Social Security Administration
Summary of Efforts Made to Achieve the
Managing Government Records Directive

(March 2014)

Goal 1: Require Electronic Recordkeeping to Ensure Transparency, Efficiency, and Accountability

1.1 Electronic Records Management for Permanent Records (1.1): By December 31, 2019, all permanent electronic records in Federal agencies will be managed electronically to the fullest extent possible for eventual transfer and accessioning by NARA in electronic format. By December 31, 2013, each agency will develop and begin to implement plans to achieve this transition. Agencies should also consider the benefits of digitizing permanent records created in hard-copy format or other analog formats (e.g., microfiche, microfilm, analog video, and analog audio).

In fiscal year (FY) 2012, we piloted a software for records automation and classification. The automated classification feature did not meet the minimum success level required in the statement of work. Using our lessons learned from the pilot, we continue working towards automating the classification and disposition of all email records, including those that are permanent. In FY 2013, we worked with another vendor that provided market research and a feasibility assessment for the automation of records management. This feasibility study provides the basis for our future procurement of an automated records management solution.

In FY 2013, we conducted an agency-wide survey to determine the custodian, volume, location, and medium of all permanent records. We retain permanent electronic records from the Office of the Commissioner in the Assignment and Correspondence Tracking (ACT) system. SSA components capture permanent electronic records that they create and each component determines how it will store, search, and retrieve their permanent electronic records. We are currently exploring records management functionality for the SSA Web Content Management System (WCMS).

Several components are working with our records management staff to develop plans to digitize permanent records.

We have made changes and plan to make changes to our recordkeeping practices. In FY 2012, we received National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approval of our first records schedule for our Enumeration System's permanent electronic record information. In October 2013, we accomplished our agency's first permanent electronic records transfer of the Numident records to NARA, after submitting our transfer request in the National Archives Electronic Records Archive (ERA) system. In FY 2014, the Electronic Management of Assignments and Correspondence (EMAC) will replace the ACT system. When fully implemented, EMAC will track and control a large volume of agency assignments containing numerous permanent records. We incorporated records management and archival functionality into the design, development, and implementation of our information systems that contain permanent electronic records in accordance with our

systems development lifecycle. Per NARA Bulletin 2010-02 dated February 5, 2010, "*Continuing Agency Responsibilities for Scheduling Electronic Records*," we disseminate an agency-developed Records Management Questionnaire (RMQ) for all permanent electronic records stored in or generated by our information systems.

We are working on a flexible scheduling approach (big bucket initiative) for all agency records. During the past year, we developed and distributed spreadsheets to all agency components for completion concerning their permanent records. Based on the information gathered, we plan to change onsite retention of permanent records to 30 years or less to comply with Goal 2.2.

We designated file plan coordinators (FPC) for each agency component to ensure current file plans are in place and that we capture and manage all permanent records.   To assist our FPCs with this process, we created a universal file plan template. This template enabled us to identify permanent records retained in non-electronic formats. We plan to target these records and work with the owners to transition the records to electronic preservation.

We built and implemented the Records Holding Area Inventory Management System (RHAIMS) to provide complete lifecycle management of physical records stored in our onsite records holding area (RHA). By developing and implementing RHAIMS, we made the use of the paper SSA-325 obsolete. The data inputs from the paper SSA-325 are now electronic and accessible to all personnel via our agency intranet. In addition to converting the SSA-325 to an electronic format, the application retains any documentation related to a particular transfer housed in the RHA (e.g., box lists, disposal authorizations, SF-135s, SF-258s and correspondence). This functionality greatly decreases time spent searching for these records previously housed in multiple repositories. The RHAIMS retains records in accordance with General Records Schedule (GRS) and agency-specific retention policies. Phase Two of this project includes records management functionality.

We built a SharePoint site to track and complete the review and sign-off of NA Form 13001s we receive from the Federal Records Centers (FRC). The SharePoint site converts the entire review/sign-off process to an electronic format. Each quarter, we receive a NARA destruction list in Excel format, which we upload to a list in SharePoint. Disposition approvers log into the SharePoint site, view the transfers assigned to them, and complete the sign-off process. In addition, SharePoint logs all history associated with a particular transfer for auditing and knowledge management purposes. Once disposition approvers have reviewed all transfers for a given cycle, we export the list to Excel and email the list to our FRC account manager to begin the physical destruction process.

We plan to implement the Archives and Records Centers Information System (ARCIS) records transfer portal into our FRC workflows. Once implemented, we will electronically process all FRC transfer requests via ARCIS.

1.2 Electronic Email Management (1.2): By December 31, 2016, Federal agencies must manage all email records in an electronic format. Email records must be retained in an appropriate electronic system that supports records management and litigation requirements (which may include preservation in-place models, including the capability to identify, retrieve, and retain the records for as long as they are needed).

Currently, there is no system in place to apply authorized disposition at the end of the appropriate retention period for temporary and permanent email records. The email recipient is responsible for disposing of temporary email records or retaining permanent email records.

We completed an email auto classification software pilot in FY 2012. The FY 2012 pilot proved unsuccessful. One of the reasons our email records management automation pilot was unsuccessful was the volume of record series. We attempted to automate 772 record series -- 248 agency-specific and 524 GRS -- containing many event-driven dispositions. Event-driven dispositions require user intervention, thus defeating the purpose of an automated classification system. During the pilot, we also found our records series too granular for successful automation. For example, the system could not differentiate whether Freedom of Information Act requests were granted or denied, currently represented by different dispositions. Additionally, different dispositions apply based on the procurement amount. A system is incapable of determining a procurement amount without user intervention. To alleviate these problems, we plan to implement buckets (flexible scheduling), which will include all GRS series that are not exempted. We will eliminate open-ended retention and as many event-driven retentions as possible to reduce user intervention and allow for system automation. Until we receive NARA approval for all of our flexible schedules, we plan to implement Capstone for our senior officials and temporarily retain emails for all other employees, dependent on budget availability.

Upon completion of our flexible scheduling initiative, we will revisit the selection of a vendor to automate the management of email. In FY 2013, we worked with another vendor that provided market research and a feasibility assessment for email archiving, automated records management, and eDiscovery solutions. The vendor examined the marketplace to determine whether it is technically feasible to meet agency requirements for archiving, automation of records management, and eDiscovery. Requirements include integration of multiple line-of-business applications and integrators with eDiscovery applications, as well as an open architecture to support growth. The feasibility assessment serves as a basis for developing an action plan to define and implement an automated solution to satisfy Goal 1.2.

Other steps we have taken to meet this goal include: (1) the identification of senior officials for records management purposes, (2) obtaining budget approval to contract a vendor to develop our flexible schedules and file plans, (3) developed a list of known permanent records, and (4) developed a recommendation to obtain the Acting Commissioner's decision on whether to include Associate Commissioners and non-Associate Commissioners as senior officials for records management purposes.

Goal2: Demonstrate Compliance with Federal Records Management Statutes and Regulations

2.1 Agencies Must Designate a Senior Agency Official (SAO)

Elizabeth Reich, Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, Quality, and Management, is our designated Senior Agency Official.

2.2 SAO Shall Ensure that Permanent Records are Identified for Transfer and Reported to NARA.

The Records Management Staff (RMS) identified three permanent records that were over 30 years old and eligible for transfer to NARA. The records identified included:

1. Reports of the Board of Trustees of the OASI, DI, HI, and SMI Trust Funds/Office Responsible for Preparation of the Report

2. State Agreements and Modifications

3. Actuarial Studies Files/Office Responsible for Preparation of the Study

Copy of Report submitted to NARA

2.3 Agency Records Officers Must Obtain NARA Certificate of Federal Records Management Training

At the time of the release of M-12-18 our Records Officer held a Certificate of Federal Records Management Training. On December 31, 2013, the Records Officer retired. The Acting Records Officer is working to obtain a Certificate of Federal Records Management Training.

2.4 Agencies Must Establish Records Management Training

RMS began developing a Records Management Training video in February 2013. In July 2013, RMS released the training video to all Social Security Administration employees.

2.5 SAO Shall Ensure that Records are Scheduled

RMS reviewed component surveys and file plans to compile a list of unscheduled records. RMS reported to NARA that we identified 38 unscheduled records. NARA does not want our agency to schedule the reported records because we plan to submit flexible record schedules in the future. The flexible schedules will include the unscheduled records reported to NARA.

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