Guidelines for Preserving the Permanent Public Records of the Governors of Maryland

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The goal of any administration should be to fully document and make available for research and reflection the public policies and services of the administration, in whatever form they are recorded This includes capturing the essence of all administration web sites, constituent outreach, and the process by which polices and services are developed and implemented. This record should be permanent and available for consultation at the Maryland State Archives.

The Mandel Commission recommended that the Records Management function in State Government be transferred to the State Archives, but that has not happened, leaving the legal responsibility for developing Records Retention and Disposal Schedules shared between the Department of General Services and the Maryland State Archives. Because of the lack of a fully implemented records management program for the Executive Department, it is understood that further appraisal of what is transferred to the Archives under the following guidelines may be necessary and that some disposal of non-permanent records included in the transfer may occur at some future date.

1) Orderly transfer of permanent administrative and policy related records from the Executive and Executive Departments to the Maryland State Archives

a) The key to maintaining the historical record of State Government will be the careful assessment and retirement of key files that document the policies, projects and public services of each Department/Agency/office in State Government. Generally, retention schedules should guide what should be saved, but not all offices have established schedules (copies of those that have been developed are available from the State Archives or the Department of General Services), but, overall, the rule is that whomever is responsible for office administration throughout State Government uses his or her best judgment to ensure that the accomplishments are documented as to process and procedures for implementation of policy and the management of programs/projects/services (including fully documented copies of web sites). The guiding rule is: when in doubt, save. Paper files no longer needed for administrative and policy development or implementation should be inventoried and boxed for transfer to the Archives.   The Archives provides on line instructions for inventorying traditionally on paper as well as electronically at the Archives web site (see the attached screen dump that includes the appropriate URL). Agencies will be responsible for reimbursing or paying for transport to the Archives warehouse.

b) Most government business today is conducted electronically. Yet, few records disposition schedules are in place to adequately govern the management and transfer of electronic records. We have worked hard and, to a great degree, successfully to provide a viable electronic archives over the past four years. Focused on a fee-paid program, it brings all land records on line. Moreover, through Network Maryland, we have the capacity and network infrastructure in place to accept and store the historical record of State Government as it exists electronically by adding incrementally the necessary storage capacity. We can do this as long as the electronic management systems (such as the bill drafting, correspondence tracking, and locally retained electronic versions of files) are accompanied by working copies and documentation of any software used that is not generically available (such as Word or Wordperfect). Any information management systems used for Cabinet-level decisions, particularly important policy development and implementation, for example, need to be well documented and transferred in functioning order to the Archives. Probably, the most difficult question is what to do with e-mail, assuming that provisions have been made over the four years for its periodic retention in some backup/storage way. The general rule is: all e-mail relating in any way to the operation of government should be saved and transferred to archival storage, but in a manner that results in ease of retrieval. Given the lack of a clear path of transfer of permanent electronic records to the Archives on a routine basis, universally accepted tape backups with accompanying retrieval software and manuals will suffice

until replaced by a more efficient, less expensive method. Assuming that all computers used by executive personnel are networked, it would be prudent to back up all such computers on to tape or hard drive via the network and retire copies of the tapes and/or hard drives to the archives using the electronic inventory system to document contents by tape or hard drive.

Note: we have an on-line inventory program that would be a simple way to inventory files to be transferred to the Archives which will be available next week via Network Maryland's access to the internet.

2) Documenting the Administration's Accomplishments

a) All management personnel in the Administration (department/agency heads and deputies--in short, anyone directly involved in the management of government and government services over the past four years) should note in summary, written form, what they see as the accomplishments and unfinished business in their respective areas of responsibility.   The summary need not be an exhaustive list, but rather one that focuses on what government has done, or tried to do, over the past four years. For example, the current Chief of Staff, should be sure to note his efforts (now on track) to comprehensively re-think the visitor experience at the State House. These reflections should be put together in a legacy report for deposit not only at the Archives, but on line, accompanying a comprehensive "slice in time" of the web presence of the Administration.

b) All agency web sites should be "harvested" each year onto hard drives or tapes (with accompanying software and manuals) and delivered to the Archives. What this means is that all state agencies with a web presence should capture and retire everything available on their sites to storage at the Archives where they would be available as a permanent electronic archives. To a degree we have done this with the periodic retirement of the Maryland Manual On-Line files, but this has not included an in-depth recording of what is available on every government web site, only the administrative framework.

3) The Governor's Memoirs

The Governor should be encouraged to collaborate with someone to begin the process of writing his 'memoirs' of his public service now, and not wait for a day that rarely comes.   Governor Hughes, for example, called upon a talented writer/editor to assist him, as did Governors Tawes and Agnew for their public papers, but much of what could be learned from the experiences of other governors has been

either lost or buried in their surviving papers without their personal input and reflection. Preserving the web presence of a Governor's administration permanently, for example, would make the task easier and preserve more effectively the memory of the past four years, but the Governor's voice can only continue to be heard fully if he records his own reflections and thoughts for posterity.

4) Public Papers of all administrations

As part of the legacy of any administration, the *Public Papers* should have a search able web presence in the *Archives of Maryland On-Line* series. The *Public Papers* would include audios of radio programs, videos, text of speeches, and the collected position and policy papers of the administration.   I would recommend an appropriation to the Archives for this purpose. The proposed budget would be the equivalent of the *Maryland Manual* budget every year (ca. $80,000) , and would cover the hiring of a professional editor/compiler (most likely connected with a Maryland academic institution), and the creation and maintenance of a web-based presence as a dynamic volume in the *Archives of Maryland On-Line* series. Note that this idea was begun in print under the Tawes administration and stopped with the Agnew administration (see the volumes which have been given to the Chief of Staff). In electronic form, it should be revived as a permanent activity of every administration, through the auspices of the Archives, initiated by academic professionals at the conclusion of every administration. or better yet, during the course of an administration. Over time the project would also be retrospective and encompass all previous administrations. Such an undertaking could be a private/public partnership with private funds being raised through the non-profit Friends of the Maryland State Archives, a title 501c3 tax exempt organization.

The Archives' Rules and Regulations, including regulations for electronic records, are posted on our web site at http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/intromsa/html/regs.html. Instructions and forms for records transfers are also posted on our web site at http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/stagser/s1259/162/html/0000web.html. Our staff would also be happy to provide a packet of instructions and forms for records transfers to offices who request it.