RECORDS MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES
JANUARY 1, 2023 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023

Semi-Annual Report

National Archives and Records Administration
August 2023

Records Management Oversight Activities
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January 1 through June 30, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This report shares recurring themes, key observations, and recommendations for action identified by the Records Management Oversight and Reporting program of the Office of the Chief Records Officer through various oversight activities completed January 1 through June 30, 2023.

We conduct oversight through inspections including tracking plans of corrective actions (PoCAs), assessments on various records management topics, analysis of annual reports submitted by federal agencies, and tracking of unauthorized dispositions allegations.

During this six-month period our work included:

- An inspection of the records management program of the Department of the Navy was completed.
- Federal Agency Records Management annual reporting was conducted with the summary analysis report expected to be published soon.
- Several assessments, inspections and system audits are in progress with reports expected by the end of the fourth quarter FY 23 and/or early FY 24. (See listing at the end of this report)

Published inspection and assessment reports, and correspondence related to allegations of unauthorized disposition of federal records are posted on our webpage.

We also continued our tracking and monitoring of Plans of Corrective Action (PoCAs) submitted by agencies following inspections. As of June 30, 2023, NARA is actively working with agencies on 66 open PoCAs with 657 total recommendations. For the open PoCAs, 199 recommendations have been closed as a result of agency action.

TRENDS

- Annual reporting data indicates that the transition to electronic recordkeeping is continuing with most agencies expressing confidence that NARA and OMB goals will be met.
- Cognitive technologies for records management is not a major focus of agencies, although use of these technologies for other purposes that create records exists.
- Records are at risk when the fundamentals of records management, including policies, internal controls, records schedules, and procedures for implementation, are out of date or not in place.
- Communication and cooperation between those specifically charged with leading the records management program and others assigned records management responsibilities is essential to the success of a records management program.

SUMMARY OF OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

- **Department of the Navy Records Management**

  NARA inspected the records management program of the Department of the Navy (DON) as part of a multi-year plan to inspect the records management programs of the Department of Defense (DoD) components. The purpose of this inspection was to examine how well the DON and its components comply with federal records management statutes and regulations and to assess the effectiveness of its records management policies and procedures. The engagement emphasized the coordination of records management program implementation across the DON including the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), United States Navy (USN), and the United States Marine Corps (USMC) with a focus on policies, electronic records management, strategic planning, training, oversight, and history collections.

  The DON records management program has both strengths and weaknesses noted in the report. Strengths included the inclusion of records management in the overall information management, data management and information governance structure and a commitment to electronic records management and the use of technology to the fullest extent feasible. The findings and recommendations in the report focused on records management program administration, communication, cooperation and support, improvements for the maintenance of historical collections and the transfer of permanent records to the National Archives and other concerns related to records schedule implementation and disposition of records,

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE ACTION

Overall, the challenges facing federal records management programs remain fairly consistent and must be faced with concerted effort and leadership. The purpose of publishing specifics from our oversight activities semi-annually is to provide information about our activities and identify commonalities, particularly for those agencies that have not yet been inspected or otherwise engaged with us. We encourage Senior Agency Officials for Records Management (SAORM), other Senior Agency Officials, as well as Agency Records Officers and other Records Managers, to use this information to identify where they may have similar issues and proactively make adjustments.

NARA makes the following recommendations for SAORMs to consider based on the oversight activities covered by this report:

- Senior level support is essential for records management programs to be successful and requires SAORMs to proactively endorse and promote these programs to other senior officials within their agencies.

- Agencies must ensure that the basic fundamentals of a records management program are in place and comply with all regulations under 36 CFR Chapter XII.

- Agencies must develop procedures to regularly review their internal controls for implementing and assessing the records management program policies and recordkeeping requirements the same as any other program. (36 CFR 1226.10, OMB A-123 and A-130).

- Agencies must ensure that policies, procedures, and controls adequately cover new technologies that create records, such as portable electronic devices, electronic messaging environments, and collaboration platforms. (36 CFR 1222.32 and 36 CFR 1222.34)

Proper records management supports government accountability and allows agencies to create and retrieve information required to accomplish mission goals. NARA is committed to working with federal agencies to improve records management across the government to advance these important goals.

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS

The following are some of the oversight activities expected to be completed in calendar year 2023.

Annual Federal Agency Records Management Report

- Annual report to Congress covering records management activities in CY 2023, based on the annual SAORM reports, Records Management Self-Assessment, and Federal Electronic Records and Email Management reports received January-March 2023
- Preparation for the next reporting cycle to run in January 2024

Multi-Agency Inspections

- Records Management in Judicial Agencies
- Records Management in Legislative Branch Agencies
- Department of the Interior's Office of Indian Affairs, Bureaus of Indian Affairs, Trust Fund Administration and Indian Education and the American Indian Records Repository

Single Agency Inspections

- Department of the Army
- Federal Aviation Administration

Assessments
- Social Media Records

Systems Audits
- Email and Calendar Records of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Peace Corps

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