NATIONAL ARCHIVES
OFFICE *of the*
CHIEF RECORDS
OFFICER

Senior Agency Official for Records Management
FY 2015 Annual Report

The *Managing Government Records Directive (M-12-18)* requires Senior Agency Officials (SAOs) for Records Management to provide an annual report to NARA. This report demonstrates how your organization is achieving the goals of the *Directive* and other important initiatives as identified by NARA.

NARA uses the reports to determine the overall progress of the Federal Government in meeting the goals of the *Directive*, including implementing proper email management and transitioning to electronic recordkeeping. Additionally, NARA uses the report for information sharing purposes to provide best practices and model solutions with Federal agencies.

The reporting period begins on November 16, 2015, and reports are due back to NARA no later than COB January 29, 2016.

Please note that NARA will post a version of your 2015 SAO report on the NARA website. This action is in the interest of transparency in Government and to promote collaboration and communication among agencies. Please let us know whether there is a specific justification as to why your report cannot be publicly shared (in whole or in part).

Instructions for Reporting

- This template covers progress through fiscal year (FY) 2015.

- Please be brief and precise in your answers. Limit answers to each question to no more than 500 words.

- Please complete the eight questions/items on the following pages and send the report to prmd@nara.gov. Include the words "SAO annual report" and your agency's 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: LaVerne H. Council
Position title: Chief Information Officer/Senior Agency Official

Address: Department of Veterans Affairs, OIT, 810 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC

Office telephone number: 202.461.6911

1. What are the agencies, components, or bureaus covered by this report and your position as SAO?

VA Staff Offices and three Administrations (National Cemetery Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration and Veterans Health Administration)

2. Is your agency going to meet the *Directive* goal to manage all <u>email</u> records in an accessible electronic format by December 31, 2016? *(Directive Goal 1.2)*

☒ Yes   ☐ No

2a)   *Provide a list of actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to meet this goal. Include specific information on your <u>progress</u> regarding:*

In an effort to meet Goal 1.2 of the Directive, VA:

- Met with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to discuss the NARA approved Capstone approach to managing electronic mail records and the benefit for VA to implement the process
- Conducted research and developed comprehensive briefing papers and in the process of developing an implementation plan on considerations for Agency-wide deployment of an electronic recordkeeping system that will support both the 2016 and 2019 mandates
- Is in the process of establishing and updating department-wide email policies
- Established disposition practices for agency email (either destroy in agency or transfer to NARA) for Capstone Officials
- Plans are underway to upgrade the VA Email system to Exchange 2013 and take advantage of new technological features supporting email preservation including eDiscovery and litigation tools that will

prevent responsive records from being deleted during the litigation hold time period

    2b)   *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in 2016 to meet this goal.*

- Establishment of an enterprise-wide working group to identify and set forth plans for implementing Capstone to manage agency email records to include attachments, calendar appointments, tasks, instant messages and chat transcripts
- Establish an executive level oversight group to ensure Capstone implementation goals are achieved
- Identify Capstone Officials and establish records retention policy
- Address retention policy for non-Capstone officials
- Update email policy and VA Records Control Schedules, to reflect the Capstone process

3. Has your agency taken actions to implement the 2014 amendments to the *Federal Records Act* requiring Federal employees to copy or forward electronic messages (including email, texts, chats, and instant messaging) that are federal records from their non-official accounts to official accounts within 20 days?

            ☒ Yes   ☐ No

Please provide a brief description of the actions taken, such as establishing policies and providing training.

- Disseminated VA wide memorandum detailing expectations to implement the 2014 amendments
- In the process of developing a new directive to address VA electronic communications within the agency
- Developed Rules of Behavior on-line training on using personal email accounts including the 20 day requirement
- Provided new policy memorandum to all VHA facility records managers, VACO VHA Record Liaisons and the Executive Assistant functional email account
- Distributed guidance on use of personal email accounts and adherence to the Federal Records Act

4. Describe your agency's internal controls for managing electronic messages (including email, texts, chats, and instant messaging) of the agency head and other executives (including appropriate advisers, and other senior management staff).

- A new directive is being developed to address the management of electronic messages, including texts, chats, instant messages
- VA plans to conduct Records Management assessments to ensure field compliance
- The agency has taken the approach of managing electronic messages for the agency head and other executives by ensuring that all information is currently saved and backed up on servers within their IT Department.
- Information Security Officers (ISO) have implemented necessary processes and protective security measures in order to safeguard and appropriately protect this information as required

5. Is your agency going to meet the *Directive* goal to submit records schedules to NARA for all existing paper and other non-electronic records by December 31, 2016? *(Directive Goal 2.5)*

$\boxtimes$ Yes $\square$ No

> 5a) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to meet this goal.*

- VA currently has eight Records Control Schedules and will continue to review and update as necessary

Note1: Very few of these records will be classified as permanent records

> 5b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in the future to meet this goal.*

- Facility Records Managers provided a list of records in both electronic and paper format that have not been scheduled
- Provide a list of unscheduled records to NARA as required
- Submit three new records schedules in the Electronic Records Archive (ERA) that are currently pending approval
- Records Management Offices will continue to look for unscheduled records in both paper and electronic format.
- Records Officers will partner with Privacy Officers to review all SORN's to ensure the assignment of a records schedule.
- Electronic systems without a records schedule are added to the list of unscheduled records.

6. Is your agency going to meet the *Directive* goal to manage all permanent electronic records in an electronic format by December 31, 2019? *(Directive Goal 1.1)*

$\boxtimes$ Yes $\square$ No

6a) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to meet this goal. Include specific information on your progress regarding:*

- VA developed briefing papers on the considerations for Agency-wide implementation of a comprehensive records modernization strategy and deployment of an electronic records management system
- A series of ERMS commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vendors conducted demonstrations for VA Enterprise Records Service (ERS) and other key records management stakeholders to include the Office of General Counsel (OGC)
- VA will review and leverage existing FileNet licenses in an effort to manage all records electronically
- ERS reached out to other Federal Agencies to share best practices
- The Records Management Steering Committee is working to identify permanent records types; examples are the Radiation, Agent Orange and Gulf war Illness register list. This year, NARA completed the final efforts to pre-accession these records
- Submitted permanent Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Records in electronic PDF format
- VHA Office of Research and Development recently scheduled several permanent record types

6b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in the future to meet this goal.*

- VA intends to identify and convert all paper permanent records into electronic records for transfer to NARA

7. Please provide any insight to your agency's efforts to implement the *Managing Government Records Directive* and the transition to a digital government.

- VA made significant progress with digital health records systems, such as the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) and My HealtheVet
- The agency took a proactive approach regarding this matter by adopting and transitioning to an electronic Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) which allows for Veterans claims to be processed within an electronic environment. The system allows VBA to transition from a paper-based claims process to an electronic-based system.

8. With regard to records management, is your agency preparing for the upcoming change in Presidential administration?

☒ Yes   ☐ No

8a) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to ensure records of departing senior officials will be appropriately managed during the upcoming change in Presidential administration.*

- Enterprise Records Services (ERS) developed a draft directive to ensure all departing senior official/Political Appointees receive Records Management briefings prior to departure
- Guidance has been distributed concerning actions taken on records owned by agency senior officials and Political Appointees
- Administration Records Officers will work with senior officials and Political Appointees and OGC to ensure that all out going senior leaders are briefed on records they can remove or copy
- VA will brief incoming senior officials to ensure they know their records responsibility prior to taking their new position
- VA will ensure departing senior official records are appropriately managed during the upcoming change in Presidential administration by implementing procedures to include out-briefings with the VA Records Manager, a representative from the VACO Records Management Office, a representative from OGC, and a representative from the Corporate Communications Staff.
- Discussions are held to identify and inform the senior official of the records information they are allowed to take and/or make copies of for their personal use

8b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in the future to ensure records of departing senior officials will be appropriately managed during the upcoming change in Presidential administration, including ensuring that federal records are not improperly removed from the agency.*

- ERS is currently working with the Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO) to ensure Records Management Exit Briefings are added to the senior official/Political Appointees Out Processing Checklist
- Administration Records Officers plan to ensure exit interviews are conducted when senior officials depart the administration. This validates that senior officials are appropriately informed and educated regarding what information they are allowed to take with them when retiring or transitioning from their current senior official positions
- Collaborate with the Office of General Counsel to review the records management out-processing for senior officials leaving government service
- Require all departing senior leaders receive a copy of the agency records management out processing requirements