



Highlights of [GAO-04-927](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Since 2001, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has been working to develop the policies and plans to build the Electronic Records Archives (ERA), a major information system that is intended to preserve and provide access to massive volumes of all types and formats of electronic records. Senate Report 108-146 directed GAO to provide a progress report on NARA's development of the ERA system. Specifically, GAO's objective was to determine the agency's progress in implementing recommendations from previous assessments.

What GAO Recommends

To reduce the risks associated with NARA's efforts to acquire ERA, GAO recommends that the Archivist direct the ERA Program Director to design and implement a process to ensure that recommendations from contractor reviews are addressed and incorporated into program policies and plans. In commenting on a draft of this report, the Archivist of the United States generally agreed with the overall findings and recommendation, and provided an update on NARA's actions to implement the recommendations in this and prior GAO reports.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-927.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Linda D. Koontz at (202) 512-6240 or Koontzl@gao.gov.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Planning for the Electronic Records Archives Has Improved

What GAO Found

NARA has made progress towards addressing GAO's prior recommendations: four of the eight recommendations have been fully addressed, and NARA is making progress in addressing the three recommendations on staffing, enterprise architecture, and information security (see table).

NARA is making less progress in addressing the recommendation to revise acquisition policies and plans to meet relevant industry standards. None of the eight key acquisition policies and plans fully complies with the standards selected by the agency. A contributing cause has been that although contractor staff assessed these policies and plans against standards, NARA had not established a process to ensure that the identified weaknesses were addressed and incorporated into subsequent versions. Making program policies and plans compliant before contract award is important to ensure that the agency has the information it needs to manage the acquisition and that the contractors have sufficient information on which to base the design of the system.

Summary Status of NARA's Progress in Addressing GAO Recommendations

Prior recommendation	Status	Progress
1. Work breakdown structure	Addressed	Completed a comprehensive work breakdown structure.
2. Dependency among predecessor and successor tasks	Addressed	Defined dependencies among predecessor and successor tasks.
3. Use of earned value management	Addressed	Implemented earned value management for the program.
4. IT investment management	Addressed	Implemented an IT investment management process.
5. Acquisition program policies and plans	Not addressed	None of the policies and plans were fully IEEE compliant.
6. Staffing	Partially addressed	Hired 25 of 27 positions; however, two key positions—security officer and quality assurance specialist—remain unfilled.
7. Enterprise architecture	Partially addressed	While the enterprise architecture has been strengthened, several elements are incomplete, including the target architecture.
8. Information security	Partially addressed	While improved, weaknesses remain in information security.

Source: GAO, based on NARA data.