

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Periodic evaluation is a key factor in maintaining an effective, efficient program. Once policies and procedures are established, it is important to monitor effectiveness, adherence and performance. Through assessment, best practices will be established and cost efficiencies identified, thus refining and improving the program. In order to achieve the goals of a comprehensive Records Management Program, the assessment process is divided into three sections; Self-Assessments, Program Assessments, and Departmental Evaluations.

Self-Assessments shall be performed within one year and conducted at least every three years thereafter by Headquarters and Field offices, and Contractor sites. The purposes of self-assessments are to:

- determine whether the basic requirements of the Records Management Program are being met at the local Federal level;
- highlight outstanding work, deficiencies, and local issues that need to be addressed; and
- prepare for a program assessment by identifying areas that require attention.

Findings and recommendations for corrective action should be summarized at the Headquarters, Field and Contractor site levels and provided to the designated Program Records Official (PRO) for evaluation and action, as necessary. Summaries and completed forms shall be maintained until the next assessment period.

Attachment A is a checklist that may be used to perform self-assessments. An organization-specific checklist, based on Attachment A, may be customized to include local or programmatic issues. The form selected should be used by all Federal and Contractor offices within a Departmental Program. Only with standardization can the assessments present a clear comparison of records programs and practices.

Program Assessments shall be performed by the PRO within one year and conducted every three years thereafter. The purposes of program assessment are to:

- ensure that records management requirements are implemented properly at all levels within each Departmental Program;
- identify and address any organization-wide issues that may exist;
- establish consistency and best practices; and
- identify manpower and cost efficiencies where possible.

A plan outlining deficiencies, best practices and improvements that will be made to the program shall be developed within ninety days of completion of the Program Assessment. For information purposes, summarized findings and a copy of the improvement plan shall be provided to the Departmental Records Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer. A record of the program assessment and results shall be maintained until the next assessment period. Attachment B is a list of criteria to assist you in performing program assessments. These criteria may be altered to include information specific to the records of each Program Office.

Program assessments shall be performed on Contractor Programs by the appropriate Records Management Field Officer (RMFO). Program assessments shall be scheduled by mutual agreement with the Contractor and conducted initially, at least every three years and one year prior to completion of a contract term. A summary of findings and recommendations and, if warranted, copies of the assessment forms and feedback provided to the Contractor(s) shall be forwarded to the PRO and the Departmental Records Officer. All or portions of the attachments may be used to perform assessment of Contractor programs.

Departmental Evaluations shall be conducted at least every three years. Analysts from the Records Management Division, Office of the Chief Information Officer shall conduct the evaluations, and if required, assistance will be provided by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The purposes of Departmental evaluations are to ensure that:

- programs have been put into place that meet Federal regulations for the management of records;
- records are created, maintained and dispositioned according to NARA regulations and guidance;
- permanent records are preserved and sent to the National Archives in a timely manner;
- assessments of the records program are conducted with visible results; and
- policy and guidance provides sufficient support to the program.

Departmental evaluations shall be scheduled with Program Records Officials (PRO) and evaluations will include a visit to at least one Field site, if the Program has oversight of Field entities. A list of the site(s) to be visited and the areas to be examined will be provided to the PRO at least sixty days prior to the evaluation. Preliminary findings and recommendations shall be provided to the PRO and a final report sent to the Head of the Program Office by the Chief Information Officer or a designee. The PRO shall respond in writing outlining corrective actions to be taken and anticipated completion dates within ninety days of receiving the final report. Copies of evaluations and findings shall be maintained by the Departmental Records Officer. The protocol to be used for evaluations is included as Attachment C.