



The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) created this document as a template for state/territorial archives to use as an advocacy/information tool that emphasizes the value and importance of our work. Each state or territorial archives will need to adapt this document to its particular situation and functions. For example, some state/territorial archives are not responsible for records management or are not involved in educational efforts/standards. Please adjust this template, add or rearrange text or emphasis, or adapt any part of the document for your institution's situation.

State archives are ESSENTIAL for government to WORK

At this critical time in the United States, we need a strong state/territorial archives in {state/territory's name}. State archival programs provide crucial, unbiased, and indispensable stewardship of the historical records in their care. Consistent funding and support for the work of state archives enables them to effectively manage and make archival records widely accessible, take advantage of evolving technologies, and foster innovative projects and research.

The State Archives fulfills critical functions for the government and people of our state including:

Supporting government effectiveness and transparency. Government officials serve best when they make informed decisions. One key to such decisions is knowing what was done in the past—what worked, what failed, what lessons might be learned—so previous accomplishments can be built upon and costly mistakes can be avoided. State archives preserve the documents that spell out previous policies, approaches, and decisions—documents that inform present-day decision making and policy creation.

Saving tax dollars by increasing government efficiency. Like people everywhere, government agencies tend to keep records, “just in case.” Efficient management provided by the state archives not only saves taxpayers money—it improves government transparency and accountability as well.

Providing essential records management services. Efficient records management standards and best practices provided by the state archives improve government transparency and accountability, ensure that records are available to the public as documentation of government actions and policies, and cut costs in government. Records management programs are essential to state government and ensure that core information is retained for long-term access.

Providing evidence of the past to support the work of government and the interests of our citizens. The archives identifies and protects essential records for use by citizens, communities, and businesses as well as for use by government itself. Government records are especially important because they protect the legal, financial, and historical foundation for the state and its citizens.

Developing technological solutions to address electronic materials. Technology has transformed the way in which government officials, the public, and researchers use government records and information. Archivists are at the forefront of developing solutions to address the concomitant challenges these changes bring. Archives invest in technological developments to preserve born-digital

materials and to increase access to digitized content. State archives are key to promoting best practices for managing, preserving, and providing access to electronic records of historic value. Increased investment is vital to the long-term stability of state-led electronic records management programs.

Serving as a resource for personal research and family history discovery. Records in the state archives reflect the lives of the wide range of people in every state and territory. Government connects with individual lives in many ways—censuses, taxes, court proceedings, education, and property ownership being only a few. As a result, state archives are an important resource for individuals seeking information about their families and communities for personal, medical, and legal reasons. State archives are where we can meet and connect with the people who inhabit our personal histories.

Helping prepare the next generation of responsible citizens. The State archives helps teachers meet state standards in social studies education and to engage students in the functions of democracy. Historical records can be used to strengthen students’ critical thinking skills, teach them to assess different viewpoints, and help them understand how social and cultural context can influence actions.

Protecting the state’s most essential records from natural and human-made disasters. Records are essential to restoring order after a disaster. The state archives provides training and guidance **before** a disaster happens to ensure essential records are secured; after a disaster, it provides support in recovering damaged records to ensure continuity of operations. It provides protection not only for “paper” records, but for the considerable extent of electronic information and records.

The {relevant state or territory} archives plays a critical role in preserving the state’s history and the rights of its citizens. Government records face unprecedented threats and opportunities, and an effectively functioning State archives is essential to the operation of government and to meeting the many needs of our state’s citizens this year and in the future.

The State archives needs your support to {bulleted list of specific asks for support relevant to the state situation}.

[for example:

- Restore funding for.....
- Promote legislation to....
- Protect existing resources that.....
- Contact the [governor, legislature, legislative committees, legislative members]