



Senior Agency Official for Records Management 2022 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 9, 2023, and reports are due back to NARA no later than March 10, 2023.

NARA plans to post your 2022 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 2022 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: Kurt D. DelBene
- Position title: Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, Chief Information Officer
- Address: 810 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC 20420

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.

Veterans Benefits Administration
Veterans Health Administration
National Cemetery Administration
VA Central Offices

2. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have any of the temporary adaptations to agency business processes become permanent improvements to the management and preservation of electronic records?

-
- Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable, no adaptations were needed
 - Do not know

Please explain your response. (If Yes, include details of the changes and why they became permanent. If No, or Do not know, please explain your answer.)

- 3. Has your agency taken action to 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
- Do not know

Please explain your response with specific actions taken, challenges and results.

- 4. Has your agency taken action to 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
- Do not know

Please explain your response with specific actions taken, challenges and results.

Given the size of the Department of Veterans Affairs (as the second largest cabinet Federal department) and unique population that we serve, hundreds of record series, customer-based and unique mission, we discovered that there are significant cost and risks involved in digitizing every single permanent and temporary analog records. Going forward, VA creates and maintains our federal records in electronic format because the nature of during business is electronic.

- 5. 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 and transfer inactive, temporary records to Federal Records Centers or commercial records storage facilities by June 30, 2024?**

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

Please explain your response with specific actions taken, challenges and results.

Full compliance with OMB/NARA M-23-07 is unfortunately not feasible for VA. VA requested an extension (minimum of 25-years) for moving millions of records from our agency-operated Records Center Vault (RCV) to commercial sites; due to the volume of records, VA also requested consideration to continue to maintain and transfer paper records to the FRCs. Moving records to commercial sites is costly and has significant risks (damage to records, records lost).

6. Does your agency have policies and procedures that incorporate records management into the information governance (IG) framework for information, data, and other agency information management? (This includes a relationship between CIO, CDO, SAORM, DRO/ARO, Records Management (RM) Staff, Security, Privacy Officers, and FOIA)

Note: The incorporation of records management into information governance is part of the framework covered by [OMB Federal Data Strategy - A Framework for Consistency \(M-19-18\)](#) as it provides a vision for managing and using federal data, along with recordkeeping requirements included in [OMB Circular A-130, Managing Information as a Strategic Resource](#).

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and provide details about how your agency's policies enhance IG and RM's role or relationship to it.

Currently, VA has policy documents (Directive 0009: Ensuring Quality of Information Disseminated by VA and Directive 0214: Enterprise Governance Structure and Process) that incorporate records management into the information governance (IG) framework for information, data, and other agency information management. VA does have a data governance framework. The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology, Deputy Chief Information Officer (DCIO), is a member of the VA Data Governance Council, which is chaired by the Chief Data Officer. The Chief Information Security Officer and the Chief Finance Officer are also members. As a key committee member, the DCIO works to plan and implement agency-wide data governance activities and ensure records and cybersecurity are integrated.

7. Has your agency developed policies and procedures to ensure the capture and preservation of electronic messages, including when hardware or software is upgraded?

Note: Electronic messages means electronic mail and other electronic messaging systems that are used for purposes of communicating between individuals. Electronic messages that satisfy the definition of a federal record under the Federal Records Act are

electronic records. This includes email, text messages, chat messages, voicemail, social media posts, and other similar applications. (See: [Email Management](#) and [CFR 1236: Electronic Records Management](#))

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and include details of your agency's methods to capture and preserve electronic messaging records or challenges preventing you from doing so.

VA Directive 6301 Electronic Mail Records sets forth policy, assigns responsibilities, and explains the requirements for the management of email records in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 36, chapter XII subchapter B, chapter XII, and United States Code (USC) Title 44, Title 36, chapters 29, 31, 33, and 35. Managing electronic records in information systems ensures compliance with records management policies and regulations as established by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and listed in the CFR. It provides Department-wide policy for the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of temporary and permanent federal records created or received using electronic mail applications. Capstone implementation guidance outlines the responsibilities for VA IT Operations to manage the Microsoft 365 Exchange online tenant as global administrators. Software is upgraded in accordance with agency security updates and Office Content Delivery Network.

8. Is your agency using or exploring cognitive technologies to identify records and distinguish between temporary and permanent retention?

Note: Cognitive technologies generally describe automated technologies that can be applied to recordkeeping practices and procedures. These include Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation, Software Robot or Bot, and other machine learning technologies.

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response. (If Yes, include details on both methods and tools being explored, the level of accuracy and how that level is determined.)

From a VACO point of view, no. However, VA is exploring possible AI investments.

9. Do you as SAORM regularly oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of your records management program and its compliance with statutes and regulations?

- Yes

No

Do not know

Please explain your response including what specific measures you have incorporated into the SAORM role.

The Senior Agency Official for Records Management (Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology) designated the Director, Enterprise Records Service, as the VA Agency Records Officer who leads and manages the VA records management program. The VA Agency RO briefs the SAORM on the status and progress of the VA RM program.

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

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

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

Conduct thorough analysis of current policies and procedures, prior to establishing or updated policies. For instance, an in-depth cost/benefit analysis would have reveal the challenges of closing agency owned records storage centers.

11. Do you have any suggestions for how NARA can better engage with you and your program in your role as SAORM?

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and include any comments on previous NARA SAORM engagements, topics for future engagements, or other suggestions.