



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

MAR 10 2023

Dear Ms. Debra Steidel Wall,

The Department of State is pleased to provide the Senior Agency Official for Records Management report for 2022.

The Department continued its progress in the transition to electronic record keeping. The Department is exploring emerging technologies to better manage its digitally and analog-born records. In partnership with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Department has made strides in reducing its volume of permanent paper record holdings by proposing for transfer approximately 3,440 cubic feet of records. Additionally, the Department has been coordinating closely with the Federal Records Centers to store 20,400 cubic feet of paper records that would have otherwise been stored within an agency operated records storage facility.

Despite the issuance of the "Update to Transition to Electronic Records" (M-23-07), which extends the deadlines for Goals 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, the Department still faces many of the same challenges that we have reported on in previous years.

We look forward to our continued partnership with you and your staff. My point of contact for this effort is Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric F. Stein, and he can be reached at 202-485-2051 or SteinEF@state.gov.

Sincerely,

Alaina B. Teplitz
Assistant Secretary
Performing the duties for
The Under Secretary for Management (M)



Senior Agency Official for Records Management 2022 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 (OMB) and NARA issued a memorandum, *Transition to Electronic Records* ([M-19-21](#)), to ensure that all federal records are created, retained, and managed in electronic formats. M-19-21 gave agencies until the end of December 2022 to comply with several specific deadlines.

On December 23, 2022, OMB and NARA issued a new memorandum, *Update to Transition to Electronic Records* ([M-23-07](#)) reinforcing the goals in M-19-21 and extending the 2022 deadlines to June 30, 2024.

Additionally, on January 1, 2021, Congress enacted the Preservation of Electronic Messages and Other Records Act, amending 44 U.S.C. Chapter 29, that requires the electronic capture, management, and preservation of such electronic records in accordance with the records disposition requirements of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 33.

This year's SAORM report provides an opportunity for agencies to report on plans and progress towards electronic recordkeeping and preservation under these requirements, as well as other important records management initiatives.

The reporting period begins on January 9, 2023, and reports are due back to NARA no later than March 10, 2023.

NARA plans to post your 2022 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 on our website.

Instructions for Reporting:

- This template covers records management program developments, including those related to the transition to electronic recordkeeping as required by M-19-21 and M-23-07.
- 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 2022 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.

NARA may follow up with agencies to obtain additional information and/or documentation related to responses provided in the template.

As in previous years, we will be validating selected questions and responses from agencies. Your agency may be selected at random to provide additional documentation and/or take part in interviews to discuss your records management program activities.

Provide the following information (required):

- Name of SAORM: Alaina Teplitz
- Position title: Undersecretary for Management, Acting
- 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 indicate any that are new or have been changed due to reorganization or other circumstances.

The Department of State

2. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have any of the temporary adaptations to agency business processes become permanent improvements to the management and preservation of electronic records?

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- Yes
 No
 Not applicable, no adaptations were needed
 Do not know

Please explain your response. (If Yes, include details of the changes and why they became permanent. If No, or Do not know, please explain your answer.)

As the Department's workforce further integrates into a hybrid work environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department's Records Program continued to explore and implement solutions that will enhance the Department's governance of records generated over collaborative and mobile platforms. The Department's records program consulted with industry leaders and internal and external stakeholders in response to these growing demands.

3. Has your agency taken action to meet the goal to manage, preserve and transfer all permanent records in an electronic format with appropriate metadata by June 30, 2024? (M-19-21, 1.2 and M-23-07, 1.1 and 1.2)

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response with specific actions taken, challenges and results.

The Department's central archive, known as eRecords, continues ingesting and preserving all formats of permanent, born-digital objects pursuant to the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) bulletin 2015-04. The Department achieved significant progress in transitioning to electronic record keeping by minimizing the paper records that would be subject to mandatory digitization within this past calendar year. While the financial resourcing to fund Goal 1.2 remains burdensome, during calendar year 2022, the Department proposed 3,440 cubic feet of permanent records for transfer to NARA to reduce its paper holdings requiring digitization. The Department moved 3,201 cubic feet of paper records and requested the accessioning of an additional 17,242 cubic feet of permanent records to be stored at NARA's Federal Records Center system until their scheduled disposition date. Additionally, the Department is dependent upon NARA finalizing the proposed rule on the digitization of permanent records so it can create the policy, establish the requirements, and proceed with permanent records digitization efforts.

4. Has your agency taken action to meet the goal to manage and preserve all temporary records in an electronic format by June 30, 2024? (M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3)

-
- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response with specific actions taken, challenges and results.

As reported last year, the Department continues to transition paper-based business processes to electronic and digital platforms, while simultaneously updating records disposition schedules to reflect these new processes and record keeping medium. As a matter of policy, the Department already electronically manages and preserves temporary records that are born digitally. The Department does not have the resources to mass digitize legacy, temporary analog records, especially records of short-term value where such an action would be extremely cost prohibitive. The Department's temporary paper holdings will decrease over time as temporary records meet their scheduled disposition date.

5. Will your agency meet the requirements of M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3 to close agency-operated records storage facilities and transfer inactive, temporary records to Federal Records Centers or commercial records storage facilities by June 30, 2024?

- Yes
 No
 Not applicable, all records are in electronic format
 Do not know

Please explain your response with specific actions taken, challenges and results.

The Department's agency-operated records storage facility is a multi-purpose facility that provides integral records and information management services to the Department workforce including its research, declassification, and transparency programs. While the Department has no plans to close the facility, efforts to significantly reduce the amount of inactive temporary records stored at this facility are well underway. The Department will explore commercial storage should it become cost advantageous and operationally feasible to leverage such services.

6. Does your agency have policies and procedures that incorporate records management into the information governance (IG) framework for information, data, and other agency information management? (This includes a relationship between CIO, CDO, SAORM, DRO/ARO, Records Management (RM) Staff, Security, Privacy Officers, and FOIA)

Note: The incorporation of records management into information governance is part of the framework covered by [OMB Federal Data Strategy - A Framework for Consistency \(M-19-18\)](#) as it provides a vision for managing and using federal data, along with recordkeeping requirements included in [OMB Circular A-130, Managing Information as a Strategic Resource](#).

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- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and provide details about how your agency's policies enhance IG and RM's role or relationship to it.

The Department has an intra-agency Electronic Records Management Working Group (ERMWG) that serves as an information governance framework including coordinating the agency's response to M-23-07. There is also an intra-agency Enterprise Data Council (EDC) that is chaired by the Chief Data Officer. These groups continue to coordinate on program, policy, and resourcing matters involving records management, information technology (IT), cyber security, privacy, data categorization, information sharing, and knowledge management.

7. Has your agency developed policies and procedures to ensure the capture and preservation of electronic messages, including when hardware or software is upgraded?

Note: Electronic messages means electronic mail and other electronic messaging systems that are used for purposes of communicating between individuals. Electronic messages that satisfy the definition of a federal record under the Federal Records Act are electronic records. This includes email, text messages, chat messages, voicemail, social media posts, and other similar applications. (See: [Email Management](#) and [CFR 1236: Electronic Records Management](#))

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and include details of your agency's methods to capture and preserve electronic messaging records or challenges preventing you from doing so.

The Department's policy for capturing and preserving email and other electronic messages (eMessages) was codified in 2020 and can be found here:
<https://fam.state.gov/FAM/05FAM/05FAM0430.html>

As previously reported, the Department's eRecords repository automatically captures all emails sent and received on all Department email domains and manages them pursuant to General Records Schedule (GRS) 6.1. The Department is currently exploring technological solutions to automate the capture and preservation of text and electronic messages to conform to recent changes to GRS 6.1.

8. Is your agency using or exploring cognitive technologies to identify records and distinguish between temporary and permanent retention?

Note: Cognitive technologies generally describe automated technologies that can be applied to recordkeeping practices and procedures. These include Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation, Software Robot or Bot, and other machine learning technologies.

- Yes
X No
 Do not know

Please explain your response. (If Yes, include details on both methods and tools being explored, the level of accuracy and how that level is determined.)

The Department is not using cognitive technologies or cognitive computing to differentiate between temporary and permanent records. The Department is utilizing machine learning capabilities to cull non-record emails from record emails within its eRecords repository. For example, emails containing redundant, obsolete or trivial news clippings or copies of published articles that were disseminated for reference purposes can be excluded from search results to minimize the volume of results within a given search.

9. Do you as SAORM regularly oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of your records management program and its compliance with statutes and regulations?

- X Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response including what specific measures you have incorporated into the SAORM role.

Major records management compliance, communications, and implementation efforts require SAORM engagement and, as such, I am regularly kept informed or I am involved in those efforts utilizing the Department's chain of command. For example, I am regularly kept abreast of strategic records management efforts, and I monitor efforts to close out open records management recommendations made by the Office of Inspector General or the National Archives and Records Administration. Additionally, in those instances requiring direct engagement, I am consulted by the Agency Records Officer or Bureau of Administration leadership on records management matters that have a major impact on the Department. The Agency Records Officer is aware of records management challenges at various overseas posts including those identified by the Office of Inspector General and is taking appropriate action to ensure that Department facilities worldwide are managing records appropriately.

10. Is there specific policy or guidance you need from NARA to support the strategic direction of your records management program?

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and include any comments on existing, pending, and future topics.

The Department continues to await NARA's success criteria for meeting goals 1.1 and 1.2 of M-23-07. Additionally, the Department is dependent upon NARA finalizing the proposed rule on the digitization of permanent records so it can create the policy, establish the requirements, and proceed with permanent records digitization efforts.

11. Do you have any suggestions for how NARA can better engage with you and your program in your role as SAORM?

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

Please explain your response and include any comments on previous NARA SAORM engagements, topics for future engagements, or other suggestions.

The Department has no suggestions at this time. The Department welcomes additional opportunities for collaboration with NARA as it continues its progress towards transitioning to electronic record keeping.