

# Council of State Archivists

## Developing and Maintaining a Strong State Archives

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State archives have an essential statutory role in each state and territory in the United States that is fundamental to the effective and transparent operation and management of government. State archival programs ensure preservation of records that document functions and actions of government; maintain public accountability and support transparency; protect and support the rights of the individuals; furnish public access to government records, and provide evidence of the past to support the work of government and the interests of its citizens.

State and territorial governments should provide adequate resources to enable state archives to meet the following minimal criteria to accomplish their central mission.

### **1. APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION, MANDATES AND POLICIES, INCLUDING:**

- Legislation that clearly defines state archives responsibilities and functions; provides a comprehensive, clear, impartial, definition of government records; provides guidance to public officials and governmental bodies in documenting their actions and programs; supports access to and transparency of government records; ensures necessary privacy restrictions; and, ensures proper physical care and custody of the records.
- Plans and policies that ensure effective implementation of legislative mandates and compliance with accepted national professional standards and best practices.

### **2. OPPORTUNITIES TO EMPLOY PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE IN THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ALL STATE GOVERNMENT RECORDS, INCLUDING:**

- Employing records systems that support the functions and activities of government, and provide accountability and appropriate retention and disposition to meet legal mandates. If the state or territorial archives is not co-located with the state records management function, an effective program that works closely and cooperatively with the archives is essential.
- Identifying archival records of all types, including electronic, early in their life cycle to ensure comprehensive, comprehensible, archival record preservation; and,
- Employing accepted professional archives and preservation practices for the archival records that are transferred to the custody of the state archives.

**3. APPROPRIATE FACILITIES AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING:**

- Records storage facilities that ensure ongoing preservation – including proper environmental controls, space for existing records, capacity to incorporate future records, and programs and services to preserve digital government records.
- Physical security to safeguard records from damage, theft, or natural disaster, and cyber security protection for electronic records;
- Space to support records, archives, and preservation functions, public use and programming; and
- Emergency planning and preparedness and continuity of operations plans completed and up to date, to prepare for damage, theft, natural or human disaster.

**4. SUFFICIENT HUMAN AND FISCAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE ARCHIVES MISSION, INCLUDING:**

- Leadership with sufficient legal and governance support to fulfill mandated functions;
- Staffing with relevant education/training/capacity to undertake records and archival functions in legal compliance, and in accordance with existing and emerging professional records and archival standards and best practices; and,
- A budget that ensures the mandates and mission of the state archives will be met effectively, in support of the needs of government and the interests of the people on whose behalf the government operates.