



ARKANSAS State Archives

2016-2026 Strategic Plan

The Arkansas State Archives is a division of



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS

HERITAGE



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Introduction

The Arkansas General Assembly established the official state archives on April 27, 1905, as the Arkansas History Commission. At the time, the History Commission was one of just a few official state archives. The Alabama Department of Archives and History was established in 1901; and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1902. In 1905, the state's General Assembly overturned Governor Jeff Davis' veto in order to create the agency. John Hugh Reynolds, who served as the first secretary to the Commission, hailed the bill's passage as "public recognition by the State of its duty to its history and its public records."

Throughout its long history, the Arkansas History Commission has been dedicated to organizing and maintaining the state and local history of Arkansas by collecting manuscript materials, artifacts, books, land records, census records, military records, family histories, and various county, state and federal records. The agency serves thousands of patrons in three research facilities and online each year.

In 1971, the AHC came under the administrative umbrella of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism (ADPT), a relationship that lasted for 45 years. Since 1979, the AHC has also been housed, along with ADPT, at the One Capitol Mall Building adjacent to the State Capitol. In fall 2015, the Friends of the Arkansas History Commission formed as an advocacy and fundraising group for the agency.¹

During the Third Extraordinary Session of the 90th Assembly in April 2016, the legislature passed Act 3, the purpose of which was to "promote efficiency and effectiveness in the operations of state government." One of the measures passed in Act 3 was the renaming of the Arkansas History Commission as the Arkansas State Archives, and the administrative Type 2 transfer of the agency from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to the Department of Arkansas Heritage (DAH).²

Prior to its transfer to DAH, the agency was governed by a seven-member board, appointed by the Governor with the approval of the State Senate. Commissioners served seven-year terms. The first administrator of the agency was John Hugh Reynolds, who held the title of secretary to the Commission, and who guided the early development of the archives from 1905-1911. Since 1911, the agency has had five directors who report to the Commission: Dallas T. Herndon, Ted

¹ The Friends of the Arkansas History Commission's executive board voted to change the organization's name to the Friends of the Arkansas State Archives effective July 1, 2016.

² The full text of Act 3 can be viewed at <http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2015/2016S3/Acts/Act3.pdf>.

Worley, Dr. John L. Ferguson, Dr. Wendy Richter, and Dr. Lisa K. Speer. Under their leadership, the AHC has developed the largest collection of research materials pertaining to Arkansas history, life, and culture in existence; and continues to improve and expand services and resources in order to most effectively serve researchers' needs.

Agency Mission

Under the Department of Arkansas Heritage, the State Archives' mission remains the same as it was in 1905 - to keep and care for the official archives of the State of Arkansas; collect material bearing on the history of Arkansas from the earliest times; copy and edit official records and other historical material; and encourage historical work and research by the public. While the tools and methods now encompass digitizing records for online and remote accessibility, utilizing the latest preservation methods, and creating events and secondary resources to educate and inform the public, the agency remains committed to Reynolds' vision. Preserving and collecting our state's historical documents and public records are at the forefront of the State Archives goals as the agency enters a second century of service.

Regional Locations

The State Archives maintains two regional archives, both located in Arkansas state parks.



The **Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA)** is located in Powhatan Historic State Park. Arkansas State Parks provided funding for the design and construction of the facility, which opened in March 2011. NEARA's mission is to collect, preserve, and make available those source materials pertaining to the history of northeast Arkansas and its people. NEARA serves a sixteen-county region in northeast Arkansas,

which includes: Baxter, Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Fulton, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, Sharp and Stone counties.

NEARA offers a variety of research resources related to northeast Arkansas. Holdings include traditional archival material such as letters, diaries, maps, photographs, newspapers, and broadsides. Books, periodicals, and other print resources create a general Arkansas history reference library. The core of NEARA's initial holdings included approximately 500 cubic feet of

Lawrence County government records, donated by the Lawrence County Historical Society. These county records are among Arkansas's earliest documentary resources. Records from numerous counties in the region are also available on microfilm for researcher access.

The mission of the **Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives (SARA)** is to collect and preserve primary and secondary source materials pertaining to the history of southwest Arkansas and its people, and to serve as a resource center for historical research focusing on the unique history, culture, and heritage



of the area. SARA, which was founded in 1978 as a project of the Hempstead County Historical Society, with assistance from the Arkansas History Commission, Historic Washington State Park, and the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation, is located within Historic Washington State Park. The Arkansas History Commission acquired SARA in 2005. The SARA Foundation, a friends group, provides volunteer planning and monetary support to SARA throughout the fiscal year.

SARA offers a variety of research resources related to a 12-county region in southwest Arkansas that includes the counties of Columbia, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Polk, Sevier, and Union. As one of Arkansas's earliest counties, Hempstead County was established in 1818, prior to the creation of the Arkansas Territory (1819). The county encompassed all of southwest Arkansas, including parts of present-day northeast Texas until a boundary dispute was settled upon after Arkansas reached statehood status in 1836. Hempstead County was eventually subdivided into the twelve counties now served through SARA.

Agency Fiscal Information

As Professor Michael Dougan notes in his work *Arkansas Odyssey*, the Arkansas History Commission struggled with insufficient funding throughout much of its existence. Dougan notes that the average annual expenditure by the state on the agency between 1936 and 1942 was \$6,605, compared to the Barbers Examining Board, which received more than \$10,000 in state funding.³ In the fifteen years from 2005-2015, the agency's total appropriation increased by only a little over \$550,000. The most significant increase came in 2009-2010 when two

³ Michael Dougan, *American Odyssey: The Saga of Arkansas from Prehistoric Times to the Present*. (Little Rock, AR: Rose Publishing Company, Inc., Publishers, 1994), 551.

additional staff members were added to manage the newly opened NEARA research facility at Powhatan. In this same fifteen year period, 2009-2010 is the only time the agency's small staff has experienced any growth, increasing from 23 full-time employees to 26. The Black History Commission of Arkansas's appropriation actually declined during the fifteen year period under consideration, from \$11,500 in 2005-2006 and dropping to \$10,180 in 2007-2008 where it remained until 2014-2014 when Representative Frederick Love secured \$50,000 in general revenue funding for the Curtis H. Sykes Memorial Grant Program, administered by the BHCA.

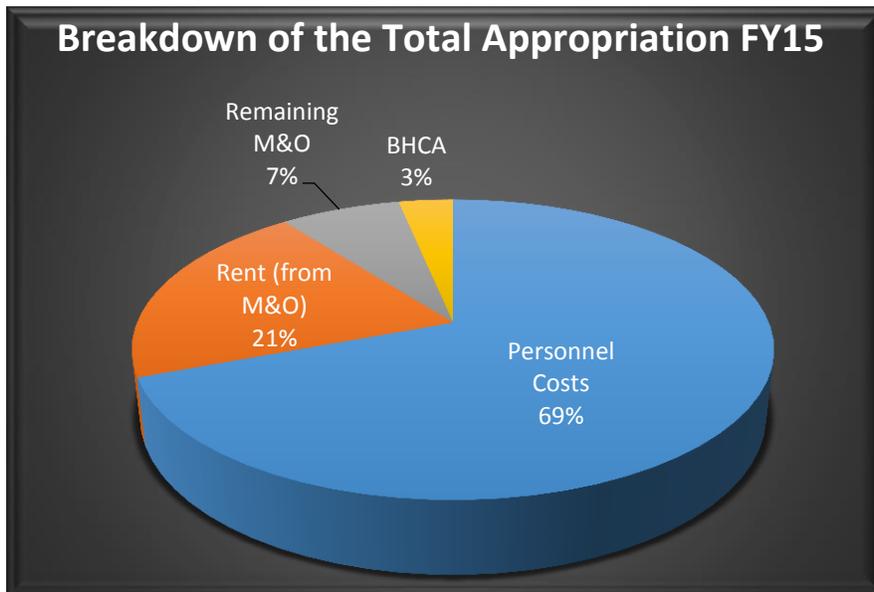
Figure 1 on the following page represents, in real dollars, the total appropriation between 2005-2015. This amount devoted to salaries, the amount remaining for maintenance and operations (M&O), how much of that M&O goes towards rent paid to the Arkansas Building Authority (ABA), the appropriation for the Black History Commission of Arkansas, which is also a part of total M&O, and the number of full-time positions at the agency (all three facilities). The pie chart represented in Figure 2, also on the following page, illustrates the breakdown for the 2014-2015 appropriation by percentage, with the two largest percentages allocated for salaries and rent. By request, the Arkansas Building Authority reviewed the agency's lease and space at One Capitol Mall in spring 2015. As a result, the agency's lease was rewritten and amount of rent paid to ABA reduced by just over \$52,649, making funds now available for mission-critical operations.

Unfortunately, the long-term stagnation of the agency's budget has created a situation that makes it impossible for the agency to fully function as a state archives should with responsibilities for preservation of state records and the ability to assist local government agencies with records preservation.

Figure 1. Agency Revenue, Expenditures and Personnel, 2005-2016

	Total Appropriation	Personnel Costs	M&O	Rent (from M&O)	BHCA	No. Positions
2015-2016 ⁴	1,968,534	1,357,248	547,356	\$321,562	63,930	26
2014-2015	1,842,330	1,275,644	506,506	\$374,211	60,180	26
2013-2014	1,791,599	1,274,913	506,506	\$374,211	10,180	26
2012-2013	1,747,038	1,280,352	456,506	\$374,211	10,180	26
2011-2012	1,722,299	1,255,613	456,506	\$374,211	10,180	26
2010-2011	1,669,102	1,234,416	424,506	\$342,457	10,180	26
2009-2010	1,600,705	1,136,019	444,506	\$342,457	10,180	26
2008-2009	1,496,480	1,071,794	414,506	\$342,457	10,180	23
2007-2008	1,477,652	1,052,966	414,506	\$341,911	10,180	23
2006-2007	1,444,124	1,004,887	427,737	\$340,272	11,500	23
2005-2006	1,418,295	979,058	427,737	\$340,272	11,500	23

Figure 2. Breakdown of FY15 Appropriation

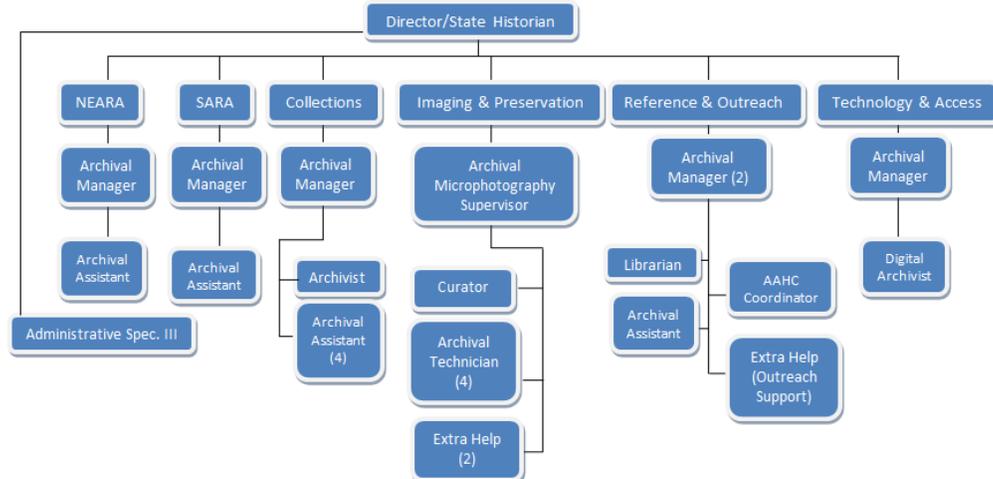


⁴ Despite chronic underfunding, the agency saw slight improvements between the FY15 and FY16 appropriations. The total FY16 appropriation increased by \$126,204, with increases for technology, facility needs, and for public programming for the BHCA and State Archives.

Organizational Structure

There are four major sections within the organizational structure of the Arkansas State Archives: Collections, Imaging and Preservation, Reference and Outreach, and Technology and Access. Each is led by an archival manager who ensures the agency goals are communicated to all staff housed at the Little Rock facility and the two regional archives. NEARA's and SARA's archival managers work closely with the section managers to coordinate services and collection access. Most of the agency's projects and goals require teamwork from each of these major divisions to implement new strategies and initiatives statewide. Due to the small size of the staff, collaboration and cross-training among personnel from all areas is vital to the success of the agency.

Figure 3. Agency Organizational Chart, 2016



At the core of the State Archives is the **Collections** section, which is responsible for acquisition, inventory, processing and cataloging of all holdings. Since 1905, collecting Arkansas's historical materials has been the main objective of the agency.

Preserving and making newspapers, official state records, documents and other loaned materials accessible to the public through microfilm copies is the main goal of the **Imaging and Preservation** section. This section is also responsible for the care and preservation of the agency's large artifact collection and exhibit development.

If one has attended a State Archives' workshop, taken advantage of the agency's many reference and research services available onsite and online, or received a grant from the Black History Commission of Arkansas, then one has experienced the public face of the archives – the **Reference and Outreach** section. Keeping events fresh and interesting, improving the research room procedures, creating primary source lesson plans for teachers, writing grant applications

and developing new ways for the public to enjoy, learn and use the agency’s collections are part of the diverse responsibilities of this section.

The **Technology and Access** section provides for the expanding online information needs of the agency. Administering the agency’s new online digital archives, the [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](#), overseeing the creation of a redesigned [website](#), and managing an increasingly robust social media presence, are responsibilities of this section.

Purpose of this Plan

Underlying most of the goals in this strategic plan is the need to improve funding and staffing for the Arkansas State Archives. In FY16, the AHC received a little over \$1.9 million dollars from the Arkansas General Assembly. The majority of this funding goes towards personnel expenses and rent on the agency’s space at One Capitol Mall, which leaves only about \$225,000 for maintenance and operational needs of its three facilities for the entire fiscal year. The State Archives is almost entirely funded out of general revenue, except for a small revenue stream that the agency produces from fees (copying services) and external grant funds that vary annually. All of the goals included in this plan will require improvements in the agency’s fiscal situation.

While nationally, state archives funding as a whole has decreased by 4.5% since FY14, most other state archives in the southeastern United States are still funded at much healthier levels than the Arkansas State Archives.

Figure 4. Southeastern U.S. State Archives Budgets and Appropriations⁵

State	Total Budget ⁶	Appropriation
Alabama	\$6,340,051	\$6,083,922
Arkansas	\$2,219,070	\$1,968,534
Florida	\$2,354,689	\$615,646
Georgia	\$4,743,809	\$4,151,428
Kentucky	\$5,133,192	\$2,076,995
Louisiana	Not available	Not available
Mississippi	\$4,099,988	\$3,762,067
Missouri	\$2,514,766	\$1,677,726
Tennessee	\$3,465,808	\$3,270,261
Texas	\$4,674,196	\$2,624,408

⁵ Council of State Archivists, *The State of State Records, 2015 ed.* (Albany, NY: Council of State Archivists), 2015, 2-5.

⁶ The total budget number may include fees collected by the agency (e.g., issuing copies of birth/death certificates), and monies from trust funds and grants.

In similarly populated states, Arkansas’s funding situation by comparison varies considerably, with Arkansas’s appropriation lagging behind Utah, Mississippi and New Mexico, but far exceeding the appropriation for Kansas.

Figure 5. State Archives Budgets and Appropriations by State Population

State	Population ⁷	Total Budget	Appropriation
Utah	2,995,919	\$2,489,326	\$2,550,684
Mississippi	2,992,333	\$4,099,988	\$3,762,067
Arkansas	2,978,204	\$2,219,070	\$1,968,534
Kansas	2,911,641	\$500,000	\$200,000
Nevada	2,890,845	\$1,235,006	\$1,102,875
New Mexico	2,085,109	\$2,907,700	\$2,739,300

In general, many of the state archives in the groups used for purposes of comparison also have more robust levels of staffing; although nationally staffing levels for archives have declined by 18% in the last year. The 26 full-time employees at the Arkansas State Archives are also distributed throughout three statewide facilities, unlike many of the other state archives represented here which operate only one location within their host state.

Figure 6. Comparative State Archives Staffing Levels⁸

State	Total Number of Staff
Alabama	46
Arkansas	26
Florida	40
Georgia	17.5
Kansas	5.25
Kentucky	40
Louisiana	30
Mississippi	45
Missouri	58.75 ⁹
Nevada	12.5
New Mexico	35
Tennessee	43
Texas	64
Utah	27

⁷ Estimated population as of July 1, 2015.

⁸ *The State of State Records, 2015 ed.*, 15-17.

⁹ The Missouri State Archives supports a staff that is almost twice as large as the Arkansas History Commission on a \$1.6 million appropriation. However, the MSA operating costs do not include facility rental or costs for technology. Of the 58.75 staff at the MSA, the largest number is devoted to state records (24). An almost equal number of staff is split between archives and local government records functions.

Only three other sampled states have lower staffing levels than Arkansas – Kansas, Nevada, and Georgia. In Georgia, the state archives’ funding was slashed so significantly in 2012 that it was closed to the public for a time, and eventually the function of state archives transferred to the University of Georgia Library systems.¹⁰

This plan identifies seven major goals to be achieved between 2016 and 2026, and outlines numerous objectives associated with meeting each goal. These goals were identified through a joint planning process of the Arkansas History Commission and the Black History Commission of Arkansas, and moderated by the agency Director. The archives’ staff has reviewed and provided input into these goals and associated objectives. In order of priority, the major goals identified in this plan as goals for the agency within the next ten years are:

- Strengthening the role of the State Archives in preserving state records
- Providing increased support for the preservation of local government records
- Providing appropriate levels of staffing for the agency’s three facilities
- Addressing facility needs
- Strengthening the agency’s technology infrastructure and growing digital initiatives
- Improving and promoting public access to the collection and expanding agency holdings
- Cultivating additional outreach opportunities

As noted earlier in this plan, key to accomplishing many of these objectives and, ultimately, all seven of these goals, will be improvements in the agency’s funding level and increases in staffing.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Strengthen Role of State Archives in Preserving State Records

Despite its role as the official state archives for Arkansas, the History Commission currently cannot adequately fulfill its obligation to act as a repository of government records. Insufficient funding and manpower, lack of space at One Capitol Mall for a full-fledged records program, and lukewarm support for a broad public records law in Arkansas are all factors that have created a state records retention program that overlooks the important aspect of historic preservation. Current records retention legislation (Act 918 of 2005) makes no mention of the role of the State Archives, and expressly notes that “there is no general requirement for agencies to preserve public records.”¹¹

The vagueness of the law and the generality of the records retention guidelines published by the Department of Finance and Administration do not provide adequate guidance for state

¹⁰ Kim Severson, “Budget Cuts Hobble State Archives in Georgia,” *The New York Times*, 26 September 2012, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/us/budget-cuts-to-limit-public-access-to-georgia-archives.html? r=0>.

¹¹ “AN ACT CONCERNING THE RETENTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS BY STATE AGENCIES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,” Act 918 of 2005, State of Arkansas, 85th General Assembly, <http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/intergovernmentalServices/Documents/act918.pdf>.

entities attempting to make judicious decisions regarding the disposition of records, particularly those having historical value.¹² Prior to Act 918, Arkansas had a much stronger public records law. Act 905 of 1995, “An Act to Establish a State Records Management and Archives Program for the State of Arkansas,” created the framework for a records preservation program.¹³ The Act unequivocally established the role of the State Archives, created a State Records Commission to oversee the program, created an Office of Records Management, and coordinated its role with the State Archives, outlined the disposition process, and provided a process for the recovery (i.e., replevin) of records unlawfully removed from the possession of the state. Also significant, the Act provided a penalty for non-compliance. Unfortunately for the state of Arkansas, the History Commission never received adequate fiscal support for the program, and the Act was repealed during the 83rd session of the General Assembly in 2001. Since that time, it is highly likely that innumerable state records have been lost. Archives’ staff has recovered state records from dumpsters, and is aware of state records being donated to university and city libraries. Because of the repeal of Act 905 of 1995, no process exists for the recovery of these records now no longer owned by the state of Arkansas.

Currently, the State Archives works with only a select number of agencies (about 13%) on the preservation of their records. Most state agencies manage record-keeping in-house; and a wide range of conditions exist. Some agencies, like the Game and Fish Commission have extensive and well-ordered archives, while other entities have discovered upon administrative changes that no historical records were saved.

On February 17, 2016, Governor Asa Hutchinson issued a memorandum to state agencies, offices and departments requiring them to work with the State Archives in transferring records that may have legal, administrative or historical value and not currently in use in the state archives. In this memorandum, Governor Hutchinson recognized that the State Archives’ inability to work comprehensively with state agencies, a situation deemed “not satisfactory,” was caused by a “persistent lack of manpower, space and resources.”

As a result of Governor Hutchinson’s memorandum, the agency has scheduled a number of state records preservation workshops for 2016. The goals for the workshops are: assisting state agencies with the identification of records having long-term legal, administrative, and historical value; providing information on caring for records still in use in state offices; providing information on managing electronic records; and explaining the process for transferring records to the State Archives. At present, the agency continues to work within the same historical budgetary constraints that have plagued the agency since its creation.

¹² Richard J. Peltz, “Arkansas’s Public Records Retention Program: Records Retention as a Cornerstone of Citizenship and Self-Government,” *UALR Law Review*, 28 (2006): 175-249.

¹³ “AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STATE RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES PROGRAM FOR THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,” Act 905 of 1995, State of Arkansas, 80th General Assembly, <ftp://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/acts/1995/Public/905.pdf>.

Specific objectives to be accomplished for the purposes of protecting and preserving the historical records of Arkansas's state government entities include:

- Conduct a records assessment of state agencies¹⁴
- Assess agency storage requirements and options for records management
- Hold informational workshops for state agencies on preserving historical records
- Establish official agency liaisons to State Archives
- Pursue re-establishment of working group to review records disposition and preservation issues
- Pursue (re)adoption of state records management and archives act
- Revise internal records transfer process
- Create and acquire funding for at least one (1) FTE records manager
- Create and acquire funding for at least one (1) additional FTE Archival Technician for filming and/or digitization of state records¹⁵

Goal 2: Provide Support for Preservation of Local Government Records

In 1984, the Arkansas History Commission published the results of a “Historical Records Assessment and Reporting Project,” funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The report included findings on state, county and municipal records, and historical manuscript collections held in repositories across Arkansas. Regarding local government records, the findings were somewhat discouraging. The report indicated a wide disparity in the storage conditions in which county and municipal records were held across Arkansas, and noted examples where county records had been compromised or destroyed by courthouse fires and natural disasters. The report cited the History Commission’s inability to provide adequate support to the counties due to insufficient levels of funding for a Local Government Records program. The report, endorsed by the Arkansas State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB), called for a legislatively mandated standard for any copying of state records, for which counties would need to seek approval from the State Historian.

The report, now over 30 years old, ends with this insightful prediction: “Most clerks are unprepared for the changes that come with word and data processing and have had difficulty dealing with the variations in record format. There are questions about the maintenance and storage of original and security disks and tapes of the printouts which are produced.”¹⁶ Today, those maintenance and storage concerns surround digitization projects of local government

¹⁴ “Agency” means the Arkansas Supreme Court, Arkansas Court of Appeals, and any state office, department, bureau, division, board, or commission, excepting institutions of higher education, created for the purpose of performing one (1) or more functions of state government.

¹⁵ This position may also be used to support Strategic Objective 5, which involves providing additional support for the preservation of local government records.

¹⁶ Jo Luck Wilson and John L. Ferguson, *The Historical Records of Arkansas*. ([Little Rock, AR:] Arkansas History Commission, 1984), 38.

records. Digitization presents great opportunities to simplify access to local government records; but planning and oversight is necessary to ensure that these projects adhere to professional best practices for the creation and long-term storage of digital data.

Recent articles in the *Banner News* (Columbia County) reported on a scanning project at the county courthouse that, once completed, would result in the destruction of “thousands of old hard copies.”¹⁷ It is not clear if counties have a long-term storage and maintenance plan for the large amount of digital data the scanning projects will produce. If not, destruction of the paper originals ultimately will have the same result as a courthouse fire or natural disaster.

Specific objectives to be accomplished for the purpose of protecting long-term access to Arkansas’s history at the county and municipal level are:

- Establish working relationships with the Association of Arkansas Counties and affiliate groups
- Explore and pursue funding for updated, multi-phase state-wide assessment and inventory of local government records
- Explore and pursue funding for informational and records preservation workshops for local government officials
- Pursue options for expanding copying and storage capability of local government records at the State Archives and regional facilities.

Goal 3: Provide Appropriate Staffing

The agency has 26 full-time employees (FTE) at three locations, with each regional archives staffed by only two -- an Archival Manager and an Archival Assistant. Most of the agency’s staff fall into four categories: Archival Manager, Archivist, Archival Assistant, and Archival Technician. Several staff members hold unique titles: State Historian (Director), Curator, and African American History Program Coordinator. Twenty-six (26) people spread over three locations is inadequate to perform all the work of a state archives, particularly with three locations. Of the 14 other archives included in Figure 6 (“Comparative State Archives Staffing Levels”), the average number of staff is 35 – nine more positions than the State Archives currently retains *for three facilities* around the state.

¹⁷ “Scanning Documents County eyes project that will digitize old records,” and “County to apply for grant in scanning project,” *Banner News* [Columbia County], 9 September 2015, 1. These articles report on the county clerk’s application for grant funds from the Association of Arkansas Counties to digitize “deteriorating records.” The articles indicate that digitization would be outsourced. Arkansas Code 13-4-204 and 13-4-301 requires the permanent retention of handwritten records over fifty (50) years old. Records not handwritten, but more than 50 years old, may be destroyed, unless determined to be of historical significance by the History Commission. Before destruction, Arkansas Code requires that counties provide written notice to the History Commission, with a description of the scope and contents of the records, at least sixty (60) days prior to destruction.

For the FY15 budget, the agency received Executive Approval (with no additional appropriation) for two new positions. However, during the legislative session, these positions were taken out of the budget, leaving the agency without even an option to seek grant funds to fill the positions. Since that time, the agency has received a surfeit of grant funds – including funding for personnel -- from multiple agencies that exceed what can be expended by existing positions. Having additional positions in the budget, even without general revenue funds earmarked for them, would have provided a much-needed avenue to increase manpower.

Chronic understaffing at the AHC leads to many problems. Existing staff are balancing too many competing priorities, making it difficult to complete projects in a timely fashion. The perpetual need to multi-task is also physically and mentally challenging for staff. Without hope that the current situation may be remedied by increases in our staff size and parity in the workload, a decline in morale and staff turnover inevitably will result.

In order to address the insufficiency of the current staff size, as well as to support new or expanded initiatives in this plan, this plan supports the addition of the following positions:

- *Deputy Director*: Currently, the State Historian acts as agency Director. Nearly 100% of the State Historian's time is spent on administrative tasks, leaving little or no time for scholarship. If scholarship is an integral part of the State Historian position, a Deputy Director position is necessary to share some of the administrative responsibilities. Rather than asking for a new position, the agency may have more success with reclassifying and upgrading an existing, vacated position.
- *Four (4) Archivist positions*: Two (2) assigned to support the intake and processing of state records and historical manuscripts in Little Rock; and one (1) assigned to each regional archives. This would represent one (1) processing Archivist to compensate for the position converted to a Digital Archivist position.
- *One (1) State Records Manager position and one (1) Electronic Records Manager*
- *At least one (1) Information Technology position* in the AHC or larger administrative agency devoted primarily to the History Commission's unique document storage, access and preservation requirements
- *One (1) Archival Technician position* to support the increased filming and digitization workload involved with preserving state and local government records.
- *Five (5) additional Extra Help positions*: Currently, the agency has 3 allocated extra-help positions. In the FY16, the agency received several external grants involving funds for personnel. Because extra help are limited to working 1800 hours in any fiscal year, the archives had to turn down a little over \$43,000 in grant funds for digitization labor because we lacked an adequate number of extra help positions. Adding five (5) Extra Help positions to our budget would not require an increase in our appropriation; but would give the agency the ability to pursue and apply external grant funds on a greater scale, and thus accomplish more of the goals in the plan at no direct cost to the State of Arkansas.

- *One (1) Grants Specialist:* position would provide necessary means for the agency to pursue and manage additional grant applications/projects that would serve to help secure additional funds needed to advance the goals set forth in this document. At present, others undertake these responsibilities in the agency, in addition to existing responsibilities, which limits the types and numbers of grants the agency can effectively request, implement, and administer.

Providing appropriate staffing also involves enabling the existing staff to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities, and providing incentives for continued outstanding performance and to combat potential staff turnover. To this end, the following objectives will be priorities:

- Provide funding for staff to participate in job-appropriate professional development opportunities, when possible
- Explore ways to address pay rate inequities at various levels of staffing
- Review positions for upgrades and classifications
- Use Annual Performance Evaluations (PEs) to set yearly goals and mark progress in achieving those goals for all agency staff

Goal 4: Address Facility Needs

One Capitol Mall

The State Archives has been located at One Capitol Mall in Little Rock since its opening in 1979. This facility was specifically constructed to house the state archives and the state library. Over the years, both agencies have lost space to other government functions, with the State Library eventually forced to relocate to a renovated location on West Capitol Avenue. The archives occupies 37,989 square feet of rentable space at One Capitol Mall, at the cost of \$321,562 annually. Presently, there do not appear to be options for acquiring more space within the current location. It is possible, however, that existing spaces could be used more efficiently. A space utilization study could be beneficial to the agency if it is to remain at One Capitol Mall for any length of time.

Collections storage space could also be used more efficiently with the installation of compact shelving in vaults with load-bearing floors. The agency's current, total collection size is 48,402 cubic feet (8,607 square feet). At the growth rate of 440 cubic feet per year, it is anticipated that the collection will grow an additional 8,800 cubic feet over the next 20 years.¹⁸ Adding a recommended 15% cushion to that number, gives a total cubic footage of 10,120. Therefore, by 2025, minimal estimated **total collections storage** needs at One Capitol Mall would be 9,754 square feet. However, this figure is based on historic collection growth rates and does not reflect potential growth resulting from increased work with state and local government entities.

¹⁸ The growth rate is arrived at by dividing the cubic footage by number of years in existence (110) x 20 years. This formula is recommended in Thomas P. Wilstead, *Planning New and Remodeled Archival Facilities*. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2007), 118.

Perhaps simpler problems to address in the short-term involve: minor reconfigurations and upgrades to the One Capitol Mall research room, which received a major update just over a decade ago; shifting of the collection to store film-based materials in a central location; and working with Arkansas Building Authority to determine potential solutions to signage and parking problems consistently identified by visitors as deterrents to researching at One Capitol Mall, while the Commission explores longer-term strategies for addressing facility needs.

Regional Archives – NEARA and SARA

The agency's regional locations vary significantly in their physical condition. The Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA) in Powhatan Historic State Park was opened in 2011. Assets of the facility are an HVAC system appropriate for an archives, security and fire suppression systems, and compact shelving to maximize collection storage. NEARA's collection has grown considerably in a short period of time, and within the duration of this plan, options may need to be explored for adding collections storage space. NEARA's research room and office spaces are small. Any renovation of this facility should incorporate expansion of these spaces.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives (SARA) in Historic Washington State Park. SARA shares space in a 1976 schoolhouse with the Park's museum collections storage facility, with a little less than half of the square footage devoted to SARA. From an environmental and security standpoint the building is fraught with problems, lacking proper HVAC controls, and fire suppression or security systems. The building is located on the perimeter of the park, which does not afford it the visibility or the security a state archives facility requires. The interior of the building – at least the SARA side – has had few (perhaps no) renovations and is still laid out like a schoolhouse with small rooms along a long corridor. The research room is cramped, and there is no line of sight into the research room from other parts of the building. This means that, in theory, a staff member should stay in the research room at all times with visiting researchers to ensure optimum collection security. Because SARA is staffed only by two people, this is not always possible. Several years ago SARA experienced the theft of a monetarily and historically valuable 1860s ambrotype, which was purchased and put into the collections at another Arkansas historical agency. When the theft came to light, the ambrotype was returned to SARA, but this created an embarrassing situation for all parties involved, and resulted in a loss of funds to the entity that purchased the stolen item. SARA has some limited space for collection growth; but maximizing this potential will require a facility redesign and the installation of more efficient movable shelving.

The following objectives will be undertaken in order to develop a long-term strategy for creating physical structures that support various activities of the agency – preservation of the historical record, facilitating research, and promoting education through public programming and exhibits.

One Capitol Mall

- Explore possibility of space utilization study for One Capitol Mall
- Explore options for expanding collections storage capability
- Explore off-site collection storage options for infrequently accessed or digitized collections
- Explore reconfiguration of microfilm vault for audiovisual collection storage
- Upgrade research room microfilm readers
- Phase out the card catalog(s) and remove from research room
- Work with Arkansas Building Authority to improve building signage and visitor parking

SARA

- Explore options for expanding collections storage capability
- Work with Arkansas State Parks to improve building layout, functionality, security for archival facility, and signage
- Upgrade research room microfilm reader

NEARA

- Explore possibilities for expansion of existing facility, or acquiring off-site storage
- Upgrade research room microfilm reader
- Work with Arkansas State Parks to improve existing signage

Goal 5: Strengthen Technology Infrastructure and Expand Digital Initiatives

The State Archives has made good progress towards moving into the digital age in recent years, despite initial reluctance to bring technology into the organization. Agency computers are set up on a 4-year replacement cycle, and staggered so that only a percentage of PCs require replacement each year. In some years, the agency's appropriation was insufficient to provide for computer upgrades, and ADPT or grant funding provided for computer replacements. In FY13, the agency recommitted to a digitization program, and in a little over two years, 2700 items have been added to the agency's online digital collection, the [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](#). In FY15, the agency hired its first Digital Archivist, a position that works in concert with the Archival Manager for Technology and Access, to develop digital collections. FY15 also saw the purchase of expanded server storage for the agency's growing electronic storage needs.

The increasing availability of online collections has led to a decrease in the number of visitors to at state archives across the nation.¹⁹ Therefore, it is imperative that state archives have the resources necessary to meet the demand for online access to historical materials. Because the work involved in digitizing archival materials (i.e., scanning and metadata creation) is labor intensive, the State Archives has needed to involve all staff members in digitization efforts to move the online collections initiative forward. Involvement of all staff in digitization projects means that their regular assignments take longer to accomplish; ultimately, a less efficient system for accomplishing the work of creating online collections than adding additional staff.²⁰ The Digital Archivist position was converted from an existing Archivist position, which the agency could not really afford to sacrifice. In addition to responsibilities for developing and executing digital collections, the Digital Archivist is also the agency's *de facto* public relations officer and works with the State Historian and Archival Manager for Technology and Access to develop a comprehensive archiving program for state agency records. This level of multi-tasking large projects a minimal pay is not efficient for accomplishing the agency's short or long-term goals.

As the agency's digital assets grow, so does its need for specialized digital record preservation software and increased electronic storage. At the same time, the agency's need to have devoted Information Technology staff is vital for managing those assets, ensuring integrity over time, and promoting continued access to digital objects as platforms change. Currently, the State Archives relies on the Department of Information Services (DIS) for hardware, software and systems support.

In April 2011, the agency launched the Arkansas Records Catalog, a "union catalog" to aggregate information about Arkansas archival collections in one central place. Through Ark-Cat, researchers can browse and search archival holdings at seven (7) repositories around the state. While a useful gateway to locating archives in a select number of agencies in Arkansas, Ark-Cat has not realized its full potential as an online resource for Arkansas history. In September 2015, the commissioners endorsed a motion to pursue a statewide digital collaborative among archival agencies, historical societies, and libraries in Arkansas. Many excellent models of state digital consortiums exist from which Arkansas can draw information.²¹

¹⁹ The cumulative reported number of person-to-person requests at state archives in 2006 was 530,933. By 2014, that number had dropped to 263,801. 2014 COSA *State Records Report*, 66.

²⁰ See Steve Puglia's article, "The Costs of Digital Imaging Projects," for information on the various costs associated with scanning, editing, and creating metadata for digital collections. Available at: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/links/cached/chapter3/link3.10b.digitalimagingcosts.html>.

²¹ "Alabama Mosaic," at <http://www.alabamamosaic.org/>; "Indiana Memory," <https://digital.library.in.gov/>; "LOUISiana Digital Library," <http://louisdl.louislibraries.org/>; "Mississippi Digital Library," <http://www.msdl.org/>; "Missouri Digital Heritage," <http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/>; "South Carolina Digital Library," <http://scmemory.org/>; "Volunteer Voices," <http://www.volunteervoices.org/>; "The Portal to Texas History," <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>. This is a sample list. Approximately 33 state archives sponsor or participate in digital consortiums.

Enlisting widespread support for this initiative and locating important funding sources will be critical to making this objective a reality.

Specific objectives to be accomplished for the purposes of strengthening the agency's technology infrastructure and expanding digital initiatives include:

- Upgrade staff computers based on existing replacement cycle with machines capable of working on digitization initiatives
- Continue to provide training for staff on digitization best practices (i.e., scanning standards, metadata creation, copyright issues, etc.)
- Continue to regularly add content to existing digital collections website
- Acquire additional equipment for in-house digitization work (e.g., flatbed scanners, oversize scanners, converters for audiovisual materials)
- Explore and pursue grant-funding opportunities for digital projects, including digitization of public domain newspaper collection
- Explore and pursue grant-funding opportunities for reformatting and/or digitization of audiovisual collections
- Explore onsite digital access to newspapers currently filmed by the AHC
- Explore and pursue statewide collaborative and potential funding sources
- Acquire additional storage for agency electronic resources; explore cloud-based storage options
- Upgrade equipment for agency research rooms (readers, scanners) as dictated by best options for delivery of content to researchers
- Acquire hardware, software and storage necessary for ingest/maintenance of state electronic records
- Complete website redesign began in FY15; continue to use website as informational and promotional resource for agency

Goal 6: Improve and Promote Public Access to Collection and Expand Holdings

The Arkansas State Archives' holdings comprise the largest collection of Arkansas newspapers, photographs, state agency records, military records, land records, county records and manuscripts in the state. The majority of holdings date from the territorial period to the early 1970s, while incoming collections both enhance these holdings and add modern records. Over half a million photographs, three thousand newspapers, 75,000 military records, four thousand manuscript collections, three thousand maps, 51,000 land records, and 26,000 books and publications form the bulk of the archives. Thousands of other records, including state, and county and municipal records, round out the substantial resources available to the public for research.

Due to a variety of factors including the inadequacy of the agency’s budget and size of staff, a processing backlog had developed in recent years. In 2013, the History Commission implemented minimal level processing or MP-LP in an effort to get archival materials in the hands of researchers in a timely fashion.²² Also in 2013, agency staff began a survey of the physical holdings, identifying any materials considered “unprocessed” and not yet available. Collection-level descriptions of these materials are created and entered into Archivists’ Toolkit™ so that an access point to the material is opened for research. Priorities for additional processing at the series or folder level will be determined by other criteria, e.g., demand, historical or monetary value, or condition. The survey is complete for NEARA; and is expected to be completed at Little Rock in 2016. Because of staff turnover, SARA has been unable to begin its survey. SARA’s collections survey, creating additional finding aids and collection descriptions created for its holdings is a high priority for the immediate future.

The Black History Commission of Arkansas, created by Act 1233 of the Arkansas General Assembly in 1991, has played a vital role in collecting materials relating to the history of black Arkansans. Thanks to the BHCA’s efforts, the State Archives maintains strong scholarly and genealogical collections on African Americans in Arkansas. While Caucasian and Black or African Americans comprised 95.3% of the population in 2014 according to the U.S. Census Bureau²³, there are Arkansans of other ethnicities, which are not well-represented or documented in the archives’ holdings.²⁴ Developing a strategy to document and present the story of recently arrived ethnic groups in Arkansas may be one of the most time-consuming challenges facing the agency. Fortunately, many good models for “documenting diversity” have been examined in current, scholarly archival literature.²⁵

²² MP-LP, which stands for “More Product-Less Process,” stresses performing minimal arrangement and preservation work on collections in keeping with what is appropriate based on your facility’s environmental monitoring, to speed the process of opening archival materials for public research.

²³ U.S. Census Bureau, “Quick Facts,” at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05000.html>.

²⁴ 2014 State and County Quick Facts, U.S. Census Bureau, at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05000.html>.

²⁵ Some relevant articles that advance theory in this area of archival collection building, as well as relevant case studies include: Beverly Allen et al, “Yo Soy Colorado: Three Collaborative Hispanic Cultural Heritage Initiatives,” *Collaborative Librarianship* 4,2 (2012); CDIE Planning Committee, *Documenting Diversity: A Report on the Conference on Documenting the Immigrant Experience in the United States of America, November 15-17, 1990*, (St. Paul, MN: Immigration History Research Center, 1991); Dominique Daniel, “Documenting the Immigrant and Ethnic Experience in American Archives,” *The American Archivist*, 73 (Spring/Summer 2010); Rabia Gibbs, “The Heart of the Matter: The Developmental History of African American Archives,” *The American Archivist* 75 (Spring/Summer 2012); Tracy B. Grimm and Chon A. Noriega, “Documenting Regional Latino Arts and Culture: Case Studies for a Collaborative Community-Oriented Approach,” *The American Archivist*, 76,1 (Spring/Summer 2013); “Thomas H. Kreneck, “Documenting a Mexican American Community: The Houston Example,” *The American Archivist*, 48,3 (Summer 1985); Joel Wurl, “Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles for Documenting the Immigrant Experience,” *Archival Issues* 29, 1 (2005).

Specific objectives to be accomplished for the purposes of improving access to the collection and expanding agency holdings include:

- Finalize agency processing best practices handbook
- Complete collection inventory begun in FY14 at Little Rock
- Begin and complete collection inventory at SARA
- Select new collection management software and migrate existing collections from Archivists Toolkit to new CMS
- Complete minimal-level processing of SARA holdings; complete collection data entry in collection management software
- Initiate folder or series-level processing, as appropriate, of collections described only at collection level
- Provide browsing access to collections through redesigned website
- Address preservation concerns identified during collection inventory
- Explore and pursue grant-funding opportunities for manuscript preservation and access projects, including audio-visual materials
- Create additional topical research guides; revise existing guides as needed
- Incorporate regional archives holdings into new and revised guides
- Explore and pursue opportunities for implementing a more robust oral history program
- Promote existing collections and new acquisitions on social media, in agency newsletter, exhibits, presentations, seminars and other outreach opportunities
- Implement fee-based research service to provide access for patrons who cannot visit in-person
- Complete AASIS inventory of three-dimensional object collection (FY16)
- Begin the AASIS inventory of pre-2015 manuscript holdings; completion date TBD
- Continue to assign AASIS inventory ID numbers to new manuscript and object acquisitions²⁶
- Develop outreach campaigns to targeted communities and individuals to solicit new acquisitions, particularly for groups not well-documented by current holdings

Goal 7: Cultivating Outreach Opportunities

In FY15, the State Archives sponsored or participated in a number of seminars, meetings, and events around the state in an effort to increase awareness of the agency and its mission. The agency sponsored ten (10) seminars, several of which were collaborative efforts with other Arkansas historical, genealogical and archival agencies. Individual staff members made thirty-four (34) presentations at meetings and professional conferences, gave six (6) facility tours, and

²⁶ The AASIS inventory is an internal (state) accounting function. While the AASIS inventory does not result in any enhanced patron access to collections, it is included in the strategic plan because of the commitment of time involved for archives' staff.

manned information booths at nine (9) events around the state. Additionally, staff represented the agency at twenty-four (24) state, regional and national meetings and conferences, including the annual conferences of the Arkansas Historical Association, Arkansas Museum Association, Tennessee Genealogical Society, State Electronic Records Institute (national), the Best Practices Exchange, and the Council of State Archivists annual meeting.

Due to increased efforts of agency staff to reach Arkansas media outlets through systematic creation and distribution of press releases and public service announcements, the archives has seen an encouraging upturn in coverage in state and local media in recent years.²⁷ Yet, State Archives' staff still encounter members of the general public or staff from other state agencies who are not familiar with the agency, or who have misconceptions about its mission.

In its FY15-17 budget request, the agency sought and received Executive approval with no increased appropriation for a new position – a Public Information Officer. In the 2015 fiscal session, this position, along with an Education and Instruction Specialist, was removed by committee during Joint Budget hearings. The agency continues to manage its public information and outreach needs as effectively as it can with existing staff. Press releases are written and distributed by the Digital Archivist, who has some background in writing for newspapers. Several members of staff, including the Digital Archivist and African American History Program Coordinator, work with local radio stations to record public service announcements. The Outreach Coordinator schedules television news appearances for the Director; and the Digital Archivist acts as backup for the Director. Event coordination for the agency is managed by a Marketing Committee. In 2015, the agency relied on grant funding from the Arkansas Humanities Council to pay for the major portion of costs associated with its public programming.

Grant funding from the Arkansas Humanities Council also included \$10,000 for outreach to Arkansas teachers and students. Through a partnership with the Humanities Council, now concluding its second phase, the State Archives has created a series of standards-based lesson plans incorporating primary sources held by the agency. These lesson plans have been vetted by selected groups of Arkansas teachers and student teachers, as well as the Humanities Scholars for the project. Agency staff presented the plans at the 2014 and 2015 Arkansas Curriculum Conferences. During summer 2015, staff traveled to nine (9) of the state's

²⁷ "A struggle to succeed," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 18 October 2015, 4H; "Agency catching up on state archiving," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 31 August 2014, 1B, 7B; "AHC opens gubernatorial papers collections," *Malvern Daily Record*, 28 August 2014, 3; "Chefs, authors to talk food, history," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 3 June 2015, 1E, 3E; "Folklorist McNeil's life work collected, open to public," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 12 October 2014, 6E; "History Commission unveils mural," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 28 April 2015, 1B, 3B; "'Mother of Counties' hits 200," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 20 January 2015, 1B, 8B; "NEA Regional Archives receives Barney Sellers collection," *Walnut Ridge Times Dispatch*, 26 August 2015; "New research options available at commission," *Malvern Daily Record*, 9 January 2015, 10; "Official: Arkansas only state with no requirement to archive government records," *Pine Bluff Commercial*, 24 October 2015; "Workshop traces soldiers' stories," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 2 August 2015, 1B, 7B.

educational co-ops to present the plans to Arkansas teachers. The plans also were presented at a regional archivists meeting – the Society of Tennessee Archivists in October 2015. The ten (10) plans and supplementary material are located on the [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](#) website. In November 2015, these materials accounted for 77% of all page views on the digital collections site.²⁸ Working with K-12 educators presents an opportunity for the commission to strengthen or build a new constituent group, and perhaps allows us to insert our voice in the ongoing conversation about the value of history education in schools.

Specific objectives to be accomplished for the purpose of extending the outreach of the commission, increasing the agency’s visibility, and strengthening partnerships with allied agencies include:

- Secure additional funding for outreach initiatives
- Develop collaborative grant applications with allied agencies for public programming and improved access to resources
- Support staff presentations to and participation in local, state, regional and national meetings and conferences
- Develop additional lesson plans based on agency resources
- Continue participation in Arkansas Curriculum Conference
- Develop engaging and informative presentation(s) for Arkansas educational co-operatives
- Work with the Arkansas National History Day Coordinator to provide information and resources to students and teachers
- Develop Arkansas history podcast series for public radio
- Develop new State Archives and BHCA tabletop exhibits for display at meetings and events
- Seek funding for additional agency publications and traveling exhibits
- Develop plan for more frequent rotating exhibits; develop 3-year plan for exhibits
- Develop a strong volunteer corps for all three locations
- Develop additional internship opportunities for Arkansas college and university students
- Forge a strong working relationship with newly established Friends of the Arkansas State Archives; develop collaborations
- Develop a pool of common presentations for AHC staff to give upon request to local and state organizations

²⁸ 6,152 views out of 8006 total page views.

Conclusion

This plan outlines ambitious goals for the Arkansas State Archives, most of which require additional funding and manpower if they are to be executed successfully. It is important to emphasize that the goals outlined in this plan are activities *routinely performed* by state archives across the United States. In making a commitment to preserving state and local government records and creating digital access to collections, the activities outlined in this plan are not groundbreaking. Rather, this plan is intended to bring the Arkansas State Archives up to the same standards followed by all other state archives, and many of the territories. The success of this plan hinges on gaining increased and appropriate support for the agency in the legislative and executive branches of Arkansas government. In addition, effective advocacy of the agency's commissions and friends, the continued efforts of agency staff to provide quality public service, and promotion of its collections and services will strengthen and contribute to the overall success of this ten-year plan.