to be in touch with agencies records management programs. Performing audits and recommending mitigation strategies that will never be implemented does not seem productive. More guidance on how to implement a program with a small staff and limited funds seems to be more practical. I like the SAO concept but it doesn't change the funding allocation or increase personnel. NARA needs to create a focus group to really learn about agencies records management programs. Take this feedback and develop realistic guidance. NARA needs to quit talking and begin truly listen and learn about records management in the government.