CoSA SERI Strategic Plan 2021-2024

(Adopted by the CoSA Board, March 25, 2021)

CoSA Mission:

Using collaborative research, education, and advocacy, the Council of State Archivists provides leadership that strengthens and supports state and territorial archives in their work to preserve and provide access to government records.

CoSA Mission Statement Adopted by the CoSA Board of Directors and Membership, July 12, 2017.

SERI Statement:

The State Electronic Records Initiative (SERI) was established in 2011 to focus on improving management, preservation, and access to state and territorial government electronic records in all 56 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. SERI increases capacity and capability for state electronic records management and provides a robust community of practice for archival staff preserving electronic records. SERI is committed to supporting the communities of practice, documents, guidance, and other resources to help state and territorial archives achieve their missions and increase equitable access to state electronic records. SERI promotes knowledge of the digital lifecycle and requirements for the preservation of state electronic records. SERI advocates for increased awareness and preservation of electronic records. SERI is the flagship program of CoSA.

CoSA SERI Goals 2021-2024:

GOAL: IMPROVE MANAGEMENT, PRESERVATION, AND ACCESS TO STATE AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Guidance and Research: Develop, produce, and disseminate policy, guidance, and best practices documents. Particular attention will be paid to areas that will increase the capacity of state/territorial archives to preserve state electronic records including:

- Transfer
- Collection processing
- System/service migration policies

Training: Provide professional development training opportunities for state/territorial archives staff to broaden their knowledge of digital preservation practices. The preservation of state electronic records continues to be a moving target as new technologies, formats, and needs develop. SERI will continue to provide training materials and opportunities to support state and territorial archives staff in their work to manage, preserve, and provide access to state electronic records.

Resource Center: Maintain and further grow of a community-driven clearinghouse of electronic recordkeeping and digital preservation resources.

Equity: Access to government records is an equity issue. Not all constituents have physical access to archives and records, especially where archives facilities are located outside of urban centers, making them difficult to physically access by public transportation and where populations are scattered over large distances making physical access to the archives difficult, costly, or impossible. Providing better access to electronic records serves under-resourced populations because it reduces barriers to public information, such as access to court and vital records, which may be critical to an individual seeking veteran's benefits, proving citizenship, or gaining a better understanding of the legislative process. SERI's efforts have made a positive and sustained difference to the ability of state and territorial archives to build and maintain digital preservation and access infrastructures. SERI is committed to supporting state and territorial archives in their efforts to provide appropriate online access to state electronic records.

GOAL: INCREASE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY FOR STATE ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Training: SERI will continue to address the need for new training and information regarding digital preservation of state electronic records. The actions needed to preserve state electronic records continue to change. State electronic records continue to evolve; they are coming in an ever-widening array of format types. Practitioners need to keep abreast of new technologies and practices. SERI will continue to offer training to assist state and territorial archives staff in current developments for state electronic records management.

Surveying and Evaluation: Undertake regular surveying to evaluate the state/territorial capabilities for preservation and management of state electronic records. SERI is committed to continuing these efforts and providing longitudinal insights into how archival capabilities grow, shift, and change over time. These surveys and evaluations provide insight to CoSA as to the most important places to focus attention on developing materials and programs to support state/territorial archives.

Direct Assistance: Develop and deliver direct assistance to states/territories in need of bridging the digital preservation gap by helping them create the documentation, workflow, policies, and other materials needed to implement digital preservation activities. SERI consultants will identify and work directly with state/territorial archives to develop the foundational documentation needed to start addressing state/territorial electronic records.

GOAL: PROVIDE A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR ARCHIVAL STAFF PRESERVING ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Communities of Practice: SERI facilitates a supportive community of practice between the state/territorial archives staff. SERI is committed to strengthening and maintaining these communities based on interests, tools, etc. SERI is committed to creating and maintaining opportunities for state/territorial archives staff to increase their ability and capacity to manage state electronic records.

Mentoring: SERI is committed to developing and strengthening mentorships between state/territorial archives staff regarding electronic records. SERI will work to leverage the existing community of practice into a more structured mentorship in which states/territories can support each other in the preservation of electronic records. This will help broaden the understanding of how states/territories are managing their electronic records. These mentorships will also provide opportunities for succession planning and training the next generation of state archival leaders. Providing mentorship opportunities from different states will help individuals grow professionally and get ready for the next level of leadership.

GOAL: PROMOTE THE VALUE OF AND CULTIVATE SUPPORT FOR ELECTRONIC RECORDS PROGRAMS

SERI advances the electronic records needs of its members to stakeholders and the public by acting as a clearinghouse for information, participating in policy and funding discussions, developing advocacy and awareness messages, and working in partnership with counterparts in allied organizations. SERI uses the strength of collaboration and partnership to leverage resources, share expertise, and to solve problems.

Electronic Records Day: Electronic Records Day is designed to raise awareness among state government agencies, the general public, related professional organizations, and other stakeholders about the crucial role electronic records play in their world. SERI encourages everyone to:

- Spread the word through social media channels.
- Do a special blog post.
- Engage the public in a presentation on risks to digital content.
- Start a dialog with other entities that work with e-records on a daily basis.
- Host a workshop on good digital preservation practices.

Stakeholder Engagement: SERI will continue to identify and develop a strong cross-section of stakeholders and partners. SERI benefits from other professions and interest groups understanding the complexities of state electronic records management. SERI will continue to offer engagement sessions, webinars, and best practices documents to stakeholders so they can gain a full understanding of issues related to electronic records management, preservation, and ongoing access. Stakeholder groups use this information regularly as well as in their approaches to their constituencies. Strong engagement with stakeholder groups will ensure that CoSA has partners carrying the message of the importance of long-term access to electronic records.

GOAL: SUSTAINABILITY OF SERI

State and territorial electronic records are being created at increasing rates. Properly managing the preservation of and access to electronic records will continue to be a requirement of state/territorial archives for years to come. Therefore, SERI needs to plan to support state/territorial archives in their efforts to manage state electronic records. To address the sustainability of SERI, we are committed to addressing:

Governance and Leadership: CoSA's SERI Steering Committee manages and oversees the work of the initiative. The SERI Steering Committee includes co-chairs of each of the subcommittees (currently Advocacy and Outreach, Education and Programming, and Tools and Resources) and other CoSA members. SERI will work to develop plans for rotation of leadership in the subcommittees as well as in the steering committee. This will help address SERI sustainability by ensuring that we develop new leadership and talent as well as preserve the interest and passion for participation in established state electronic records staff. These materials will also address how and when goals or directions of the various SERI subcommittees should change to better align with the interests of the volunteer participants, the mission of CoSA, and the goals of SERI.

Volunteers: CoSA's SERI Steering Committee manages and oversees the work of the initiative, working with volunteers from state and territorial archives throughout the nation. Volunteers perform the work completed by SERI. SERI is committed to continuing to put out regular calls for new volunteers and provide ongoing support to all volunteers.

Partnerships: SERI will continue to partner with organizations that have strongly aligned interests and similar goals. One such partnership that SERI will focus on will be with the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Electronic Records Section (ERS) to support the CoSA resource center development and maintenance. Additional partnerships to support SERI activities will be pursued as well.

Financial support for SERI: SERI is a major initiative of CoSA and, therefore, is a major financial commitment of CoSA's. SERI will continue to identify core goals and objectives and seek out financial support to achieve these goals. SERI has been supported in part by federal grants and corporate sponsors such as Preservica and AVP. SERI will continue to find areas of mutual interest with Preservica and other sponsors to support the work ahead.