



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Fiscal Year 2014 – 2019

Strategic Plan February 2014 (As of June 5, 2013)

Our Values:

Collaborate: An open, inclusive work environment -built upon respect, communications, integrity, and collaborative team work.

Innovate: Encouraging creativity and investing in innovation - to build our future.

Learn: Pursuit of excellence through continuous learning - becoming smarter all the time about what we know and what we do in service to others.

Strategic Context: NARA Transformation

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is engaged in a multi-year effort to transform itself into a dynamic and modern agency. The NARA Transformation—launched in 2010—is a long-term initiative to build a new organizational culture that is agile and responds quickly to change, accepts risk, rewards innovation, and seeks continuous improvement.

The Transformation is grounded in the Open Government principles that an effective government is transparent, collaborative, and participatory.

Transformation requires NARA to develop new ways to engage its customers, advance new theories of archival science, and demonstrate leadership in electronic records management. NARA’s Transformation is guided by six “transformational outcomes” that describe how we will deliver on our mission in a modern environment.

NARA completed a significant Transformation milestone in 2011, when it abolished its geographic organizational structure and realigned into new organizations focused on key customer segments. The new organizational structure allows us to better engage our stakeholders, encourage their collaboration and participation, and more effectively respond to their needs. In addition, the recently established Office of Innovation will accelerate agency-wide efforts to increase collaboration and provide more opportunities for public participation.

The Transformation is building the organizational culture that is necessary for NARA to achieve its strategic goals and realize its mission, as outlined in the 2014–2019 Strategic Plan, and change the way people think about archives.

Transformational Outcomes

- *One NARA* - We will work as one NARA, not just as component parts.
- *Out in Front* - We will embrace the primacy of electronic information in all facets of our work and position NARA to lead accordingly.
- *An Agency of Leaders* - We will foster a culture of leadership, not just as a position but as the way we all conduct our work.
- *A Great Place to Work* - We will transform NARA into a great place to work through trust and empowerment of all of our people, the agency’s most vital resource.
- *A Customer-Focused Organization* - We will create structures and processes to allow our staff to more effectively meet the needs of our customers.
- *An Open NARA* - We will open our organizational boundaries to learn from others.

Major Trends Affecting NARA: 2014–2019

Electronic records are—and will continue to be—NARA’s single greatest challenge and opportunity. NARA must modernize its approach to accepting, storing, and providing public access to records, in order to manage increasingly larger volumes of electronic records, in larger file sizes, and in a variety of formats. “Big data,” social media, and public use and re-use of government data are changing the nature of government records in ways that challenge traditional records management practices.

As we work to improve management and preservation of and access to electronic records, these major trends will influence our strategies in the years 2014 through 2019.

- *Open Data and Digital Government*—The Administration has set clear goals for all Executive branch agencies to provide government information online and in machine-readable formats. “Open data” will change the nature of Federal records that NARA will receive in the future and challenges us to make more of its existing, paper-based archives available online and in searchable formats.
- *Cloud Computing and IT Shared Services*—The Administration is encouraging agencies to move more applications and data storage to lower-cost, commercial hosting. NARA must develop a cloud archiving strategy so that records created and used “in the cloud” can also be archived, preserved, and made publicly available in the cloud. We must also determine if there is a continuing need for centralized, fee-for-service storage of temporary and pre-archival electronic records similar to the paper-based services that we provide through Federal Records Centers.
- *Public Participation*—Open Government concepts have focused agencies on the benefits of encouraging public participation using new media tools. NARA must develop new techniques for managing and archiving records that document dynamic government interactions with the public. At the same time, we must seek new ways to solicit more public input and collaboration to further our mission.
- *Citizen Engagement*—NARA anticipates continued public demand for opportunities to learn about America’s government and history in person through NARA exhibits, educational programs, and public events. NARA must find cost-effective ways to integrate in-person and online experiences so that our civic literacy programs are rewarding for both virtual and physical visitors. NARA will ensure that traditional services remain available and effective for underserved populations and individuals with limited proficiency with technology.
- *Employee Engagement*—NARA has been challenged with low employee satisfaction for many years. We must strengthen our efforts to provide all employees with an engaging, productive work experience now and in the future. We must plan for future workforce needs and ensure that all employees have the opportunity to collaborate, innovate, learn and grow as professionals.

NARA Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Mission is to provide public access to Federal Government records in our custody and control. NARA's mission focuses its many disparate programs and statutory responsibilities toward a common purpose of providing public access. Public access to government records strengthens democracy by allowing Americans to claim their rights of citizenship, hold their government accountable, and understand their history so they can participate more effectively in their government.

MISSION

NARA drives openness, cultivates public participation, and strengthens our nation's democracy through public access to high-value government records.

Our Vision is to transform into an agile and modern information agency. NARA's vision harnesses the opportunities of new and emerging trends in government, technology, and public engagement to deliver an exciting 21st-century archives. NARA will collaborate with other Federal agencies, the private sector, and the public to deliver *information*—including records, data, and context—when and where the customer needs it and through their communications channel of choice.

VISION

We will be known for cutting-edge delivery of extraordinary volumes of high-value government information and unprecedented engagement to bring greater meaning to the American experience.

Our Values reflect common aspirations that support and encourage the long-standing commitment of NARA staff to public service, openness and transparency, and the government records that NARA holds in trust. NARA's organizational values describe how the agency will interact with the public, achieve its goals, and realize the transformational outcomes.

VALUES

Collaborate—Create an open, inclusive work environment that is built on respect, communication, integrity, and collaborative team work.

Innovate—Encourage creativity and invest in innovation to build our future.

Learn—Pursue excellence through continuous learning and become smarter all the time about what we know and what we do in service to others

Strategic Goal: Make Access Happen

Make Access Happen establishes “public access” as NARA’s core purpose, adds strategic context to our daily operations, and inspires our workforce to develop new, innovative approaches to delivering government information to the public. *Make Access Happen* signals a significant shift in strategy and purpose: NARA will reach beyond its traditional role of making records available for others to discover, and will *make* access happen by providing flexible tools and accessible resources that promote public participation. NARA will be a recognized expert and leader in delivering information to customers in ways that are the most useful and meaningful to them.

Objective 1: Ensure that anyone can explore, discover, and learn from NARA holdings

NARA will maintain intellectual control of records in its custody—including cloud-hosted records and “data-at-rest” which is *not* in NARA’s physical control—and provide intuitive search capabilities so that the public can easily explore NARA’s vast holdings of government records and artifacts.

Initiative 1: Make searching NARA records as easy as using popular commercial search engines.

Initiative 2: Integrate NARA exhibitions, educational programs, and public programming into a unified national program that engages diverse audiences in learning about government records so they may actively participate in America’s democratic (decision making, governance) process.

Initiative 3: Be instrumental in establishing an effective Enterprise Architecture within the Federal Government to enable data-at-rest information management processes.

Objective 2: Make an ever-increasing number of records available to the public

NARA will streamline existing processes and develop new processes to significantly increase the number of NARA records that are available to the public.

Initiative 1: Digitize all analog archival records and make them available online to the public.

Initiative 2: Establish processes that will quickly and efficiently move electronic records into a NARA-managed repository, allowing these to be made publicly accessible as soon as legally possible. (associated with Digital Processing Environment (DPE) in President’s Budget for FY 2014 submission)

Initiative 3: Streamline review and screening processes to protect the most sensitive information from public disclosure while releasing all that we can.

Objective 3: *Deliver records to customers the way they want them*

NARA will deliver records at the times, in the formats, and through communications channels that are most useful and meaningful to modern information consumers.

Initiative: Develop and implement a coordinated “scan-on-demand” system that is closely integrated with our centralized, online catalog in order to respond to reference requests from other Federal agencies and the public.

Strategic Goal: Connect with Customers

Connect with Customers challenges NARA to build deeper, collaborative relationships with individual customers, communities of interest, and other organizations. *Connect with Customers* is a broad goal that combines our aspirations to continuously improve customer service, cultivate public participation, and generate new interest in government records. NARA must understand the needs and expectations of its customers, partners, and the public in order to make access happen in ways that provide meaningful and rewarding experiences for the public.

Objective 1: *Build long-term, positive relationships*

NARA will continuously engage with and learn from its customers—individuals, organizations, and other Federal agencies—to build effective relationships and provide a consistent customer experience across programs and locations.

Initiative 1: Collect and analyze data on customer interactions—including customer feedback—to more effectively understand and respond to customer needs.

Initiative 2: Build effective partnerships with key customers and communities to establish continuing, two-way communications about customer needs and expectations.

Objective 2: *Drive new interest in NARA holdings and new expectations for NARA’s work*

NARA will seek out both new and previously underserved communities to draw new users to our records and services and elicit new uses, experiences, and interpretations of our diverse holdings of records and artifacts.

Initiative 1: Expand NARA’s use of public participation and crowd-sourcing tools to develop innovative solutions to operational challenges and to improve public access.

Initiative 2: Seek out partnerships with the private sector, other agencies, and cultural and academic institutions to achieve common goals and expand NARA’s reach into new communities.

Objective 3: Be recognized as a trusted and authoritative source of government records and information.

NARA will encourage user-generated content while maintaining a secure environment that ensures the integrity and authenticity of original records.

Initiative 1: Establish new on-demand channels for the public to reach NARA professionals for information consultation, services, and support.

Initiative 2: Deliver authentic digital content in formats that underscore the integrity and authenticity of the data.

Initiative 3: Make online publications the “official version” of NARA regulatory publications and materials.

Strategic Goal: Maximize NARA’s Value to the Nation

Maximize NARA’s Value to the Nation drives us to continually improve our efficiency and effectiveness. This strategic goal recognizes that public access to government information creates measurable economic value, which adds to the enduring cultural and historical value of our records. We will secure and preserve the records and artifacts that we hold in trust so that current and future generations can use them to promote civic literacy and citizen engagement, document the rights of citizens, learn about American history, and spur innovation that drives economic growth.

Objective 1: Drive public and commercial use and re-use of NARA records to create measurable economic activity

NARA will make archival records and historical government data publicly available in machine-readable and open formats to support public and commercial information processing and dissemination activities.

Initiative 1: Make archival data available in machine-readable open formats, and with standardized metadata, to allow efficient public and commercial use and re-use of NARA records.

Initiative 2: Establish open interfaces to NARA electronic information systems so that records can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, and searched in different formats.

Objective 2: Demonstrate leading practices that promote government accountability, historical understanding, and civic engagement

NARA will develop and demonstrate new practices and technology that lead the industry and set the standard for “cutting edge” of records management, public participation in government, and cultural and civic engagement.

***Initiative 1:** Modernize Federal records management—including updating legal and regulatory framework—to support the transition to digital government. (Associated with President’s Records Management Directive, Part 2A3)*

***Initiative 2:** Collaborate with other Federal agencies, public users, archival professionals, and the information management industry to establish joint data and metadata standards in commercially developed records management and archival applications. (Associated with President’s Records Management Directive, Part 2A3 and President’s Budget for FY 2014 submission)*

Objective 3: Achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in all that we do

NARA will continue to be an effective steward of the government resources that it holds in trust and constantly strive to be a responsive, efficient, 21st-century government agency.

***Initiative 1:** Implement new business practices that are environmentally sustainable, increase efficiency, and ensure the protection of NARA assets.*

***Initiative 2:** Build new public-private partnerships to attract non-Federal resources to further NARA’s mission and goals.*

Strategic Goal: Build Our Future Through Our People

Build Our Future Through Our People acknowledges that an engaged workforce is essential to achieving NARA’s mission and realizing its other strategic goals. *Build Our Future Through Our People* is our commitment to provide all employees with the training and opportunities necessary to successfully transition to an electronic environment. We will build a modern workforce of information management professionals, develop the next generation of leaders, and encourage employees to collaborate, innovate, and learn.

Objective 1: Establish a culture of empowerment and inclusion

NARA will develop leaders, encourage coaching and mentoring, and empower employees to make decisions and take action in support of the agency’s mission and goals.

***Initiative 1:** Establish a leadership development program that identifies, trains, and develops candidates for future leadership positions.*

***Initiative 2:** Streamline internal approval processes and delegate decision-making authority to the lowest practical level.*

Objective 2: Ensure we have a diverse workforce with the skills necessary to fulfill our mission

NARA will build the workforce of the future by providing opportunities for professional growth, attracting and retaining the next generation of professionals, and maximizing diversity of experience.

***Initiative 1:** Provide innovative policies coupled with state-of-the-art practices and tools to anticipate and meet the requirements of recruiting and retaining a 21st Century workforce.*

***Initiative 2:** Define accessible career paths that support NARA's priority of achieving outstanding records and artifact management in an electronic environment.*

***Initiative 3:** Create a comprehensive professional development program—including intra-agency rotational assignments—to ensure NARA staff members have the competencies needed to be successful in a digital information age.*

Objective 3: Provide an open, inclusive work environment

NARA will provide a trusting and collaborative workplace that accepts risk, encourages open communication, and ensures that all employees have opportunities to achieve their full potential.

***Initiative 1:** Expand opportunities and tools for internal collaboration that will allow staff to share their expertise across the agency and build understanding of challenges, opportunities, and business methods.*

***Initiative 2:** Build a robust internal communication environment that provides information early and often to support informed decision-making.*