



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

April 2, 2021

Karen Ballesteros  
Office of the Secretary Records Officer  
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services  
OS/ASA/OCIO  
200 Independence Ave. S.W.,  
Suite 336E #23,  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
Karen.Ballesteros@hhs.gov

Dear Ms. Ballesteros,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received your report dated February 8, 2021, regarding the unauthorized disposition of email records from the Office of the Secretary (OS).

Your report indicates that,

The Office of the Secretary (OS) believes that there have been accidental destruction of non-capstone mailboxes and file shares of departing users over several years. As part of the HHS off-boarding procedure, a departing user and their supervisor are given the option of how to back up files stored in their email. If no selection was made and/or a user was not off-boarded correctly, the email mailbox and files shares of the given user were deleted after 90 days of inactivity. We believe this impacted Email and File Shares of Non-Capstone Officials off-boarded within the HHS, Office of the Secretary (OS) from November 2016 to November 2020.

NARA understands that this issue is similar to the one cited in your February 5, 2021 report (UD-2021-0014). As was done in that report, please provide more details and/or documentation related to this incident, including the number of email accounts that were accidentally destroyed between November 2016 and November 2020, and all steps taken to recover lost records and prevent a recurrence of this unauthorized deletion.

This case will remain open until the requested information is provided. Thank you for your commitment to improving your records management practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

cc

Acting Department Records Officer  
Jacqlyn Smith-Simpson, [Jacqlyn.Smith@hhs.gov](mailto:Jacqlyn.Smith@hhs.gov)



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February 18, 2022

Karen Ballesteros  
Office of the Secretary Records Officer  
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services  
OS/ASA/OCIO  
200 Independence Ave. S.W.,  
Suite 336E #23,  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
Karen.Ballesteros@hhs.gov

Dear Ms. Ballesteros,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), Office of the Secretary's (OS), follow-up report regarding the accidental destruction of non-capstone mailboxes and file shares of departing employees.

The report indicates that HHS's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) could only provide the total number of deleted mailboxes as a whole for a group of three subcomponent agencies using HHS email shared services. OCIO reported that approximately 5,405 email accounts from the OS, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and Administration of Community Living (ACL) collectively were prematurely deleted between November 1, 2016 - November 29, 2020.

HHS's OCIO has implemented measures to address the loss of non-capstone accounts. Effective November 2020, all employee mailboxes within OS are retained and discoverable by means of eDiscovery through the Microsoft 365 Compliance Center until either the retention period expires, or records are accessioned to the National Archives for permanent preservation.

Based on the information provided, OS has met all reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14 and this matter is now resolved. If you have any questions, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence R. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a distinct 'R'.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government