The OMB/NARA *Managing Government Records Directive* (M-12-18) requires Senior Agency Officials for Records Management (SAORM) 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* 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 January 8, 2018 and reports are due back to NARA no later than March 16, 2018.

NARA plans to post your 2017 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 progress through December 31, 2017.
- 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 PRMD@nara.gov. Include the words "SAORM 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: Scott R. Blackburn

- Position title: Executive in Charge, Office of Information and Technology, Chief Information Officer

- Address: 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420

- Office telephone number:
  (202) 461-6910

1. **What agencies, bureaus, components, or offices are covered by this report and your position as SAORM?**

    Please provide list

- VA Staff Offices and three Administrations (listed below):
    o National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
    o Veterans Benefits Administration *(*VBA)
    o Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

2. **Is your agency and its components making progress towards managing all permanent electronic records in electronic format by December 31, 2019? (M-12-18, Goal 1.1)**

    ☐Yes
    ☐N o

    Please explain your response:

VA will make every effort to meet the December 31, 2019, due date. Our Administrations have taken a proactive approach by initiating programs/activities where paper files are being scanned, uploaded and converted into an electronic media format. For example, there are currently 14 VHA records that have been designated as permanent records out of approximately 3200 VHA records. These records are located at VHA Central Office. Half of these records are in electronic format including the VHA patient registries for Agent Orange, Gulf War, and Radiation. The small number of permanent paper records can be either scanned to a flat file or PDFA or transferred to NARA prior to the December 31, 2019 cutoff date. Although VA is not yet in compliance with this requirement, we are making progress towards it.

3. **Has your agency developed plans or taken actions to evaluate and implement the digitization of permanent records created in hard copy or other analog formats (e.g., microfiche, microfilm, analog video, analog audio)? (M-12-18 Goal 1.1)**

☑Yes
☐ N o

Please explain your response and include any obstacles you are facing in planning or implementing digitization initiatives.

Yes, VA organizations are making progress in developing plans to evaluate and implement the digitization of permanent records. For instance, NCA initiated a file digitization project. VBA has taken the proactive approach by initiating a File Bank Extraction (FBE) program where the digitization of permanent records created in hard copy or other analog formats that currently reside at Regional Offices are being scanned, uploaded and converted into an electronic media format within the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). VHA is currently working on a plan to transfer these records to NARA before the deadline of December 31, 2019 or scan the small number of permanent holdings into flat file or PDFA. There are funding issues that need to be addressed and we are still working with leadership towards full support and sponsorship. VA asks for clarification and guidance on how to maintain digitization in individual staff offices (e.g. what companies to go to; cost; funding; etc.).

4. **OMB M-17-22 required agencies to create reform plans that may result in re-organizations and the elimination of offices and/or functions. Where necessary, has your agency taken steps to ensure that recordkeeping requirements and other records management needs have been or will be accounted for and implemented when making these changes?**

☑Yes
☐ N o

Please explain your response:

VA employees are aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities, and follow all relevant rules and regulations. VA's enterprise directive requires all offices to maintain file plans, and guidance for organizing and identifying office records to aid in their retrieval, use, and disposition.

5. **Have you, as the SAORM, taken steps to ensure that your records management program has the strategic direction, support and resources it needs to be successful?** (see: NARA Bulletin 2017-02: Guidance on Senior Agency Officials for Records Management https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2017/2017-02-html)

☐**Y**es
☐N o

Please explain your response

VA recognizes the importance of ensuring that records management is included in its strategic plan and as an important tool for supporting agency business processes. VA strives to use a variety of means to manage its records, including traditional records management programs, automated tools, or other approaches. The records officers coordinate with the IT project managers to ensure that records management processes occur throughout the system life cycle and use risk assessment to determine appropriate records management approaches. Our VA Records Officer and team works closely with program offices to provide guidance and support. RM training is available to employees to ensure that they comply with all applicable records management requirements.

VA has experienced a lack of skilled records management staff well versed in electronic records management as well as a general lack of needed staff overall to fulfill mission of the function. The SOARM is taking steps to ensure that the records management program has the strategic direction, support and resources it needs to be successful.

6. **Have you, as the SAORM, ensured that all incoming and outgoing senior officials* receive briefings on their records management responsibilities including documenting their public service, use of personal email, and other recordkeeping requirements.**

   *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.

   ☐Yes
   ☐N o

   Please explain your response:

VA briefs incoming and departing senior officials on their records management responsibilities and provides supporting documents and materials that identify and explain requirements regarding senior officials' records management responsibilities

including documenting their public service, use of personal email, and other recordkeeping requirements.

7. **Is the records management program and related requirements included in your agency's Information Resource Management Plan or an equivalent information management plan? ([OMB Circular A-130, Managing Information as a Strategic Resource](#))?**

☐Yes
☐ N o

Please explain your response:

VA has a records management program, including a documented and approved records management directive, handbook and disposition schedules. RM training covers records in all formats, including electronic communications. VA has controls in place to ensure the reliability, authenticity, integrity, and usability of records maintained in electronic information systems.

8. **What policies, guidance or support do you need from NARA to ensure a successful transition to fully electronic recordkeeping? (NARA Strategic Plan. Goal 2.4)**

We recommend that NARA offer a national level electronic records management keeping system/tool that can be used by all agencies; provide additional instructional training on how, when, and where to start file plans and file inventories in order to transition to a fully electronic recordkeeping environment across the department.