

**UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE**  
**FOR MANAGEMENT**  
**WASHINGTON**  
MAR 19 2021

The Honorable  
David S. Ferriero  
Archivist of the United States

Dear Mr. Ferriero:

The Department of State is pleased to provide the Senior Agency Official for Records Management 2020 Annual Report.

The Department has continued to make progress over the past year meeting the goals outlined by NARA to fully transition to electronic recordkeeping (Transition to Electronic Records, M-19-21). We continue to enhance our corporate archive to include all electronic permanent records, collaborate with the Center for Analytics to leverage analytics to meet complex and dynamic electronic recordkeeping challenges, and align our information governance and access programs to the Department's overall IT modernization initiatives.

We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with you and your staff on the implementation of these important initiatives. My point of contact for this effort is Eric F. Stein, Director, Office of Information Programs and Services. He may be reached at 202-485-2051 or at [SteinEF@state.gov](mailto:SteinEF@state.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Carol Perez  
Acting Under Secretary for Management

Enclosure:

As stated.



*Senior Agency Official for Records Management  
2020 Annual Report*

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requires Senior Agency Officials for Records Management (SAORM) to provide an annual report demonstrating how agencies are handling important records management initiatives as identified by NARA.

NARA uses the reports to determine the overall progress of the Federal Government in managing its records and the transition away from paper to digital formats, and to identify best practices and model solutions within Federal agencies.

On June 28, 2019, the Office of Management and Budget and the National Archives issued a memorandum: *Transition to Electronic Records* (M-19-21) to ensure that all Federal records are created, retained, and managed in electronic formats by December 31, 2022. This year's SAORM report provides an opportunity for agencies to report on plans and progress towards the milestones and target goals in this memorandum, as well as other important records management initiatives.

The reporting period begins on January 19, 2021, and reports are due back to NARA no later than March 19, 2021.

NARA plans to post your 2020 SAORM report on the NARA website upon receipt. Please ensure that your agency's report is a publicly releasable version. This action is in the interest of transparency in Government and to promote collaboration and communication among agencies. NARA intends to list any non-responding agencies in a summary report and on the website.

**Instructions for Reporting:**

- This template covers both records management program developments towards the transition to electronic recordkeeping outlined in M-19-21 through December 31, 2022, and other aspects of agency records management programs.
- Please be brief and precise in your answers. Limit answers to each question to no more than 500 words.
- Please complete the questions/items below and send the report to [rmselfassessment@nara.gov](mailto:rmselfassessment@nara.gov). Include the words "SAORM 2020 Annual Report - [Agency Name]" in the subject line of the email.
- If you are responsible for records management in multiple agencies, components, or bureaus, please determine how you will submit reports to NARA. While NARA prefers a comprehensive report, you may submit separate reports for each component.

Provide the following information (required):

- Name of SAORM: Carol Perez, Acting
- Position title: Under Secretary for Management
- Address: U.S. Department of State
- 2201 C St. NW  
Washington D.C, 20520

**1. What agencies, bureaus, components, or offices are covered by this report and your position as SAORM and which will be reporting separately?**

*Please provide a list, and also indicate any that are new or have been changed due to reorganization or other circumstances.*

The Department of State

**2. Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed any policies or practices related to records management at your agency?**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include details of specific challenges, if applicable):*

Yes, Department practices are constantly evolving to meet the demands of new operating environments. However, the COVID-19 pandemic did not change any records management policies. To enable the workforce to comply with existing records management policies in a maximum telework environment, the Department's central Records program issued telework guidance, best practices such as "The Do's and Don'ts of Teleworking," and policy reminders regarding the use of Department provided telework platforms and applications to conduct agency business. The Records Management program continues to explore ways to enhance Federal Records Act compliance by Department employees in the maximum telework environment.

**3. Does your agency have an established information governance framework that connects records management, data management, and other agency information lines of business? (A relationship between CIO, CDO, SAORM, DRO/ARO, RM Staff)**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please provide details on what support is needed:*

The Enterprise Data Council (EDC), established in February 2020, provides executive oversight, strategic vision, and decision making regarding the Department's critical data assets in order to facilitate data-informed insights and analysis. As a subgroup of the EDC, the Electronic Records Management Working Group (ERMWG) continues to leverage resources and support from diverse program areas of the Department, including records management, information technology (IT), cyber security, budget planning, the historians, technical experts, and senior leadership, to meet the goals pursuant to M-19-21. The Department's central Records program is actively engaged in the EDC's and ERMWG's efforts at the senior and working levels.

**4. Has your agency made progress towards managing all permanent records in an electronic format with appropriate metadata by December 31, 2022? (M-19-21, 1.2)**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include specific goals and example metrics):*

As previously reported, the Department's eRecords archive has been successfully enhanced to ingest all permanent electronic files and cables and to enrich all electronic permanent records with the appropriate metadata pursuant to NARA guidance and regulations for electronic objects (NARA bulletin 2015-04). The Department is currently reviewing NARA's recently published rule regarding metadata pursuant to section 2.1, M-19-21, and the Department plans to enhance the eRecords archive to support any new regulation.

**5. Has your agency made progress towards managing all temporary records in an electronic format by December 31, 2022? (M-19-21, 1.3)**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include specific goals and example metrics):*

The Department continues developing and establishing policies to support the transition to managing all electronic records electronically to include revising its domestic records disposition schedules to support electronic record keeping. Since January 1, 2017, the Department has captured over one billion temporary emails within the eRecords archive, where they are managed

electronically in accordance with the approved records disposition schedules for Capstone email (General Records Schedule 6.1). All other types of “born-digital” temporary records are managed electronically, and with our cloud service providers, we are exploring leveraging capabilities to further increase our ability to manage these files.

**6. Is your agency investing resources in IT to support the transition to electronic recordkeeping?**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response. If Yes: Please include specific examples of resources and how this will support records management processes. If No or Do not know: Please explain.*

The Department has invested tens of millions of dollars in IT resources to support electronic record keeping. First, the Department has continued to enhance its eRecords archive to successfully meet previously established OMB M-19-21 deadlines. Through these efforts, the Department has also begun to improve mission delivery, customer service, and accountable stewardship by expanding eRecords as the core platform to resolve cross cutting challenges within the information management and information access arenas. For example, eRecords is now interoperable with the Department’s centralized Freedom of Information Access application and other technology platforms in use by our Center for Analytics.

**7. To meet the requirements of M-19-21, 1.3, related to records storage facilities, does your agency have plans to use commercial storage to replace agency-operated records centers and NARA Federal Records Centers by December 31, 2022? (M-19-21, 1.3)**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include specific goals and example metrics):*

The Department’s agency-operated records center is a critical component of the Department’s records management program. The Department continues evaluating options specified in Goal 1.3, M-19-21. After assessing the scale and complexity of this rapid transition, the Department determined that it may require additional resourcing to use commercial records storage as an augment to already established inter-agency agreements with NARA.

**8. Does your agency have policies and procedures that include documentation to ensure records of newly appointed and outgoing senior officials\* are properly captured and/or processed and not improperly removed, altered, or deleted including electronic records and email?**

\*Senior officials are the heads of departments and independent agencies; their deputies and assistants; the heads of program offices and staff offices including assistant secretaries, administrators, and commissioners; directors of offices, bureaus, or equivalent; principal regional officials; staff assistants to those aforementioned officials, such as special assistants, confidential assistants, and administrative assistants; and career Federal employees, political appointees, and officers of the Armed Forces serving in equivalent or comparable positions.

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include specific details of policies and procedures):*

As noted in NARA's May 12, 2020, inspection report of the Department's Records Management program, "Records management is built into the onboarding and exiting process for most of the Department. All State employees are required to take annual records management (RM) training. The training meets all NARA requirements as outlined in NARA Bulletin 2017-01. The Department's most senior officials receive onboarding and exiting briefings from the Agency Records Officer."

Additionally, the Department's delegated Transition Coordinator managed the activities related to the most recent change of administration. As part of the Department's broader transition work, the Agency Records Officer, the Office of Legal Adviser, and the Executive Secretariat successfully coordinated and provided an extensive series of records briefings for both outgoing and incoming senior officials to ensure federal records are properly captured and preserved, and to ensure seamless continuity in the Department's records management efforts.

**9. Do you, as the SAORM, see challenges within your agency in meeting the goal of fully-electronic recordkeeping?**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include details of specific challenges, if applicable):*

M-19-21 was released in June 2019 (out of the budget cycle), leaving the Department little time to: (1) evaluate the cost implications, (2) request funding for new requirements, and (3) formulate a strategic way forward for our complex, geographically-dispersed organization with 270 foreign locations. NARA has yet to release the success criteria for M-19-21, making it difficult at this time to align the Department's strategies to NARA's goals with respect to M-19-21.

**10. Do you have suggestions for NARA to improve its engagement with you as the SAORM?**

Yes

No

Do not know

*Please explain your response (include any comments on previous NARA SAORM engagements, topics for future engagements, or other suggestions):*

No suggestions at this time.