

READY ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE



THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

1997 - 2007

Revised 2000

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In 1997 I transmitted NARAs Strategic Plan to the President, the Congress, and the American public with a profound sense that much was riding on its success. That feeling continues now as I transmit the first update of our plan.

The National Archives and Records Administration is our national record keeper. It is a public trust that safeguards the records on which people of a democratic republic depend for documenting their individual rights, for ensuring the accountability and credibility of their national institutions, and for analyzing their national experience. Both the Government and the public rely on NARA to meet an almost unlimited range of information needs from records. Such records are essential for congressional oversight committees to evaluate agencies, for veterans to prove their entitlements to such benefits as medical care, for citizens to discover their families' histories, and for Holocaust survivors to trace assets looted from them by the Nazis. These are just a few of the many uses made of U.S. Government records. The records we preserve and make available every day directly affect the lives of millions of our citizens as well as the understanding we have of our nation's history.

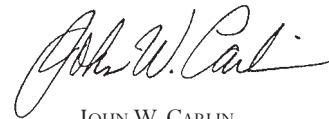
In the Rotunda of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, we are re-encasing America's great Charters of Freedom (the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights) for safe display within an enhanced educational environment. Every time I look at these founding records of our Government, I feel an awesome responsibility for their care, and for the care of the millions of other records in our holdings. Meeting that responsibility in an era of records proliferation, technological change, and financial challenge has been and remains the purpose of our Strategic Plan. How well we meet our responsibility depends on the success of the specific strategies in this plan.

We first created this document as a 10-year plan because we knew we could not do immediately everything that needs to be done. But I promised at the outset that our plan would not sit on a shelf, that we would put it into action, and that we would work hard and thoughtfully to achieve success. Though I remain fully aware that much must yet be done, I take tremendous pride in the progress we have so far made, as described later in these pages. Credit for our progress starts with the outstanding commitment and work of the NARA staff. I asked for tremendous effort from staff members, and they have responded. Also our progress owes much to new partners who joined us as called for in the plan, and to key stakeholders who are helping us move toward our plan's key goals. And through the plan's first three years, we are particularly grateful to the Congress and the Administration for understanding the value of our services and providing essential support.

To update our plan, we reached out, directly and through the Internet, to our customers within and outside the Government, our key stakeholders, and front-line members of our own staff. We also made use of lessons we learned in the first three years of our plan's implementation. The feedback we received reinforced the soundness of the directions we have been taking, but also provided detailed suggestions for improving implementation, and pushed us to achieve results at an even faster pace.

In consequence, the updated plan does several things. It identifies things that are now achievements rather than objectives, such as establishing our reimbursable program for records-center services to Government agencies. It identifies efforts under way to meet objectives, such as our progress toward creating a viable Electronic Records Archives, an Internet-accessible catalog describing all our holdings, and increased direct assistance to Government offices nationwide with records management. Our updated plan also adds new objectives identified through assessments we have made in the plan's first three years, objectives such as building a new regional archives to serve our Southeast Region and completing an assessment of the current record-keeping environment of the Federal Government. Finally, we have removed from the plan references no longer relevant and have updated statistics and examples. Again, I am grateful to all who helped to keep our plan current, challenging, and sound.

This document now identifies what we must do during the next seven years to keep faith with the trust that a democratic nation has placed in us. We must reach this plan's ambitious goals because NARA is not an ordinary agency. We serve not just today's citizens, but all who are yet to come. We must preserve past documents already in our care, but also prepare to manage tomorrow's records in new and challenging forms. If Americans are to have faith in their public institutions, the records of those institutions must be secure, open, and accessible. Ensuring that they are is what NARA does. This updated plan will help us do it even better in the future.



JOHN W. CARLIN

ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES

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THE NEEDS OF USERS

Every day, thousands of people use NARA's records and services in multiple ways.

People from all over the nation, indeed the world, have entered the Rotunda of the National Archives Building on Pennsylvania Avenue to see the American Charters of Freedom—the originals of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. And as a reaffirmation of our nation's faith in the values these documents express and the form of government they gave us, we are re-encasing them for continued preservation and display in the National Archives in the 21st century.

Other people learn about the administrations of Presidents from Hoover to Bush from documents and exhibits in Presidential libraries we maintain. In our regional facilities around the country and our two archival facilities in the Washington area, historians study the Civil War, other scholars review records assembled by congressional committees, investigators trace assets looted from Holocaust victims, film producers find photographs for documentaries, veterans locate proof of their entitlement to benefits, citizens use court records to secure legal rights, journalists listen to Nixon Watergate tapes, and Americans check immigration and census records to fill gaps in family histories. Moreover, lawyers, business executives, consumer groups, environmentalists, and others consult the *Federal Register* and *Code of Federal Regulations* that we publish; students and teachers download documents from our web site; and government officials request assistance in managing their records and call the Federal records centers we operate from coast to coast to retrieve records they need for conducting business. And other customers request information as diverse as the records we hold, view online and traveling exhibits of our documentary treasures, and participate in public programs and educational activities we provide on-site in our facilities nationwide and online at our web site.

How well can we continue to serve all these users? The hard truth is that we face major challenges. Changes in our society, changes in the Federal Government itself, and changes in the nature of records make it necessary for us to devise new plans and find new strategies to succeed. In addition to keeping up with influxes of paper records, we must cope with growing quantities of computer-generated records in multiple formats. We must continue working to stay abreast of accelerating technological change, take advantage of opportunities that technologies offer, and meet increased expectations for electronic access to records.

THE LEGACY OF PAPER

The influx of paper will not end any time soon. Federal agencies are now using computers, but the Government is far from the paperless operation that has been predicted. In addition to the valuable paper records we already have, to which we want to continue to provide ready access, records yet to be turned over to us will continue for decades to be accumulations from the paper age. Moreover, the transfer of such records was accelerated by the last decade's Government cutbacks. As agencies streamlined, programs ended, and military bases closed, their records wound up on our doorstep much sooner than if the programs had continued. Also, the paper and electronic records of the various independent counsels come to us as their

investigations close. By the very nature of our business, our work will grow because even a downsized government continues to generate records.

More and better space is needed to house Federal records. Our resources are currently committed to a system designed primarily to store and provide access to paper records. We operate 3 records services facilities in the Washington area, 19 records services facilities spread nationwide from Atlanta to Anchorage, and 10 Presidential libraries. These buildings house more than 20 million cubic feet of documentary material—literally billions of pages, photos, films, etc. That material has increased in volume by more than one-third just in the past decade, and we have been adding more than one-half million cubic feet of mostly paper-based records per year. In the past, the cost of that space and its maintenance had consumed nearly half of our budget, which did not include money for the major repairs, the additional space, or the upgrading to provide appropriate space for records preservation needed by nearly every NARA facility. Under our Strategic Plan, and with the support of the Administration and Congress, we have now implemented a program in which agencies reimburse us for the storage and retrieval services we provide for records still in their legal custody, so we now have more flexibility to provide the records center space they need. However, quality archival space remains a need, along with improved ways to provide ready access to records. We have a superb state-of-the-art archival facility in College Park, Maryland, which provides appropriate conditions for records preservation and use. But many of our facilities do not. Most are full or nearly full right now. Only a fraction of the archival materials in those facilities are in space that has all the appropriate environmental controls. And space in many of these facilities is not good for staff or researchers. Archival facilities in which we have the most pressing space problems include the original National Archives Building in Washington, DC; the Southeast Regional Archives facility in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Pacific Alaska Regional Archives in Anchorage, Alaska. Moreover, we need to begin planning a sizeable new archival facility for the millions of 20th-century veterans' records to ensure their preservation for continuing use by veterans, their families, genealogists, and historians.

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

Electronically generated records present an even greater challenge. Our society continues to invest heavily in electronic information systems. Government computers have been and increasingly are generating electronic records in various forms. The reality at the beginning of the 21st century is that most records are created electronically and may be maintained in a variety of formats. Included are thousands of major Federal agency databases that must be maintained electronically to preserve their usefulness. Included are vast scientific “archives” of information accumulated by Federal agencies that track the weather and explore outer space. Included is Census 2000, which is critical for determining entitlements to Federal payments, and other databases for tracking the effect of new laws such as welfare reform. Included also are millions of email messages that no one will fully understand in the future unless we preserve both the messages and transmission information about them. Not only the volume but also the range and diversity of electronic records is increasing. Historically, electronic records transferred to us for preservation have mostly been in the form of databases. Now we must

resolve records management, preservation, and access issues involving digital images, digital sound, geographic information systems, web sites, and other electronic record formats.

We are preparing for a future that already is here. As early as 1993, the Office of Technology Assessment reported, “Most Federal agencies now perform many key activities . . . that could not be accomplished with paper systems. . . . Agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Social Security Administration (SSA), Bureau of the Census, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration would literally collapse without information technology.” The Government’s use of digital technology for creating, communicating, and processing information has grown in the interim, along with the creation and maintenance of records in electronic form. During the 1990s, our holdings of electronic records increased from a few thousand files to several hundred thousand. We expect that growth will accelerate in the future. During the Clinton Administration, for example, several electronic records management systems were used by White House staff. Among the electronic records we will accession from the White House are Presidential memorandums and documents, National Security Council cable traffic, the President’s daily diary, and millions of email messages. The State Department is estimated to have more than 25 million diplomatic messages in electronic form. These messages, which hold essential evidence of the conduct of foreign affairs, will be transferred to us in blocks averaging a million messages a year, every year, indefinitely.

Users increasingly expect immediate electronic access to information at no cost.

The growth of web access and “e-government,” the availability of electronic access under the Freedom of Information Act, as amended by the Electronic Freedom of Information Act, and provisions of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act will further increase demands for online records and services. We must master the challenges of preserving electronic records in a way that makes them usable; that is, available in systems through which users can locate needed records, retrieve them, and read them. Also, we must be able to ensure the authenticity and reliability of electronic records. Provision will need to be made for controlling the creation, transmission, and maintenance of electronic records to guard against tampering and ensure a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities, or facts to which they attest.

Solutions are in sight but much remains to be done. Following our Strategic Plan, we have formed partnerships with other government agencies, other countries, and universities. These partnerships have enabled us to achieve significant breakthroughs in the application of computer science and advanced technology to our goals of ensuring that records are well managed, properly preserved, and readily accessible for as long as needed. These breakthroughs, achieved in research we sponsored at the San Diego Supercomputer Center and the Georgia Tech Research Institute, provide the foundation for our vision of the archives of the future—Electronic Records Archives, which will be a comprehensive, systematic, and dynamic means for preserving virtually any kind of electronic record, free from dependence on any specific hardware or software. The Electronic Records Archives, when operational, will make it easy for our customers to find records they want, and easy for us to deliver those records in formats suited to customers’ needs. Our partnerships with such agencies as the Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation will help us realize this vision by building on the successful results of

previous research and prototypes as well as allowing us to tap into leading-edge resources and world-class expertise in laboratories and universities around the country. Our excitement about building the Electronic Records Archives is tempered by our recognition that realizing its promise will require continued technological advances and mitigation of the key risks of such a significant undertaking. It also will require that we sustain a high level of commitment and receive the resource increases that will be needed to provide ready access to essential evidence *in electronic form* across generations of information technology and for future generations of Americans.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF STAFF

Throughout NARA, talented and dedicated people are working hard to meet the goals of our Strategic Plan. They need continued opportunities to focus their energies, learn new skills, make use of new technologies, and develop partnerships for solving problems. We must continue to build an organizational culture that respects diversity, encourages creativity, and values risk-taking, communication, commitment, and loyalty.

We must recruit new kinds of staff with new kinds of expectations. Our planning must include preparation for training leaders for tomorrow. We must help current staff members with traditional archival training to add skills necessary for working with new technologies. And we must replace valuable staff members whom we will be losing to retirement with staff prepared by experience to deal with records in the electronic information age. Moreover, we must partner with universities and professional associations to determine educational requirements for 21st-century archivists. Also, a new generation of recruits for whom the computer is a central work tool may expect more flexible work situations than traditional offices provide, and more independence, responsibility, flexibility and opportunity for the use of creativity. We must assess these needs in preparing for effectively recruiting and training people with the technological understanding, content knowledge, and comfort that we need for future success. And we must seek ways to recruit and retain them in a competitive job market.

We recognize that in today's world no agency can do its job alone. The demand for more efficiency, more service, and more productivity means that we must search for creative ways to collaborate with others in fulfilling our mission. Managing the documentary evidence generated by others is inherently a collaborative effort. We need to increase our partnerships with universities, libraries, professional associations, commercial entities, and other Federal agencies to develop technologies and make records available online. Fortunately, we have built a foundation for such collaboration through work on several projects with external partners, such as the Department of Education, the Government Printing Office, the Department of Defense, the Patent and Trademark Office, and the National Science Foundation within the Federal Government, and the San Diego Supercomputer Center and Georgia Tech Research Institute outside the Government. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission, which we administer, works in partnership with State Historical Records Advisory Boards and the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators, among others. Our headquarters staff collaborates on programs with the nearby University of Maryland, as our Presidential libraries

do with universities near them. And corporations, foundations, and other private-sector donors are in partnership with us and our Presidential library foundations to fund special programs. Now we are building on that foundation, recognizing that collaboration will require flexibility in finding common ground and in coordinating activities to meet common goals. Our staff can exercise leadership most helpfully within partnerships.

All of us at NARA want to do more than just maintain the status quo. We are proud of our institution and its role. It is not enough in our planning just to find ways to dig out from under the paper avalanche and catch up with new technologies. We want to excel, not just survive. We want to meet challenges, not just react to pressure. We want to get ahead of and even influence the technological curve. We want to build an organization that will actively deliver value, not just respond passively to whatever requests may come. We want to foster openness and trust among our staff and improve communication inside and outside the agency. We want to prepare NARA for strong and active leadership in providing records services in this century.

We have made much progress in our plan's first three years. We have made this progress because of the support we have had from the Administration, the Congress, and interested constituents, and because of the work of our staff and our partners. The previously mentioned Electronic Records Archives, just a dream at the plan's first writing, has now become realistically feasible. We have helped the Department of Defense develop a standard for electronic recordkeeping that we have endorsed for use by other agencies in the Federal Government. We have improved our electronic records guidance by helping Federal agencies on critical electronic records issues while more comprehensive ways to meet electronic records challenges are being developed, and instituted targeted assistance to help agencies meet pressing needs for managing records in all media. We have established the previously mentioned reimbursable program for providing records center services to Federal agencies, completed the scheduling of a half-million cubic feet of records in our Washington National Records Center, and promulgated standards for the safe storage of Federal records still in the legal custody of agencies. We have begun to re-encase the nation's Charters of Freedom, prepared for a renovation of the original National Archives Building, and taken steps to improve facilities in our regions. We have taken significant steps to improve the quality and the speed of our service to veterans, improve the policies and processes for determining the disposition of Federal records, and build an electronic Archival Research Catalog that will describe all of our archival holdings online. And not least of all, we have put online an electronically accessible collection of high-interest documents, expanded our Digital Classroom and other access services through our web site, and expanded the electronic publication of the *Federal Register* and related publications, from which our customers made more than 142 million retrievals in 1999.

From our present state, we still have a long way to go. We still must bring many preservation, space, and access projects to full fruition. We must provide better guidance faster on electronic records management. And we must be more persuasive about the value of Federal recordkeeping overall. As records are increasingly created electronically, records-management awareness on the part of Federal officials needs to be increased. Records are assets to be managed like other property assets. Agencies need them not only to meet legal and congressional requirements but

to do their jobs better and satisfy public needs for authentic information. Records are essential for the accountability of a democratic government. We must see that the right, authentic records are available whenever needed, and for as long as needed, throughout their life cycle.

Failing to do so is not an option. The records entrusted to us include the nation's great Charters of Freedom, the very foundation of our democracy. But we also are responsible for the accessible preservation of millions of other Government records on which people depend—records needed for everyday business such as tax returns, contracts, passports, and patents; records used by millions of naturalized Americans to verify their citizenship; records used by millions of military veterans to document their entitlement to benefits; records used by the Congress and the courts and the press in assessing agencies' accountability; records that all kinds of scholars study to assess objectively what we have done as a nation and what we can learn from our national experience.

Without such records, how can Americans document their rights, their entitlements, their identities? How can citizens inspect what Government officials have done and hold them accountable? And how can the children in our schools depend on the textbooks they read for accuracy in describing the history of our great country? As we prepare to re-encase democracy's most important documents, let us also recognize the importance of all documents to democracy.

THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

We began this effort by standing back, looking at our legislation, identifying the basis of our mission, vision, and values, and expressing them as succinctly as we could in a guiding statement of strategic directions, as follows:

Strategic Directions for the National Archives and Records Administration

Vision

The National Archives is a public trust on which our democracy depends. It enables people to inspect for themselves the record of what government has done. It enables officials and agencies to review their actions and helps citizens hold them accountable. It ensures continuing access to essential evidence that documents:

- the rights of American citizens,
- the actions of Federal officials, and
- the national experience.

To be effective, we at NARA must determine what evidence is essential for such documentation, ensure that government creates such evidence, and make it easy for users to access that evidence regardless of where it is, or where they are, for as long as needed. We also must find technologies, techniques, and partners world-wide that can help improve service and hold down costs, and we must help staff members continuously expand their capability to make the changes necessary to realize the vision.

Mission

NARA ensures, for the Citizen and the Public Servant, for the President and the Congress and the Courts, ready access to essential evidence.

Goals

- **One:** Essential evidence will be created, identified, appropriately scheduled, and managed for as long as needed.
- **Two:** Essential evidence will be easy to access regardless of where it is or where users are for as long as needed.
- **Three:** All records will be preserved in an appropriate environment for use as long as needed.
- **Four:** NARA's capabilities for making the changes necessary to realize our vision will continuously expand.

Values

To succeed in our mission, all of us within NARA need to value the following:

- ***Risk-taking:*** experiment, take chances, try new ways, learn from mistakes, be open to change
- ***Communication:*** propose ideas, dialogue with others, develop trust, and act openly, honestly, and with integrity
- ***Commitment:*** be responsible, accountable, and always willing to learn
- ***Loyalty:*** support the mission, help fellow workers, proceed as a team, and recognize that our government and our people truly need our service

The pages that follow expand on the concepts in this statement. These concepts, along with our assessment of our legislative mandates and constituent demands, external influences and internal resources, and obstacles and opportunities, are the foundation from which we developed the goals and strategies that follow.

STRATEGIC MISSION

The mission of the National Archives and Records Administration is rooted in legislation codified under Title 44 of the United States Code. Therein resides the authority of the Archivist of the United States, as head of the National Archives and Records Administration, to provide guidance and assistance to Federal officials on the management of records, to determine the retention and disposition of records, to store records in centers from which agencies can retrieve them, and to take into archival facilities and Presidential libraries, for public use, records that are, in the language of Section 2107, “determined by the Archivist of the United States to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation by the United States Government.”

As defined in Section 3301, these records are:

all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them.

Title 44 further specifies the kinds of records that Federal officials must create and preserve with NARA’s guidance. Section 3101 stipulates that:

the head of each Federal agency shall make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency and designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency’s activities.

Definitions in Section 2901 extend recordkeeping requirements to elements of the legislative and judicial branches, as well as executive branch agencies, and Section 2203 requires similarly that the President of the United States “assure that the activities, deliberations, decisions, and policies that reflect the performance of his constitutional, statutory, or other official or ceremonial duties are adequately documented. . . .”

Thus, NARA shares responsibility with Federal officials throughout the government for “adequacy of documentation”—for seeing that certain kinds of records are created, kept, and made accessible. In Title 44 NARA has an additional and unique role to file centrally and to publish Federal laws and administrative regulations, the President’s official orders, and the structure, functions, and activities of Federal agencies through the daily *Federal Register*. And in Section 2504 NARA, through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, has the responsibility for encouraging the collecting, preserving, editing, and publishing the papers of “outstanding citizens of the United States, and other documents as may be important for an understanding and appreciation of the history of the United States.” All this we have summed up in a simple, succinct

statement of mission that both reflects our statutory mandates and expresses our sense of their significance:

The mission of the National Archives and Records Administration is to ensure, for the Citizen and the Public Servant, for the President and the Congress and the Courts, ready access to essential evidence.

This statement acknowledges our statutory responsibility for records in all three branches of the Federal Government. The statement acknowledges our statutory responsibility to help Federal officials manage records effectively for their own use as well as for the public's. And the statement acknowledges our commitment to making it as convenient as we can for officials and the public to get access to what sections 3101 and 3301 call "evidence" of "essential transactions" of the Federal Government.

The statutes quoted above speak of protecting rights, of maintaining adequate and proper documentation of what officials responsible to the public do, and of preserving records of historical and other value. Accordingly, we have defined "essential evidence" in our mission statement not just as documents needed for court cases, but as material generated by or received by the Federal Government, that documents:

- the rights of citizens,
- the actions of Federal officials, and
- the national experience.

Documentation of the rights of citizens means material that enables them to establish their identities, protect their rights, and claim their entitlements. Documentation of the actions of Federal officials means material that enables them to explain past decisions, form future policy, and be accountable for consequences. Documentation of the national experience means material of importance for understanding and evaluating the effects of Federal actions.

Essential evidence is not limited in form. It can include:

- written paper records,
- maps, drawings, and pictorial materials of documentary value,
- records generated in multiple formats by computers,
- artifacts as well as papers in Presidential library collections, and
- donated manuscripts, Federal Register publications, and other materials that help document rights and entitlements, Federal actions, and historical experience.

We use the term "essential evidence" to sum up, not to supplant, statutory definitions of records or traditional archival concepts. Recognizing that we cannot save everything, nor need to do so, our commitment to essential evidence in our mission statement underscores the particular importance we attach to safeguarding, within the body of Federal and Presidential records, those materials, informational as well as evidentiary, in technical archival terms, that document the

identities, rights, and entitlements of citizens, the actions for which Federal officials are accountable, and the effects of those actions on shaping the national experience.

NARA alone is the archives of the Government of the United States, responsible for safeguarding records of all three branches of the Federal Government. The Smithsonian Institution maintains archives of its own as well as artifacts from a wide range of sources, on a wide range of subjects, including American history; and the Library of Congress preserves private manuscript and pictorial collections, as well as books, of an equally wide range. But neither the Library of Congress nor the Smithsonian has a mandate to protect Federal and Presidential records, or exercises responsibility for seeing that the activities of the three branches of the United States Federal Government are accessibly documented. Historians and other researchers make use of the holdings of NARA, the Smithsonian, and the Library of Congress, but there is virtually no overlap in what we statutorily have the responsibility to collect and preserve. NARA alone is mandated to provide ready access to essential records of what the Federal Government does—why, how, and with what consequences. Our mandate is unique.

STRATEGIC VISION

With the 20th century just ended, we see a particular opportunity, and feel a special responsibility, for securing the history of what may be remembered as the American Century, and for preparing to document what could be for this nation an even greater one.

Consider what the United States has attained: In earlier centuries, our predecessors fought a war for Independence, created a remarkably durable democratic republic, and held it together in a bitter Civil War. In the 20th century, the United States and its allies led free nations to victory in two world wars and a long cold one; put men on the moon; transformed life's conditions through scientific discovery, commercial enterprise, and government action; and at the century's end achieved a rare combination of peace and prosperity as the planet's preeminent nation.

Documentation exists of our national trials and triumphs. We must not lose it, as civilization lost the public records of ancient Rome to the Vandals. Today's threats are more insidious. Acidic paper, nitrate-based film stock, and storage in space unprotected from temperature fluctuations result in the disintegration of both paper documents and photographic images. The problem is compounded by mushrooming quantities of computer-created records in multiplying formats, so easy to delete, so endangered by the physical instability of computer tapes and disks, and so dependent on hardware and software that become obsolete, rendering unreadable records that survive.

Over the years of this plan, we want to stem the losses already occurring in our nation's recorded history, begin to document the 21st century fully and efficiently, and take advantage of new technologies to extend our rich resources to every office, school, and home. That is our vision. The effort to get there is noble, necessary, and difficult. It is noble because it takes the long view, seeking to assure Americans their just place in the history of nations. It is necessary because it supports the continuation of free government through public confidence that the records that

enable citizens to document their rights and entitlements, hold public officials accountable, and assess their nation's historical experience are secure. It is difficult because it depends on establishing working partnerships with all Federal agencies for effective records management programs that encompass all media in which our nation's records are created.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Four general, strategic goals will be achieved if what we envision becomes reality. They are as follows:

One: Essential evidence will be created, identified, appropriately scheduled, and managed for as long as needed.

Two: Essential evidence will be easy to access regardless of where it is or where users are for as long as needed.

Three: All records will be preserved in an appropriate environment for use as long as needed.

Four: NARA's capabilities for making changes necessary to realize our vision will continuously expand.

To achieve our strategic goals, we will pursue the strategies and strive to meet the measurable performance objectives outlined below.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE WILL BE CREATED, IDENTIFIED, APPROPRIATELY SCHEDULED, AND MANAGED FOR AS LONG AS NEEDED.

Strategic Overview

Only by assisting agencies with the management of their records from the time when those records are created can we ensure that essential documentation is available for the Government itself, today's citizens, and future generations. Without effective records management, records needed to document citizens' rights, actions for which Federal officials are responsible, and the historical experience of our nation will be at risk of loss, deterioration, or destruction. To minimize these risks, we will work in active partnership with the Administration, Federal officials, the Congress, and Federal courts to help them create, identify, appropriately schedule, and manage record material so that the Government is able to preserve records as long as they are needed to protect rights, ensure accountability, and document the national experience, and to destroy records as soon as it is practical to do so after they are no longer needed.

Achievement of this goal requires that we rethink our policies, processes, and programs in records management and deliver more effective, practical, front-end guidance and assistance to Presidential administrations, Congressional staff, and agency records managers, so that 21st-century records will survive as well as those valuable records already generated. Achievement of this goal also requires accelerated research and development on problems in managing electronic records, appraising their value, preserving them permanently, and enabling the public to access them electronically—records and images from space exploration, for example, and also records that will be as important in the future as Holocaust assets records are to us today.

We must protect records from the time of their very creation to ensure their accessibility for as long as they are needed to meet the needs of Government agencies and the public. Moreover, better front-end records management will help agencies fulfill their legal responsibilities for recordkeeping and will result in more efficient and responsive records and information services, which will improve performance and save money for the agencies themselves and the Federal Government as a whole.

Specific Strategies

A. We will work in active partnership with Federal officials, the Congress, the courts, and others to ensure that essential evidence is created, identified, maintained, and appropriately scheduled for as long as needed.

1. We will advocate executive-level attention to records management and create incentives for agencies to be our active partners in records management.

2. We will develop tools to assess Government recordkeeping and the needs of those who create, maintain, and use Federal records.

3. We will analyze the practicality, relevance, and effectiveness of our records management legislation, regulations, and guidance; improve their clarity and consistency, and when necessary, propose new legislation, regulations, and guidance that addresses changes that legislation and new technologies are bringing to Federal recordkeeping practices.

4. We will identify “best practices” in records management and promote their broader use; collaborate on innovative training programs and on experiments with information technologies; and lead in the development of policies, standards, and guidelines for effectively managing government records in the public interest.

5. We will test and implement within NARA itself an effective life-cycle approach to the management of Federal records, establishing the credibility of our regulations and guidance to agencies by doing it right within NARA.

6. We will aggressively work with Presidents and their appointees throughout their administration by advising and training them on how to have smooth transitions and avoid later difficulties by practicing good recordkeeping from the start.

7. We will continue to work supportively with the Senate and the House on the records of congressional offices and committees.

8. We will address records management concerns in Federal agencies and courts throughout the country through direct targeted assistance on their critical records management needs.

9. We will work with Federal agencies, private-sector organizations, and international groups to develop and adopt standards and technologies that will make possible the management of electronic records to ensure their preservation and access for as long as needed.

10. We will work with partners in Federal agencies, state and local governments, other countries, and the private sector to explore new technologies for creating, capturing, and preserving essential evidence in all formats.

B. We will work with agencies to revise our records disposition policies, processes, and tools to enable the Federal Government to preserve records as long as they are needed to protect rights, ensure accountability, and document the national experience and to destroy records as soon as it is practical to do so after they are no longer needed.

1. We will evaluate and redesign, as necessary, the process for determining the disposition of records, regardless of format, to ensure we have a more credible, timely, and responsive

process that includes a means to involve public users as well as public officials more effectively in appraisal decisions.

2. We will support the reinvented process for determining disposition through the development of appropriate automated tools for use by Federal agencies and NARA to inventory and schedule records.

3. We will work with Federal agencies to develop and implement policies to ensure scheduled permanent records become part of the National Archives of the United States.

C. We will offer “best in the business” records center services to all Government agencies to support those agencies in implementing efficient and cost-effective records disposition programs.

Key Performance Targets and Measures

We will measure our success by using the following performance measurements to track our accomplishments toward the accompanying performance targets:

MEASUREMENTS	TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The success rate of targeted assistance partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2007, 100 percent of targeted assistance partnership agreements deliver the results promised.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promptness of NARA and Federal agencies in bringing records under records management control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2007, 60 percent of approved new records schedule items cover records created within the last 2 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time it takes for NARA to process records schedule items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2007, the median time to process records schedule items is 120 calendar days or less.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE WILL BE EASY TO ACCESS REGARDLESS OF WHERE IT IS OR WHERE USERS ARE FOR AS LONG AS NEEDED.

Strategic Overview

In a democracy, the records that constitute our archives belong to the citizens, and providing ready access is no incidental service. While managing Government records better, we also envision expanding opportunities for individual citizens, educational institutions, and Federal agencies to make use of them. We see ourselves more aggressively informing and educating our customers about the services we offer and the essential evidence to which we can provide

access. New technologies are making it easier to reach all users in their homes, schools, and workplaces nationwide. We will increase partnerships with Government agencies at all levels, and with university and corporate communities, to take advantage of these new means to bring the holdings of the National Archives to people no matter where they are. We also will enhance the educational usefulness of documentary material to the extent that partners will help us with funding and additional expertise.

Achievement of this goal requires that we listen to our customers, improve access to records in ways that meet their needs, and meet customer service standards in providing ready access. This will mean creating comprehensive catalogs and indexes to our holdings so users can find the records they need; making documentary material, including maps, photographs, sound and film recordings, and electronic records, available through the Internet; improving reference service at our Military Personnel Records Center for the millions of veterans and the agencies who serve them; helping Presidents at the beginning of their administrations plan for public access to their records in Presidential libraries; mounting traveling and Internet exhibits and related educational materials to bring documentation of our national experience to a wider audience; and opening the Nixon tapes, information requested under the Freedom of Information Act, and millions of documents being declassified under Executive Order 12958. In these ways, NARA can become an even greater national resource.

Specific Strategies

A. We will expand current efforts to build a nationwide, integrated online information-delivery system that educates citizens about NARA and our facilities, services, and holdings. This system also will extend opportunities for educational uses of documentary material, make available digital copies of high-interest documents, and contain an online ordering capability.

1. We will implement policies and standards that facilitate development of an integrated, agency-wide information infrastructure.
2. We will expand and enhance our web site, which is our portal for increasing electronic access to our holdings, information, and services.
3. We will seek access partners to expand our online products, including digital copies of records, indexes, publications, and exhibits.

B. We will work in partnership with the Government Printing Office to ensure that all *Federal Register* online and print publications are current and easy to search and use.

C. In addition to expanding electronic access to our holdings, we will ensure microfilm or digital copies of our holdings of interest to genealogists and others are more broadly available in our research rooms nationwide.

D. While recognizing the need to protect national security interests and personal privacy rights, we will represent within the Government the public interest in seeing that material is not classified or otherwise closed unnecessarily or longer than necessary.

E. We will work in partnership with former Presidents to ensure that Presidential records are available for research as soon as possible after the opening of a Presidential library.

F. We will expand public access to documentation of the national experience by seeking public-private partnerships to fund a permanent exhibit around the Charters of Freedom as well as other new exhibits with associated educational materials that we can circulate physically, electronically, or both.

G. We will develop and improve our systems and processes for quickly receiving and answering records requests, particularly at the Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

H. We will work in partnership with the grant program of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to increase nationwide access to historical records through more Federal-state-local collaborative activities, a national agenda of electronic records research and development, and the publication of major documentary collections.

Key Performance Targets and Measures

We will measure our success by using the following performance measurements to track our accomplishments toward the accompanying performance targets:

MEASUREMENTS	TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The success of NARA in meeting our customer service standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2007, access to records and services and customer satisfaction levels meet or exceed NARA’s published standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability of NARA customers to use NARA services regardless of location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2007, 70 percent of NARA services are available online.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of descriptions of NARA archival holdings to all users regardless of location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2007, 95 percent of NARA archival holdings are described at the series or collection level in an online catalog.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of security classification policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2003, ISOO will develop a uniform sampling system for collecting information about classification activity within the executive branch.

MEASUREMENTS

TARGETS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The availability of previously classified NARA archival holdings to the public• The availability of Presidential records to the public• The success rate of NHPRC-assisted projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2004, NARA will review and declassify 100 percent of archival holdings more than 25 years old for which NARA has been granted declassification authority and responsibility for their review by the originating agency.• By 2007, 10 percent of records of a two-term President or 15 percent of records for a one-term President are open and available for research at the end of the 5-year post-Presidential period specified in the Presidential Records Act.• By 2007, 90 percent of all NHPRC-assisted projects produce results promised in grant applications approved by the Commission. |
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STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ALL RECORDS WILL BE PRESERVED IN AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT FOR USE AS LONG AS NEEDED.

Strategic Overview

We cannot provide public access to records for as long as needed unless we can preserve them for as long as needed. Few people realize that the records they use in our reference rooms or through our web site are there only because archivists have inspected them, given special preservation treatment to those that needed it, stored them in acid-free containers, and housed them in space that will protect them from insect damage and destructive fluctuations in temperature and humidity, as well as from fire, flood, and theft.

To provide future access will require rectifying several problems confronting NARA right now. Throughout our facilities, collections of photos, films, and paper documents are already in jeopardy because of high use and/or physical fragility. The old, original National Archives Building in downtown Washington is aging badly to the detriment of records still stored there. Even the cornerstone documents of our democracy on display in the National Archives Rotunda—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—need re-encasing because their aging containers no longer protect them adequately. Climate-controlled, protected archival space is needed for millions of U.S. military service records, dating from the 19th century through the World Wars to the present, now stored in an environmentally inadequate records center, and thousands of cubic feet of other archival records in regional records services facilities across the country. And many of our facilities are simply out of space altogether.

Our biggest challenge, however, is to preserve the millions of electronic Federal and Presidential records being created daily in a dizzying array of formats. Thanks to research and

development partnerships with the Department of Defense, the National Science Foundation, the San Diego Supercomputer Center, the Georgia Tech Research Institute, and our National Historical Publications and Records Commission, we have hope that a real Electronic Records Archives can be developed and built. Such an archives would be able to preserve any kind of electronic record in a format that frees it from the computer system in which it was created. It also would enable us to provide users with records they can read on computer systems now in use and systems yet to come. The Electronic Records Archives will incorporate every type of electronic record we manage—including textual, cartographic, and audiovisual. And the Electronic Records Archives will not be located in any one place but will stretch across NARA’s nationwide system.

To fix our current facilities, to ensure appropriate protection and preservation of their records, and to expand storage capacities adequately to meet demands for more space already upon us will require more resources. The same will be true for the Electronic Records Archives, which may be a more complex and difficult undertaking than the building of the National Archives at College Park. Our ability to meet our storage and preservation challenges for records in all formats will be a key factor in the future course of our agency.

Specific Strategies

A. We will take cost-effective steps to protect our archival and records center holdings in appropriate space, while also providing an appropriate working environment for our staff.

1. We will complete the renovation of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, to make essential infrastructure improvements, re-encase the Charters of Freedom, expand public-use space, and ensure accessibility for all citizens.
2. To address our most immediate facility needs and to ensure we have a strong regional archival system, we will work in partnership with local institutions and officials to build new archival facilities in our Southeast Region and Alaska.
3. We will develop plans to ensure that modern military service records are protected by housing them in archival space with environmental controls, and we will implement a special preservation program for the many fragile and fire-damaged records.
4. We will develop or update architectural and storage standards for NARA archival facilities, Presidential libraries, and affiliated archives.
5. We will work with Presidential library support organizations to increase private funding for major renovations and additions to Presidential libraries.
6. We will ensure that all NARA records centers meet our facility standards within the regulatory timeframes.

7. We will develop and implement policies and standards for the creation of affiliated archives for the physical custody of Federal archival material, particularly electronic records, when feasible and when both the generating agency and NARA, in consultation with users, agree that it is in the public interest.

8. When feasible and with appropriate public comment, we will selectively reappraise the continuing value of record material already in our custody.

B. We will work in partnership with other Government agencies and the private sector to develop and implement an Electronic Records Archives, which can preserve and make accessible any kind of electronic record in a format that frees it from the computer system in which it was created.

C. We will implement an improved preservation program nationwide to ensure our most at-risk holdings get priority attention and that all holdings are protected in the most appropriate, cost-effective manner.

Key Performance Targets and Measures

We will measure our success by using the following performance measurements to track our accomplishments toward the accompanying performance targets:

<u>MEASUREMENTS</u>	<u>TARGETS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of our records space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2007, 90 percent of NARA holdings are in appropriate space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The preservation of at-risk archival holdings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2007, 50 percent of at-risk archival holdings are appropriately treated or housed so as to retard further deterioration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The success of our Electronic Records Archives in preserving and making accessible electronic holdings in all formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2007, 97 percent of NARA's electronic holdings are preserved and accessible, regardless of their original format.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 4: NARA’S CAPABILITIES FOR MAKING CHANGES NECESSARY TO
REALIZE OUR VISION WILL CONTINUOUSLY EXPAND.**

Strategic Overview

We must have the capacity to adapt continuously to change. Technological innovations will continuously provide challenges in our work and opportunities to improve it. Changes in demographics and individuals’ approaches to work will result in an ever-evolving work environment. That means we must aggressively recruit and develop a diverse, flexible workforce, help staff to learn new skills and make use of new technologies, and develop partnerships for solving problems. Our technological infrastructure must be capable of supporting re-engineering, process innovations, and communications among our staff members and between us and the agencies and citizens we serve nationwide. NARA management must create a work environment that encourages creativity and excellence, respects diversity, and values risk-taking, communication, commitment, and loyalty.

Specific Strategies

A. We will ensure we hire, develop, sustain, and retain staff according to the competencies needed to achieve our strategic goals.

1. We will undertake Human Capital Management planning for key positions and redesign our human resource development processes for our entire workforce.
2. Valuing and encouraging diversity in our workforce, we will recruit and promote people with a broad range of educational backgrounds, work experiences, and career interests to meet our strategic needs.
3. We will create career development programs and explore curricular partnerships with agencies, universities, and others to develop leaders for the agency’s future, to educate staff about electronic technologies, life-cycle records strategies, rigorous new business processes, and other strategic competencies, and to provide learning opportunities for staff at all levels nationwide.
4. We will redesign our performance appraisal processes to assign clear responsibilities for stewardship, ensuring that both managers and staff are accountable for their work.

B. We will work with our employees’ union to assist staff in making transitions if their jobs are affected by the implementation of our plan.

C. We acknowledge that we do not have all the answers on how best to achieve the tasks set out in this plan.

1. We will seek out new approaches, best practices, and partnerships, particularly on

electronic records issues, from Federal, state, and local government agencies, universities, professional associations, private businesses, and other nations' archival institutions.

2. We will expand opportunities for our customers to inform us about information and services they need.

D. We will build a practical, affordable automated system for tracking and using records throughout their life cycle. This system will integrate and make available information gathered about records during the process of creation, scheduling and appraisal, maintenance in records centers, destruction or archival accessioning, preservation, and continuing use.

E. We will streamline our production processes for publishing *Federal Register* publications and develop a means for Federal agencies to submit *Federal Register* documents to us electronically.

F. We will build a reliable, expandable, high-capacity, cost-efficient information technology and communications infrastructure to support our work processes and public access to our holdings.

G. We will reduce the proliferation of uncoordinated projects by instituting a rigorous process for analyzing their benefits, costs, and relevance to the needs of users and to priorities in our plan.

Key Performance Targets and Measures

We will measure our success by using the following performance measurements to track our accomplishments toward the accompanying performance targets:

<u>MEASUREMENTS</u>	<u>TARGETS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The linkage of staff performance and staff development to the Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2003, 100 percent of employee performance plans and 100 percent of staff development plans are linked to strategic outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The diversity in NARA's workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2007, the percentages of NARA employees in underrepresented groups match their respective availability levels in the Civilian Labor Force.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The effectiveness of <i>Federal Register</i> production improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2007, NARA will accept 100 percent of the legal documents submitted electronically for publication in the <i>Federal Register</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The effectiveness of NARA's information technology and communications infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2007, NARA will have a 95-percent effective computer and communications infrastructure.

IV. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED?

In previous sections of this Strategic Plan, we have indicated where we want to go and what we must do to get there. This section provides more detail on our planned accomplishments—their relationship and significance to our strategic goals, means and strategies we will use to achieve long-range performance targets, and key external factors that could affect our success. In addition, we discuss the mechanisms we will use to determine whether we are achieving the intended results.

PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

What follows are our key long-range performance targets, which are indicators of the progress we are making toward achieving our strategic goals. These are not the only measures we will use to gauge our progress; our annual performance and operating plans will track additional measures. At the strategic level, the long-range performance targets below will tell us, our stakeholders, and the public whether we are on track to accomplish the goals of this plan. The targets are organized by strategic goal for ease of reference.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE WILL BE CREATED, IDENTIFIED, APPROPRIATELY SCHEDULED, AND MANAGED FOR AS LONG AS NEEDED.

1. By 2007, 100 percent of targeted assistance partnership agreements deliver the results promised.

For essential evidence to be created, identified, appropriately scheduled, and managed for as long as needed, we must take the initiative with Federal agencies to ensure their recordkeeping practices are in accordance with our guidance. In the past we provided general outreach and technical assistance, promulgated policy, and evaluated agency records management programs to compel Federal agencies to comply with our guidance. This resulted in a list of records management problems that agencies had to resolve on their own and reached very few agencies. Through targeted assistance we now emphasize partnerships, not compliance.

In contrast to audits, which were often perceived negatively by agencies, targeted assistance means that we work together with agencies to resolve long-standing or significant records management issues by:

- increasing direct contact with agencies and really understanding what they need from us
- increasing agency awareness of records management responsibilities through tailored training and outreach
- extending outreach initiatives beyond records officers to program managers
- resolving specific records management problems for records in all media, especially electronic records
- emphasizing problem resolution and customer service
- expediting disposition requests that result from partnerships
- developing new measures to verify that agency records management programs are being carried out effectively.

As we make targeted assistance the basis of the way we do records management, we expect to see significant improvements in the way Federal agencies manage their records. Although we will strive to make every partnership agreement a success, in the early years of implementing this new direction, we do expect some growing pains. Therefore, we have set the following interim targets:

FY 2002 85 percent of targeted assistance partnership agreements deliver the results promised.

FY 2005 95 percent of targeted assistance partnership agreements deliver the results promised.

Key external factors Federal agencies must implement their part of the partnership agreements.

2. By 2007, 60 percent of approved new records schedule items cover records created within the last 2 years.

Approving the disposition of records is the most critical statutory responsibility of the Archivist of the United States because it determines how long records must be kept to protect individual rights, provide accountability in government, and document the national experience. When agencies create new functions (and hence, new kinds of records), we must determine the disposition of those records as soon as possible. This will ensure that the records are not at risk and that they are kept as long as needed. This work is especially important for electronic records, which can quickly become voluminous and which can so easily be deleted. Both our targeted assistance effort (target 1.1) and our redesign of the process by which we determine the disposition of records (target 1.3) will help us achieve this target. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 35 percent of approved new records schedule items cover records created within the last 2 years.

FY 2005 50 percent of approved new records schedule items cover records created within the last 2 years.

3. By 2007, the median time to process records schedule items is 120 calendar days or less.

We must make the scheduling and appraisal process more effective and efficient and decrease the time it takes to get schedules approved. Taking a long time to process schedules delays action on the disposition of records and discourages agencies from submitting schedules, potentially putting essential evidence at risk. Our planned redesign of the scheduling and appraisal process will result in dramatic improvements in the timeliness and quality of the process. Until the recommendations from the redesign are implemented, however, we will not be able to make improvements in the process. Recommendations resulting from the

process redesign could be difficult and time-consuming to implement. Until we know more about the changes resulting from our redesign project, our tentative interim targets are:

FY 2002 The median time to process records schedule items is 240 calendar days or less.

FY 2005 The median time to process records schedule items is 180 calendar days or less.

Key external factors If changes in statute or legislation are recommended as part of the redesign of the scheduling and appraisal process, delays in implementation could result.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE WILL BE EASY TO ACCESS REGARDLESS OF WHERE IT IS OR WHERE USERS ARE FOR AS LONG AS NEEDED.

1. By 2007, access to records and services and customer satisfaction levels meet or exceed NARA's published standards.

Our customers deserve the best service we can deliver. Through the measurement of performance against customer service standards, development of customer service teams and customer service training, and process redesign efforts in areas that traditionally had high backlogs, we are coordinating our efforts to ensure that our customer service meets our customers' needs.

One of our biggest challenges is to reduce the response time for requests for veterans' records. At the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis we are in the midst of a multi-year business process re-engineering project to bring the average response time on requests for modern military service records from several weeks to 6 days. We will accomplish this by using teams that will handle requests from start to finish instead of the current assembly line approach, and we will use information technology to help us track and process requests. We will track customer satisfaction and cost per request and from this baseline information develop performance objectives that address increasing the quality of the process while decreasing the cycle time. We also are implementing a new order fulfillment and accounting system, which will help improve service on 18th- and 19th-century military service records at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.

We continue to make process improvements in our research rooms, train staff in customer service principles, employ customer service teams, modernize and upgrade research room equipment, add research room staff, and adjust hours of service to make it easier for more people to use our services. We also are adding public computer terminals with Internet access in all our research rooms. Many of these improvements are critical for us to be able to meet customer service expectations for the opening of the 1930 census in April 2002. We release a decennial census every 10 years—72 years after the original census was completed. This requires at least 4 years of preparation so that all microfilm rolls, indexes, and adequate equipment and staff are available on opening day and during the years of increased research activity that typically follow.

We will meet or exceed our published standards for access to records and services and customer satisfaction levels as follows:

- FY 2002
- 85 percent of written requests are answered within 10 working days.
 - 85 percent of Freedom of Information Act requests for Federal records are answered within 20 working days.
 - 80 percent of requests for military service records at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis are answered within 10 working days.
 - 95 percent of items requested in our research rooms are furnished within 1 hour of request or scheduled pull time.
 - 99 percent of customers with appointments have records waiting at the appointed time.
 - 90 percent of Federal agency reference requests in Federal records centers are ready when promised to the customer.
 - 99 percent of records center shipments to Federal agencies are the records they requested.
 - 50 percent of archival fixed-fee reproduction orders through the Order Fulfillment and Accounting System are completed in 35 working days or less.
 - 95 percent of education programs, workshops, and training courses are rated by participants as “excellent” or “very good.”
- FY 2005
- 90 percent of written requests are answered within 10 working days.
 - 90 percent of Freedom of Information Act requests for Federal records are answered within 20 working days.
 - 95 percent of requests for military service records at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis are answered within 10 working days.
 - 95 percent of items requested in our research rooms are furnished within 1 hour of request or scheduled pull time.
 - 99 percent of customers with appointments have records waiting at the appointed time.
 - 95 percent of Federal agency reference requests in Federal records centers are ready when promised to the customer.
 - 99 percent of records center shipments to Federal agencies are the records they requested.
 - 80 percent of archival fixed-fee reproduction orders through the Order Fulfillment and Accounting System are completed in 35 working days or less.
 - 95 percent of education programs, workshops, and training courses are rated by participants as “excellent” or “very good.”

Key external factors Unexpected increases in records holdings or public interest in groups of records can significantly increase workloads, response times, and wear and tear on public use equipment. Construction at the National Archives Building may result in a temporary decrease in the number of public programs and services offered there.

2. By 2007, 70 percent of NARA services are available online.

With the advent of the Internet and other electronic means of communication, more people, regardless of their physical location, have the opportunity to use our services. Electronic access facilitates communications with our customers, especially those who cannot visit one of our facilities. Our web site is the most widely available means of electronic access to our services and information, including directions on how to contact us and do research at our facilities; descriptions of our holdings in an online catalog; digital copies of selected archival documents; electronic mailboxes for customer questions, comments, and complaints; an automated index to the John F. Kennedy assassination records collection; electronic versions of *Federal Register* publications; online exhibits; and classroom resources for students and teachers. We are expanding the kinds and amount of services and information available on our web site and evaluating and redesigning the site to make it easier to use. By 2004, the forms most widely used by the public will have Internet-based online equivalents for those customers who choose to use them. By 2007, we will extend this service to all appropriate forms.

We also have two electronic request systems: Federal agencies can use the Centers Information Processing System for requesting and tracking Federal agency recalls of records center holdings and an Online Registry System for requests from the National Personnel Records Center. In the future, we expect to expand our new Order Fulfillment and Accounting System to let customers place and track orders online. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 30 percent of NARA services are available online.

FY 2005 50 percent of NARA services are available online.

3. By 2007, 95 percent of NARA archival holdings are described at the series or collection level in an online catalog.

The Archival Research Catalog—an online card catalog of all our holdings nationwide—will allow the public, for the first time, to use computers to search descriptions of our vast holdings, including those in the regional archives and Presidential libraries. Moreover, anyone can perform these searches through the Internet rather than having to travel to one of our facilities.

In FY 2001 we will complete the development of the Archival Research Catalog along with plans for operating and maintaining it. Subsequently, we will migrate existing records descriptions to the Archival Research Catalog and roll out the system to our staff and the public. We also will implement a program to train staff in the fundamentals of the records life cycle and descriptive standards and build our data administration program. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 20 percent of NARA archival holdings are described at the series or collection level in an online catalog.

FY 2005 70 percent of NARA archival holdings are described at the series or collection level in an online catalog.

4. By 2003, ISOO will develop a uniform sampling system for collecting information about classification activity within the executive branch.

The Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO), which is administered within NARA, annually reports to the President on the status of the Government-wide security classification program. ISOO collects data from executive branch agencies that create or handle classified national security information to assess the state of the Government's overall security classification program as well as individual agency programs. Credible data are essential to making these assessments. One element that has been particularly troublesome for the larger classifying agencies is the number of classification decisions made by classifiers in a fiscal year. Three agencies use sampling methods to determine this number. These agencies represent more than 90 percent of all classification activity in the executive branch. The results from their sampling methods tend to vary significantly from year to year because the methods lack uniformity in content and application. Consequently, the reliability and credibility of the data are questioned. A uniform sampling method would result in more reliable and credible data.

Key external factors Agencies who sample their number of classification decisions must cooperate in the development of the uniform methodology.

5. By 2004, NARA will review and declassify 100 percent of archival holdings more than 25 years old for which NARA has been granted declassification authority and responsibility for their review by the originating agency.

Executive Order 12958 requires the declassification of material 25 years old unless specifically exempt. The Government protects millions of classified documents at great expense, including more than 400 million pages in our Washington, DC, area facilities and 24 million pages in Presidential libraries. The majority of these documents more than 25 years old no longer require classified protection and can and should be accessible to citizens. Our interim target is:

FY 2002 NARA will review and declassify 85 percent of archival holdings more than 25 years old for which NARA has been granted declassification authority and responsibility for their review by the originating agency.

Key external factors The Kyl and Lott Amendments require that we re-review, page-by-page, up to 200 million pages of records already released to the public to ensure that no Restricted Data and Formerly Restricted Data was inadvertently released. This review is diverting resources from normal declassification work.

The Nazi War Crimes Act and other special declassification projects also are reducing the amount of declassification that can be accomplished with existing resources. Instead of examining entire records series for declassification, many of our declassification staff are required to examine individual withdrawn classified documents to determine their relevance and coordinate their declassification with the appropriate agencies under the Nazi War Crimes Act.

We have partnered with several agencies that are providing declassification support. The CIA must continue to provide technical support to enable the review of documents by other agencies. The State Department and other agencies must take prompt action on reviewing and declassifying documents in Presidential libraries.

6. By 2007, 10 percent of records of a two-term President or 15 percent of records for a one-term President are open and available for research at the end of the 5-year post-Presidential period specified in the Presidential Records Act.

The Presidential Records Act (PRA) requires Presidential records to be available for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests 5 years after the President leaves office. Five years after the last two Presidents left office, well under 10 percent of their records had been opened, largely because of the absence, on the Presidents' departures, of NARA staff trained to accomplish the exacting reviews required under the PRA and FOIA. We must ensure that Presidential records are available in accordance with the Act in a more timely fashion.

To ensure the preservation of Clinton Administration records and artifacts for informational, historical, evidentiary and administrative purposes and to prepare for the transfer of Presidential and Vice Presidential records to our custody, we are working closely with White House and Vice Presidential staff to account for and inventory Presidential records in all media held in Presidential, First Lady, and Vice Presidential staff offices and other file locations. With assistance from the Department of Defense, we will complete the transfer of Presidential and Vice Presidential records to NARA-operated sites in FY 2001. We also are establishing a Clinton Presidential Materials Project. The staff that we have hired and trained in the requirements of the PRA and FOIA will begin processing Clinton Administration records and artifacts as part of this Project. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 2 percent of Clinton Presidential records are processed for opening on January 20, 2006.

FY 2005 8 percent of Clinton Presidential records are processed for opening on January 20, 2006.

Key external factors We do not have legal custody of the records of the President and Vice President until the end of the Administration. Our access to current Presidential and Vice Presidential records to prepare them for transfer to the Clinton Project is at the approval of the incumbent President and Vice President. Once the records are in our custody, progress in processing and inventorying the records may be hindered by an unusually large number of special access requests or subpoenas.

7. By 2007, 90 percent of all NHPRC-assisted projects produce results promised in grant applications approved by the Commission.

Grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission help archivists, editors, and historians nationwide broaden public access to the entire range of records on which the understanding of American history depends. Toward this end, the NHPRC works to ensure completion of documentary projects on America's founding era; strengthens the nation's archival infrastructure through collaboration with the states; and funds research and development on preserving and making accessible important documentary sources in electronic form.

The Commission, which is administered within NARA, achieves its goals largely through a competitive grants program open to nonprofit organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, and (in a limited number of cases) individuals. Projects are evaluated during and at the close of the grant period to determine if they have submitted evidence of the satisfactory completion of the project along with the necessary copies of products. Because some of the projects are experimental, they may not produce the expected results. In these cases, however, finding out what does not work may be just as valuable as finding out what does work. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 84 percent of all NHPRC-assisted projects produce results promised in grant applications approved by the Commission.

FY 2005 88 percent of all NHPRC-assisted projects produce results promised in grant applications approved by the Commission.

Key external factors The NHPRC rigorously evaluates grant applications on the basis of the relevance of projects to the NHPRC's strategic objectives and the ability of applicants to produce promised results. Nonetheless, results ultimately depend on the grantees rather than on the NHPRC.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ALL RECORDS WILL BE PRESERVED IN AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT FOR USE AS LONG AS NEEDED.

1. By 2007, 90 percent of NARA holdings are in appropriate space.

Providing appropriate physical and environmental storage conditions is the most cost-effective means to ensure records preservation. While our state-of-the-art facility in College Park, Maryland, provides appropriate storage conditions for the archival headquarters records of most Federal agencies as well as modern records of national interest, several regional facilities have severe quality problems, including backlogs of needed repairs and renovations, and existing Presidential libraries need upgrades in environmental conditions.

We are taking a multi-pronged approach to ensuring our holdings are in appropriate space. Based in part on our experience with our College Park facility, we are developing storage standards for all NARA archival records holdings. We published new standards to safeguard Federal records in records centers and other records storage facilities. These standards will ensure Federal records are protected whether they are stored by NARA, another Federal agency, or the private sector. The National Archives Building in Washington, DC, which has been the focus of several engineering and architectural studies, is under renovation. On January 20, 2001, we will take custody of the records of the Clinton Administration. We must lease, staff, and equip a temporary facility to house all the Presidential materials, safely transport the records there, and process the records and prepare for the opening of the Clinton Presidential Library. For this and future Presidential libraries, we are developing new facility standards to ensure Presidential records and artifacts are appropriately housed. In addition, many older libraries are undergoing renovations and upgrades. Finally, in our regions we are focusing first on facilities with the worst storage conditions (Atlanta, St. Louis) and on those which are out of space (Atlanta, Anchorage). Our interim targets are:

FY 2004 The renovation of the National Archives Building is completed.

FY 2004 The Clinton Presidential Library opens.

FY 2004 The new facility for the Southeast Regional Archives is completed.

FY 2005 The new facility for the Pacific Alaska Regional Archives (Anchorage) is completed.

Key external factors Public, Administration, and congressional support for our space planning activities is vital to develop and implement proposed plans. The plans for moving Clinton Presidential materials to temporary space rely on the cooperation and assistance of the Department of Defense. Completion of the Clinton Library is dependent on the acquisition of land and donation of sufficient funding to the Clinton Foundation to build the library.

2. By 2007, 50 percent of NARA's at-risk archival holdings are appropriately treated or housed so as to retard further deterioration.

Providing public access to records for as long as needed requires that we assess the preservation needs of the records, provide storage that retards deterioration, and treat or duplicate and reformat records at high risk for deterioration. We must preserve paper records and motion pictures, audio recordings, video tapes, still photography, aerial photography, microfilm and other microforms, and maps and charts in a variety of formats in our holdings. We have implemented a risk assessment program to identify at-risk records among new accessions and among previously accessioned textual (paper) holdings in the Washington, DC, area. We will implement these risk assessment procedures in Presidential libraries and for archival records in our regional records services facilities. We also will retard further deterioration of the large quantities of acetate-based motion pictures, still photos, aerial films, and microfilms in the Washington,

DC, area by housing them in cold storage. We will identify other nontextual records at risk outside the Washington, DC, area and develop a long-term, nationwide plan for their preservation.

At our National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis the records of the service of our 20th-century military veterans require immediate preservation attention. Because these records have such great value to current veterans now trying to document their rights and to future researchers documenting the military history of the 20th century, the majority of these records will be accessioned by NARA. To ensure both short-term and continuing access to these records, we are establishing a comprehensive preservation program for these records with a professional staff. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 40 percent of NARA's at-risk archival holdings are appropriately treated or housed so as to retard further deterioration.

FY 2005 45 percent of NARA's at-risk archival holdings are appropriately treated or housed so as to retard further deterioration.

Key external factors Unusually large increases of new at-risk records, increases in the cost of leasing cold storage space, and growing or shifting public demands for the use of at-risk records could delay achievement of performance objectives. Limitations on the availability of appropriate cold storage facilities and commercial treatment labs will affect the Presidential libraries' ability to address audiovisual holdings' requirements.

3. By 2007, 97 percent of NARA's electronic holdings are preserved and accessible, regardless of their original format.

We have accessioned and are preserving more electronic records than any other government archives in the world. All citizens count on us to ensure that our heritage in electronic form is preserved for as long as needed. But even as the world leader, we still lack the capacity to accommodate our current backlog of files and the exploding volume and variety of electronic data files that Federal agencies transfer to us. We must expand the capacity of our current preservation system, research options with public and private sector partners to establish a more robust system, and accommodate an increasing number of routine electronic accessions in a variety of media and in a number of file formats.

To deal with the complex challenges we face in accessioning, preserving, and providing access to electronic records, we are taking a short- and long-term approach. First, we must extend and expand our existing systems that handle electronic records processing because that is the only means we currently have of controlling these records. For the future, however, we have research and development partnerships with the National Science Foundation, the San Diego Supercomputer Center, and others to discover new ways to look at preserving and providing access to electronic records within a comprehensive and stable architecture that will be infrastructure independent, scalable, modular, and extensible.

Risk management is a key factor to the success of an undertaking of this size and scope. To mitigate risk, more research and development must occur, but we believe by building on the successes of our partners' research and prototypes, we can develop and build an Electronic Records Archives that will preserve any kind of electronic record in a format that frees it from the computer system that created it and will allow us to respond to reference requests in ways that meet customer needs. We plan to complete the research, development, prototype, and pilot by 2004. Once the Electronic Records Archives is operational, we will assess the need for continuation of our existing electronic records preservation systems.

FY 2002 60 percent of NARA's electronic holdings are preserved and accessible, regardless of their original format.

FY 2004 The pilot Electronic Records Archives is implemented.

FY 2005 80 percent of NARA's electronic holdings are preserved and accessible, regardless of their original format.

Key external factors The results of existing and future research and development into electronic records preservation and further advances in technology used by Federal agencies may change the requirements for an electronic records preservation system.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 4: NARA'S CAPABILITIES FOR MAKING CHANGES NECESSARY TO
REALIZE OUR VISION WILL CONTINUOUSLY EXPAND.**

1. By 2003, 100 percent of employee performance plans and 100 percent of staff development plans are linked to strategic outcomes.

A new agency performance appraisal system that links employees' individual performance with our performance as an agency will demonstrate to staff their importance to the success of our Strategic Plan. To ensure that our employees are prepared to carry out the responsibilities in their performance plans, we must help them learn new skills, refresh old skills, and make use of emerging technologies. We will develop, test, refine, and implement career development programs focusing on instruction in supervisory, universal, supplemental, and job-specific competencies that are linked to accomplishment of our strategic goals. Supervisors and managers will be trained in developing new performance plans and staff development plans for their employees. All staff must be actively engaged in fulfilling their new plans or our workforce will stagnate, and we will not be able to take advantage of new ideas and opportunities to achieve our strategic vision.

2. By 2007, the percentages of NARA employees in underrepresented groups match their respective availability levels in the Civilian Labor Force.

A diverse workforce enhances our agency by ensuring that we can draw on the widest possible variety of viewpoints and experiences to improve the planning and actions we undertake to achieve our mission and goals. By promoting and valuing workforce diversity, we create a work setting where these varied experiences contribute to a more efficient and dynamic organization and employees can develop to their full potential.

Training in diversity is a critical step for creating an understanding of the value of diversity and ensuring its integration into our organization. We also are focusing on improving our performance in hiring and promoting people in underrepresented groups by continuing our efforts to expand recruiting techniques, collecting and analyzing pertinent personnel management data, and implementing staff development programs. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 The percentages of NARA employees in under represented groups match 60 percent of their respective availability levels in the Civilian Labor Force.

FY 2005 The percentages of NARA employees in underrepresented groups match 80 percent of their respective availability levels in the Civilian Labor Force.

Key external factors Achievement of this target depends on qualified people in underrepresented groups applying for positions at NARA.

3. By 2007, NARA will accept 100 percent of the legal documents submitted electronically for publication in the *Federal Register*.

The information published within the *Federal Register* system is essential to the life, health, safety, and defense of the citizens of the United States and of its governmental, business, and social systems. Informing citizens of their rights and legal responsibilities was at the heart of the establishment of the *Federal Register* system and improving our capability do this remains a critical ongoing responsibility.

We have successfully added online publications to the *Federal Register* system, which has increased public access to this essential evidence. Nevertheless, to meet customer needs and the requirements of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, we must improve the Federal Register's capabilities to accept and publish documents electronically. We are undergoing a business process improvement project and developing an Electronic Document Management System so we will be able to receive and edit documents electronically, maintain version control of documents electronically, update the *Code of Federal Regulations* online every day, offer richer text-search options to *Federal Register* users, and create an electronic public inspection desk. We also must work with the Government Printing Office and other Government and private-sector partners to resolve the technical, policy, legal, and security issues of moving to this electronic environment. Our interim target is:

FY 2003 NARA will complete pilot projects with three Federal agencies to electronically receive legal documents for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Key external factors Successful Government-wide electronic commerce remains dependent upon the resolution of issues surrounding Government-wide digital signature standards and an electronic public key infrastructure.

4. By 2007, NARA will have a 95-percent effective computer and communications infrastructure.

Our information technology backbone is NARANET, a wide-area network that connects the entire agency internally and connects us to public and government customers via the Internet. Reliable performance of NARANET is essential to ensuring that customer expectations for access to our information and services can be met. To achieve a 95-percent effective computer infrastructure, we must ensure: the network is available to users 99.7 percent of the time, user services are delivered within established parameters 95 percent of the time, and services to the desktop are delivered within established timeframes 90 percent of the time. Our interim targets are:

FY 2002 NARA has a 90-percent effective computer and communications infrastructure.

FY 2005 NARA has a 93-percent effective computer and communications infrastructure.

Key external factors Because of technology changes in both hardware and software, NARANET components either rapidly become obsolete or cannot be maintained efficiently. Generally this means that 20 to 30 percent of the components must be replaced or upgraded each year. To achieve the necessary level of performance, we must acquire new hardware and software to support a 15-percent annual growth as well as cyclically maintain the minimum levels on existing systems.

TARGETS ACHIEVED

The following long-range performance targets from the 1997 version of our strategic plan were met and have been replaced in the current plan with new or follow-on targets. These targets were in Strategic Goal 2.

- By 2007, 50 percent of customer contacts for NARA information and services are made electronically.
- By 2002, 100 percent of Office of Federal Register publications are available upon publication in both traditional formats and online.

We also made progress in a number of areas toward our strategic goals. Significant achievements are noted below.

Strategic Goal 1

We tested, evaluated, and endorsed the Department of Defense standard for the management of electronic records.

We issued guidance to Federal agencies on how to schedule certain electronic records.

We launched an interagency Fast Track Guidance Development Team, which is developing and disseminating through the web guidance on electronic records issues.

We hired several senior records analysts to bolster our targeted assistance to Federal agencies to help them resolve long-standing or significant records management issues in all media.

Strategic Goal 2

We completed a 2-year project to digitize 124,000 high-interest documents, which are linked to records descriptions in our NARA Archival Information Locator.

We described 3,210 microfilm publications and their locations in our NARA Archival Information Locator.

We completed descriptive and data content standards, technical and functional requirements, and a data model for our future Archival Research Catalog.

We implemented core teams who are using redesigned work processes to improve service on military service records at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

Strategic Goal 3

We began the renovation of the National Archives Building.

We designed, developed, fabricated, and tested a manufacturing model of the prototype encasement for the Charters of Freedom.

We issued facility standards for the storage of Federal records in records storage facilities.

On October 1, 1999, we successfully converted our records center program to a revolving fund operation.

We increased the processing capacity of the Archival Preservation System to 50,000 files per year.

Strategic Goal 4 We renovated all of our mission critical systems for Year 2000 compliance.

For more information about our performance on long-range performance targets and annual objectives, please see our annual performance reports.

ASSESSING OUR RESULTS

Periodic assessment of the results we achieve and the extent to which our organization caused these results is necessary for successful strategic management. Decision makers need to know what worked, what didn't, and why, and explore ideas of what should be done next. The evaluation process described below will provide the information we need to improve performance, ensure accountability, and inform the planning process.

Performance Measurement

One of our major accomplishments in FY 1998-1999 was the development and deployment of our Performance Measurement and Reporting System. To tell the Congress, the Administration, and the American people how well we are progressing toward our strategic goals, we need data that is consistent, reliable, and auditable. Our new system is a data warehouse that allows us to define and consistently measure data critical to the analysis of our progress on our strategic and annual performance plans. The system collects performance data from other databases and systems, verifies that the data is "clean," and stores it in a central warehouse for reporting purposes. We can compare the performance data with our targets in a variety of dimensions, including across time (yearly, quarterly, monthly, etc.) and across organizational components. For the first time we have reliable performance data that we can analyze and use to show results and improve our services. Each year we are further refining and expanding the system to incorporate more of a balanced scorecard approach for tracking cycle times, quality, productivity, cost, and customer satisfaction for our products and services.

Customer Satisfaction Assessment

Development and implementation of a comprehensive and coordinated program to measure the satisfaction of customers with our services is another key to strategic management success. Our customers will be surveyed on a recurring basis to establish agreement on responsive service levels and to determine degree of satisfaction with the accuracy and timeliness of services. By repeating surveys at frequent, systematic intervals, changes in our performance will be measured and appropriate management actions taken to ensure that service levels reflect an appropriate balance between customer needs and NARA resources.

Program Evaluation

We will verify and validate measured values of actual performance and customer satisfaction in several ways. We will use three existing mechanisms—periodic management reviews, formal audits of operations, and systematic sampling of measurement system effectiveness—to evaluate the degree to which our strategies are succeeding. Applicable program evaluations and audits are cited in the Bibliography at the end of this plan.

Combining these performance measurement and evaluation methods and integrating them into every level of day-to-day management of our operations provide powerful tools to assess the success of our programs, enabling us to determine which programs are on schedule to meet their objectives, what is or is not working and why, and what additional steps are necessary to ensure the program can meet the service level agreements which have been established. This focus on whether intended results are occurring, and the degree to which our programs have influenced those results, is at the heart of the Government Performance and Results Act's intent. We will monitor external changes that affect our work, evaluate the degree to which our strategies are succeeding, and change those that are not.

USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Applying information technology to our business processes is one of the significant methods for implementation of this strategic plan. When properly applied, information technology can both improve customer service and help contain costs. However, certain principles must be followed to ensure that the information technology is correctly applied. Specifically, we will ensure that the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996, the Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998, OMB Circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Systems," and other OMB information policy and technology regulations are carefully followed in our information technology processes.

To accomplish this, an Information Technology Review Team chaired by the Archivist and including the Chief Information Officer and the Chief Financial Officer oversees the application of information technology in NARA. The team uses a three-tiered process involving selection, control, and evaluation of information technology projects. Only the best ideas are funded—ideas that are in keeping with the Strategic Plan, meet customer needs, demonstrate a substantial return on investment, and have an acceptable risk of technical failure. The Review Team regularly reviews our information technology portfolio to make certain that the benefits truly are worth the expense. In addition, the Chief Information Officer evaluates our information technology decision-making process and adjusts the program when necessary to improve overall performance.

CONCLUSION

This, then, is the Strategic Plan of the National Archives and Records Administration. It is a plan—a concrete, measurable, and practical plan—for stemming losses now occurring in our nation’s recorded history, for assuring adequate documentation of events to come, and for expanding opportunities for all Americans to make use of government records in all forms, now and for posterity.

It is also a living plan, one that we genuinely intend to use, which means, among other things, that we must periodically reassess how useful it is. We will re-examine it each year to see what has happened to the assumptions on which it is based, what unanticipated challenges have subsequently arisen, and what unexpected opportunities have come to hand. How change will affect us we can only guess, but we can be sure that change will come, and that our plan can succeed only to the extent that we keep it current. Thus, at the same time that we commit ourselves to this plan, we also commit ourselves to continue planning.

A CHRONOLOGY OF STREAMLINING, STRATEGIC PLANNING, AND GPRA ACTIVITIES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
08/03/1993	President Bill Clinton signs Public Law 103-62, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993
09/11/1993	The President issues a Presidential Memorandum on Streamlining the Bureaucracy The President issues Executive Order 12861 on the Elimination of One-Half of Executive Branch Internal Regulations The President issues Executive Order 12862 on Setting Customer Service Standards
10/15/1993	Acting Archivist Trudy Peterson forms three task forces to respond to the Presidential initiatives of September 11
11/01/1993	The Acting Archivist proposes the Federal Records Center program as a pilot project under the GPRA The Acting Archivist submits the agency's preliminary streamlining plan to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
12/01/1993	The Acting Archivist submits the agency's streamlining plan to OMB
12/03/1993	The Acting Archivist approves and disseminates the FY 1994 NARA Strategic Plan
12/13/1993	The Task Force on Reinventing NARA submits its final report to the Acting Archivist
12/20/1993	The Acting Archivist issues a memorandum on Next Steps in Reinventing NARA
01/28/1994	The Customer Satisfaction Initiative Committee and the Employee Survey Working Group administer a nationwide employee survey
01/31/1994	OMB approves NARA's pilot project request
02/23/1994	The Acting Archivist issues a second memorandum on Next Steps in Reinventing NARA The Still Pictures Reference Task Force begins Business Process Re-Engineering (BPR) study of reproduction services for still photography agency-wide
03/03/1994	The Acting Archivist submits NARA's Status Report on Customer Surveys to the President

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
03/18/1994	The Employee Survey Working Group begins holding open forums on the survey results
03/29/1994	The President signs Public Law 103-226, the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994
03/31/1994	The Acting Archivist submits the annual performance plan for NARA's GPRA pilot project to the Office of Management and Budget
04/01/1994	The Acting Archivist holds open forums on the State of the Archives
04/06/1994	The Acting Archivist offers buyouts and early retirement to eligible employees
04/11/1994	The Acting Archivist issues a memorandum on Update on NARA Restructuring Initiative
04/19/1994	The Acting Archivist institutes a hiring freeze
04/23– 05/13/1994	The Archivist's Planning Team solicits staff input on restructuring alternatives
04/28/1994	The Acting Archivist issues a memorandum on Staff Input for Reorganization Alternatives
05/09/1994	The Acting Archivist restructures the Office of the Archivist
05/20/1994	Still Pictures Reference Task Force submits final report of BPR study of agency-wide reproduction services for still photography. Implementation actions begin.
05/23/1994	The Employee Survey Working Group issues Employee Survey Final Report
06/02/1994	The Acting Archivist offers a second opportunity for eligible employees to receive buyouts and early retirement
07/14/1994	The Acting Archivist submits the agency's streamlining plan to OMB
08/02/1994	Strategic Plan Working Group holds first meeting to draft FY 1995 NARA Strategic Plan
08/03– 04/1994	The Acting Archivist holds open forums on the impact of employee buyouts
08/19/1994	The Acting Archivist issues NARA's Customer Service Plan to all staff
08/26/1994	The Acting Archivist informs all employees that staff services units will be restructured effective October 1
09/20/1994	The Customer Satisfaction Initiative Committee makes NARA's Customer Service Plan public

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
	The Acting Archivist and the Management Council discuss and make recommendations on draft FY 1995 NARA Strategic Plan
10/01/1994	The restructuring of NARA's staff services units becomes effective
10/05– 07/1994	The Acting Archivist holds open forums on the Staff Services Restructuring
10/18/1994	Draft FY 1995 NARA Strategic Plan released for agency-wide comment
11/22– 12/02/1994	NARA conducts written survey of genealogical customers nationwide
12/15/1994– 01/10/1995	NARA conducts focus group meetings with historians on customer service
01/03/1995	The Office of the Vice-President of the United States issues a memorandum to all departments and agencies announcing the Second Phase of the National Performance Review (NPR)
01/05/1995	The Acting Archivist establishes a review team to respond to the Vice-President's memorandum on NPR Phase II
01/25– 27/1995	The Acting Archivist holds open forums for NARA staff to discuss the NPR Phase II process and what it means for the future of the agency
02/24/1995	The Acting Archivist submits NARA's preliminary report to the NPR
03/03/1994	The Acting Archivist releases NARA's FY 1995 Strategic Plan
04/03/1995	The Acting Archivist holds open forums on the State of the Archives
04/26/1995	NARA celebrates 10 years of independence with activities nationwide
05/05/1995	The President nominates John Carlin to be Archivist of the United States
05/25/1995	The U.S. Senate confirms the nomination of John Carlin as Archivist of the United States
6/01/1995	John Carlin is sworn in as the eighth Archivist of the United States
08/24/1995	The Archivist issues a Vision, Mission, Values statement to staff and announces the start of a Strategic Directions Initiative
	The Archivist establishes VISION, an electronic suggestion box
09/14– 15/1995	The Archivist holds a retreat with his new Leadership Team where they get training in team building, communication, and strategic planning

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
09/18/1995– 03/26/1996	The Archivist and Deputy Archivist hold approximately 70 informal staff meetings with every NARA unit nationwide
10/13/1995	The Archivist establishes a column in the Staff Bulletin to announce and discuss strategic initiatives and answer questions from staff
11/08/1995	The Archivist issues a memorandum which establishes the Strategic Directions Team to hold facilitated brainstorming sessions with staff on strategic priorities for the agency
02/20– 03/29/1996	The Strategic Directions Team visits all NARA facilities nationwide to gather input for new strategic plan. More than 1,000 staff members participate in 156 brainstorming sessions
04/12/1996	The Archivist issues a memorandum on Interim Hiring Policy
04/22– 07/29/1996	The Archivist and Leadership Team develop a draft Strategic Plan
06/24/1996	Input from Strategic Directions Team sessions available to staff on the NARA web site
07/02/1996	The Archivist issues a draft Strategic Plan for staff and public comment
07/16– 17/1996	The Archivist holds open forums for key stakeholders, customers, and constituents on the draft Strategic Plan
07/19– 08/04/1996	The Archivist and Leadership Team revise the Strategic Plan based on staff and public comment
08/07/1996	The Archivist issues <i>Ready Access to Essential Evidence: The Strategic Plan of the National Archives and Records Administration, 1997–2007</i>
09/23/1996	The Archivist announces a plan to restructure the agency around the records life cycle
01/06/1997	The first phase of NARA’s life cycle restructuring becomes effective
01/08/1997	The Archivist issues a memorandum on Strategic Plan Stewardships
04/07/1997	The Archivist issues a memorandum on Reallocation of Personnel Resources
05/05/1997	The Archivist issues a memorandum which establishes the GPRA Working Group to develop performance measurements
05/22/1997	The Deputy Archivist and staff meet with OMB on a draft of NARA’s GPRA performance goals
06/23/1997	The Deputy Archivist and staff meet with OMB on a second draft of NARA’s GPRA performance goals

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
07/03/1997	NARA posts draft GPRA performance goals on its web site for public and staff comment
07/29/1997	The Deputy Archivist and staff consult with Senate staff on the draft Strategic Plan
08/06/1997	The Deputy Archivist and staff consult with House of Representatives staff on the draft Strategic Plan
08/18/1997	The Deputy Archivist submits an advance draft Strategic Plan to OMB
08/28/1997	The Deputy Archivist and staff consult with OMB on the draft plan
09/10/1997	The Archivist submits a draft Strategic Plan to House and Senate committees
09/23/1997	The Archivist submits a draft Strategic Plan, revised to reflect further consultations with OMB and Congress, to OMB and House and Senate committees
09/30/1997	The Archivist submits a final version of the Strategic Plan to OMB and Congress
12/03/1997	The Archivist announces the completion of the agency's life-cycle restructuring to be effective February 1, 1998
12/08/1997	OMB informs Federal agencies that NARA will establish a reimbursable records storage program that will begin to charge agencies for the cost of storing their records center records in FY 2000
01/13/1998	The Archivist submits for review a revised Customer Service Plan that reflects the mission, values, priorities, and customer service standards published in the Strategic Plan
01/16/1998	The Archivist issues a process for the review of information technology product plans
02/03/1998	The Archivist issues two documents concerning the Federal Records Center Reimbursable Project: "Financing the Records Center Program" and "Why Does the Federal Government Need a Reimbursable Records Center Program?"
03/24/1998	The Archivist announces a space planning initiative led by a team charged with developing a nationwide space plan
04/14/1998	The Archivist announces a new round of staff meetings, with the goal of visiting all NARA units on a rotating basis
06/09/1998	The Archivist issues Strategic Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2000 that include the integration of information technology investments analysis and strategic planning into the budget process

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
09/17/1998	NARA unveils a new public web page that serves as a gateway to information about Conversations with America events involving NARA
09/28/1998	NARA develops a Plain Language Action Plan and submits it to the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR)
09/30/1998	NARA publishes a revised Customer Service Plan that reflects the mission, values, priorities and customer service standards outlined in the Strategic Plan
12/01/1998	The Archivist issues the FY 1999 Revised Final Annual Performance Plan
04/07/1999	The Archivist identifies the Southeast Region, National Personnel Records Center, and Records Center Storage Standards as priority space initiatives to meet NARA's space needs
04/15/1999	The Archivist develops a list of FY 2001 Strategic Initiatives to be evaluated for inclusion in the budget and annual performance plan
05/06/1999	The Archivist announces the establishment of a team to re-engineer the scheduling and appraisal process
10/01/1999	NARA releases an inventory of 35 activities performed by NARA that are commercial in nature as required by the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act
10/05/1999	The Archivist announces that the interim hiring policy will be abolished effective October 1, 1999
10/22/1999	The Archivist rolls out NARA's nationwide automated performance measurement and reporting system
12/14/1999	The Archivist delivers a "State of the National Archives and Records Administration" address to staff
12/21/1999	The Archivist issues the FY 2000 Revised Final Annual Performance Plan
02/07/2000	The Archivist announces the creation of the Life Cycle Coordination Staff to develop data standards, policies, and processes for all NARA life cycle data and coordinate the planning for all life cycle systems
02/07/2000	The Archivist submits a preliminary FY 2001 Annual Performance Plan to Congress
02/14/2000	The Archivist directs NARA offices to examine their programs in conjunction with the Strategic Plan and annual performance plans to identify FY 2002 budget initiatives
04/06/2000	NARA releases its agency-wide Annual Performance Report for FY 1999 to the Congress, the Administration, and the public

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
04/17/2000	The Archivist develops a list of FY 2002 Strategic Initiatives to be evaluated for inclusion in the budget and annual performance plan
05–06/2000	The Archivist and Leadership Team update the Strategic Plan
06/29/2000	The Archivist issues the draft updated Strategic Plan for staff and public comment
07/12/2000	The Archivist and Deputy Archivist discuss the draft Strategic Plan at an open forum sponsored by the National Archives Assembly. The forum is taped for agency-wide distribution
07/13/2000	The Archivist and Deputy Archivist discuss the draft Strategic Plan with Federal records officers
07/17/2000	The Archivist and Leadership Team host an open forum for key stakeholders, customers, and constituents on the draft Strategic Plan
08/01/2000	The Director of Congressional Affairs shares comments on the draft Strategic Plan with key congressional staff
08/01– 08/10/2000	The Archivist and Leadership Team revise the draft Strategic Plan based on staff and public comment
08/11/2000	The Archivist submits an advance updated Strategic Plan to OMB
09/29/2000	The Archivist submits a final updated Strategic Plan to OMB and the Congress

**THE REPORTS ARE ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY BY AUTHOR AND THEREUNDER
CHRONOLOGICALLY BY THE DATE OF THE REPORT.**

1. Acton Burnell, *Performance Measurement and Reporting System Lessons Learned: A Report to the Oversight Committee*, February 18, 2000.
2. Acton Burnell, *Performance Measurement and Reporting System Metric Specifications*, April 27, 2000.
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