NATIONAL ARCHIVES

OFFICE *of the* CHIEF RECORDS OFFICER

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 13, 2020, with reports due back to NARA no later than March 13, 2020.

NARA plans to post your 2019 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 records management program developments towards the transition to electronic recordkeeping outlined in M-19-21 through December 31, 2019.
- 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. Include the words "SAORM 2019 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: Ruth Ann Abrams
- Position title: Deputy Secretary
- Address: 901 New York Ave., NW Suite 200 Washington, DC 20268

1. **What agencies, bureaus, components, or offices are covered by this report and your position as SAORM and which will be reporting separately? Please also indicate any that are new or have been changed due to reorganization or other circumstances.**

   Postal Regulatory Commission

2. **Is your agency managing all permanent electronic records in electronic format as of December 31, 2019? (M-19-21, 1.1)**

   ☐ Yes
    x No

   The Commission is in the process of implementing a new electronic document management system to replace the Commission's docketing system, the repository of the majority of the Commission's records. This project has been on hold due to budgetary constraints. As a compensating control, the Commission is also implementing a new records management policy to provide updated records management and data governance guidance to all employees.

3. **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)**

   x Yes
   ☐ No

   The Commission is in the process of implementing a new electronic document management system to replace the Commission's docketing system, the repository of the majority of the Commission's records. This system will provide appropriate metadata for these records. This project has been on hold due to budgetary constraints. As a compensating control, the Commission is also implementing a new records management policy to provide updated records management and data governance guidance to all employees.

4. **Has your agency made progress towards managing all <u>temporary</u> records in electronic format? (M-19-21, 1.3)**

x Yes
☐ No

The Commission is in the process of implementing a new electronic document management system to replace the Commission's docketing system, the repository of the majority of the Commission's permanent and temporary records. This project has been on hold due to budgetary constraints. If budget permits, the Commission will expand the project parameters to include managing all Commission records – including those records not included in this repository. As a compensating control, the Commission is also implementing a new records management policy to provide updated records management and data governance guidance to all employees.

5. **Have you, as the SAORM, taken steps to ensure that your records management program complies with the Federal Records Act and its regulations through strategic plans including performance goals, objectives and measures? (M-19-21, 1.4)**

X Yes
☐ No

Yes, the SAORM regularly reviews the records management program for compliance with the Federal Records Act and its regulations, and directly notifies the Secretary and other senior executives of any non-compliance issues. These discussions guarantee that the records management program remains a budgetary and strategic priority with senior officials. For example, records management objectives are included in the strategic action plan for the Commission. Another example is the electronic document system project – which was affected by recent budgetary constraints. However, by keeping the compliance issues at the forefront, the Secretary and Chairman kept this as a funding priority, keeping the project alive. Moreover, both IT and records management report directly to the SAORM, which insures that the two are closely linked in strategy and implementation.

6. **If applicable, have you identified all agency-operated records centers and made plans to either close them before 2022, or have you submitted a request to NARA for an exception? (M-19-21, 1.3)**

X Yes
☐ No

The Commission plans to discontinue the use of on-site records storage once the electronic system's records management module is live. This is pending budgetary constraints. The Commission will make an exception request in FY 2021 should one be needed.

7. **Does your agency have procedures that include documentation to ensure records of 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.

x Yes
☐ No

All staff, including senior officials, are informed of their records management responsibilities and complete mandatory annual training.

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

X Yes
☐ No

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

The Commission is a small agency, and the SAORM role is a collateral duty for the Deputy Secretary. The Commission's records management program, including projects to meet the recordkeeping goal, have been and will continue to be negatively impacted by budgetary constraints. As the Commission does not have a dedicated training function, our records management training could use some assistance to ensure it stays up to date and compliant with all current records management regulations.

9. **Do you need support from NARA to ensure a successful transition to fully-electronic recordkeeping?**

x Yes
☐ No

The ongoing support of NARA's appraisal archivist has been paramount to the Commission's successful records management program. Another area NARA could be of service is in the area of training by providing a basic records management online/web-based training for small agencies, with a module for senior executives. This would address an ongoing need and would ensure that the training is not impacted by the budget.