

State and territorial government archives play the critical role in society of collecting and preserving records that protect the legal, financial, administrative, and historical aspects of our government and the public it serves. These archives:

**Document government**

**Secure our rights**

**Enable government effectiveness and transparency**

**Provide access to records**

**Promote history and civics**

Effectively functioning government archives are the foundation of open and transparent government operations that meet constituents' needs.



## **Your Government Archives Welcomes You!**

**Here are a few ways that you can engage:**

Introduce yourself to your state/  
territorial archivist and ask for a tour.

Explore the state/territorial archives  
resources made available online.

Attend an archives-sponsored event.

Ask about using archives collections to enhance  
your reports, brochures, and communications.

Follow your state/territorial  
archives on social media.

Encourage others to explore the archives!

### **ABOUT COSA**

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) is a nonprofit membership organization of the state and territorial government archives in the fifty states, five territories, and District of Columbia. Through collaborative research, education, and advocacy, CoSA provides leadership that strengthens and supports state and territorial archives in their work to preserve and provide access to government records.

### **PRODUCED BY**



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### **WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM**



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# **Government Archives are Essential**





## Documenting Government

Records created by agencies and officials as evidence of procedures, policies, and actions are preserved in the archives to document the history and actions of government. From documentation of the work of elected officials, to proceedings in civil and criminal courts, to constituents' vital records, government records provide evidence of diverse and indispensable government functions.



## Securing Rights

State and territorial archives identify and protect essential records for use by individuals, families, and the community for personal, medical, and legal reasons. Government connects with individual lives in many ways, prompting the creation of records—censuses, taxes, military service, education, legal proceedings, birth, marriage, death, immigration, and property ownership, among others. Individuals use these records to protect their rights and property, and to secure benefits. Interactions of individuals with the government may often be the primary official records an individual or family leaves behind.



## Enabling Effectiveness and Transparency

Records that document actions and policies, and which are available for public use, are essential for effective and transparent government. Archives preserve documents that validate what the government has done: what worked, what failed, and what lessons might be learned. Access to these documents informs decision-making and policy creation.



## Providing Access

Providing access to government records—no matter the format—is a core function of state and territorial archives. Investment in archives through maintenance and migration of records underscores the importance of this work. Government archives model and promote best practices for managing, preserving, and ultimately providing access to government records of historical value, in both analog and digital formats.



## Promoting History and Civics

Primary source materials available at state and territorial archives provide the basis for history and civics research and education. The use of historical records in the classroom strengthens critical thinking skills and provides social and cultural context. The United States is strengthened by this commitment to its record.

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