



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 rmsselfassessment@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: Vaughn Noga
- Position title: Chief Information Officer and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information
- Address: U.S. EPA Headquarters, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Mail Code 2810A, Washington, DC 20460

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.

All of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is covered by this report.

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):

As the agency SAORM and CIO, I have sent out several agency-wide emails reminding the workforce of their Records Management responsibilities as they work remotely. Though unexpected, the pandemic has forced our Agency to leverage existing collaborative tools, drastically reducing the creation of paper records and improving efficiency. Further, the implementation of Senior Leadership and Political Appointees Briefings for entering and exiting employees was modified to accommodate a virtual workplace.

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:

As the CIO I also serve as the SAORM. At EPA, the information governance framework is strengthened by consistent communication and an awareness of the importance of records management, data management, and other related information programs.

The Agency advances the implementation of records management policies, procedures, and retention schedules by providing annual mandatory online records management training to all EPA employees.

The EPA IT Strategic Framework is a five-year strategic plan that outlines a strategy for information technology and information management. The goals include Optimizing Enterprise IT Services, advancing electronic records management, transitioning paper to electronic processes, and developing processes to prevent paper being created by the agency.

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):

In 2020, the National Records Management Program (NRMP) created a five-year strategic plan to include specific initiatives that will help the agency meet the above stated 1.2 goal in M-19-21.

The Agency sponsored a working group, under the aegis of its National Records Management Program that identified different paper processes within the agency that require submission, accumulation, and storage of paper records. The Agency will work to identify the reason why these paper processes exist and, to the fullest extent possible, work with offices to transition their legacy processes to electronic.

EPA has also implemented a National Digitization Program (NDP) and is in the process of standing up two Digitization Centers to digitize EPA long-term temporary and permanent records. EPA has worked closely with OMB and NARA in commenting on the proposed NARA rule for the digitization standards for permanent records.

The Agency requires electronic systems to be registered in the Agency's Registry of EPA Applications, Models and Data Warehouses (READ), which is the authoritative source of information about EPA electronic information resources. It is a requirement that the appropriate records schedule that applies to each system also be included in READ. READ is reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the records schedules assigned are accurate and that permanent records are transferred to NARA in accordance with the records schedule.

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 Agency has implemented a National Digitization Program (NDP) and is in the process of standing up two Digitization Centers to digitize EPA records. NDP has drafted validation instructions and created an SOP and other instructional materials to guide the digitization of temporary records based on NARA's standards for digitizing temporary records.

EPA has also committed to modernizing and enhancing the Agency's electronic records management system to manage both permanent and temporary records. This effort includes making the enterprise recordkeeping system more scalable, user-friendly, quickly searchable, accurate, and cost-effective, while also providing better coordinated and effective electronic access to Agency records.

Added from last year's report: EPA seeks to ensure that all closed/eligible long-term temporary analog records are transferred to the Federal Records Center before December 31, 2022 and estimate the volume of paper records maintained in offices that may require digitization.

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.

Records management is one of my top investment priorities as the CIO of EPA and as the SAORM. The Agency's Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS) Team works closely with the National Records Management Program (NRMP) to provide the Agency with a way to preserve, search and manage electronic records. The ECMS team is currently working on three initiatives to support the transition to electronic recordkeeping.

ECMS Modernization

Modernization of the ECMS platform to include transitioning to cloud hosting, leveraging more modern search technologies and enhancing API endpoints and leveraging an API management tool.

Content Ingestion Services

Implementation of machine learning technology to provide record schedule suggestions to EPA staff as they submit their electronic records to ECMS.

Paper Asset Tracking Tool

Buildout of the Paper Asset Tracking Tool (PATT). PATT is a tool that tracks paper record assets as they are submitted and processed through the digitization centers.

Additionally, the agency is in the process of the development and implementation of eSignature across the Agency, establishing workgroups to address paperless requirements and formal groups that prioritize office automation.

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):

At present, the Agency has no plans to use commercial storage. However, the National Records Management Program is working on the development of an Agency-wide survey to identify any needs for commercial storage after 12/31/2022. Additionally, the National Digitization Program is working closely with the Agency headquarters and regional offices that have been prioritized for digitization to assist them with strategic planning that might include commercial storage utilization.

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):

The National Records Management Program (NRMP) worked closely with the Transition Teams to develop a section in the Transition Book that details how to manage records. Additionally, NRMP provided Records Management transition briefings, reminders and presentations to the Records Liaisons Officers (RLOs) across the Agency. Additionally, the Agency Records Officer,

John Ellis, assisted with the virtual transition briefings for the Administrator and some of his senior staff. Not only are all employees required to complete RM training, Senior Officials and Political appointees are given individual, in-person (or video) Records Management Briefings by the Agency Records Officer for additional guidance.

EPA Capstone implementation ensures that the Capstone Officials are identified and their email records and calendars are saved and managed accordingly.

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):

The pandemic has introduced multiple barriers in the agency's plan to review, analyze and reduce paper. The OMB/NARA Memo M-19-21 deadline (12/31/2022) has not shifted despite the pandemic making that goal more difficult to achieve. Our National Records Management Program staff, for example, had originally planned to start a multi-year set of evaluation and support trips last year to Agency offices across the country to assist the local RLO's with their overall program and strategic approach to meet M-19-21, as well as overcome any other barriers they may face to sound paper records management. These evaluation and support trips were also needed to help these offices prepare for our National Digitization Program. These trips have now been delayed until FY22.

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):