

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
REPORT**

FISCAL YEAR 2007



**U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
National Records Management Program
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NARA RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May of 2007, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) conducted its third Records Management Services Customer Satisfaction Survey. This survey helps NARA improve records scheduling and appraisal services, electronic records guidance products, and training services by identifying the most important drivers affecting customer satisfaction. This objective is in accordance with Goal 1, Target 2 of NARA's 2006 Strategic Plan, "By 2012, 90 percent of customers are highly satisfied with NARA records management services."

In 2007, NARA expanded on past surveys by categorizing customers as active or inactive and asking more specific questions about the General Records Schedules (GRS), electronic records guidance products and training services. NARA sent a questionnaire to the Records Officer (or designated point of contact) of every Federal agency. Each Records Officer received one of two versions of the questionnaire. The version each received depended upon their frequency of submitting proposed records schedules. NARA sent different versions of the questionnaires to track customer satisfaction with recent services and to determine why some agencies are not using our records scheduling and appraisal services.

NARA distributed 245 questionnaires and received 126 completed surveys for an overall response rate of 51 percent. NARA asked active agencies about their overall satisfaction with NARA's scheduling and appraisal services. Eighty percent of those respondents said they are satisfied. This is a slight improvement over the 2006 survey that revealed a 78 percent overall satisfaction rate. Overall dissatisfaction level reported in the survey is 20 percent, which compares favorably with the 2006 survey's results of 22 percent dissatisfied.

The timeliness of the records schedule approval process continues to be of concern to Records Officers of active agencies; however, there has been improvement in this area since the 2006 survey. In 2007, 8 percent fewer customers disagree or strongly disagree that the time it takes to approve a records schedule is satisfactory.

NARA asked inactive agencies questions about their current scheduling status and reasons why they had not recently submitted a schedule to NARA. Most respondents (45%) believed their agency's current records schedules were adequate.

We asked both groups specific questions related to the GRS, electronic records guidance products, and training services. Sixty-six percent of respondents agreed that the GRS is comprehensive enough to meet their agency's scheduling needs. The majority of active agencies reported indicated they were aware of NARA's 2006 Electronic Records Management (ERM) guidance products. The converse is true for inactive agencies. However, comments from both surveys reveal confusion on how the guidance should be applied. Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated that NARA's training courses address the needs of their agencies.

To raise the overall satisfaction level of its customers from 80 percent, NARA will work to implement its electronic *Request for Records Disposition Authority* (SF 115), review internal procedures to ensure that the monthly *Status Report on Registered Schedules* are consistently disseminated to agencies, and continue to expand its records scheduling and appraisal guidance products. We will look for systemic delays in the records scheduling process and increase wherever possible the resources used for scheduling agencies' records. For a comparison of 2006 and 2007 results, please see **Appendix A**.

PURPOSE

The customer satisfaction survey helps NARA's National Records Management Program improve scheduling and appraisal, electronic records guidance products, and training services by identifying the most important drivers affecting customer satisfaction. This allows us to focus our resources to improve service in the areas that are most important to our customers.

METHODOLOGY

NARA conducted the survey for the third time in May 2007, one year after the previous survey. It asks Records Officers or their designee, how they feel NARA is doing in this area. Respondents are asked about their overall satisfaction level as well as their satisfaction with the following aspects of NARA's records management services: timeliness, adequacy of communication, utility of NARA's FY 2007 ERM guidance products, and training.

NARA's Lifecycle Management Division identified agencies' Records Officers and compiled and verified their contact information. Like previous customer satisfaction surveys, each Federal Records Officer (or designated point of contact) received the questionnaire either by electronic or regular mail. NARA staff followed up with regular electronic mail and telephone reminders throughout the survey period.

The target audience received one of two versions of the survey questionnaire. Which version an individual received depended upon whether their agency had recently submitted proposed records schedules to NARA. An "active" agency was one that had at least one open records schedule at NARA between May 2006 and May 2007. Those that did not meet this criterion were designated "inactive." NARA believed "active" agencies would provide more informed feedback on its scheduling and appraisal services during the above-mentioned timeframe. Conversely, NARA hoped to obtain information from "inactive" agencies on why they were not currently using its services.

Some questions were common to both surveys; others were different. Both versions had the same demographics questions and they provided an opportunity for respondents to comment on one of NARA's primary records scheduling products: the General Records Schedule. They also included new questions about NARA's electronic records guidance products and its records management training services. A comprehensive list of survey results can be found in **Appendices B and C**.

For the purposes of this report, "satisfied" Records Officers are participants who indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with scheduling and appraisal services overall. "Dissatisfied" Records Officers indicated they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied overall.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Both surveys shared common demographic questions. Other questions differed. Survey A recipients (“active agencies”) were thought to be more familiar with NARA’s records management services. Therefore, that survey asked active agencies for feedback on their interactions with NARA during the scheduling process.

Survey B contained questions designed to gain insight into why inactive agencies had not recently submitted records schedules to NARA. The results of these questions allowed NARA to analyze whether experience and/or other demographic factors had a bearing on whether agencies were “active” or “inactive.”

RESULTS

This report compares the 2007 survey results for Survey A with the 2006 survey results. The comparison is not perfect since the demographic questions from the 2006 survey had been changed for the 2007 Survey A.

Survey B was not included in this analysis since it was sent to a different target audience (inactive agencies) and did not include comparable questions to the 2006 survey. This report does, however, compare subsets of results for questions common to both Surveys A and B.

The percentages included in this report are rounded numbers. Since each set of percentages must equal 100, the same number in a set may be arbitrarily rounded up or down. This happens when a number falls in the mid-range (e.g. a 1.6 or a 1.5) and the other numbers in the set round strongly up (e.g. 1.7) and strongly down (e.g. 1.3).

SURVEY A: ACTIVE RECORDS SCHEDULING AGENCIES

1. Background

This report compares a subset of the 2007 survey results with the 2006 results. This subset consists of Records Officers who had one open records schedule at NARA since May 2006. Survey results reported in the body of this report also include “Don’t Know” responses. NARA did not report “Don’t Know” responses in the 2006 report because the percentage of survey participants who chose this option was small (between two and five percent). In 2007 the number of “Don’t Know” responses rose to between 5 and 13 percent.

2. Response Rate

NARA distributed 116 questionnaires and received 75 completed surveys for a response rate of 65 percent. This is an 11 percent decrease from 2006.

3. Demographics (Questions 10-13)

- 10. How long have you been working in records management with the Federal government?*
- 11. How long have you been working in records management with your current agency?*

12. *Is records management currently your primary or secondary responsibility?*
13. *How many SF 115s has your agency submitted to NARA during the past 12 months?*

The majority of survey respondents reported that they worked in records management with the Federal government (83 percent) and with their current agency (72 percent) for more than three years. Most (84 percent) reported that records management is their primary responsibility and most (73 percent) had submitted one or more schedules to NARA during the twelve previous months.

4. Core Questions (Questions 1-6, 8)

A. Overall Satisfaction

8. *How satisfied are you with NARA scheduling and appraisal services?*

Most Records Officers who completed the 2007 survey (80 percent) reported they are satisfied or very satisfied with NARA appraisal and scheduling services. This is a two percent improvement over the 2006 results.

B. Timeliness of Records Schedule Approval Process

1. *The time it takes to approve a records schedule is satisfactory.*

Respondents expressed the highest level of concern with the timeliness of the scheduling process. Almost half (45 percent) stated that the length of time is unsatisfactory. Forty-four percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the time it takes to approve a records schedule is satisfactory. More survey participants (24 percent) indicated they “Strongly Disagree” for this question than any other in the survey. Eleven percent of respondents stated they “Don’t Know” if the time it takes to approve a records schedule is satisfactory.

While the satisfaction rate with the timeliness of the scheduling process is lower than we would like, the good news is that customer satisfaction in this area is rising. In 2006, fifty-three percent of respondents stated that the length of time to approve a schedule was unsatisfactory. About one in four respondents (24 percent) strongly disagreed that timeliness was satisfactory. The 2007 results show an overall eight percent decrease in respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the time to approve a records schedule is satisfactory. However, the number of respondents who strongly disagreed rose by ten percent.

C. Communication (Questions 2-6)

2. *NARA staff keeps my agency informed about the progress of our records schedules throughout the approval process.*

The 2007 responses to Question 2 showed a slight decrease (1 percent) over 2006 responses. Three-quarters of this year’s respondents agreed that NARA staff keeps their agency informed about the progress of their records schedules while sixteen percent disagreed. This is an improvement of four percent over the 2006 results. There was a five percent increase in “Don’t Know” responses.

3. *When my agency's staff contacts our NARA appraisal archivist for assistance, we receive a response that meets our needs.*

This question received one of the three most positive response rates. The majority of survey respondents (81 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they receive a response that meets their needs when they contact NARA for assistance. Only eleven percent of respondents stated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. Although the percentage of those who agreed decreased by eight percent and those who disagreed increased by four percent from 2006, respondents' satisfaction level remains high for this question.

4. *My agency's staff has a good working relationship with our NARA appraisal archivist.*

As in 2006, this year's survey respondents express the highest satisfaction rate with the working relationship they have with their appraisal archivist and the response they receive when they contact NARA for assistance. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have a good working relationship with their NARA appraisal archivist. There was a 3 percent increase in "Don't Know" responses to the question.

5. *My agency receives consistent guidance from NARA staff regarding records scheduling policy and procedures.*

A large percentage of survey respondents (81 percent) agree that their agency receives consistent guidance from NARA staff regarding records scheduling policy and procedures.

6. *When I have an open records schedule with NARA, I regularly receive the monthly Registered Schedules Status Report from NARA.*

This was a new question. NARA has sent the *Status Report of Registered Schedules* to agencies since August 2005. The report is a tool to communicate with our scheduling and appraisal customers. Each NARA appraisal archivist is responsible for sending the status report to their assigned agencies every month. Sixty percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they receive this report monthly. However, 40 percent of respondents disagreed (24 percent), strongly disagreed (3 percent), or didn't know (13 percent) whether they regularly received the report.

5. Survey Respondents' Ideas for Improving Scheduling Services

9. *Please let us know the most important thing we could do to improve our scheduling and appraisal services to you.*

Overwhelmingly, people asked NARA to speed up the scheduling process. Most believed that the scheduling process takes longer than necessary "especially," according to one respondent, "in light of our [agencies'] mandate to schedule all electronic records by 9/30/09."

SURVEY B: INACTIVE RECORDS SCHEDULING AGENCIES

1. Background

Survey B targets inactive scheduling agencies. Its purpose was to identify why these agencies had not recently submitted schedules to NARA. The majority of these Records Officers are from independent commissions and small offices or bureaus within large agencies. Some, in fact, do not appear to have an opportunity to submit schedules directly because of their organizational procedures. Survey B included three unique questions to gauge the possible reasons: lack of familiarity with the process, currently developing schedules, or other reasons not specifically addressed.

2. Response Rate

NARA distributed 129 questionnaires to the inactive sub-group and received 51 completed surveys for a response rate of forty percent.

3. Demographics (Questions 1-3)

- 1. How long have you been working in records management with the Federal government?*
- 2. How long have you been working in records management in your current agency?*
- 3. Is records management your primary or secondary responsibility?*

The majority of Survey B respondents to question 1 indicated they had worked in records management with the Federal government for more than three years (77 percent). The percentage of respondents with experience with their agency roughly doubled as the number of years increase. Sixteen percent of respondents had less than one year of experience, twenty-eight percent had between one and three years and fifty-five percent have more than three years experience. The Survey B results for these questions were consistent with Survey A results and showed that the majority of both sub-groups have more than three years experience. However, the Survey B respondents had less experience (83 percent vs. 77 percent over 3 years) in records management.

4. Core Questions (Questions 4-6)

A. Familiarity with the Process:

- 4. How familiar are you with NARA's scheduling process?*

The majority of respondents reported that they are either extremely (55 percent) or moderately (35 percent) familiar with the NARA scheduling process. Minimally familiar or "Not at all" combined together accounted for slightly less than ten percent of the respondents reasons for not submitting schedules to NARA.

B. Currently Developing Schedules:

- 5. My agency is currently developing records schedules (SF 115s) for submission to NARA.*

While the data gathered from this question is encouraging – fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated their agency was currently developing schedules -- a large number of agencies (39 percent) stated that they are not developing schedules for submission to NARA.

c. Reasons for not Submitting Schedules:

6. *My agency has not recently submitted records schedules to NARA because:*

Response Option
1. I am unaware of the National Archives and Records Administration.
2. I do not know who to contact within NARA regarding questions about scheduling records.
3. The current records schedules at my agency are adequate.
4. My agency has enough space to adequately store our records and therefore does not see a need to produce new records schedules.
5. I am not aware of any negative consequences to my agency resulting from not recently creating new records schedules.
6. My agency does not have the necessary resources to undertake scheduling records with NARA at this time.
7. Records management is not a priority with my agency's management and program staff.
8. I think NARA's records scheduling process is too complicated.
9. I think NARA's records scheduling process takes too long.
OTHER

This question had a list of nine possible reasons why agencies did not submit schedules to NARA. Respondents could select all that applied.

Respondents did not select Options 1 and 2. Option 3 received the most selections out of the nine available, including the “Other” option. Forty-five percent of respondents believed their current records schedules were adequate.

Option 4 was selected once. There were no selections for option 5. Options 6 and 7 were fairly evenly split. Twelve percent selected option 6 which indicated resource issues at their agency. Eight percent selected option 7 that records management is not a priority in their agency. Options 8 and 9 are mapped to the perception that scheduling is difficult and time consuming. Only four percent chose option 8 and two percent selected option 9. Thirty-three percent selected the “Other” option. The respondents who selected this option gave two primary reasons for not submitting schedules: they were developing schedules at their agency; or they were working directly with a NARA representative to develop a schedule.

QUESTIONS COMMON TO ACTIVE AND INACTIVE AGENCIES (SURVEY A AND SURVEY B)

1. Background

For the 2007 survey, NARA replaced the questions about guidance products with new ones that addressed the GRS, electronic records guidance products, and training services. Analyses of earlier results showed that the initial set of guidance questions were too broad for NARA to obtain useful data. The new questions addressed specific products and services. NARA asked the same questions of both active and inactive records scheduling customers since both groups may use these products and services.

2. Response Rate

For Survey A, NARA received 75 completed surveys and for Survey B, NARA received 51 completed surveys. There were a combined total of 126 respondents who answered the questions regarding the GRS, electronic records guidance products, and training services. NARA examined the data in two ways: first by type of agency customers, whether active or inactive, and then together as a whole.

3. Core Questions Common to Both Surveys

a. General Records Schedules (GRS)

1. Familiarity with the GRS:

Survey A, Question 7 and Survey B, Question 7

I am familiar with the General Records Schedule (GRS).

A preponderance of respondents (97 percent) reported familiarity with the GRS. The active and inactive agencies responded in the same way to this question. Note: This question did not include the “Don’t Know” option because it is based solely on knowledge.

2. The GRS’ Retention Periods Meet Agency’s Needs, Provide Comprehensive Coverage, and Are Easy to Use:

Survey A, Question 7a and Survey B, Question 7a

The General Records Schedules’ (GRS) retention periods meet my agency’s needs.

All agencies surveyed responded similarly to the questions dealing with coverage, comprehensiveness, and ease of use of the GRS. Most respondents indicated that the GRS’ retention periods were adequate. However, a significant number (14 percent) disagreed and (2 percent) strongly disagreed. While a large group of survey respondents (66 percent) either strongly agreed or agreed that the GRS was comprehensive, thirty-three percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Seventy-eight percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the GRS was easy to work with. Again, a fairly large proportion (21 percent) disagreed.

Survey A, Questions 7b-c and Survey B, Questions 7b-c

*The GRS is comprehensive enough to meet my agency's scheduling needs.
The GRS is easy to work with.*

Agencies actively scheduling records had the most comments (20) regarding the GRS. Of the inactive agencies, five respondents provided comments to this question. Of the total, five respondents recommended that NARA adopt the “big bucket” approach to the GRS.

Four respondents requested that NARA create an alphabetical or subject index to the GRS. Two respondents commented negatively about the organization of the GRS currently on NARA's website at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/records-schedules.html>.

3. Suggestions for future GRS items:

Survey A, Question 7d and Survey B, Question 7d

Please let us know if you have any suggestions for future GRS items.

Examples of items agencies asked NARA to include in future GRS versions included: occupational safety and health self-reporting forms and checklists, fire protection and prevention measures, and safety inspections.

b. Electronic Records Guidance Products

1. Familiarity with NARA's *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Instant Messaging*:

Survey A, Question 14, Survey B, Question 8

*Are you familiar with NARA's *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Instant Messaging*?*

Sixty-one percent of respondents in Survey A were familiar with the *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Instant Messaging*. However, a significant number, almost thirty-nine percent, were unfamiliar with this guidance product. Seventy-three percent of Survey B respondents reported lower awareness of this product.

2. Adequacy of format and relevancy of IM Guidance:

Survey A, Questions 14a-b and Survey B, Questions 8a-b

*The format of this guidance adequately covers the topic.
This guidance addresses technologies currently in use at my agency.*

Overall, customers reported that they found this guidance product adequate (73 percent) and that it addressed the technological needs of their agency (65 percent). However, almost twenty percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that the format of this guidance fit their needs. Thirty percent said the guidance did not address technologies currently in use at their agency.

3. Familiarity with NARA's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Implications of Recent Web Technologies for NARA Web Guidance:

Survey A, Question 15 and Survey B, Question 9

Are you familiar with NARA's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Implications of Recent Web Technologies for NARA Web Guidance?

Fifty-nine percent of active scheduling agencies were familiar with this guidance product while forty-one percent said they were not familiar with this product. The level of unfamiliarity seems high but is similar to the rates of familiarity with the *Instant Messaging* guidance. Inactive agencies reported a higher level of unfamiliarity (75 percent) as might be expected of agencies not as involved in current scheduling projects.

4. Adequacy of Format and Relevancy of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Implications of Recent Web Technologies for NARA Web Guidance:

Survey A, Question 15a-b and Survey B, Question 9a-b

*The format of this guidance adequately covers the topic.
This guidance addresses technologies currently in use at my agency.*

Overall customers reported that they found this guidance format adequate (79 percent) and that it addressed the technological needs of their agency (79 percent). About twelve percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the format fit their needs and twelve percent stated that the guidance did not address technologies currently in use at their agency.

5. Suggestions for Future Guidance Products:

Survey A, Question 16 and Survey B, Question 10

Which technologies are in use in your agency that you would like to have guidance about?

The majority of agencies actively scheduling records are aware of NARA's FY 2007 Electronic Records Management (ERM) guidance products. The converse is true for the majority of agencies that are not actively scheduling their records. Of those agency records personnel who are aware of the guidance, who are self-described having more than three years experience and whose primary job is records management, an overwhelming majority indicated that the ERM guidance adequately addressed technologies currently used in their agencies.

c. Training Services

1. Awareness of NARA's Records Management Training Services:

Survey A, Question 17 and Survey B, Question 11

I am aware of NARA's Records Management Training Program.

Questionnaires A and B contain a new set of five questions regarding NARA’s Records Management Training Program (Items 17-17d on Survey A; 11-11d on Survey B). The surveys defined “Training Program” as the standard, nationwide courses offered in NARA’s Records Management Training Program, as described in NARA’s annual training catalogue or the NARA website.

This analysis will be used to inform the marketing efforts and needs assessment activities of the Training Program, especially those targeting Records Officers. In this way, the data collected could ultimately affect the curriculum revision that will take place on an ongoing basis. The information will also be interpreted in conjunction with an impact evaluation survey conducted by the Training Program. The impact evaluation was sent to those who have actually attended NARA classes—completers and non-completers of the Records Management Certificate Program. We intend to note any correlation between the responses of the Records Officer and the number of participants from that agency.

Analysis of the data shows that agency Records Officers have an extremely high level of awareness about the Training Program. Responses to Items 17/11 and 17a/11a were “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” for ninety-seven and ninety-eight percent of respondents. Further data analysis showed that there was no notable difference between active and inactive agencies regarding their program awareness.

2. Awareness of Training Program Course Offerings:

Survey A, Question 17a and Survey B, Question 11a

I am aware of the types of courses offered in the Training Program.

Almost ninety-nine percent of respondents indicated awareness of the types of courses offered in the Training Program. There was no notable difference between active and inactive agencies regarding their specific course awareness.

3. Frequency of Training Participation:

Survey A, Question 17b and Survey B, Question 11b

My agency’s staff has often participated in the Training Program.

The combined response regarding the frequency of staff participation in NARA training was fifty-seven percent (responded “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that participation is “often”). There was a notable difference between the agencies actively involved in scheduling (Survey A) and those who were not (Survey B). The active agencies indicated significantly greater staff participation in the NARA training, with seventy-three percent that strongly agreed or agreed.

4. Training Program Provides Value:

Survey A, Question 17c and Survey B, Question 11c

The Training Program benefits my agency.

A large majority of respondents (82 percent “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”) indicated that the Training Program benefited their agency. Most remaining respondents (14 percent) didn’t know whether their agency benefited. There was no notable difference between the active and inactive agencies.

5. Relevancy of NARA’s Records Management Training Program’s Courses

Survey A, Question 17d and Survey B, Question 11d

The Training Program’s courses address the needs of my agency.

Similarly, seventy-nine percent of the combined agencies strongly agreed or agreed that NARA courses address their agency needs; twelve percent answered “Don’t Know.” There was no significant difference between the active and inactive agencies. Among active agencies, there is a significant correlation between both program and course awareness and staff participation. However, “Don’t Know” responses were higher among Survey A respondents, and a higher proportion disagreed with the premise.

DISCUSSION

There was a significant increase in the number of “Don’t Know” responses in the 2007 surveys (between 5 and 13 percent) from the 2006 survey results (between 2 and 5 percent). This leads us to believe that surveys are being forwarded by Records Officers to other staff members for response. This is particularly relevant to Survey A. The increase in “Don’t Know” responses makes it difficult to analyze, and verify the results of this survey. The number of “Don’t Know” responses on questions like the following raises the issue of whether our actual respondents were appropriately placed to provide input on the survey.

SURVEY A		Don’t know
13. How many SF 115s has your agency submitted to NARA during the past 12 months?	2007	8 (11%)
	2006	2 (2%)
2. NARA staff keeps my agency informed about the progress of our records schedules throughout the approval process.	2007	7 (9%)
	2006	3 (4%)
3. When my agency’s staff contacts our NARA appraisal archivist for assistance,	2007	6 (8%)

we receive a response that meets our needs.	2006	3 (4%)
4. My agency's staff has a good working relationship with our NARA appraisal archivist.	2007	5 (7%)
	2006	3 (4%)
5. My agency receives consistent guidance from NARA staff regarding records scheduling policy and procedures.	2007	4 (5%)
	2006	3 (4%)
6. When I have an open records schedule with NARA, I regularly receive the monthly Registered Schedules Status Report from NARA.	2007*	10 (13%)

*New question.

This survey was sent to active agencies that had an open schedule during the previous year. Several comments clearly indicated that the respondent was not a Records Officer but another staff person. This phenomenon could have affected the results of the survey and presented a less accurate picture of records management satisfaction among Records Officers.

CONCLUSION

The vast majority of survey respondents agree that they have a good working relationship with their appraisal archivist and that they receive a response that meets their needs when they contact NARA for assistance. Survey respondents continue to express the highest level of dissatisfaction with the time it takes to approve a records schedule. The one percent decrease in satisfaction relating to NARA staff keeping agencies informed about the progress of their records schedules throughout the approval process illustrates that communication is still a significant concern for agencies.

In order to raise the overall satisfaction level of its customers from eighty percent, NARA will work to implement its electronic *Request for Records Disposition Authority* (SF 115), review internal procedures to ensure that the monthly *Status Report on Registered Schedules* are consistently disseminated to agencies, and continue to expand its records scheduling and appraisal guidance products. We will look for systemic delays in the records scheduling process and increase wherever possible the resources used for scheduling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NARA remains committed to improving its scheduling and appraisal services to raise customer satisfaction levels. This year, two different surveys were distributed to two different populations.

The intention of fielding two surveys was to compare data with future surveys and track changes made by NARA with customers actively using our services.

We saw a slight improvement in customer satisfaction in 2007. However, only forty-four percent of our customers feel that the time it takes to approve a records schedule is satisfactory. This is only a one percent increase over last year. While NARA has taken steps to address this issue (lowering the amount of time on the Federal Register from 45 to 30 days), it is clear that this remains the most significant concern of our customers. NARA is prevented by statute from making certain changes (for example, self-approval of dispositions for temporary records) advocated by some customers to the schedule approval process. Because the effects of 207(e) may be seen over the coming year, NARA should develop strategies to minimize the impact on the time required to approve a schedule. We should work with agencies to predetermine the amount of schedules that may be submitted to comply with 207(e) and explore ways to expedite the process. The following is a list of some actions NARA plans to take to address this issue:

- Regionalization of scheduling
- Structured Appraisal Reports
- Electronic submission of the SF115
- Posting agency schedules on the NARA website
- Increased outreach and follow-up with agencies by NARA headquarters and regional staffs

NARA has implemented some of these changes (regionalization of scheduling for a limited number of agencies, structured appraisal reports), but others will not be completed prior to FY 2008 (Electronic SF115, Agency schedules on the web). The regionalization of scheduling is still on too small a scale to have a noticeable difference.

Another area of concern for agencies is the communication between NARA and the agency about the status of records schedules. Beginning in August 2005, NARA sent a monthly *Status Report of Registered Schedules* to agencies with open schedules. Despite this effort, only sixty percent of 2007 survey respondents indicated that they have been receiving these status reports. However, seventy-five percent of our Survey A respondents agreed that NARA staff kept them informed about progress during the scheduling process. NARA needs to monitor this carefully to ensure that reports are being sent in a timely manner and to the right person. Respondents also indicated in survey comments that they would like more information about their open schedules than is presently included in the status reports. NARA should evaluate these responses to determine if the content of the status report should be revised.

Responses to the questions about the GRS revealed that most agencies are familiar with the product and use them. Based on the comments, NARA should explore developing an alphabetical index for the GRS to facilitate ease of use. Also, NARA should consider reorganizing the GRS into big buckets and continue to identify types of records that can be scheduled under a GRS.

The questions concerning NARA guidance products provided contradictory responses. While the majority of Survey A respondents indicated they were aware of NARA 2006 ERM guidance products, many of their comments revealed some confusion about how they apply to agencies'

records. Therefore, we recommend that NARA increase its education and outreach to the agencies about its guidance products, possibly through briefings and other types of training. Other possible mechanisms for outreach include presentations at BRIDG meetings; and consolidation of all NARA guidance in one easily locatable page on NARA Records Management web site. In addition, NARA also should explore developing lower-level implementation guidance.