

May 24, 2024

The Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) calls on Congress to provide the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) with an appropriation of at least \$527.3 million for Fiscal Year 2025. The president's proposed budget for NARA is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough.

The request for such an increase is justified: NARA has faced decades of near-stagnant funding, preventing the agency from keeping pace with the exponential growth of archival holdings and the government's transition to digital records. This funding shortfall has led to significant operational challenges, including inadequate staffing levels and delayed digitization efforts. NARA struggles to process the millions of cubic feet of records in its possession and meet the demand of serving the public.

The Association of Professional Genealogists is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) professional organization dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the genealogical profession. Founded in 1979, APG is the world's largest association for professional genealogists, representing more than 2,000 members in forty countries around the world, all of whom are committed to the preservation and dissemination of historical records.

APG's members, many of whom operate vibrant small businesses, rely daily on access to well-preserved, readily available archival materials crucial to the timely and efficient delivery of services. These documents are the lifeblood of many of our members' work, enabling them to uncover family histories, settle estates, assist in dual-citizenship applications, and contribute to the broader understanding of our nation's past.

Resource constraints within NARA have resulted in a ten-year backlog for processing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, impeding the public's ability to learn about government workings and the impact it had on family members and historical eras. Resource constraints within NARA prevent its ability to track and enforce record schedules, endangering the transfer of documents from the Executive Branch.

Congress must plan to provide an annual uplift of an additional \$100 million for each of the next four fiscal years. This is critical to *rightsizing* NARA, allowing the agency to address critical challenges; expand its workforce; enhance agency record-keeping oversight; improve technological capabilities; and accelerate mass digitization efforts, ensuring that historical records are preserved and accessible for future generations. In other words, the agency would finally be able to accomplish its statutory mission-critical obligations.

We urge Congress to preserve and make available our nation's precious documents by providing an annual appropriation of at least \$527.3 million for Fiscal Year 2025.

Sincerely,

Association of Professional Genealogists

[This letter was sent via e-form to the offices of U.S. Congressmen David Joyce and Pete Sessions, whose responsibilities include the appropriate committees related to the NARA budget.]