

# RECORDS MANAGEMENT

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF)



12/29/2021

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## **Report Mandate**

Chapter 1 Enactment Clause 1, paragraph B.2.P.9., of the amended 2021 Acts of Assembly states, “The department shall communicate a detailed plan and implementation schedule to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, and the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget by September 30, 2021. Additionally, the department shall report quarterly to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, and the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget on progress made, with the first progress report to be delivered not later than December 31, 2021.”

## **Context for ARPA Initiatives**

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is excited about the opportunity presented by the appropriation of ARPA State Fiscal Funds in the August 2021 Special Session II of the General Assembly to improve public health in Virginia. VDH views this investment as a once in a generation opportunity and VDH will work tirelessly to maximize use of funds to create and sustain these initiatives. Simultaneously, VDH is fully engaged in responding to COVID-19 and protecting the health of Virginians. Currently, VDH is creating project plans to minimize the impacts of the public health emergency on local health departments in the first year and will be flexible in the implementation of these initiatives as dictated by the emergency response. Modifications to VDH’s plans will be reflected in future quarterly reports.

## **Executive Summary**

The existing paper-based processes make it challenging for the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) react and respond to requests for data and information, and the appetite for data analytics has significantly increased over the last eighteen months due largely to the ongoing pandemic. These inefficiencies result in time consuming manual searches for records and result in processing delays. Moreover, compliance with storage and records management policy requirements has created significant and growing physical storage demands, which require budget and manpower resources and consumes valuable space which is neither efficient nor cost effective.

A holistic and comprehensive refresh of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) electronic health record, administrative systems is vital to the transformation of records management processes. As such, VDH is actively engaged in converting from a paper-centric records management process to a digitized and automated system that when fully implemented, will make information and records across all offices more accessible and interoperable.

Digitizing and automating outdated paper-based processes will enable employees to work more effectively and efficiently, and better serve Virginians. Since records are currently only maintained in paper form, there is no contingency plan should the records be lost or damaged by fire, flood, or other natural disaster.

During Q2FY22, VDH conducted research on digitization vendors and cloud storage platforms, conducted reviews with three priority offices for digitization (Office of Drinking Water (ODW), Office of Vital Records (OVR), Office of Licensure and Certification (OLC)), to learn about ongoing and past digitization and cloud storage efforts, completed an office record inventory assessment, and begun developing office-specific digitization strategies. VDH expects this work to continue into the next quarter, and anticipates implementation of office digitization strategies and procuring a digitization vendor/storage solution in the fourth quarter and into the next fiscal year. The results of these interviews will be used to develop requirements for these future procurements. These accomplishments in the first few months have set the Records Management Initiative on the path to successfully digitize VDH's paper records within the ARPA SLFRF funding window.

## **Objectives**

VDH aims to digitize existing paper records, destroy unnecessary paper records, and automate existing paper-based record keeping processes to:

- Allow for easier and more efficient access to data across the organization and to customers
- Allow for integration and interoperability of data across central offices and local health districts (LHD)
- Eliminate the time and effort associated with manually recording, filing, and retrieving data
- Free physical space in VDH sites by digitizing or destroying paper records and removing the file storage containers

## **Overview of Quarterly Progress (Oct – Dec 2021)**

Since developing an initial workplan that was submitted in September 2021, VDH has conducted numerous activities that have advanced the Records Management Initiative and positioned VDH to begin the digitization of the previously identified priority offices in the coming months. The key activities that have been accomplished to date are summarized below:

### *Office Engagement*

- Conducted initial scoping interviews for Office of Drinking Water (ODW), Office of Vital Records (OVR), and Office of Licensure and Certification (OLC) to determine the scope of needs that best suit each respective office when it comes to digitization and digital storage platforms. These interviews informed the current state of physical records and the logistics of procuring a digitization vendor while also aligning to a digital storage platform based on office workflow and collaboration requirements.
- Provided each respective office with a records assessment guide for the purpose of capturing the current state of their office records.

- The assessment guide was developed to gather the information necessary to complete three major goals of FY22 Phase 1 from the September workplan: identify and procure a contractor to digitize, identify and implement a digital storage system, and initiate and complete the digitization process for the three priority offices (OVR, OLC, ODW)
- The assessment identified fields for Office Documents, Record Types, and Record Series which are aligned with the Library of Virginia Record Retention Schedule. Access/security requirements also helps align potential platforms with state retention requirements and security considerations.
- Conducted working sessions with the three priority offices to complete the records assessment guide and build requirements for future file storage systems
- Initiated development of office-specific digitization strategies outlining the path to digitization vendor procurement, cloud storage platform implementation, and change management communications, while mitigating disruptions to office staff

#### *External Engagements*

- Interviewed Library of Virginia subject matter experts to understand retention policy requirements, digitization best practices, and Library of Virginia capabilities
- Assessed cybersecurity considerations with VDH's Chief Information Security Officer regarding digitization vendors and storage platforms to ensure that vendors meet cybersecurity requirements
- Captured leading practices and lessons learned from VDOT and VDH LHD staff members who have undergone past records digitization projects
- Collaborated with Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE) Records Digitization staff to evaluate VCE's records scanning offerings and the standard processes

#### ***Comments on Alignment to plan submitted in September 2021***

The procurement of digitization vendors, physical state assessments, and alignment with digital storage platforms is currently ongoing and on track for FY22.

#### **Anticipated Next Quarter Activities (Jan – March 2022)**

The following outlines the activities and tasks planned from January through March 2022:

- Finalize digitization strategy development by engaging with offices to identify the priority order and approach to digitizing the documents to mitigate disruptions to daily business
  - Identify and suggest a digitization vendor based on each office's record considerations

- Identify and suggest a digital storage platform based on each office's record considerations
- Select a digitization vendor
- Select digital storage platforms consistent with VITA requirements and appropriate to the document sensitivity in each program
- Begin scanning/destruction/digital workflow implementation
- Develop and begin a change management plan
  - The change management plan will include communications, trainings, etc.
- Identify next priority offices for digitization efforts and begin the engagement effort with them

## Risks and Risk Management

### Risks

- **Risk 1:** Availability of a solution that can scale to the volume needed by each office over three years
  - **Mitigation Strategy:** Evaluate vendors on the capacity to meet VDH needs and timeframes. The Records Assessment inform the specific needs of each office records.
- **Risk 2:** Ability to develop a system infrastructure to effectively store documents prior to the procurement of a vendor and the initiation of digitization
  - **Mitigation Strategy:** Proactively coordinate with VITA and learn best practices from other agencies who have undergone similar projects. The Records Assessment completed by each office will inform the digital storage platform recommended for each office in conjunction with the research and insight gathered from other VDH offices and VITA. These actions will mitigate the risk of an inefficient system infrastructure by building requirements into the digitization strategy for each office.
- **Risk 3:** Ability to coordinate with local offices in assessing their records' current state during the digitization process
  - **Mitigation Strategy:** The Records Assessment to be completed by each office was created in a way that can be conducted hands-on or hands-off, enabling VDH to maximize information gathering from offices and LHDs that are less responsive. Additional concerns about responsiveness will be escalated within VDH as needed, and timelines for each office can shift based on their ability to begin the process at a given time.
- **Risk 4:** Ability to digitize records without hindering VDH's ability to conduct business while still allowing for access to vital records

- **Mitigation Strategy:** By coordinating actively with each office about their specific business needs and time constraints, a digitization strategy tailored to each office or LHD will factor in the required access to files and note any specific needs based on the file type. By constructing this plan in collaboration with each office, the potential for file access limitations while the digitization is underway should be mitigated.
- **Risk 5:** Ability for VDH staff to adjust to a new records management system and process
  - **Mitigation Strategy:** Each office will have a specific digitization strategy tailored to their office needs and each plan will incorporate anticipated training, education, and communication materials to ease transition into new business processes and digital platforms. Each office will have specific needs identified and communications deliverables outlined to address those needs to onboard staff into the new way of working with digital files.

## Change Management Considerations

VDH understands that transformation initiatives are successful not only with the right technology, processes, and resources, but also with people who are properly equipped for the changes. Successfully navigating transformation in a highly complex environment requires effective management of business process changes, communications, and stakeholder management to create buy-in at early stages.

VDH has identified that digitization activities that may impact VDH employees' day-to-day activities in each priority office. As each office is digitized, VDH plans to develop and implement change management and communications strategies that include communication of goals, preparation and alignment of the changes, and confidence-building exercises promoting the benefits of the changes.

The change activities will also accommodate the needs of offices to retain access to files while they are in the process of being digitized and stored offsite. All communications will be structured to mitigate impacts to state and office activities.

## Project Budget

The following budget is broken down by the project categories defined in the work plans submitted on 9/30/2021. Please refer to this documentation for further clarification.

Total Budget: \$30,000,000

Cumulative Expenditures, Obligations, and Budget, through December 31, 2021

Project Group	Current Expenditures	Current Obligations	Projected FY22 Budget	Total Budget
LHD Districts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$11,525,000
Other Central VDH Offices	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,075,000
Office of Drinking Water	\$0	\$210,983	\$3,150,000	\$3,450,000
Office of Licensure and Certification	\$0	\$210,983	\$3,150,000	\$3,450,000
Office of Vital Records	\$0	\$210,983	\$3,150,000	\$3,450,000
Overall Records Management	\$0	\$0	\$550,000	\$2,050,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$632,949</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>	<b>\$30,000,000</b>