



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 releasable 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.

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. 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: Vaughn Noga
- Position title: Chief Information Officer and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information, Office of Mission Support

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.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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)

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- 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.)

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.)

The EPA developed and implemented the validation standard, procedure and policy that guides the digitization of temporary records. This guidance is based on 36 CFR Chapter XII Subchapter B § 1236.30 requirements for digitizing temporary records. The Agency has worked to transition to electronic recordkeeping and this shift not only meets the goals set forth in M-23-07, but it benefits the EPA workforce and the communities we serve.

In FY24, the EPA will open the first of two state-of-the art National Digitization Centers (NDCs). The digitization of this information increases access, accountability, and transparency.

These records will be managed and persevered electronically in EPA's new Agency Records Management System (ARMS). This electronic records repository will receive digitized records and facilitate the disposition of these records at the end of their retention.

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.)

With the establishment of the National Digitization Program (NDP) and the National Digitization Centers (NDCs), EPA has taken the necessary measures to reduce and eventually close all records storage facilities by transferring or digitizing existing temporary paper records.

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
- 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.)

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.

At EPA, the information governance framework is strengthened by consistent communication and an awareness of the importance of records management, data management, and other related information programs. The Agency advances the implementation of records management policies, procedures, and retention schedules by providing annual mandatory online records management training to all EPA employees and working closely with the owners of Agency IT systems to ensure that records management is incorporated into the development process. The EPA IT Strategic Framework is a five-year plan that outlines a strategy for information technology and information management. The goals of this plan include Optimizing Enterprise IT Services, advancing electronic records management, transitioning paper to electronic processes, and developing processes to prevent paper being created by the Agency.

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.)

EPA holds regular meetings with the SAORM and the ARO to discuss the status of major initiatives like the implementation of the Agency Records Management System (ARMS) and the National Digitization Centers (NDCs). Currently, there are also discussions around updates to the Agency's Capstone disposition.

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

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?)

The Agency's [FY 2022 – 2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#) includes the digitization of legacy paper records and information through the operation of the National Digitization Centers (NDCs). Additionally, the new Agency Records Management System (ARMS) was built to ensure that Agency records are managed according to the regulations and NARA standards for temporary and permanent electronic records.

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.

Guidance on the proper management of electronic records including, but not limited to, all electronic messages is codified in existing Records Management policy, CIO 2155.5. The Agency also has specific guidance and procedures on how to manage records that are

electronic messages using EPA systems. We strongly discourage the use of non-EPA systems to conduct Agency business, however, we have provided users with guidance that echos NARA's existing guidance to forward all records to their email within 20 days.

The EPA is currently working on updating its existing Capstone schedule. The policy also provides guidance on ensuring that permanent electronic records are protected against alteration, alienation, or deletion. It states that these records must be useable, searchable, and retrievable for as long as they remain in Agency custody.

Lastly, the Agency recently launched its new Agency Records Management System (ARMS) that meets NARA requirements for the management of electronic records.

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.

EPA could benefit from more robust and comprehensive policy and guidance on social media records.