

State Interagency Electronic Records Transfer Checklist

State archives can use this document as a framework to develop or update records transfer procedures for receiving permanent state electronic records. The guidelines developed by state archives can then be shared with state agencies to facilitate the effective transfer of permanent state electronic records.

Prior to Transfer

- Clearly **define roles and responsibilities** for management, transfer, and preservation of electronic records. For example, define what agencies can expect the archives to offer and what tasks the archives would like agencies to complete before transfer.
- Engage with state or agency information technology (IT) to **include agency, archives, records management in analysis and planning efforts** for software application upgrades, refresh, and decommissioning. The objective is to ensure electronic government records are managed through their entire lifecycle, including during interagency transfer.
- Engage with state or agency IT to **identify and promulgate transfer protocols and tools** for interagency records transfer.
- Engage with state or agency IT to **identify and support virus protection scanning and fixity tools** that are available to agencies to use. A state should plan to use the same checksum algorithm (for example, MD5, SHA-1, SHA-256) for both the agency and the archives to ensure that the data transfers properly.
- Communicate with agencies about the **retention schedules** they should use to identify permanent state government electronic records to be transferred.
- Archives should define and communicate **metadata standards**.
- Archives should define and communicate **preferred file formats**. Identify the preferred file formats your archives plans to support for various content types and communicate them to the agencies prior to transfer.
- Archives should **define rules, standards, and the available tools** for transfer of electronic records appraised for archival preservation to be used by agencies.

Typical supported transfer protocols are:

- File Transfer Protocol Secure (FTPs)
- Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS)

Typical supported transfer media are:

- Flash drives
- Portable external hard drives

Transfer

Agencies should:

- Notify the archives** when records have met their retention to initiate preparation and transfer procedures.
- Gather all metadata on records to be transferred** and work with the archives to determine which metadata is part of the record and has long-term value.
- Perform a virus scan** on the electronic records prior to transfer.
- Establish fixity for electronic records and **create checksums** prior to transfer.
- Complete a transfer form** describing the electronic records and their extent, condition, and any other information necessary to identify records and their context.
- Retain the permanent electronic state records being transferred until the archives confirms receipt and validates integrity of the files.

Metadata Requirements

Archives should specify the administrative, descriptive, and technical metadata that agencies should include with the electronic records transfer. Typical requirements include:

- Originating agency and personnel contact information.
- Retention schedule information including creator, classification/taxonomy, retention, exemptions, etc.
- Record Series or Title and associated dates (if applicable).
- Approximate size/extent and formats of the records being transferred.
- Any agency-generated metadata (or data sourced from originating systems) that comprises a part of the record or adds context or value to the records.

Post-Transfer

Archives should:

- Quarantine** the transferred data and perform its own **virus scan**.
- Note fixity information** provided by the agency.
- Run an independent checksum** using the same algorithm to confirm that the file transferred without incident. Archives should record both checksums to reference for future fixity checks.
- Establish a schedule** for checking fixity to maintain integrity of electronic records.
- Migrate any damaged, obsolete, or at-risk files** to more stable formats (assuming no loss of fidelity).

About CoSA

Formed in 2002, the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) is a national nonprofit using collaborative research, education, and advocacy to provide leadership that strengthens and supports state and territorial archives in their work to preserve and provide access to government records. Its members comprise the state archivists in the 50 state, 5 territorial and District of Columbia archives. These individuals oversee agencies that hold a legal mandate to document government and protect the rights and history of the American people across our country.

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