

A look at NARA's budget for 2008

As many of you may already know, the National Archives fared well in the fiscal year 2008 appropriations legislation, passed by Congress and approved by the President during the holidays.

NARA received \$411.1 million for the current fiscal year, up 20.5 percent from last year's appropriations.

This is very good news because for the past several years, we have done our job with limited resources—requiring a hiring freeze, a reduction in hours of operation, agency-wide belt-tightening, and a general slowdown in the processing of records.

In response to the new budget, the Archives staff has developed innovative ways to broaden access to records and has expanded public programs to inform and educate the public about the mission of the Archives and the importance of the records we preserve.

Two items in the new budget will have immediate consequences.

We can restore regular research hours, which had been reduced earlier due to limited resources needed to cover energy, security, and staff costs involved in keeping research rooms open evenings and on Saturdays.

The once-a-month extended hours created a challenging work environment for our talented reference and research room staff, who faced frustrated customers and a high volume of requests on those days.

We are now planning to restore those extended research hours at Archives I and II on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings and Saturdays, beginning the week of April 14.

Another economy measure we took was a hiring freeze, which has been lifted. Now, with some new funds in the FY 2008 appropriations, we're in the process of bringing on additional professional archival staff.

Clearly, the generous appropriation from Congress and the President is recognition of NARA's special mission as well as our staff's outstanding professional work. Some



3,000 employees work with customers every day to assist them with research of various kinds or to provide guided tours through an exhibit.

The good news of a budget increase, how-

ever, must be tempered by the fact that many necessary costs have risen significantly.

The lion's share of our budget—\$315 million—will be spent on rapidly-rising operating expenses: salaries and recently enacted pay raises for nearly all employees; contractor services, such as maintenance and security; and costs of energy at all our facilities except the self-funding Federal records centers.

Now, for some details.

We have received full funding of \$58 million to continue the development of the Electronic Records Archives (ERA), which is being built by the National Archives to preserve and make accessible all the electronic records being produced by the Federal Government now and in the future. It will allow access to these records, as well as records of the past as they are moved to electronic format, to anyone, anywhere at any time.

The new budget also includes \$28.6 million for construction projects and normal repairs at the Presidential libraries and other NARA-owned facilities.

Among those projects is the construction of an archival addition to the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, CA. Once the addition is completed to NARA specifications, Nixon Presidential records will be moved from College Park to Yorba Linda, so that all the records of Richard Nixon's career in public life will be under one roof.

Also included are funds to complete the repairs and restoration of the plaza at the Johnson Library in Austin, TX; \$8 million for the first steps of acquiring land for and

building a new addition to the Kennedy Library in Boston; and money for design work on renovations at the Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, NY.

The Archives' National Historical Publications and Records Commission is receiving \$7.5 million for grants to preserve and provide access to important and significant non-Federal historical records at various repositories around the country.

Despite ongoing fiscal limitations, the National Archives has the resources to meet the needs of our customers, the citizens of the United States—in the form of this generous funding provided by Congress and the President.

Equally important in meeting customers' needs are the talent, ingenuity, and commitment of NARA staff nationwide in carrying out our mission. Congratulations and, as always, thank you for a job well done. The work continues...

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allen Weinstein". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

ALLEN WEINSTEIN
Archivist of the United States

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