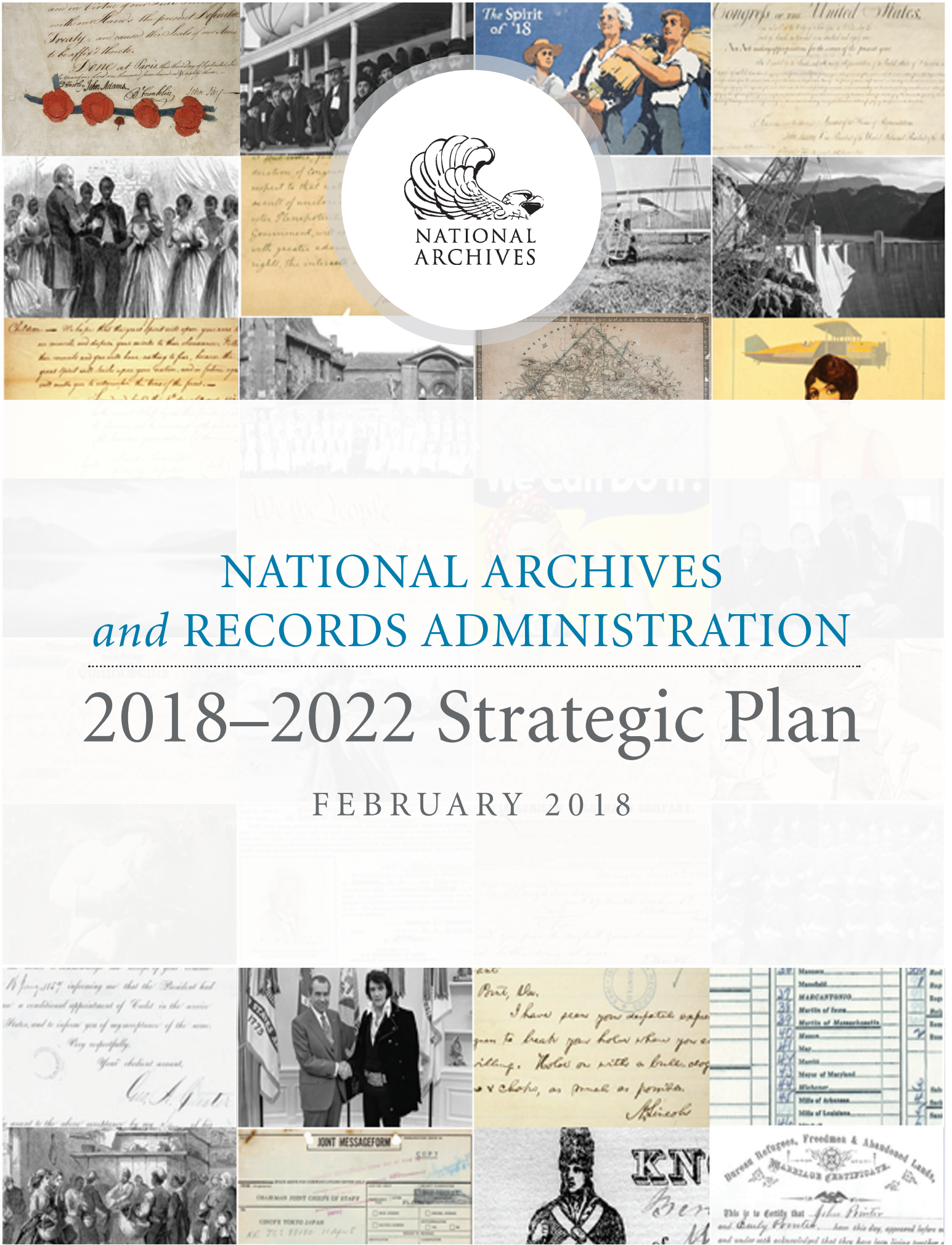




NATIONAL ARCHIVES and RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

2018–2022 Strategic Plan

FEBRUARY 2018





Agency Overview

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is an independent agency established in 1934 to identify, protect, preserve, and make publicly available the historically valuable records of all three branches of the Federal government. NARA manages the Federal government's archives, administers a system of Presidential Libraries, operates museums, conducts education and public programs, provides oversight of government-wide records management activities, and provides temporary storage of other agencies' records on their behalf. NARA publishes the Federal Register and makes grants through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. NARA provides for the appropriate declassification of classified national security information, mediating Freedom of Information Act disputes, and overseeing agency actions regarding classified and controlled, unclassified information.

NARA holds over 5 million cubic feet (equivalent to 12.5 billion pages) of permanently valuable archival Federal and Presidential records in traditional (analog) formats, and 795 terabytes of electronic archival records. NARA provides access to archival records at public research rooms located across the country, through the online National Archives Catalog, and in response to written correspondence, email, and telephone requests. NARA engages the public with archival records through our website, [archives.gov](https://www.archives.gov), educational and public programs, and museum exhibits at the National Archives Museum in Washington, DC and thirteen Presidential Libraries. NARA holds over 700,000 artifacts, primarily Presidential materials, which add context and support understanding of the events documented in NARA's records.

NARA provides a variety of services to other Federal agencies. NARA stores and services nearly 28 million cubic feet of other agencies' records, on a reimbursable basis, through the Federal Records Centers Program (FRCPP). NARA helps other agencies meet their Federal records management responsibilities through regulations, policies, training, and oversight. NARA facilitates the regulatory process by providing public notice and soliciting public comments on proposed agency rulemakings through the Federal Register. NARA manages the declassification of historical, classified records and provides agencies with standardized processes to ensure their interests are identified and appropriately considered in the declassification process. NARA supports government-wide information policy by providing Federal agencies and industry with standards for protecting sensitive Government information and by supporting the effective administration of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) across the Executive Branch.

NARA Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION STATEMENT

We drive openness, cultivate public participation, and strengthen our nation’s democracy through public access to high-value government records.

Our mission is to provide public access to Federal Government records in our custody and control. Public access to government records strengthens democracy by allowing Americans to claim their rights of citizenship, hold their government accountable, and understand their history so they can participate more effectively in their government.

VISION

We will be known for cutting-edge access to extraordinary volumes of government information and unprecedented engagement to bring greater meaning to the American experience.

We collaborate with other Federal agencies, the private sector, and the public to offer information—including records, data, and context—when, where, and how it is needed and transform the American public’s relationship with their government. We will lead the archival and information professions to ensure archives thrive in a digital world.

NARA VALUES

- **Collaborate:** Create an open, inclusive work environment that is built on respect, communication, integrity, and collaborative team work.
- **Innovate:** Encourage creativity and invest in innovation to build our future.
- **Learn:** Pursue excellence through continuous learning and become smarter all the time about what we know and what we do in service to others.

Our values reflect our shared aspirations that support and encourage our long-standing commitment to public service, openness and transparency, and the government records that we hold in trust.



Young visitors create their own film from WWII records in the Public Vaults Exhibit, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Transformational Outcomes

The NARA Transformation is a continuous process of reviewing and assessing the agency's operations, programs, and strategic direction in order to transform NARA into a dynamic and modern agency. Transformation requires us to regularly engage external organizations, peer institutions, and our customers, in order to drive innovation and demonstrate leadership in electronic records management, archival science, and efficient operations. Transformation requires us to foster a new organizational culture that is agile and responsive to change, accepts risk, rewards innovation, and seeks continuous improvement.

NARA's Transformation is guided by six "transformational outcomes" that describe how we will fulfill our mission in a modern environment.

One NARA — We will work as one NARA, not just as component parts.

Out in Front — We will embrace the primacy of electronic information in all facets of our work and position NARA to lead accordingly.

An Agency of Leaders — We will foster a culture of leadership, not just as a position but as the way we all conduct our work.

A Great Place to Work — We will transform NARA into a great place to work through trust and empowerment of all of our people, the agency's most vital resource.

A Customer-Focused Organization — We will create structures and processes to allow our staff to more effectively meet the needs of our customers.

An Open NARA — We will open our organizational boundaries to learn from others.



A visitor learns about the Vietnam War in the Vietnam Gallery, Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Make Access Happen

Make Access Happen affirms that “public access” is NARA’s core mission and is a higher calling that gives purpose and meaning to all our work. We are reaching beyond the traditional role of making records available for others to discover and we are instead making access happen by delivering increasing volumes of electronic records to the American public online, using flexible tools and accessible resources that promote public participation. In order to achieve success in this goal, NARA must digitize millions of records we hold in analog formats, keep pace with the continuous stream of new records we receive each year, and develop new ways to help citizens find our records through the online National Archives Catalog.

1.1 By FY 2021, 82 percent of NARA holdings will be processed to enable discovery and access by the public.

Archival processing refers to those actions NARA must take in order to provide efficient access for research, including: performing basic holdings maintenance, describing the records in the National Archives Catalog, so that the public knows the records are available for research, and entering the records into NARA’s inventory control system, so that NARA staff can retrieve and serve those records when requested.



Visitors research their genealogy in the Boeing Learning Center, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

NARA must accelerate archival processing in order to increase the total percent of records that are available for research, even as the total volume of records grows every year. Currently, 78 percent of NARA traditional (analog) records and 89 percent of electronic records are processed. Given the size of NARA's holdings, this means a significant number of records have not been processed and are not available for public access. In addition, NARA receives about 100,000 cubic feet per year of new archival records in traditional (analog) formats. The volume of new electronic records transferred varies significantly from year-to-year, but is substantial.

Strategies:

- Fully deploy standardized processing procedures and internal controls, and benchmark performance.
- Develop new applications for processing electronic archival records in the modernized Electronic Records Archive 2.0 information system.
- Explore cutting-edge technologies such as advanced search to automate processing of large volumes of electronic records.

Contributing Programs: Research Services; Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services; Information Services.

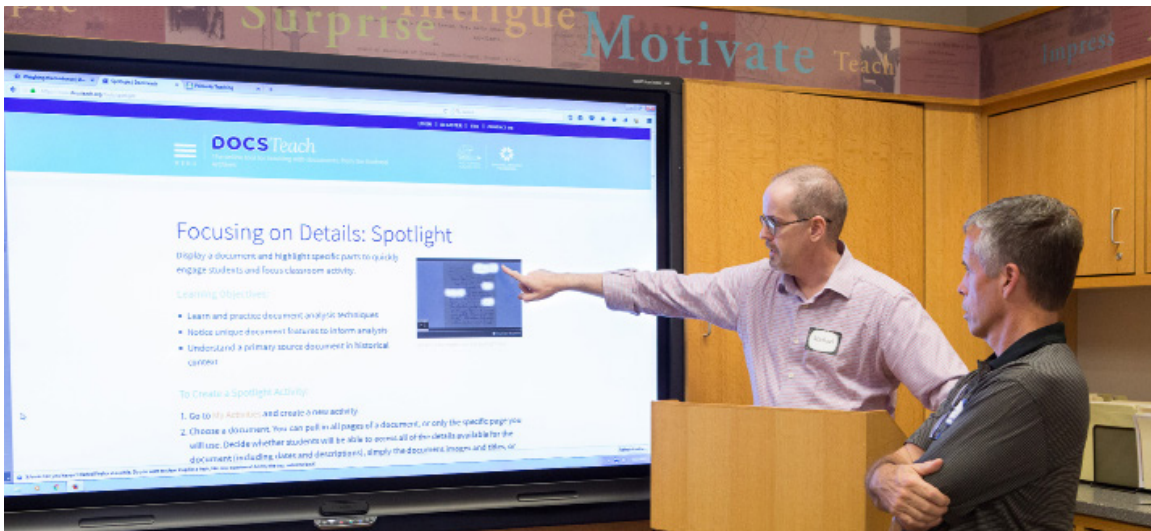
1.2 By FY 2024, NARA will digitize 500 million pages of records and make them available online to the public through the National Archives Catalog.

NARA has committed to digitize all of its traditional (analog) holdings and make them available to the public online. NARA holds approximately 12.5 billion pages of documents, photographs, films, and other records in analog formats, the majority of which are only accessible in-person, in public research rooms or through reproductions provided in response to specific customer requests.

NARA must accelerate digitization processes and address technical limitations in the National Archives Catalog so that the public can access NARA records from any location. Today, NARA has nearly 235 million pages of records digitized, but only about 15 percent of those digital records are currently available to the public through the National Archives Catalog. Challenges with the technical solution behind the Catalog have limited NARA's ability to add new digital files to the system.

Strategies:

- Enter into new public-private digitization partnerships with new types of partners.
- Integrate digitization into the responsibilities of archival units nationwide.



Education Specialist Michael Hussey explains the DocsTeach web resource to a teacher in the Boeing Learning Center, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

- Acquire and provision digitization equipment and software across the enterprise.
- Modernize the National Archives Catalog to address scalability issues.

Contributing Programs: Research Services; Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services; Information Services; Office of Innovation.

1.3 By FY 2025, NARA will provide digital, next-generation finding aids to 95 percent of the holdings described in the National Archives Catalog.

Finding aids are tools that help researchers find information in a specific record group, collection, or series of archival materials. NARA staff are adept at creating finding aids based on the physical location of analog records; however, NARA has struggled to apply these skills in an electronic environment. NARA must develop new products that help the public to research, explore, and discover digitized and electronic archival records.

Strategies:

- Build capabilities in design and user experience, to better understand user needs.
- Pilot finding aids in different platforms to find the most effective delivery methods.
- Develop models and governance processes to allow decentralized and ad-hoc preparation of next-generation finding aids.

Contributing Programs: Research Services; Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services; Information Services; Office of Innovation.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Connect with Customers

Connect with Customers challenges us to continuously improve customer service, cultivate public participation, and generate new understanding of the importance of records in a democracy. We continuously engage with and learn from our customers: individuals, organizations, and other Federal agencies. We build long-term and strategic customer relationships to ensure our services are valued by our customers and we work together to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness.

2.1 By FY 2020, 93 percent of customer requests will be ready within the promised time.

NARA strives to provide consistent, reliable, and reputable service in order to increase customer engagement and encourage customers to see NARA as a trusted partner. NARA provides service to a variety of public and Federal agency customers, including responding to reference requests, furnishing items in public research rooms, providing veterans and their families with copies of military separation documents (DD-214), and responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests from the public.

NARA currently provides 93 percent of customer requests in the promised time as a weighted average across multiple services. However, NARA will be challenged to maintain this standard as the agency transitions to a fully-electronic environment. NARA is committed to maintaining its current high standards of customer service to maintain the trust and confidence of its customers.

Strategies:

- Benchmark and revise standards for efficient and timely responses to requests.
- Develop and baseline new metrics that better address overall customer satisfaction.
- Migrate written correspondence and other off-site requests to an online solution.

Contributing Programs: Research Services; Agency Services; Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services; Office of General Counsel; Office of Innovation; Information Services.



Teachers learn about scanning records in the Innovation Hub, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

2.2 By FY 2020, NARA will achieve a 90 percent satisfaction rating from participants in museum, outreach, educational, and public programming activities.

NARA engages with the public through museum exhibits, educational and public programs, online tools and services, and by soliciting public participation in agency initiatives. NARA measures public satisfaction and participation levels to understand the breadth of agency engagement with its customers and the public.

NARA consistently receives customer satisfaction ratings in the 90th percentile from museum visitors and participants in educational and public programs. NARA will be challenged to maintain high satisfaction ratings as it explores ways to coordinate engagement functions and activities across multiple delivery channels, including online.

Strategies:

- Expand use of crowd-sourcing tools to improve public access and engagement.
- Develop a national outreach program that promotes awareness of our holdings nationwide.

Contributing Programs: Legislative Archives, Pres-idential Libraries, and Museum Services; Office of Innovation.

2.3 By FY 2025, NARA will have 1 million records enhanced by citizen contributions to the National Archives Catalog.

NARA encourages the public to engage with their government and explore American history by contributing unique content to the online National Archives Catalog. NARA encourages members of the public to add “tags” and transcribe records to improve search results and to make handwritten or difficult-to-read text accessible for a wider audience.



Capital Area scouts learn about Patents in the Boeing Learning Center, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Strategies:

- Expand use of crowd-sourcing tools to improve public access and engagement.
- Build capabilities in design and user experience to better understand user needs.

Contributing Programs: Office of Innovation.

2.4 By FY 2020, NARA will have policies and processes in place to support Federal agencies' transition to fully electronic recordkeeping.

NARA's success in meeting its strategic goals and objectives depends on the capability of its customer agencies to transform their programs and systems to support fully-electronic record-keeping. NARA must enhance its support of Federal agency records management officials with effective policies, modern tools, and new services to support the transition to electronic records.

Strategies:

- Conduct a business process reengineering to improve customer-facing functions of the Electronic Records Archive 2.0.
- Provide Federal agencies with digitization guidance and “success criteria” for managing electronic records.
- Develop Federal records management requirements and work with Federal and commercial vendors to incorporate the requirements into software applications and cloud offerings.

Contributing Programs: Agency Services; Information Services.



STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Maximize NARA's Value to the Nation

Maximize NARA's Value to the Nation recognizes that public access to government information creates measurable economic value, which adds to the enduring cultural and historical value of our records. We are reforming and modernizing records management policies and practices across the Federal government to support the transition to digital government. NARA will drive public and commercial re-use of historical government data and records to create measurable economic activity.

3.1 By FY 2019, NARA will conduct inspections of records management practices at 10 percent of Federal agencies per year, to ensure that Federal email and other permanent electronic records are being managed in an electronic format.

NARA must provide its customer agencies with the policy, guidance, and training necessary to appropriately manage records in their custody. NARA must also provide its stakeholders with reasonable and independent assurance that those agencies are complying with relevant laws and regulations.

NARA conducts on-site inspections of other agencies' records management practices to help those agencies strengthen their recordkeeping programs and ensure that records are being managed appropriately. NARA conducts inspections according to established procedures, publishes findings and recommendations in written reports, and requires agencies to respond with corrective actions that are tracked through completion. NARA has conducted 18 inspections since 2011. NARA's goal is to complete a total of 26 inspections in FY 2019.

Strategies:

- Review compliance issues identified from completed inspections and revise baselines as needed for future inspections.
- Develop procedures to evaluate Federal electronic records and recordkeeping systems.
- Stand-up a unit dedicated to inspecting agency electronic recordkeeping systems.

Contributing Programs: Agency Services.



National Archives and Records Administration, Fort Worth, TX Archives and Records Center.

3.2 By December 31, 2022, NARA will, to the fullest extent possible, no longer accept transfers of permanent or temporary records in analog formats and will accept records only in electronic format and with appropriate metadata.

NARA and most Federal agencies currently maintain separate policies, practices, and physical infrastructures for managing records in traditional (analog) formats compared to electronic records. This structure is costly and complex, which increases the risk that permanently valuable records in either format may not be appropriately retained. NARA must take decisive action to transition Federal recordkeeping to a fully-electronic environment to promote efficiency, increase access to information, and allow NARA and Federal agencies to focus resources on meeting the challenges of managing electronic records.

After December 31, 2022, NARA will no longer accept new transfers of analog records for storage by the Federal Records Centers Program (FRCP) to the fullest extent possible. NARA will continue to store and service all records received by the FRCP by that date until their scheduled disposition date. Once those records reach their disposition date, NARA will accept the permanent records into the National Archives in their original (analog) format.

Beginning January 1, 2023, all other legal transfers of permanent records must be in electronic format, to the fullest extent possible, whether the records were “born electronic” or not. After that date, agencies will be required to digitize permanent records in analog formats before transfer to NARA.

Strategies:

- Establish appraisal, scheduling, and pre-accessioning processes that reflect modern electronic records management.
- Redesign records management training to assist agencies in building a records management workforce that is skilled in electronic records and data management.

- Establish clear policy on digitizing permanent records and the appropriate disposition of analog originals.
- Work with agencies and the private sector to build capacity for mass digitization of analog records and transition storage of temporary analog records to the private sector.

Contributing Programs: Agency Services; Research Services; Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services; Office of Innovation.

3.3 By FY 2025, at least 15 external sources will be using NARA data sets from the National Archives Catalog as a primary source.

NARA collaborates with stakeholders, the public, and private organizations to make historical records available to the public. NARA currently delivers large sets of records to the public through third-party websites, including Wikipedia, the Digital Public Library of America, and non-profit genealogy sites. NARA must increase the number and variety of platforms and organizations that use NARA data sets to allow for deeper public engagement with the data and stimulate economic activity through the use and re-use of government information.

Strategies:

- Enhance NARA's Application Programming Interface (API) to improve public access to large datasets in the National Archives Catalog.
- Build new public-private partnerships that allow for a broader range of uses of NARA data sets.
- Develop collaborative relationships with other cultural institutions to attract new private investment in web applications that use and re-use government information.

Contributing Programs: Office of Innovation



Reception center, National Archives and Records Administration, Fort Worth, TX Archives and Records Center.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Build our Future Through our People

Build our Future through our People is our commitment to provide all our employees with learning and leadership opportunities necessary to successfully transition to a digital environment. We are dedicated to empowering our employees to engage in their work, innovating to improve our work processes and products, and becoming the next generation of leaders. We are building an inclusive, empowering workplace culture that connects employees with the agency mission. We are developing a diverse workforce with the skills necessary to fulfill our mission.

4.1 By FY 2020, 40 percent of NARA staff at all grade levels will have participated in a formal leadership development program activity to support the agency effort to build an agency of leaders.

NARA must have a cadre of skilled leaders – in supervisory and non-supervisory positions – in order to effectively transition to a fully-electronic environment. NARA invests in leadership development activities to ensure the agency has a diverse pool of competent leaders with appropriate technical skills and experience. Currently, 32 percent of NARA employees have participated in a formal leadership development program activity in the past five years. NARA must expand and enhance its leadership development program to provide more opportunities for staff participation and development.

Strategies:

- Re-design NARA's Supervisor Development Program and establish regular refresher training for all managers and supervisors.
- Enhance NARA's cross-training program to include more opportunities in leadership roles.
- Expand course offerings to provide more opportunities for staff at field locations.
- Develop standards and metrics to evaluate program effectiveness.

Contributing Programs: Office of Human Capital.



Federal Records Center employees loading digital materials for storage.

4.2 By FY 2020, 85 percent of NARA positions will be filled within 80 days.

NARA must have an effective hiring process in order to reach the best talent in a competitive market. NARA measures performance using the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) 80-day “time to hire” standard, beginning with the hiring manager’s initial request to fill a vacancy to the employee’s start date.

NARA must have a highly-qualified, highly-motivated, and diverse workforce in order to achieve the agency’s strategic goals and objectives. Currently, approximately 53 percent of NARA positions are filled within 80 days. NARA must fill more positions within the 80-day standard in order to secure the best candidates and minimize the disruption of extended vacancies.

Strategies:

- Improve human capital business processes and make better use of technology.
- Realign how the Office of Human Capital delivers services to internal customers.
- Ensure managers and supporting Human Capital staff are appropriately trained.

Contributing Programs: Office of Human Capital.

4.3 By FY 2020, 95 percent of NARA positions will have clear and achievable career paths for NARA employees.

“Career pathing” at NARA is a structured process of analyzing organizational units to reduce managerial span-of-control, redesign core jobs to improve employee motivation and productivity, and ensure a fairer and more effective performance management system.

NARA must have a motivated workforce that is organized into effective work units in order to achieve the agency's mission and goals. NARA must address imbalances in the organizational structure, assignment of work, and performance management standards to better support employee motivation and engagement. NARA staff must see reasonable and achievable paths to rewarding and productive careers in order to engage in their work and build an inclusive workplace. To date, NARA has completed career pathing for approximately 36 percent of agency positions. NARA must establish transparent and meaningful career paths to ensure the agency has a motivated and diverse workforce with the skills necessary to fulfill the agency mission.

Strategies:

- Redesign front-line positions to improve employee empowerment.
- Assess and correct appropriate supervisor-to-employee ratios.
- Develop new positions in journey grades to increase analytical work and encourage technical subject matter expertise.
- Resolve additional barriers to career progression and build inclusive work units.

Contributing Programs: Office of Human Capital; Office of Equal Employment Opportunity.

4.4 By FY 2020, NARA will have a career development program in place to support NARA's transition to electronic records.

NARA must ensure employees are prepared to transition to a fully electronic environment and are prepared to support other agencies with new tools, guidance, and expertise. NARA must provide a robust career development program consisting of training and experiential learning that allows all employees to identify and plan for career growth opportunities and develop competencies. NARA must develop a diverse workforce that is appropriately trained and empowered to participate in an inclusive workplace, and able to effectively support the migration to a fully electronic environment.

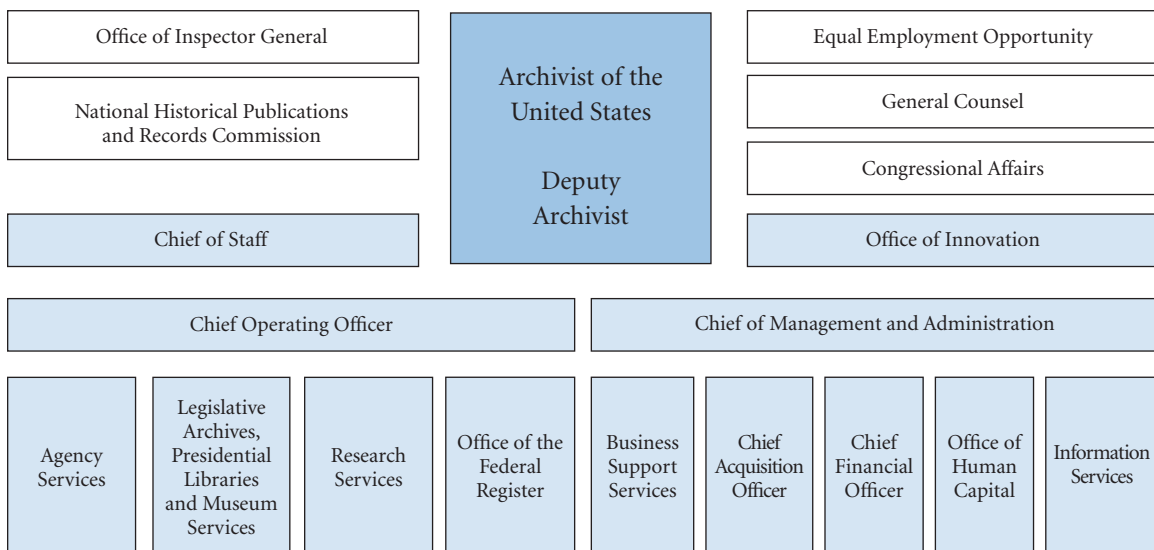
Strategies:

- Identify competencies and requirements to support career development.
- Transform career development and job-skill training programs to meet the needs of electronic records.
- Expand NARA's cross-training program to offer more opportunities in a broader range of roles.
- Develop job-specific development programs to build professional competencies.

Contributing Programs: Office of Human Capital.

NARA ORGANIZATION

NARA is organized around customer segments, which ensures that resources and management attention are focused on delivering coordinated and effective service to all stakeholders. NARA’s customer-focused organizations allow the agency to better engage its stakeholders, encourage their collaboration and participation, and respond to their needs expediently and efficiently. This structure eliminates duplication of processes and resources, creates a more flexible and agile organization, and promotes shared accountability for the performance of the agency as a whole.



The *Archivist of the United States* is vested with broad authority to store and protect the records in NARA’s custody and oversee the management of records in the custody of other Federal agencies. The Archivist is appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate and is supported by the *Deputy Archivist*, who is the agency’s senior career official.

The *Chief of Staff* provides administrative support to the Archivist and Deputy Archivist, leads NARA internal and external communications programs, and champions innovations to improve the customer experience for internal and external customers.

The *Office of Innovation* plans, directs, and coordinates NARA’s Open Government efforts, the online public catalog, digitization strategy and partnerships efforts, and NARA’s web and social media presence.

The *National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)* is an independent statutory body that provides grants to preserve and publish non-Federal records that document American history. The Archivist of the United States chairs the Commission.

The *Chief Operating Officer* provides leadership and direction to NARA's customer-facing organizations:

- *Agency Services* leads NARA efforts to meet the records management needs of Federal agencies and represents the public's interest in the transparency of these records. Agency Services includes the Office of the Chief Records Officer of the United States, the Federal Records Centers Program, the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO), the National Declassification Center, and the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS).
- *Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services* fulfills the records needs of the White House and Congress, researchers who make use of Presidential and Congressional records, and museum visitors, educators, and students.
- *Research Services* provides world-class service to researchers and citizens wanting to access the records of the National Archives and preserves archival holdings for the benefit of future generations.
- *The Office of the Federal Register* fulfills the Archivist's responsibilities to publish the daily Federal Register, the Code of Federal Regulations, and the Statutes-at-Large, and other statutory requirements.

The *Chief of Management and Administration* provides leadership and direction to NARA administrative and management functions:

- *Business Support Services* provides efficient and effective facility and property management, physical security, and administrative services at NARA field locations.
- *Chief Acquisition Officer* fulfills NARA needs for procurement and contracting services, and manages the distributed acquisition workforce.
- *Chief Financial Officer* leads NARA operations and activities related to budget, accounting, financial management, and internal controls.
- *Office of Human Capital* supports an effective and diverse NARA workforce through hiring, employee training and development, and workplace engagement.
- *Information Services* applies information technology and sound information management practices to support NARA programs and activities.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

NARA shared drafts of this Plan with external stakeholders in the Summer and Fall of 2017. NARA issued a draft for comment by staff on the agency’s internal collaboration tool, conducted an anonymous staff survey, and held two live Town Hall meetings to solicit comments and answer questions. NARA also posted a draft to the agency website, archives.gov, and GitHub for public review. NARA sent letters soliciting input from professional organizations, peer institutions, and the public, and issued a memorandum to senior officials at other Federal agencies, encouraging their review and comment. NARA also held two open forums where senior leaders presented the draft Strategic Plan to records management staff and leaders from other Federal agencies. Later, after incorporating comments and views expressed by staff and other stakeholders, NARA sent copies of the revised Plan to the agency’s Authorizing and Appropriations Committees in Congress for their review.

EVIDENCE BUILDING

NARA used information from the full portfolio of evidence to develop this Strategic Plan. NARA started 2018-2022 strategic planning by conducting a traditional environmental scan, including a review of new trends and emerging practices in archives and information management, agency performance data, program reviews conducted by NARA programs, and the Office of Inspector General’s Top Ten Management Challenges. NARA Executives also reviewed materials describing the efforts and strategies employed by the National Archives of Australia and Canada to transition to electronic records.

NARA incorporated evidence gathered to support agency reform plan proposals, which were developed at the same time that NARA formulated the new Strategic Plan. NARA Executives conducted a risk-based analysis of every agency activity or function, and issued a survey to all staff to solicit their ideas on ways to improve NARA and reduce risk. NARA used this evidence to prepare a risk profile and design new strategic objectives that mitigate long-term, strategic risks to the agency. As a result, NARA’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan establishes a long-term vision to move the agency forward and transform archiving, but also includes plans to address long-term risks and increase agency efficiency and effectiveness.



**NATIONAL
ARCHIVES**