



March 15, 2017

The Honorable Eric J. Holcomb
Governor
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204-2797

Dear Governor Holcomb:

On behalf of the Society of American Archivists (SAA), I write to express our concern about the current funding and facility issues being faced by the Indiana Archives and Records Administration (IARA). SAA is the oldest and largest professional association of archivists in North America. We represent more than 6,200 archivists in all areas of archival endeavor, including state government.

In 2001, collections held by the IARA—including Indiana’s most valuable and historical records—were moved into an industrial-style warehouse as a temporary facilities solution. Sixteen years later, the records remain in this location, where they are subject to ever-increasing dangers from water damage, lack of climate control, and space constraints. Since the beginning of this year alone, there have been five leaks in the current warehouse building, including in the roof of a vault holding vitally important records. Despite imminent peril, attempts to fund a new archives building have failed to this point.

Government archivists and archives hold a public trust to provide access to records created by elected and appointed officials and the agencies they lead. All citizens depend on public records to guarantee their rights and entitlements, hold their governments accountable, and reflect an accurate history of our country.

Without the proper facilities to care for the records in its custody, the IARA is hampered in carrying out its vital mission on behalf of the people of Indiana. Failure to alleviate these concerns sends a powerful message that implementation of recordkeeping standards and preservation of the important evidence of state government activities are not priorities in Indiana.

Appended is a copy of the Council of State Archivists statement, "Developing and Maintaining a Strong State Archives," which SAA endorses. The statement identifies minimal criteria that states should adopt to accomplish their records management mission. Among these are "Appropriate Facilities and Facilities Management" and "Sufficient Human and Fiscal Resources to Support the Archives Mission."

We urge you to address the current funding and facility issues of the IARA as a central priority of your administration. Time is of the essence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Y. McGovern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" being the most prominent.

Nancy Y. McGovern
President, 2016-2017

cc: Honorable Brian C. Bosma, Speaker of the House
Honorable Timothy Brown, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
Honorable David Long, President Pro Tempore, Indiana State Senate
Honorable Luke Kenley, Indiana State Senate
Jim Corridan, Director and State Archivist, Indiana Archives and Records
Administration
Nancy Beaumont, SAA Executive Director

Council of State Archivists

Developing and Maintaining a Strong State Archives

Developed by the CoSA Advocacy Committee: July 29, 2016;

approved by the CoSA Board of Directors August 3, 2016

Endorsed by the Society of American Archivists and the Regional Archival Associations Consortium

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.