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ARCHIVES

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UNITED STATES

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Dear Secretary/Administrator/Commissioner,

MEMORANDUM TO FEDERAL AGENCY HEADS: Presidential Memorandum on Managing Government Records

On November 28, 2011 the President issued a directive to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Managing Government Records. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is issuing this memorandum to assist agencies in fulfilling their reporting requirements.

The Presidential memorandum requires a two-part agency response. Agency input will be essential for the Records Management Directive outlining a 21<sup>st</sup> century framework for managing government records that is required by section 3.

The first part of the Presidential memorandum, section 2(a)(3), requires each agency head to designate, in writing, a senior agency official who will supervise the review required by section 2(b)(1-3). Agencies must send the following information to the Archivist of the United States, David S. Ferriero, preferably by email to [RM.Communications@nara.gov](mailto:RM.Communications@nara.gov) by **December 28, 2011**:

Agency represented, name of senior official, position title, office address, e-mail address, and telephone number.

Upon receipt of the designation of senior agency officials required by section 2(a)(3), NARA will schedule meetings to answer potential questions on completing section 2(b)(1-3) and to outline the process for developing the Records Management Directive described in section 3.

The second part of the required agency response, section 2(b)(1-3), directs agencies to provide to the Archivist of the United States and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a narrative evaluation of their records management programs within limited categories. To assist in your response, we are providing the following guidance for each sub-section. The narrative report should supplement, and therefore need not duplicate, information provided by agencies to NARA pursuant to other reporting obligations. This report must be sent via e-mail to [RM.Communications@nara.gov](mailto:RM.Communications@nara.gov) by **March 27, 2012**.

**2(b)(1)** Describe the agency's current plans for improving or maintaining its records management program, particularly with respect to managing electronic records including emails and social media, deploying cloud-based services or storage solutions, and meeting other records challenges.

Please list your agency's current plans for improving the records management program, paying particular attention to electronic records. For each of the plans on your list, indicate which of the following priorities from sections 3(a)(1-6) is addressed:

1. Creating a Government-wide records management framework that is more efficient and cost-effective
2. Promoting records management policies and practices that enhance the agency's capability to fulfill its statutory missions
3. Maintaining accountability through documentation of agency actions
4. Increasing open government and appropriate public access to Government records
5. Supporting compliance with applicable legal requirements related to the preservation of information relevant to litigation
6. Transitioning from paper-based records management to electronic records management where feasible

Identify the top priority of your records management program and describe why it is your agency's top priority.

**2(b)(2)** Identify any provisions in relevant statutes, regulations, or official NARA guidance that currently pose an obstacle to the agency's adoption of sound, cost-effective records management policies and practices.

Discuss two or three experiences you have had at your agency where a specific aspect of NARA's records management statutes, regulations or guidance created a substantial difficulty for implementing a sound, cost-effective records management program within your resource constraints. Describe the difficulty in as much detail as a 200-word limit (each) will allow. Please identify the statute/regulation/guidance as clearly as possible.

**2(b)(3)** Identify policies or programs that, if included in the Records Management Directive required by section 3 of this memorandum or adopted or implemented by NARA, would assist the agency's efforts to improve records management.

Propose an improvement for each of the issues you referred to in section 2(b)(2) which, in your opinion, would resolve that specific problem at your agency without compromising the requirements for a robust and sustainable records management structure in the Federal government as a whole.

If you have a "wish list" of new policies or programs that would enhance your ability to improve records management at your agency if included in the follow-on Records Management Directive, please describe and justify each suggestion in 200 words or less.

The report required by section 2(b) (1-3) is an important step in improving records management. NARA has conducted an annual Records Management Self-Assessment since 2009. Most recently, your agency received its preliminary score for the FY 2011 RM Self-Assessment. By combining your agency's narrative response to the Presidential directive and the data collected through the RM Self-Assessments, NARA will have a reasonably complete Federal government-wide base of information from which to develop the Records Management Directive of section 3.

Following the submission of your agency's report, NARA will schedule additional meetings to consult further with agencies, interagency groups, and public stakeholders.

NARA is excited by this opportunity to improve records management in the Federal government as part of the President's *Open Government Partnership: National Action Plan for the United States*.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul M. Wester, Jr., Chief Records Officer for the US Government, at 301-837-3120 or email him at [Paul.Wester@nara.gov](mailto:Paul.Wester@nara.gov).

Sincerely,



DAVID S. FERRIERO  
Archivist of the United States

cc:

Agency Chief Information Officer  
Agency General Counsel  
Agency Records Officer