

## **SAA, CoSA, and NAGARA Joint Statement on NARA Location Closures**

*July 24, 2026*—The Council of State Archivists (CoSA), the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA), and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) today issue a joint statement expressing alarm over the closure of multiple National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facilities around the country.

Since late June, [multiple reports](#) have shared the limited information known about the National Archives and Records Administration’s plans to close locations and move archives from facilities across the United States. The facilities identified for closure include the [National Archives Regional Facility and the Federal Records Center \(FRC\) at Chicago](#), the [National Archives Regional Facility and the FRC at San Francisco/San Bruno](#), and the [Seattle FRC](#). The planned closures have caused concern in the archives and research communities. This concern stems from the lack of details and the limited amount of information available from NARA or other federal agencies.

Since 2011, when “[M-12-18: Presidential Memorandum--Managing Government Records](#)” was released by the Obama Administration, Federal agencies have been mandated to transition to an all-electronic system of records creation and management. This goal was reiterated by subsequent White Houses in [M-19-21](#) and [M-23-07](#). On December 31, 2024, NARA stopped accepting hard-copy transfers of records to the FRCs. As such, the need for large facilities to maintain scheduled records (non-permanent) has been reduced. Over time, as physical scheduled records are disposed of, the need for temporary storage for scheduled records will dwindle to zero. Additionally, NARA pays increasing costs each year in leases for these physical spaces. In light of NARA’s insufficient budget from Congress over the past three decades, NARA has been faced with countless resource-allocation tensions. It is in this context that we learn of NARA’s intent to shutter facilities.

Although closing NARA FRCs across the country may afford NARA necessary cost savings while maintaining an effective records management program for electronic scheduled federal records, the fact that the facilities in Chicago, San Bruno/San Francisco, and Seattle house both temporary scheduled records and permanent archives raises significant concerns about the future of the permanent archives stored in these facilities and their ongoing accessibility to the public. Per multiple NARA policies (36 CFR Parts [1232](#), [1234](#), [1235](#), and [1256](#)), the agency must maintain thoughtful and concrete plans for providing ongoing access to the permanent archives. NARA would be well-served to communicate that plan clearly to stakeholders and regularly update the public about the status.

Despite NARA's tremendous progress in digitizing analog records, veterans, government officials at all levels, students, historians, and the general public continue to rely on the physical materials only accessible at the National Archives Regional Archives facilities. NARA's Strategic Goal 1, "Make Access Happen" states "that 'public access' is NARA's core mission and is a higher calling that gives purpose and meaning to all our work." We trust that public access to archives will not be an afterthought as NARA implements these closures.

These documents cannot be removed to locations distant from where they are used by the communities who need them, thereby adding additional costs in travel and lodging for those seeking to use the archives. The people of the United States must have access to these archives at a level that is equal to or better than what is currently available—whether through physical access in a new facility located in close proximity to the current shared FRC/Regional Archives or through other means that maintain or enhance public accessibility. In cases where facilities are being reconstructed rather than permanently closed, such as the project for the Regional Archives facility at Seattle, it is essential that these efforts be carried through to completion. Although funding has been allocated for the research and development phase, construction funding has not yet been secured. Ensuring that these projects receive full funding to complete the construction is critical to protecting the long-term stewardship of the records, maintaining continuity of public access, and honoring the extensive consultation and collaborative planning that has already taken place with Tribal Nations, states, territories, archival staff, and other stakeholders. The plans for the archives held at the combined FRC/Regional Archives facilities in Chicago and San Francisco would benefit from a similar collaborative relationship, specifically one that includes Tribal communities who are in geographic proximity to the essential records documenting their nations held in these facilities.

At its core, NARA's decision to close these three facilities has been thrust upon the agency by the fact that [NARA remains woefully underfunded](#). As we enter the second quarter of the twenty-first century, costly technological demands and increasing expectations for access—in addition to the standard concerns of acquiring, preserving, and making available physical records—have placed new burdens on all archives. If we are to have a robust federal archives and records management infrastructure in the United States, we must provide the resources for it. The leadership of NARA must be steadfast in asserting their budget needs with policymakers, and our policymakers must be responsible to the people of the United States who expect the government to be excellent stewards of the essential evidence of our country, our democracy, and our societies.

SAA, CoSA, and NAGARA invite and urge other organizations in the space of cultural records to join us in the statement. We urge all our members to contact their policymakers and insist on additional funding for NARA to support the preservation of our country's history.