

Records Management Guidance for Political Appointees

As a Federal employee you create and work with Federal records. Federal records include emails, instant messages, presentations, reports, spreadsheets, texts, voicemails, and much more. Without effective records management, successors may be unable to build off your work. Further, as a high-level official, the records you create and receive are likely to one day come to the National Archives. Implementing good records and information management practices helps agencies:

- minimize costs and operate efficiently
- adequately and properly document agency actions and decisions
- identify and transfer permanently valuable records to the National Archives.

When Entering Federal Service

When entering Federal service, it is important to lay the foundation for good records and information management. You should contact your agency's records management staff for a briefing on the specific recordkeeping requirements you must follow. Additionally, each agency has a Senior Agency Official (SAO) responsible for oversight of their entire records management program. NARA maintains lists of [Records Officers](#) and [SAO for Records Management](#). Some key points to remember are:

- Keep personal business out of agency administered systems and accounts e.g. texts, instant messages, emails, voicemails, and other electronic messages.
- Keep agency business out of personal systems and accounts.
- Federal employees have no expectation of privacy in agency systems or accounts.

While Working in Federal Service

If you have any questions about records and information management at your agency, first, you should contact your agency's Records Officer. It is important to remember:

- You work with permanently valuable records that will one day come to the National Archives
- It is important to properly store and maintain all Federal records including your electronic files.
- If you create or receive a Federal record in a personal or non-official account, you must immediately cc or forward a complete copy to your official account within 20 days.

When Leaving Federal Service

Even when exiting Federal service, you still have recordkeeping responsibilities. You should:

- Conduct exit interviews with your records management staff, IT liaisons, and general counsel.
- Ensure your records and information are available to your successor.
- Not delete or remove government information when leaving office.

For additional NARA guidance, please consult:

- NARA 2016 Web Publication, "[Documenting Your Public Service](#)"
- NARA Bulletin 2013-03, "[Guidance for agency employees on the management of federal records, including email accounts, and the protection of federal records from unauthorized removal](#)"

