



## *Senior Agency Official for Records Management 2023 Annual Report*

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requires Senior Agency Officials for Records Management (SAORM) to provide an annual report demonstrating how agencies are handling important records management initiatives as identified by NARA.

NARA uses the reports to determine the overall progress of the federal government in managing its records and the transition away from paper to digital formats, and to identify best practices and model solutions within federal agencies.

On June 28, 2019, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and NARA issued a memorandum, *Transition to Electronic Records* ([M-19-21](#)), to ensure that all federal records are created, retained, and managed in electronic formats. M-19-21 gave agencies until the end of December 2022 to comply with several specific deadlines.

On December 23, 2022, OMB and NARA issued a new memorandum, *Update to Transition to Electronic Records* ([M-23-07](#)) reinforcing the goals in M-19-21 and extending the 2022 deadlines to June 30, 2024.

Additionally, on January 1, 2021, Congress enacted the Preservation of Electronic Messages and Other Records Act, amending 44 U.S.C. Chapter 29, that requires the electronic capture, management, and preservation of such electronic records in accordance with the records disposition requirements of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 33.

This year's SAORM report provides an opportunity for agencies to report on plans and progress towards electronic recordkeeping and preservation under these requirements, as well as other important records management initiatives.

**The reporting period begins on January 8, 2024, and reports are due back to NARA no later than March 8, 2024.**

NARA plans to post your 2023 SAORM report on the NARA website upon receipt. Please ensure that your agency's report is a publicly released version. This action is in the interest of transparency in government and to promote collaboration and communication among agencies. NARA intends to list any non-responding agencies in a summary report on our website.

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Instructions for Reporting:

- This template covers records management program developments, including those related to the transition to electronic recordkeeping as required by M-19-21 and M-23-07.
- Please be brief and precise in your answers. Limit answers to each question to no more than 500 words.
- Please complete the questions/items below and send the report to [rmsselfassessment@nara.gov](mailto:rmsselfassessment@nara.gov). Include the words “SAORM 2023 Annual Report - [Agency Name]” in the subject line of the email.
- If you are responsible for records management in multiple agencies, components, or bureaus, please determine how you will submit reports to NARA. While NARA prefers a comprehensive report, you may submit separate reports for each component.

NARA may follow up with agencies to obtain additional information and/or documentation related to responses provided in the template.

As in previous years, we will be validating selected questions and responses from agencies. Your agency may be selected at random to provide additional documentation and/or take part in interviews to discuss your records management program activities.

Provide the following information (required):

Name of SAORM: Ryan A. Higgins  
Position title: Chief Information Officer (Acting)

**1. What agencies, bureaus, components, or offices are covered by this report and your position as SAORM, and which will be reporting separately?**

*Please provide a list and indicate any that are new or have been changed due to reorganization or other circumstances.*

This report covers all Department of Commerce Bureaus, except for the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), who will report separately.

**2. Will your agency meet the goal to manage, preserve and transfer all permanent records in an electronic format with appropriate metadata by June 30, 2024? (M-19-21, 1.2 and M-23-07, 1.1 and 1.2)**

- Yes  
 No  
 Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

*If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)*

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DOC is making slow but steady progress in this area. Bureaus are creatively working to implement systems where funding is available. Other bureaus will continue to prioritize and seek funding to address their requirements. We have implemented a DOC-wide Correspondence Tracking/Management System that supports the entire organization and handles all incoming correspondence managed at the Secretary/DEPSEC level.

**3. Will your agency meet the goal to manage and preserve all temporary records in an electronic format by June 30, 2024? (M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3)**

- Yes  
 No  
 Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

*If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)*

**4. Will your agency meet the requirements of M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3 to close agency-operated records storage facilities by June 30, 2024? (Choose all that apply)**

- Yes  
 No  
 Not applicable, my agency does not have agency-operated records storage facilities  
 Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

*If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)*

We will partially meet the requirements. All permanent records in an electronic format are managed electronically. However, DOC components are still working toward applying appropriate metadata to facilitate the transfer or destruction of records. DOC Headquarters and Bureaus are actively seeking the infrastructure that will help the department leverage the best resources to support electronic records management tools and meet the M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3 mandates.

**5. Will your agency meet the requirements of M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3 and transfer inactive records to a NARA Federal Records Center (FRC) or commercial storage facilities by June 30, 2024? (Choose all that apply)**

- Yes, we will transfer to the FRC  
 Yes, we will transfer to commercial storage facilities  
 No

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Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

*If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)*

We will partially meet the requirements. All temporary records in an electronic format are managed electronically. However, DOC components are still working toward applying appropriate metadata to facilitate the transfer or destruction of records. DOC Headquarters and Bureaus are actively seeking the infrastructure and will leverage the best electronic records management tools that meet and support the NARA and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandates.

**6. Does your agency have a Data Management Strategy that includes records management principles? (<https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/resources/cdo-rm-assessment-report.pdf>)**

Yes  
 No

*Please explain your response.*

The DOC and its information governance framework stakeholders have worked to establish a Data Governance Council which is led by our DOC Chief Data Officer. We also have a comprehensive DOC Data Management Strategy however the document does not include referenced “records management principles”.

**7. In your role as SAORM, do you meet with your Agency Records Officer(s) to discuss the agency records management program’s goals?**

Yes  
 No  
 Not applicable, my agency does not currently have a designated Agency Records Officer

*Please explain your response. (If 'Yes,' please include how often, a description of topics, and outcomes of these meetings. If 'No,' please explain why not.)*

The Deputy CIO and the Director of Policy and Governance meet with the Departmental Records Management Officer (DRMO) and Bureau RMOs weekly and quarterly. The DRMO holds ad-hoc meetings with the DOC SAORM/OCIO as well.

**8. Has your agency incorporated NARA’s digitization standards into your Information Resource Management (IRM) Strategic Plan? (44 U.S.C. 3506(b)(2) and OMB Circular A-130)**

Yes

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No

Not applicable, my agency is not currently digitizing records

*Please explain your response. (If 'Yes,' what steps have been taken? If 'No,' why not?)*

DOC's Capstone Policy outlines policies and procedures to ensure the capturing and preservation of electronic messages. This policy will be revised to reflect the updated General Records Schedules (GRS) 6.1 and will authorize the Capstone approach for other types of electronic messages, specifically instant messages, texts, and chats. Additionally, the records management policies are currently being revised to include NARA digitization standards, references, and will be incorporated into the Department's and Bureaus' Information Resource Management (IRM) Strategic Plan. DOC is exploring a budget to support using and/or exploring cognitive technologies to identify records and distinguish between temporary and permanent retention.

**9. Does your agency have a social media strategy that includes capturing and maintaining records in accordance with records management statutes and regulations?**

Yes

No

*Please explain your response.*

DOC has not developed a "Social Media Strategy" policy document at this time. We do have "Web-Accessibility Council" that provides overall guidance and recommendations regarding our DOC web presence.

**10. Is there specific policy or guidance you need from NARA to support the strategic direction of your records management program?**

Yes

No

*Please explain your response and include any comments on existing, pending, and future topics.*

DOC requests additional guidance on how to support agencies that need budgets in support of all the new Records Management deadlines, automation, storage, human capital needs, and resources needed especially for permanent records metadata.

DOC appreciates NARA's continued efforts in establishing short- and long-term plans regarding NARA's capabilities and readiness to support and accept system-to-system electronic file transfers and the capacity to accept and store textual (paper) records at the FRC. However, additional guidance would be helpful regarding compliance with

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electronic and voice messaging, collaboration tools, managing web content as a record, and social media.

DOC also suggests NARA provide additional how-to guidance and toolkits with dedicated websites for managing electronic records in cloud environments, social media, transferring permanent electronic records, and transitioning paper records from FRC to commercial storage centers. Lastly, DOC requests additional guidance on the various options and a government-wide contracting option for streamlining and efficiency purposes when and where possible.