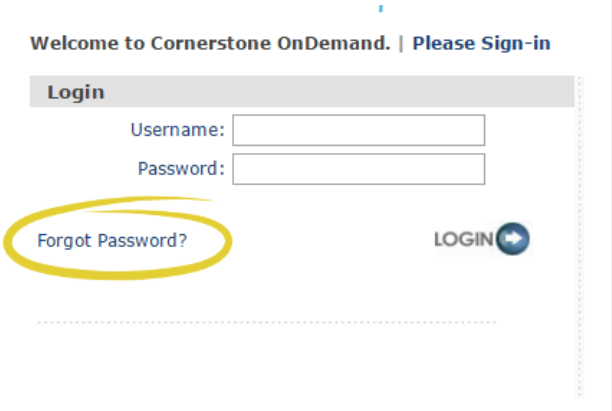
The NARA Learning Center

If I had an account in the last learning management system (LMS), how do I access the Learning Center and request a password for access?

1. Visit https://nara.csod.com.
2. Click the **Forgot Password?** Link.
3. Enter your email address in the **login credential** field and click submit.
4. You will receive an email with a link to reset your password.

Your login will be the email address. You can reset your password using the Forgot Password? feature at any time.



If I have trouble accessing the Learning Center, who do I contact for help?

If you encounter problems accessing the Learning Center, please request assistance using this link: https://clientsupport.eskillz.com/Launch/LiveSupport.aspx?RoomID=355. Be prepared to provide your first and last name, email address, phone number, and a description of the problem you're having.

How do I see what Records Management Training Courses are available if I do not have an account?

Copy and paste this URL into your browser: https://nara.csod.com/default.aspx?c=%255e%255e%255ePmn2Ns5zyP6NG9q6M1ZXfw%253d%253d. You will be able to view the course catalog and other information about the training program.

I did not have an account in the old LMS. How do I create an account in the new Learning Center?

Copy and paste this URL into your browser: https://nara.csod.com/default.aspx?c=%255e%255e%255ePmn2Ns5zyP6NG9q6M1ZXfw%253d%253d Click the Create an Account button.

My transcript is missing some of my coursework history. How do I report missing learning records?

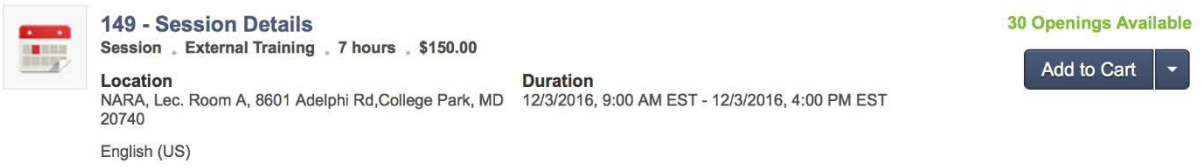
Please note that the transcript history for the initial release contains a limited set of records. We will be loading historical data over the coming weeks. If you are missing transcript history for the Records Management Training Program and need that information, please email RMT1@nara.gov.

How do I register and pay for courses?

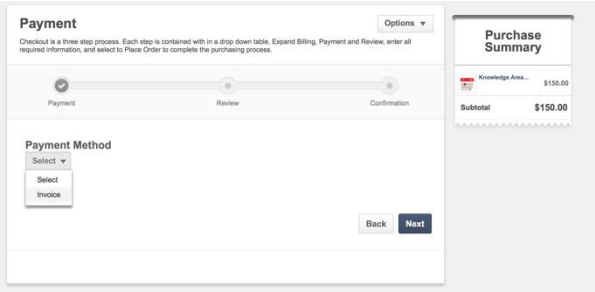
1. After you login, hover over Learning and select **Browse for Training** or **Events Calendar**.

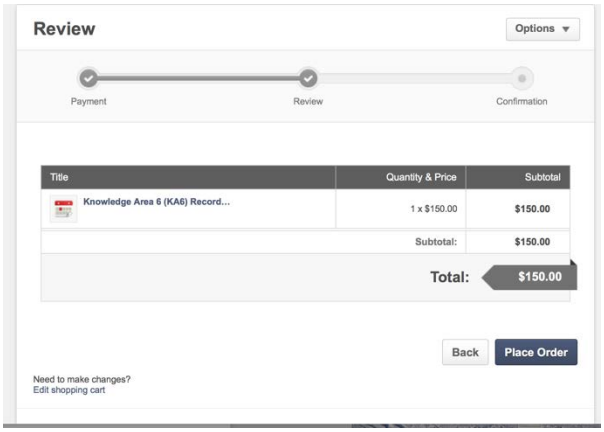
2. Click on the course you want to attend.

3. The course description will be displayed with the course sessions that are available. The session details include the class location, dates, times, and cost. Click **Add to Cart** next to the session that you want to attend.



4. When you are done adding courses, click **Proceed to Checkout**. On the next screen, select Invoice as the billing method and click **Next**.



5. Review your order and click **Place Order**. You will receive an email confirming your request for the course and an email confirming the pending payment status of your request. Both emails contain information on how to submit your payment. *We will enable credit card payments in the shopping cart in the coming months so that you can complete your payment without sending us any forms.*	

What is ARCIS?

Archives and Records Centers Information System (ARCIS) is a Web-based IT system of the Federal Records Centers Program (FRCP) of the National Archives and Records Administration. The system is the online portal through which agencies can do business with the FRC facilities.

ARCIS is a secure system that runs on standard browsers, allowing agencies to conduct transactions online, saving time and reducing paperwork. It allows for the tracking of agency transactions electronically, giving instance access to information about your records.

ARCIS can expedite your data entry. The system saves your profile, so frequently entered information, such as your record group and your mailing address, is filed in automatically every time you log in. There are easy-to-use drop-down menus that allow you to select the right option for your transaction.

An upgraded version of ARCIS is now available. In addition to Reference Requests, there are three new interdependent modules: User Administration, Access Controls, and Records Transfers.

The User Administration module gives Agency Records Officers complete control over:

- How many users have access to the system
- Who those users are
- What they are allowed to do:
  - Create records transfers and reference requests
  - Give authority to approve and submit records transfer to the National Archives
  - Create other administrators to distribute workload in a hierarchical structure

Access Controls restrict users to the records with which they can interact via:

- Records Center
- Record Group
- Charge Account (if the Record Group uses stratified billing)
- Security Classification and Security Level
- Branch (optional)
- Agency Defined Fields (optional)

The Records Transfers module enables:

- Creation of an SF 135 (Records and Transmittal and Receipt) online
- Submission of a new SF 135 directly to an FRC facility
- Forwarding of a new SF 135 to an agency internal approver prior to submission to an FRC facility
- Limitation of users so they can only create specific attributes of a new records transfer as defined by the users access rights

Once the Records Transfer module is turned on for your agency, it will replace the current SF 135 process.

Are Agencies required to use ARCIS for reference requests?

Agency are not required to use ARCIS, however, submitting a reference request using ARCIS is highly recommend as it provides the agency with 100% tracking information for the processing and shipping of the request.

How do I sign up for ARCIS?

For assistance in getting an ARCIS account please contact the ARCIS help desk at *arcishelp@nara.gov* or 314-801-9300.

Is there ARCIS Training?

The Federal Records Centers have developed a number of resources to help you learn about ARCIS. The FRCP offers computer-based training tutorials on a number of topics that you can review anytime and learn at your own pace. From time to time, there are free, instructor-led webinars and instructor-led training on individual ARCIS modules. You can also download the ARCIS manual at *http://www.archives.gov/frc/training/*.

What is ERA?

The Electronic Records Archives (ERA) is the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) system that allows Federal agencies to perform critical records transactions with NARA online. ERA is designed to preserve and manage NARA's electronic records and to manage the lifecycle of records and other holdings, including support for records retention schedules and the accessioning process for all Federal records.

ERA does more than just store data. ERA provides a true digital archive that complies with all laws and regulations that apply to Federal, Presidential, and Congressional records. ERA also provides workflow support for many of the transactions that occur between NARA and its agency customers to process and preserve electronic records.

ERA also makes certain unstructured electronic records available to the public through the Online Public Access (OPA) tool at *http://www.archives.gov/research/search/*.

Are agencies required to use ERA?

NARA Bulletin 2012-03, issued August 21, 2012, informed Federal agencies that, beginning October 1, 2012, they are instructed to use ERA for scheduling records and transferring permanent records to the National Archives. NARA will revise the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and other publications regarding the use of ERA, and until NARA issues the CFR revisions, agencies should follow the instructions in NARA Bulletin 2012-03.

For the complete text of the bulletin, please go to *http://archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2012/2012-03.html*.

Who uses ERA and what does it do?

Federal agencies use NARA's ERA to:

- Perform records management transactions online
- Draft new records retention schedules (SF 115s) for records *in any format*
- Officially submit records retention schedules (SF 115s) for approval
- Request the transfer of permanent records (SF 258s) in any format for accessioning or pre-accessioning
- Submit electronic records for storage in the ERA electronic records repository

NARA staff use ERA to:

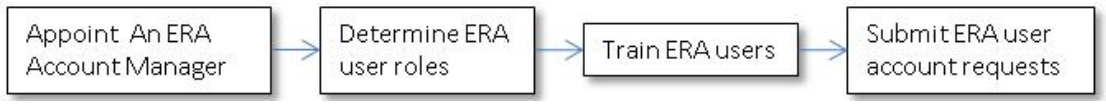
- Review and approve or reject proposed record schedules
- Review and approve or reject transfer requests that authorize an agency to transmit records to NARA
- Review and approve or reject legal transfer instruments

- Create and submit a transfer request on behalf of an agency or a legacy migration transfer on behalf of NARA
- Package legacy NARA electronic records, as well as other files received by NARA on behalf of an agency and send them to ERA
- Ingest digital records
- Document certain discrepancies; NARA accessioning staff will document transfer discrepancies via the transfer processing results – which is visible to agencies but not editable

Watch a You-Tube video of ERA in the process of accessioning records at *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNXpaAXcCvk*

How do agencies get started using ERA?

Getting started in ERA is a four step process, as illustrated below:



Step One – Appoint an ERA Account Manager

The ERA Account Manager is the person within an agency who approves user access to ERA. Frequently, the Agency Records Officer serves as the ERA Account Manager. The Agency Records Officer should email the name of the ERA Account Manager to *ERAaccounts@nara.gov*.

Step Two – Determine ERA User Roles

ERA is a role-based system. Individuals approved to function in a particular role can access the screens needed to perform that function and take certain actions, such as submitting records schedule (SF 115) and transfer requests (SF 135 and 258) information. More than one person can be assigned multiple roles, and one person can be assigned many or all of the roles.

Permissions determine what functions ERA and NARA users can view and access. Agency users can access record schedules and transfer requests for their agency only. NARA users will have access to multiple agencies.

Roles for Scheduling Records

- Records Scheduler: This role should be assigned to users who will be preparing records schedules and submitting them to the Certifying Official for approval
- Certifying Official: This role should be assigned to users who will be certifying that the agency is officially submitting records schedule information to NARA for approval. The paper equivalent of this role is the person who signs in Box 6 of the SF 115.

Roles for Transferring Permanent Records to NARA

- Transferring Official: This role should be assigned to users who will create transfer requests and submit them to the Transfer Approving Official for approval
- Electronic Transfer Staff: For electronic records transfers only, this role should be assigned to users who will package and transmit electronic files to ERA via an electronic transfer method
- Transfer Approving Official: This role should be assigned to users who have authority to approve transfer requests and legal transfer instruments on behalf of the agency. The paper equivalent of this role is the person who signs in Box 2A of the SF 258.

Step Three – Train ERA users

Once the ERA Account Manager has identified the agency staff and their roles, the staff members must complete online training before they can obtain an ERA user ID and password.

Online training is available at *http://www.archives.gov/era/training/*.

Scheduling Records training contains two lessons:

- Lesson 1 – Creating a Records Schedule
- Lesson 2 – Creating Record Schedule Items

Transferring Records training contains six lessons:

- Lesson 1 – Creating a Transfer Request
- Lesson 2 – Submitting a Transfer Request to NARA
- Lesson 3 – Preparing Files for Transfer Using the Packaging Tool (Agency)
- Lesson 4 – Finalizing the Creation of a Package (Agency)
- Lesson 5 – Transferring Electronic Files into ERA via HTTPS
- Lesson 6 – Secure File Transfer Protocol

The ERA Agency User Manual and other support materials are located here *http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/era/*.

Step Four – Submit ERA User Account Requests

After training, staff members submit a request for a NARA user account by completing an online ERA User Account Request Form (NA 3070 – see link below). Staff should submit the form to the NARA Account Representative who reviews the information and sends it via email to the agency ERA Account Manager. The ERA Account Manager approves the user account request by typing “approve” in the body of the email and sending it back to the NARA Account Representative. The ERA help desk will then contact the new user and arrange for a user ID and temporary password to be established for the user.

Link to ERA Account Request Form *http://www.archives.gov/forms/era/era-account-request.html*.

How does the paper SF 258 map to ERA Transfer Request (TR) fields?

To help users transition from paper forms to ERA, cross-walk documents have been created to show how SF 258 fields correspond to ERA Transfer Request (TR) fields for:

- Textual Records
- Motion and Analog Records
- Stills and Digital Records
- Electronic Records

All cross-walk documents are included in the ERA Agency User Manual Appendix. Individual cross-walk documents can also be found here *http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/era/crosswalk.html*.

How is a legacy schedule added to ERA?

In order to create a transfer request in ERA, the user must select the disposition authority for the records. Not all currently approved disposition authorities have been entered into ERA. Records Management Services (ACNR) is implementing a project to systematically enter legacy disposition authorities into ERA. In the meantime, ACNR will enter legacy disposition authorities upon request. To request entry of a legacy disposition authority:

1. Send your request via email to *legacy.schedule@nara.gov*. Your request must be a complete disposition authority citation (NARA SF 115 job number and item number). We will not accept manual citations.
2. You will receive a confirmation email. The authority should be entered and available within two business days of receipt of the request. If you request more than five (5) authorities in one day, NARA cannot guarantee the request will be fulfilled within 48 hours. If you need to request more than five (5) authorities, please submit your request and we will give you an estimate on how long it will take to enter them in the system.
3. You will receive a message from *legacy.schedule@nara.gov* when the disposition authority is ready for use

ERA Connectivity

ERA is accessed via the Internet. It works best using Firefox, Chrome, or Internet Explorer through Version 10. There are technical issues that may prohibit other browsers from working effectively with ERA.

Users should contact *ERAhelp@nara.gov* with questions about browser compatibility.

NARA will need the range of Internet Protocol (IP) addresses each agency uses. Send questions to *ERAaccounts@nara.gov*, which can provide additional information.

Link to ERA log-on page

The ERA log-on screen for agency and NARA users is here *http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/era/*.

Help for all ERA users – Agency and NARA

For technical ERA system issues such as resetting of passwords, etc., all users should call the ERA Help Desk. Agency personnel who have questions about record schedules, transfer requests or other records management business processes should contact their agency's NARA representative at *http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/appraisal/index.html*.

- The ERA Help Desk can be reached from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST at 1-877-372-9594
- The ERA Help Desk can be reached by email. Send questions to *ERAHelp@nara.gov*.

NARA Staff (non-Agency) Training Materials

- Online Training: *NARA Staff ERA Training: Non-electronic Transfer*
- *ERA Internal User Manual – Textual Accessioning*
- *ERA Internal User Manual – Special Media Accessioning*
- *ERA Internal User Manual – Electronic Records*

All the above manuals are located here: *http://www.nara-at-work.gov/project_information/era/index.html*.

NOTE: These links are only accessible inside NARA's firewall.

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Key Records Management Program Elements in the BPR File Manual

Table of Contents

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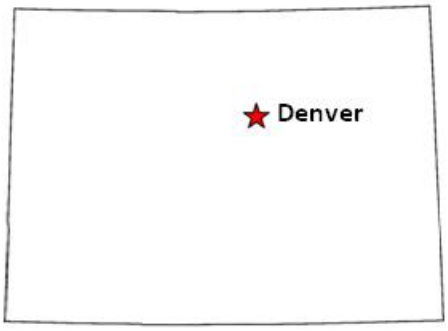
Denver BPR Office Scenario

Background:

The Bureau of Public Recreation's (BPR's) Denver, CO, Field Office provides auditing and consulting services – efficiency experts – to Rocky Mountain Area Federal agencies that seek to improve the efficiency of their operations. BPR auditors and consultants travel to a number of cities during the year to visit their Federal clients.



Colorado - The Centennial State

The Players:

You and your KA 6 colleagues are the current staff in the Denver Office. You will use the information provided below to help acclimate yourself to the situation in this office (remember, Denver is 5,280 feet above sea level!). The majority of the activities throughout KA 6 will be based on the Denver Office situation.

Current Situation:

1. BPR is located in a 40-year-old, five-story building in downtown Denver. BPR offices are located on floors 2 through 4, and the agency shares space with the Internal Revenue Service; Bureau of Land Management; Drug Enforcement Agency; and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. BPR property and supply managers have been assigned "records" as a collateral duty. The roof of the building frequently leaks. The garage area below the first floor flooded twice in five years because of faulty water pipes. Cooling and heating units maintain inconsistent temperatures.

2. On the third floor the agency operates a computer center that includes a local area network (LAN) server connected to workstations on the desks of virtually all BPR staff and managers. The LAN provides access to national financial and program-related databases, as well as electronic mail and office automation applications (Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, etc.). Users organize and name the documents they create with these applications on whim. Users delete documents when they no longer need them. Some staff print electronic documents and place the hardcopy in a paper file; others do not. System backups are performed for the contents of the entire server, including the system software, email messages, Word documents, etc. Backups are kept for nine months and are cycled; the backups are maintained on the fourth floor in a General Services Administration storage locker.

3. Library and reference materials dating from the 1950s are located in each office and cubicle. These materials include phone books, journals, agency memoranda and directives from Washington headquarters, magazines, catalogs, copies of reports from other offices within BPR and from outside the agency, socioeconomic and management texts, and other sources of information used by BPR personnel to accomplish their work. Some of the reference material that is still relevant is maintained in certain offices of program managers who must provide access to the documents when other employees request them. Similar reference information resides on the shared drive, where it is placed by users who have downloaded the information from the Internet and from email attachments.

4. Branch and division secretaries primarily handle management of records. Records include housekeeping files (such as personnel, finance, facilities) and program files dealing with the mission of the agency. A central file exists, but for the most part, each office maintains its own files. The central files contain copies of general correspondence prepared by office heads for the field director, but not all office heads use the central files to store the copies of outgoing correspondence.

5. BPR case files consist mainly of agency consultation and audit files. These are arranged by project number and then by agency name. Active project files are maintained at the desk of each auditor or consultant assigned a particular case. Some managers have large caseloads consisting of 25 to 30 cases at one time. Active files are kept in bookshelves, on the floor, on desktops, and in cabinets in each cubicle and office concerned. One of the databases used to manage the auditing and consulting work has a “case status” feature for tracking purposes. The database allows managers to know which staff member is working on what case files and the status of each case. It is this system that assigns the case project number. Files are frequently borrowed or exchanged among audit and consulting staff; borrowed files are accounted for orally or through the use of routing slips or Post-it® notes. The locations of some case files are unknown.

6. The case files themselves are not marked as “open” or “closed.” However, each caseworker knows which of the cases assigned to him or her are closed and decides where to store closed files. Completed projects are kept in three areas. Some employees maintain all their completed projects in their offices or cubicles. Some closed files are kept in the central file area. Some cases are stored in the basement garage storage room. No retirements of inactive records have been made to NARA because of the perceived need to have older records close at hand. However, the entire body of inactive records that are more than two years old is referenced no more than once a month. There is no index to the closed cases. No records inventory has ever been conducted. The current agency “schedule” is 25 years old and does not reflect the current business operation.

7. Two or three managers have attempted to put a records management program into place by first purchasing microfilm equipment and then scanning equipment. All older records maintained at BPR offices and in the garage are imaged for future reference. Microfilming was abandoned three years ago in favor of electronic scanning. Canon equipment was initially used for scanning on WORM disks, but now a Kodak scanner is used for creating CD-ROM disks. Boxes of scanned documents are stored in the basement because the scanned images are not indexed. The agency does not have a disaster plan, nor is there a coordinated building disaster plan. Critical information is presumed to be available on the back-up tapes. There is a building evacuation plan, tested by each individual agency.

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ISO 15489-1 Information and Documentation

This handout summarizes the information found in the *ISO 15489-1 Information and Documentation – Records Management, Part 1: General*.

ISO 15489-1 Policy Recommendation

ISO 15489-1 Information and Documentation – Records Management, Part 1: General

Agencies should define and document a policy for records management in which the goal of the policy is the creation and management of reliable and usable records capable of supporting business functions and activities as needed.

Principles of Records Management Programs (ISO 15489-1)

ISO 15489-1 Information and Documentation – Records Management, Part 1: General

A comprehensive records management program should include all of these components:

- Determining what records should be created
- Deciding what form and structure should be used
- Determining what metadata should be created and managed
- Determining requirements for retrieving, using, and transmitting records
- Assessing the risks
- Preserving records and making them accessible
- Complying with legal and regulatory requirements
- Ensuring that records are maintained in a safe and secure environment and retained for as long as needed
- Identifying and evaluating opportunities for improving the effectiveness and efficiency that could result from better records management

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KA 6 Next Steps Worksheet

Purpose:

This activity's goal is to help you look back at what you have accomplished today and to look forward to what steps you now need to take to have an effective records management program. This worksheet includes:

- Lists of the components of each plan needed for your records management program
- Outcomes achieved in today's KA 6 session
- An area for you to capture the next steps you want to take

Directions:

1. **Use Column 3 (*Next Steps*) to begin, continue, or update your plans for your records management program by capturing your ideas and listing the steps needed to accomplish your next set of tasks.**

2. **Answer the questions at the end of the worksheet.**

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KA 6 Next Steps

Table 1: Module 1 Next Steps Worksheet

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	KA 6 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED	NEXT STEPS (INCLUDING RESOURCES NEEDED)
Module 1 Program Development: • Program Goals → • Responsibilities and Authorities	• Goal statements for Denver BPR Office • Goal statements for own agency	

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Table 2: Module 2 Next Steps Worksheet

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	KA 6 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED	NEXT STEPS (INCLUDING RESOURCES NEEDED)
Module 2 Evaluation Components: • Planning the Evaluation: – Scope – Logistics – Methodology – Stakeholders • Conducting the Evaluation → • Writing the Report • Implementing Recommendations	• Sample questions to use in a survey for Denver BPR	

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Table 3: Module 3 Next Steps Worksheet

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	KA 6 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED	NEXT STEPS (INCLUDING RESOURCES NEEDED)
Module 3 Business Plan: → • Executive Summary • Purpose and Objectives • Scope • Determining the Preferred Option • Project Plan • Project Management – Resources – Responsibilities	• Draft of business plan sections for the Denver BPR	

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Table 4: Module 4 Next Steps Worksheet

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	KA 6 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED	NEXT STEPS (INCLUDING RESOURCES NEEDED)
Module 4 Training Plan: • Assess the Current Situation: – Describe your target audience (who are they, what are their characteristics, what key tasks are needed) – Evaluate current performance and training to identify gaps • Assess the Options: → – What training is available (at your agency or NARA)? – Is new training needed? • Choose a Solution: – Revise current courses – Purchase existing training – Develop new courses (i.e., develop objectives and course outline)	• Analysis of training options for own agency	

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Table 5: Module 5 Next Steps Worksheet

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	KA 6 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED	NEXT STEPS (INCLUDING RESOURCES NEEDED)
Module 5 Marketing Plan: • Identify Your Target Audience: – What are their characteristics? → – What motivates them? • Describe Your Product or Service: – What are its benefits? – Why should I buy it? • Develop a Promotional Strategy (e.g., different tools and media) • Design Promotional Materials (e.g., online resources, printed materials, and presentations) →	• Target audience description for Denver BPR • Promotional product design • Sales pitch for your agency	

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Internal Inspection Sample Job Aid

This job aid can assist you in conducting an informal inspection of your agency's records management program. This checklist's focus is on the operational level versus the program level. For a more detailed self-evaluation checklist, refer to NARA's Records Information Management Self-Evaluation Guide at *http://www.archives.gov/publications/records-mgmt.html*.

Keep in mind that this job aid and the more formal NARA Self-Evaluation Guide can provide a framework for general inspection of a records management program. Agencies may choose to modify or add questions to accommodate specialized recordkeeping practices as well as conduct a more in-depth review by adding more specific questions.

Yes	No	#	Inspection Question
❑	❑	1.	Does your office have a file plan?
❑	❑	2.	Are nonrecord materials filed separately from official records?
❑	❑	3.	Are there designated Records Custodians of decentralized files?
❑	❑	4.	Are Privacy Act records protected in locked file cabinets?
❑	❑	5.	Are there boxes of records stored in warehouses or basements that could be shipped?
❑	❑	6.	Are programs storing records past their disposition date?

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Automation

Is Automation the Solution?

Automation is the application of computer technology to improve the management and performance of manual work processes.

Why Should Agencies Choose to Automate?

- The processes of designing, building, or acquiring new and updated information systems provide an opportunity to ensure that those systems make and keep appropriate records as part of their standard operation. To achieve this, it is essential to collaborate with information technology managers and professionals, including contractors and consultants.
- When possible, records capture should be a routine part of doing business and should be integrated into standard business processes. By capturing records in official systems, you allow access to others who need them for business functions and avoid the growth of personal stores of records that can remain uncontrolled or unmanaged.

Tasks to Automate a Work Process in an Information System

Here is an example of the tasks needed to design and implement an information system.

Conduct a cost-benefit analysis by creating the following documents:

- A statement of the policy rationale or business case
- A list of any assumptions that underlie the analysis of costs and benefits
- An analysis of costs associated with the existing system or process and with each alternative
- An analysis of benefits of the existing system or process and each alternative
- A summary of other qualitative factors used to compare and evaluate the existing system and each alternative

Your agency probably already performs a cost-benefit analysis as part of its information technology systems-development lifecycle methodology or as part of its standard procedures for purchases and acquisitions.

Evaluate resources and needs:

- Budget
- Agency culture
- Pilot projects
- Testing
- Evaluation

- Implementation (purchase of system)
- Training
- Maintenance
- Migration plan

Project tasks:

- Project charter creation and team formation – ensure that record management is included
- Analyze requirements – What do we need? Review the automation considerations previously discussed.
- Consider how automation fits the current business plan and enterprise architecture
- Consider requests for information and requests for proposals from vendors
- Create system selection comparison matrices
- Examine procurement, installation, and development
- Plan user training and maintenance

Software and system project charter:

- Create a project concept and scope (the what and the why)
- Assign responsibilities, including records management
- Determine staff responsible for writing proposals and schedules and obtaining approvals
- Establish project milestones

System selection requirements and analysis:

- Ask: What are you going to be automating?
- Ask: What problem should the system solve?
- Ask: Is there a measurable return on investment?
- Ask: What new problems might be created?
- Review systems and business documentation
- Produce a requirements document

Consider technical requirements:

- You need a definition of infrastructure requirements for the new system (technical specs)
- Will you develop software internally or purchase commercial off-the-shelf products?
- You need available automation systems to be surveyed, evaluated, and compared
- Will upgrades and data migration be included in future support?

Train others:

- Train users, and include records management issues
- When possible, records capture and management should be routine aspects of business and should be integrated into standard business processes. Failure to capture records in official systems leads to personal stores of records that often remain uncontrolled, unmanaged, and inaccessible to others who may need them.

Standards for Storage of Federal Records

Facility Standards

It is important to understand facility standards. Records managers need to understand the key points of 36 CFR 1234, with emphasis on facility standards for agency records centers and 44 U.S.C. 3103, which provides guidance on the transfer of records to records centers (these standards apply to both agency and commercial storage of records):

- 44 U.S.C. 3103 – "When the head of a Federal agency determines that such action may affect substantial economies or increased operating efficiency, he shall provide for the transfer of records to a records center maintained and operated by the Archivist, or, when approved by the Archivist, to a center maintained and operated by the head of the Federal agency"
- 36 CFR 1232.1, Authority – Federal agencies are authorized to maintain and operate records centers for the storage, servicing, and disposal of their noncurrent records. NARA must approve the centers.
- 36 CFR 1234, Facility standards for agency records centers – Agencies must comply with facility standards
  - All records centers that agencies use must protect Federal records from threats such as fire, pests, theft, natural disasters, and water damage
  - General requirements include:
    - A single-story building made of noncombustible materials (can be multistory if inspected and certified)
    - The allowable floor load limit determined and posted
    - An anti-intrusion alarm system
  - Fire safety requirements include:
    - A maximum of 250,000 cubic feet of Federal records in each records storage area
    - Appropriate fire barrier walls between records storage bays and between records storage bays and auxiliary spaces
    - A professionally designed fire-safety detection and suppression system designed to limit anticipated fire loss to a maximum of 300 cubic feet of records
  - Environmental requirements include:
    - Environmental conditions designed to prevent mold growth
    - Nontextual storage that meets the requirements of 36 CFR 1238 (Micrographic Records Management) and 36 CFR 1236 (Electronic Records Management)
    - Paper-based permanent records stored in 24 hr × 7 air-conditioned space with air characteristics equivalent to office air

Facility Approval and Inspection Requirements

Even if an agency or commercial records center has been approved for the storage of the Federal records of one agency, any other agency that proposes to store its records in that facility must still obtain NARA approval to do so.

At least 45 calendar days before an agency first transfers records to a commercial records storage facility, the agency must submit documentation to the NARA Security and Space Division demonstrating that the facility complies with the standards in 36 CFR 1234. The documentation may take the form of a copy of the agency's contract that incorporates 36 CFR 1234 in its provisions.

At the time that an agency submits a request to establish an agency records center, NARA may conduct an inspection of the proposed facility to ensure that the facility complies fully with the standards.

Agencies must ensure, by contract or otherwise, that agency and NARA officials or their delegates have the right to inspect commercial records storage facilities to ensure that such facilities fully comply with the standards. NARA may conduct periodic inspections of commercial records storage facilities so long as agencies use such facilities to store agency records.

Regulatory Citations for Records Storage Requirements

36 CFR 1232 – Transfer of Records to Records Storage Facilities
http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/36/part-1232

Key points from this subpart include:

- Agencies may store records in various records storage facilities as long as the facilities meet the facility standards delineated in 36 CFR 1232
- Agreements with agency records centers or contracts with commercial records storage facilities must incorporate the standards and allow for inspections by the agency and NARA to ensure compliance
- Agencies must establish procedures that ensure that temporary records are destroyed in accordance with NARA approved schedules
- Agencies must ensure that emergency-operating vital records are available in accordance with 36 CFR 1223

36 CFR 1234 – Facility Standards for Records Storage Facilities
http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/36/part-1234

NARA is authorized to establish, maintain, and operate records centers for Federal agencies. NARA is also authorized to promulgate standards, procedures, and guidelines to Federal agencies with respect to the storage of their records in commercial records storage facilities.

This part covers:

- The establishment, maintenance, and operation of records centers, whether they are federally owned and operated by NARA or another Federal agency or federally owned and contractor-operated
- An agency's use of commercial records storage facilities. Records centers and commercial records storage facilities are referred to collectively as records storage facilities
- The minimum structural, environmental, property, and life-safety standards that a records storage facility must meet when the facility is used for the storage of Federal records

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Popular Learning-Style Theories

VAK model

- Categorizes participants into three main styles:
  - Visual – Learn through seeing information (70 percent of population)
  - Auditory – Learn through hearing information (20 percent of population)
  - Kinesthetic – Learn through physical interaction (10 percent of population)
- We use all three styles to receive information, but one style is dominant
- Your dominant style is the best way for you to learn new information

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and learning styles

- Extraverted Types (E's): learn best by talking and physically engaging the environment. They work best in courses that allow time for discussion and working with a group.
- Introverted Types (I's): learn best through quiet mental reflection. They like reading and lectures and prefer written work rather than oral work. They want to work independently.
- Sensing Types (S's): like concrete facts, organization, and structure. They need to start with familiar, solid facts before they can move toward abstract concepts and theories.
- Intuitive Types (N's): want to know the theory before deciding that facts are important. They focus on general concepts more than details. They desire opportunities for self-instruction.
- Thinking Types (T's): learn best when the material is presented in a logical, orderly fashion. They enjoy going into depth when learning new information.
- Feeling Types (F's): desire a personal connection with the information. They enjoy working in groups. They learn best when they can see the relationship of the material to people and human values.
- Judging Types (J's): prefer formalized instruction and defined tasks. They want to know what they are accountable for and how they will be evaluated. They want their learning environment to have structure and consistency.
- Perceiving Types (P's): are spontaneous and do not like to be boxed in by outlines or objectives. They are stimulated by the new and different. Perceiving learners want to have choices about their assignments.

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Training Delivery Tips

Establishing and Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment

An ideal learning environment sets the stage for learning and cooperation with other participants. You should not count on a good climate just happening – you must make it happen!

Establishing and *maintaining* a good climate is not a one-step process or something you do just at the beginning of the training session. It is a process that must be present throughout the entire training session. Keep in mind that your responsibilities in setting the environment begin before the participants enter the room. For example, the room should be set up and you should be ready to greet the participants.

The following tables outline some of the steps you can take to help make the learning environment safe, comfortable, and effective.

Table 1: How to Create a Comfortable Environment

WAYS TO ESTABLISH A COMFORTABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
Physiological Needs. Make sure that the room is adequate for the purpose of the training: the furniture is comfortable, the lighting is appropriate, the temperature is moderate, and water and other refreshments are available. Give frequent breaks and do not extend activities beyond a normal lunchtime.
Safety. Greet and welcome each trainee as he or she enters the room. Create and foster a relaxed atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Explain the goals of the training, and give an overview of the agenda and follow it. Treat each participant with respect.
Belonging. Take the responsibility for introducing trainees to one another and for acquainting them with the variety of resources available in the group. Provide activities that allow the participants to work in subgroups.
Self-Esteem. Provide direction (clear goals, tasks, and time frames) so activities proceed smoothly. Avoid trying to control the group or to exercise power over it. Encourage and allow the participants to assume responsibility for their own experiential learning opportunities.
Self-Actualization. Give risky assignments so the participants can try new ideas and release their creativity. Provide activities for the participants to work interdependently and share information about themselves.

Adapted from "Up Close and Personal with Dr. Maslow" in *The 1992 Annual: Developing Human Resources*. J. Pfeiffer, Editor. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Co.

Tips for Handling the Participants' Answers

When you ask questions of your participants, you need to be prepared to handle the answer. This may seem straightforward, but it is not always as easy as you might expect. *You* need to respond appropriately. For example, what should you do when the participant gives you the wrong answer? Remember that you want to maintain a safe and comfortable learning environment, so how you choose to answer (and word) your responses can affect the climate. The following "do's and don'ts" and examples can assist you.

Do's and Don'ts for Handling the Participants' Answers

Do remember to respect all the participants. Be careful not to make someone "wrong," since this can create an unsafe learning climate in which your participants may choose not to participate.

Don't say "No, that is not right."

Do practice responses (see examples below) so that you have a collection of responses ready to use. For example, here are a few safe responses that maintain the participant's self-esteem, as well as set a safe climate for all the participants:

- *"Maybe I did not ask my question clearly, let me ask it in another way."*
- *"I must not have covered that topic fully. Let me go back to the key issues…"*

Don't overuse the phrase "That is a good answer" because you may have other participants asking themselves, "What was wrong with my answer?"

Examples of Appropriate Responses

This table lists examples of appropriate responses to a participant's answer.

Table 2: How to Handle Correct, Partly Correct, and Incorrect Participant Answers

IF THE PARTICIPANT'S ANSWER IS…		
CORRECT:	PARTLY CORRECT	INCORRECT
• Use positive reinforcement **Your example:** *"That is absolutely right. You really understand this topic."*	• Reinforce the correct portion, **then** • Redirect the question to the same participant or to another participant or answer it yourself **Your example:** *"Great. Your first two criteria for writing effective objectives are correct. Does anyone remember the third criterion?"*	• Acknowledge the effort, **then** • Redirect the question to others or answer it yourself **Your example:** *"You are very close. Maybe I did not ask the question clearly. What I am asking for is how does paraphrasing show that you care about your participants?"*

Tips for Managing Questions from the Participants

From the very start of your course, you want to encourage the participants to ask questions. Again, one way to ensure participation is to create and maintain a safe and comfortable learning environment. It is important to keep in mind that the way you respond to the participant questions – the words you use, your body language, the tone of your voice – all affect the learning climate. The following "do's and don'ts" and examples can be helpful in managing these questions.

Do's and Don'ts for Managing the Participants' Questions

Do remember to respect all the participants.

Don't use words or phrases that may offend the participants.

- Be careful if you find yourself saying something such as, "*That is an unusual (or funny) question,*" as that participant (or others) may feel you are judging them
- Avoid using "why" (e.g., "*why do you ask that…?*"), which can be seen as confrontational

Do consider *not* answering every question yourself! In addition to asking other participants to give a response, you can ask the person who asked the question to attempt to answer it on his or her own. This encourages them to think it through themselves. Here is an example of how you might turn the question back to the participant:

Participant: *"What is the rationale for using only three colors in a promotional poster?"*

Instructor: *"Well, what do you think one reason might be?"*

Participant: *"Too many colors might overwhelm the reader."*

Instructor: *"Yes, that is great. Does anyone else have any other ideas?"*

Don't answer only the participant who asked the question. Yes, you read that right! While one person may ask a question, the answer should be for *all* the participants. Therefore, when you reply, you should use your eye contact and body language to engage the other participants as well as the question-asker.

Examples of Appropriate Responses

This table lists examples of appropriate responses to a participant's answer.

Table 3: Strategies for Answering Questions in Class

CHOOSE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE:	WHEN…
Provide the answer yourself	• You are the best person to provide the answer • The question could be controversial • The question could lead the discussion off track
Direct the question to another participant	• There is a high probability that another participant will be able to respond to the question • You want to generate group discussion • You want to draw on the group's experience or an individual's experience
Defer the question*	• The question is beyond the scope of the course • The answer will be provided by material covered later in the course • You need time to get the correct answer and get back to the participant

*** Note:** *If you defer a question, make sure you follow up with the participant during a break to ensure that the individual does not feel you were unresponsive.*

Training Evaluation

Kirkpatrick's Four-Levels Model

Level 1 = Reaction (Did They *Like* It?)

- The evaluation assesses the participants' initial reactions to a course
- This evaluation tool is often called "smile sheets" because you are just getting the participants' opinion on the training

Level 2 = Learning (Did They *Learn* It?)

- The evaluation assesses the amount of information that the participants learned
- This can be measured through a written test (e.g., NARA certification examination) or through skills practice during the session (i.e., develop and deliver a 30-second sales pitch)

Level 3 = Behavior (Can They *Use* It?)

- The evaluation assesses the material that the participants actually use in their daily work one to six months (or longer) after completing the course
- This is where other factors – such as the participant's manager, motivation, and morale or the work environment – can affect the training outcomes

Level 4= Result (Does It *Matter*?)

- The evaluation assesses the course's financial impact on the bottom line of the organization
- This level is difficult to measure

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Records Express Blog

Records Express is the official blog of the Office of the Chief Records Office (OCRO) at the National Archives. The OCRO provides records management leadership, oversight, guidance, and service to Federal agencies so they will appropriately manage their records for as long as needed to carry out their mission. As a result of that work, NARA can properly preserve and provide access to records that document the national experience and protect legal rights.

This blog is being launched in the spirit of openness and transparency. We expect to highlight NARA's guidance, talk about upcoming events, and discuss how the OCRO is working with our agency partners to improve records management in the Federal government.

We encourage our readers to comment on postings. Comments will be moderated according to NARA's comment and posting policy.

The Records Express blog is located at http://blogs.archives.gov/records-express.

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Recordkeeping Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction

This description of roles begins with the Agency Head, proceeds through the normal records management network (Chief Information Officer, Agency Records Officer [ARO], Records Liaison, and Records Custodian), covers the Program Manager (supervisor), refers briefly to various other officials, and concludes with the average staff member (employee).

Agency Head

- The Agency Head is responsible for the entire records management program in the agency but normally delegates this responsibility to the ARO. The statutory basis (the Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended) is as follows:
- The head of each Federal agency shall
  - "Make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency and designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities" (44 U.S.C. 3101)
  - Establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of the records of the agency" (44 U.S.C. 3102)

Senior Agency Official (SAO)

- Ensures that the department or agency efficiently and appropriately complies with all applicable records management statutes, regulations, and NARA policy
- Coordinates with the ARO and appropriate agency officials to ensure the agency's compliance with records management statutes and regulations
- Ensures permanent records that have been in existence for more than 30 years are identified for transfer and reported to NARA
- Sends a single annual report to the Chief Records Officer of the U.S. Government

Chief Information Officer or Information Resources Management (IRM) Official

- Serves as the agency official responsible for the IRM program; that is, the process of managing information resources to accomplish agency missions, which encompasses both the information itself and related resources or assets, such as personnel, equipment, funds, and information technology
- Coordinates with the ARO to ensure that the design and implementation of the agency's information systems incorporate Federal and agency records management requirements

Agency Records Officer

- Serves as the official responsible for overseeing the agency's records management program
- Ensures that the agency has an up-to-date records management directive
- Creates and maintains a network of Records Liaisons responsible for overseeing the program in headquarters and field offices in cooperation with the ARO
- Serves as the primary agency official who coordinates records management matters with NARA and with other oversight agencies
- Coordinates the development of a records schedule with NARA, IRM, and program and agency officials. The records schedule identifies records as either temporary or permanent. NARA must approve all records schedules.
- Coordinates matters relating to records management with the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act Official(s), IRM Official, System Administrators, Program Managers, the Inspector General, the General Counsel, the Public Affairs Officer, the Web Manager, the Agency Historian, and the Imaging and Microforms Manager as well as with program officials responsible for other special media, such as audiovisual records, cartographic and architectural records, and printed records
- Ensures that recordkeeping requirements are established, implemented, and periodically updated for all offices at all levels and for all record media, including electronic and other special records

Records Liaison

- Coordinates the records management activities of a major component, whether at headquarters or in the regions
- Serves as the primary component official who coordinates records management matters with the regional NARA office and any other local oversight agencies
- Coordinates changes to the records schedule with the ARO and local program managers
- Coordinates matters relating to records management with the component's FOIA and Privacy Act Official(s), IRM Official, System Administrators, Program Managers, Internal Auditors, visiting Inspector(s) General, Counsel, the Public Affairs Officer, the Web Manager, the Agency Historian, and the Imaging and Microforms Manager as well as with program officials responsible for other special media, such as audiovisual records, cartographic and architectural records, and printed records
- Ensures that component recordkeeping procedures are established, implemented, and periodically updated for all offices at all levels and for all record media, including electronic and other special records
- Coordinates with the ARO to report that each office within the component has a designated Records Custodian
- Ensures that each office creates and maintains records documenting its program and administrative activities

- Works with Records Custodians to make sure that all the records of each office are listed in the office file plan and are described accurately in the agency's records schedule
- Works with Records Custodians to ensure the transfer of eligible records to a records center, the prompt disposal of temporary records when their retention periods expire, and the timely transfer of permanent records to NARA
- Ensures the proper training of Records Custodians and employees and the proper briefing of Program and Senior Managers
- Promotes the records management program within the component
- Conducts periodic evaluations of records management activities within the component

Records Custodian

- Has assigned responsibility within a particular office for records management matters and complies with guidance issued by the Records Liaison and the ARO
- Makes sure that all of the office's records are listed in the office file plan and are described accurately in the agency's records schedule. Checks with the Records Liaison or the ARO for assistance.
- Follows the agency's records schedule to ensure the proper disposition of the office's records, including:
  - Systematic file cutoffs (breaks)
  - The retirement of eligible records to a records center
  - The prompt disposal of temporary records when their retention periods expire
  - The timely transfer of permanent records to NARA
- Assists the Program Manager in reminding the staff not to mix personal papers and nonrecord materials with Federal records and not to remove records from the office without proper authorization
- Assists the Program Manager in implementing procedures to prevent departing employees from destroying ineligible records or removing records from the agency's custody
- Cooperates with the Records Liaison and the ARO in periodic evaluations of the office's records

Program Manager (Supervisor)

- Ensures that the office has a designated Records Custodian who coordinates the office's records management activities with the Records Liaison and others
- Ensures that the staff receive basic records management training and guidance
- Ensures that the staff create and maintain records documenting the office's program and administrative activities
- Works with the Records Custodian to make sure that all of the office's records are listed in the office file plan and described accurately in the agency's records schedule
- Reviews the office file plan annually

- Reminds the staff not to mix personal papers and nonrecord materials with Federal records and not to remove records from the office without proper authorization
- Implements procedures to prevent departing employees from destroying ineligible records or removing records from the agency's custody
- Ensures that the Records Custodian follows the agency's records schedule in carrying out the disposition of the office's records
- Cooperates with the Records Custodian, the Records Liaison, and the ARO promoting and evaluating the office's records management activities

System Administrator (Information Technology Manager)

- Serves as the person primarily responsible for managing an information system
- Works with the Records Liaison, the Records Custodian, and others to ensure that the design and implementation of the system incorporates Federal and agency records management requirements

Web Manager

- Serves as the person primarily responsible for managing the webpages within a component – i.e., ensuring compliance with agency and local directives. Usually not the person responsible for content of a webpage.
- Works with the Records Liaison, the Records Custodian(s), and others to ensure that the Web Page Managers understand and adhere to Federal and agency recordkeeping requirements

Inspector General

- Serves as the official responsible for monitoring agency programs and operations to prevent and reduce waste and fraud and to improve agency management
- Coordinates with the ARO and others regarding any recordkeeping deficiencies identified during inspections and investigations

General Counsel

- Serves as the official responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to agency officials and employees
- Provides advice to the ARO and others regarding the legal value of the agency's records and the issue of public access to them

Public Affairs Officer

- Serves as the official responsible for coordinating information being released to the public such as news releases, speeches by high-level officials, media presentations, appearances of agency representatives at public events, etc. The Public Affairs Officer may be responsible for coordinating content of public websites.
- Works with the Records Liaison to ensure that release of information complies with Federal and agency public affairs directives

Historian

- Serves as the official responsible for writing narratives of past agency activities
- Provides advice to the ARO on what agency records are likely to have long-term or permanent value

Imaging and Micrographics Manager

- Serves as the official responsible for directing the agency's imaging and microfilming operations or monitoring contractors who scan or microfilm records for the agency
- Cooperates with the ARO to ensure that the agency's scanned and microform records comply with Federal and agency requirements

Staff Member (Employee)

- Obtains basic records management training and guidance from the office's Records Custodian, Records Liaison, or ARO
- Recognizes that the office's records are government property and consist of recorded information (documentary materials) required by law or used to conduct agency business
- Creates and maintains records documenting office activities
- Cooperates with the Records Custodian to ensure that all records are listed in the office file plan and described accurately in the agency's records schedule
- Does not mix personal papers and nonrecord materials with Federal records
- Cooperates with the Records Custodian in transferring eligible records to a records center and permanent records to NARA
- Cooperates with the Records Custodian in destroying records only as authorized in the agency's records schedule
- Avoids removing records from the office without proper authorization