



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

# RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR POLITICAL APPOINTEES

As a political appointee, you may enter and leave federal service with the change of administrations that occurs during Presidential Transitions. As a public servant, you have a duty to manage the records and information you create and receive. Records management is required by law. Many records created and received by political appointees and senior officials are permanently valuable and will one day be sent to the National Archives to become a part of our nation's history.

Managing records and information starts with understanding what federal records are. Federal records consist of all recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received by a federal agency under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business. They can be created in many different formats, not just paper documents. Federal records include email and any other type of electronic messages (such as chats, texts, direct messages), presentations, office documents, photographs, calendars, and other electronic files.

Political appointees may have unique records that must be appropriately identified and captured:

- Email or electronic messaging records captured under the Capstone approach.
- Records of any internal and external advisory boards, committees, or councils in which you participated.
- Reports to Congress and/or the President, speeches, testimonies, or major correspondence.

## When entering federal service

- Keep personal business out of agency-administered systems and accounts.
- Keep agency business out of personal systems and accounts.
- Be aware that there is no expectation of privacy in agency systems or accounts.
- Be aware that federal records are government property.

## While working in federal service

Talk to the experts! The senior agency official for records management (SAORM) and the agency records officer (ARO) are the people responsible for records management in agencies.

## When leaving federal service

- Complete exit briefings on records management. These briefings may come from records management staff, information management staff, or general counsel.
- Ensure federal records and information are available to your successor.
- Ensure your records are retained or disposed of according to applicable records schedules and agency policies.
- Do not remove federal records and information when leaving office.

## Email and Messages

If you create or receive a work-related text, chat, email, or other electronic message in a personal or nonofficial messaging account, the Federal Records Act requires that you either include your official account on the "cc" line of any message you send or forward a complete copy to your official account within 20 days. (44 U.S.C. Chapter 2911).

FOR ADDITIONAL NARA  
GUIDANCE SEE:



QR WEB:  
Records Management for Political  
Appointees and Senior Officials.



QR WEB:  
Records Management Guidance  
for Federal Employees.