VERMONT SECRETARY OF STATE MISSION/VISION STATEMENT

To use the Office of the Secretary of State's constitutional and statutory authority to: protect public health and safety, protect the integrity of the State's electoral process, protect public access to government and its records, facilitate commerce in Vermont, and foster an understanding of and an enthusiasm for our democratic form of government.

Descriptions of Divisions and Programs

The Office is comprised of the divisions of Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, Elections, Corporations, and Professional Regulation.

Department/Program Description

VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (VSARA)

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) division of the Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for preserving and providing access to permanent state records in the Vermont State Archives; operating the State Records Center for inactive state paper and microfilm records, including security copies of municipal land records; and issuing retention requirements for state and local government records through the State Records Management Program. In addition, VSARA carries out several administrative functions including but not limited to: certifying vital records; recording state deeds and leases; authenticating documents for foreign use; serving in the role of legislative clerk when the General Assembly is in session; and processing filings pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

Staff

VSARA is served by 15 full-time permanent employees, including its director, the Vermont State Archivist. In addition, VSARA provides onsite supervision to one full-time employee and one temporary records analyst employed by the Corporations division of the Office of the Secretary of State and two temporary archivists employed by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation.

Populations Served

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) has two primary populations it serves. The first is the public. This includes Vermont citizens, corporations and organizations as well as those from other states and countries. The second population served by VSARA is public agencies, most directly Vermont public officials and employees at both the state and local levels.

Mission, Vision & Goals

It is the mission of the Vermont State Archives & Records Administration to provide, protect, promote, and preserve Vermont public records, in collaboration with other public agencies, for the benefit of the citizens collectively served. Our vision is that Vermont public records, the cornerstone of government transparency and a knowledgeable and informed populace, are recognized and managed as public assets.

Strategic Goals

VSARA's goals are:

1) The public has access to authentic and reliable records for as long as needed to protect interests and to assure government accountability.

- 2) Public agencies have the tools and resources necessary to manage their records and information in an effective and efficient manner.
- 3) Records of continuing value are preserved and accessible to current and future generations.
- 4) Low-cost, secure repositories for public records, regardless of format, are available at an enterprise or statewide level.

Outcomes and Measures

Since its creation in 2008, VSARA continues to grow and progress; nonetheless many of VSARA's activities can only be measured through ways that are qualitative rather than quantitative. In addition, much of VSARA's work is dictated by the demands of the public and public agencies – over which VSARA has little or no control.

In 2014, VSARA focused on areas in which efficiencies could be made: training agency records officers and liaisons on how to use General Record Schedules (GRS) and develop related records management procedures; increasing the preservation of and access to archival public records; and decreasing dependencies on VSARA staff and resources for copies and similar labor-intensive processes, particularly for informational copies of vital records. To this extent, VSARA met or exceeded its FY2014 targets in several areas.

In some areas, VSARA did not meet its FY2014 targets. This is largely due to staffing issues and having to choose between service offerings. Measures impacted by staffing issues are explained in further detail under their respective areas.

Major Services to the Public

VSARA has two major services to the public that are mandated by statute. They are in the areas of:

- 1. Vital Records
- 2. Archival Records

Vital Records

The State Archivist is responsible for preserving and providing access vital records "for use by the public." In addition, the State Archivist has the authority to issue certified copies of vital records (<u>18 V.S.A. § 5002</u>). When vital records duties and responsibilities were transferred to VSARA in July 2008 from the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS), the average wait time to receive a vital record was 4-6 weeks and the public was erroneously being charged \$10 for informational copies.

Today, VSARA processes vital record certification requests submitted through an online request portal or by mail within one business day. On average, it takes a VSARA staff person about 5-10 minutes to process a request. Requests for informational copies are also processed within 5-10 minutes and provided at no cost. In addition, most Vermont vital records are now available online through Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. With Ancestry.com, VSARA negotiated free online access for Vermonters through www.vermont.gov and the site went live in late 2012, helping VSARA decrease the number of resources needed to provide informational copies pursuant to Vermont's public records laws and dramatically increase the public's access to these valuable records While VSARA cannot control the number of requests it receives for certified copies of vital records, in 2014 we initiated a more focused effort to direct citizens looking for informational copies of vital records to Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. *Between 2011 and 2014, VSARA reduced the number of staff hours spent on informational requests from approximately 390 hours annually to 122 hours*. This has provided VSARA with more time to focus on other records and responsibilities related to other statutory filings, including administrative rules, notary appointments and record authentications.

Vital Records Performance Measures	FY 2011 Actual	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target
Requests certified copies of vital records	4,671	5,133	5,651	5,625	5,303	5,303
Requests for informational copies	2,339	1,925	1,496	733	367	184
Self-service onsite for informational copies ¹	714	487	427	258	155	93
Self-service online for informational copies ²	n/a	n/a	4,320,417	6,157,837	8,620,971	10,345,165
Rate of Change						
Certifications issued by VSARA	n/a	10%	10%	5%	-6%	0%
Requests for informational copies	n/a	-18%	-22%	-51%	-50%	-50%
Self-service onsite for informational	n/a	-32%	-12%	-40%	-40%	-40%
copies Self-service online for informational copies	n/a	n/a	n/a	43%	40%	20%

Archival Records

Pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 117, the State Archivist shall "take custody of archival records" and "arrange, describe, and preserve archival records, and promote their use by government officials and the public."

A three-year court records project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) was completed in FY2014 and resulted in a 90% increase in records accessioned into the State Archives in comparison to FY13. As a result of this project, as well as other accessions in FY2014, VSARA also saw a 41% increase in requests for informational copies of records. In both measures, VSARA exceeded its FY2014 targets. Our FY2014 forecasts for others areas were relatively on target and FY15 targets have been readjusted based on observed trends for the current fiscal year.

January 2015 marks the first time that VSARA's Archives Unit and Reference Room will be staffed by three full-time archivists instead of two. While VSARA will no longer rely on staff from other VSARA units to support work related to VSARA's Reference Room, we are projecting demands for access to archival records and reference services to continue to grow and also become more sophisticated. FY16 targets, particularly for accessions, reflect what is considered doable with existing staff in terms of balancing internal workloads and external demands.

¹ Measured by research visit rather than individual records

² Measured by individual record page views per calendar vs. fiscal year. This number only reflects records accessed through Ancestry.com as FamilySearch.org does not provided statistical data that can be used for this measure.

Archival Records ³	FY2011 Actual	FY2012 Actual	FY2013 Actual	FY2014 Actual	FY2015 Target	FY2016 Target
	11000001				Turget	Turget
Paper records accessioned into	309	730	681	1,293	600	700
Vermont State Archives (cubic feet)						
Requests for reference services	689	609	618	607	643	682
Requests for informational copies	134	153	224	315	463	681
Records researched onsite	702	687	1,214	1,177	1,177	1,177
New researchers registered onsite	619	454	430	349	262	300
New researchers registered by mail ⁴	1,116	968	681	502	287	221
Rate of Change						
Accessioned into Vermont State	n/a	136%	-7%	90%	-54%	17%
Archives						
Requests for reference services	n/a	-12%	1%	-2%	6%	6%
Requests for informational copies	n/a	14%	46%	41%	47%	47%
Records researched onsite	n/a	-2%	77%	-3%	0%	0%
New researchers registered onsite	n/a	-27%	-5%	-19%	-25%	15%
New researchers registered by mail	n/a	-13%	-30%	-26%	-43%	-23%

Major Services to State Agencies

VSARA has two major services to the state agencies that are mandated by statute. They are in the areas of:

- 1. Agency Records Management Programs
- 2. Low-Cost Secure Storage for Agency Records

Agency Records Management Programs

Pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 218, the head of each state agency or department is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and implementing an active and continuing records management program approved by the State Archivist; and designating a member of his or her staff as the records officer for his or her agency or department. While not required by law, constitutional officers and the judicial and legislative branches have followed the spirit of this law for the past 30-40 years.

Related, the State Archivist shall "cooperate with the heads of State agencies or public bodies to establish and maintain a program for the appraisal and scheduling of public records; and "maintain a record center to hold inactive records in accordance with records schedules approved by the State Archivist" (3 V.S.A. § 117). In 2009, VSARA introduced the concept of records liaisons to assist records officers and expand the number of state employees receiving record schedule training. On average, there are more than 600 records officers and records liaisons in the State Government, across all three branches, at any given time.

As referenced under *Archival Records*, public demands often require VSARA to shift resources. In FY2014, demands related to archival records coupled with a vacancy in the Records Analysis Unit significantly

³ With the exception of legislative audio CDs transferred into the State Archives in boxes, almost all of VSARA accessions have been in paper format. This will change with VSARA's plan to open its digital archives for the transfer of digital archival records in 2016. At this time, we do not have enough information to provide FY16 targets.

⁴ Majority of researchers registering by mail are those requesting informational copies of vital records

impacted VSARA's abilities to provide services to agency records programs. To optimize its limited resources of approximately 1.5 full-time employee (FTE), VSARA chose to emphasize training and use of the various general record schedules already available for agencies in FY2014. This decision allowed us to remain on target for FY2014 in the area of the training. As a result, however, there was a significant decrease in new records analysis work.

As of January 2015, VSARA has two FTEs in this unit and is in the process of hiring one more records analyst. One of the analysts, however, is a Digital Records Analyst/Archivist who will spend much of his time carrying out a function and services that VSARA has not been able to provide in the past, specifically related to electronic records management and long-term digital preservation (digital archives). In comparison, VSARA had four FTEs in its Records Analysis Unit in FY11, FY12 and FY13.

Record Programs Performance Measures	FY2010 Actual	FY2011 Actual	FY2012 Actual	FY2013 Actual	FY2014 Actual	FY2015 Target	FY2016 Target
Records officers/liaisons trained	n/a	37	92	84	109	67	94
Records inventoried	500	756	506	1,126	527	648	797
Record schedules issued	n/a	14	32	25	3	18	25
Rate of Change							
Records officers/liaisons trained	n/a	n/a	148%	-9%	30%	-39%	40%
Records inventoried	n/a	51%	-33%	123%	-53%	23%	23%
Record schedules issued	n/a	n/a	129%	-22%	-88%	500%	39%

Low-Cost Secure Storage for Agency Records

While agencies have been gradually improving their respective records management programs, much work still needs to be done. Relative to the State Records Center, however, applying new record schedules to existing or incoming records has allowed VSARA to stabilize growth within the State Records Center (which was close to capacity in 2008 when its operations were transferred from the Department of Buildings and General Services to VSARA). This is despite having an unexpected influx of records transferred for storage in FY2011 and FY2012 due to the consolidation of several courthouses and the closing of the Waterbury State Complex following Tropical Storm Irene.

Therefore the value of applying record schedules, even if just a few, to new and existing records is evident in the FY2013 actuals for record transfers to the State Records Center as well as records being destroyed or removed from the State Records Center (e.g. transferred to the State Archives). The impact, therefore, of VSARA choosing to focus on training over records analysis in FY2014 due to limited resources was negative. Our destruction rate, which should be level or increase every year to assure capacity, dropped by more than 40%.

Procedures and strategies put into place in FY2011 to reduce the volume of transitory records being submitted for interfiling appear to be working and VSARA expects to see some additional decreases before leveling off. In FY2015, VSARA had hoped to start phasing out the service of reconstituting records from microfilm for state agencies, primarily the Vermont Judiciary and the Department for Children and Families. Initiated by the former Division of Public Records for minimal charge, almost all state agencies

are exclusively dependent on VSARA staff and equipment for accessing their microfilm records, generally in the form of paper printouts from microfilm. Unfortunately, we are seeing an unexpected increase in requests for FY2015 which we project will level off or be less in FY2016.

Record Center	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Performance	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Measures						U	C
Transferred for storage	9,929	11,487	11,273	8,938	8,665	9,000	9,000
Destroyed or removed	7,696	6,058	6,168	11,642	6,908	9,000	9,000
from storage							
Records Requested	11,996	9,013	11,416	11,906	11,623	10,000	10,000
from storage							
Records returned for	6,345	7,292	5,237	4,210	4,625	5,000	5,000
storage							
Records interfiled in	2,809	3,447	2,038	1,333	824	600	480
storage boxes							
Records reconstituted	10,071	8,421	9,804	9,616	6,088	8,000	8,000
from microfilm							
Rate of Change							
Transferred for storage	n/a	16%	-2%	-21%	-3%	4%	0%
Destroyed or removed	n/a	-21%	2%	89%	-41%	30%	0%
from storage			_ / •				
Requested from storage	n/a	-25%	27%	4%	-2%	-14%	0%
Returned for storage	n/a	15%	-28%	-20%	10%	8%	0%
Interfiled in storage	n/a	24%	-41%	-35%	-38%	-27%	-20%
boxes							
Records reconstituted	n/a	-16%	16%	-2%	-37%	31%	0%
from microfilm							

ELECTIONS DIVISION

In addition to improving on our high level of performance in the foregoing areas that represent our primary responsibilities, in 2014-2015 the Elections Division is embarking on an overhaul of our IT systems that support Election Administration.

Beginning in February of 2014, the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office began installing a new and highly improved suite of elections-related software applications. The agency's elections operations (i.e. business functions) that will be affected are:

- voter registration (summer 2015)
- absentee ballot tracking (summer 2015)
- election management (summer 2015)
- campaign finance reporting (launched in summer of 2014, became mandatory in January 2015)
- lobbyist disclosure (launched and mandatory in January 2015)

Most importantly, the proposed upgrades to our elections systems will enhance the security, accuracy, and integrity of our elections by eliminating opportunities for error, automating many processes, and implementing stronger checks. As a whole, the upgrades provide faster, more accurate and greater access to information for researchers, political parties, candidates, the media, and most importantly the general public. They will streamline and automate the filing process for all filings due in the Elections Division, thereby reducing time and costs on both the filers and our office.

From the public's perspective, both the campaign finance and lobbyist disclosure systems will provide *vastly* improved access to the information that is disclosed. At this time, Vermont is woefully behind most other states in the access we provide to both our campaign finance and lobbyist data. We are routinely ranked near the bottom for our transparency in these areas. The proposed integrated election system will bring us up to a level of transparency that is currently expected as the norm.

Additionally, and particularly relevant to the statewide checklist that will be launched this year, the public will have significantly improved access to their voter registration and election information. With the new system, a registered voter will be able to access their registration information, track their absentee ballot activity, look up their representatives and candidates running in their district, and locate their polling place. This will be a significant improvement on voter information provided in real time to registered voters.

The anticipated improvements have been requested many times over by members of the general public, candidates, parties, researchers, voter outreach organizations, lobbyists, lobbyist employers, and legislators. We are proud and excited to be executing this project to finally implement the upgrades we have anticipated and needed for years.

As such, the most important performance measures for the Elections Division for FY2016, in addition to meeting and maintaining our performance measures in the areas described above, will be to meet the delivery date for each of the systems we are developing, on time and with a successful product.

System Description	Anticipated Delivery Date
Campaign Finance Disclosure Database	June, 2014
Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Tracking System	July, 2015
Election Management System	July, 2015
Lobbyist Disclosure Database	January, 2015

CORPORATIONS DIVISION

Mission

The Corporations division strives to provide a business friendly environment and to facilitate commerce by administering state law with respect to the registration and maintenance of foreign and domestic corporations, partnerships, limited liability companies, and sole proprietorships doing business in Vermont. Furthermore, the division acts as the State repository for trademark and Tradename registrations, and Uniform Commercial Code liens and related filings.

The division accomplishes an average of 88,000 unique transactions per year and collects approximately \$5.2 million in annual receipts for the services it provides.

The Division strives to provide consistent, reliable and efficient service to those doing business in Vermont, other State agencies, and to the general public with respect to registration data in its custody.

Outcomes and Measures

The division's primary objective is to make the registration and search process as efficient and user-friendly as possible through the effective use of technology and training. Performance measurement is still a work in progress for the Corporations Division. Implementation of the new business registration and information system will drive better performance and yield better data for continuous improvement.

Our new system has done many things to improve the division's ability to measure the performance of its services. It has allowed the division to provide fast, accurate, reliable and cost effective services for business formation; trade name and trademark protection; and Uniform Commercial Code transactions. Customers now have access to a myriad of online services 24/7. The final stages of the new system will be completed by March 2015.

Our new system allows the division to begin tracking the following vital indicators:

- Response times for filings
- Clear tracking of rejections
- Accuracy of database results
- Improved customer service response times
- Improved tracking of receipts and filings
- Greater management auditing of financial and operational metrics

Here are some of the current ways the division measures service:

Service Delivery	Pre-2013 Performance	2014 Goal	2014 Performance	2015 Goal	2016 Goal
Response time for standard filings	5 days	1 day	Instant to 1 day	Instant to 1 day	Instant to 1 day
Response time for filings requiring staff review	10 days	3 days	1 day	1 day	1 day
Clear explanations for rejected filings	75%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Accuracy of public information search results	75%	99%	90%	99%	99%
Reply to phone and email inquiries within 24 hours	75%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Wait times for walk-ins is less than 5 minutes	90%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Provide proof of filing and receipt for every transaction	50%	99%	75%	99%	99%

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

Mission

The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR) within the Office of the Secretary of State serves 46 professions and approximately 60,000 licensees by providing administrative, investigative, and legal assistance to the regulatory programs for these professions. **The mission of the Office of Professional Regulation is public protection.** We protect the public from unethical, incompetent, or otherwise unprofessional behavior by licensed practitioners in the professions and occupations that are regulated through the Office; to protect the public from practitioners in these fields who are unauthorized to practice; and to ensure equity in licensing, regulation, and discipline by fairly and responsibly administering the rules and statutes pertaining to these professions and occupations.

OPR evaluates and processes approximately 8,000 initial licenses annually, renews approximately 50,000 existing licenses biennially, and receives approximately 800 unprofessional conduct complaints each year, leading to several hundred investigations and approximately 200 prosecutions resulting in disciplinary action.

Our customers are the general public who make use of professional services, as well as the licensees and businesses providing those services. For licensees, employers and applicants, we strive to provide an efficient, user-friendly agency where current and potential licensed professionals can easily obtain answers to their questions and quickly obtain a license if they are qualified. For consumers, we deliver a population of licensed professionals who have been well vetted and a system of regulation under which they can be assured that unsafe practitioners will be removed from practice.

The OPR is focused on the results embodied by the below core performance objectives and related measures, which align with the department's mission and vision.

The OPR strives to assure:

- 1. An efficient, effective and user-friendly license application process;
- 2. Easy public access to information about professions and licensees;
- 3. Swift, objective, professional, and thorough investigations;
- 4. Fair, expeditious, and well-respected disciplinary process;
- 5. Courteous, knowledgeable, and accessible staff;
- 6. Clear communication about standards for licensure and practice, this office, and its mission.

Ever since a new licensing and enforcement tracking system was installed in 2009, we have been focused on standardizing and improving business processes and increasing our efficiency and customer service through initiatives like online renewal of licensure and our newest additions of paperless licensing and online initial applications. We continue to develop and track new workload metrics to help determine case and license processing times. We are currently measuring the following indicators of success:

OBJECTIVES	CURRENT METRIC	DESIRED OUTCOME
Initial licensure: New applications for licensure processed quickly, eligibility for licensure thoroughly reviewed. All but the most complex licenses issued within 3 business days.	70%: Reporting functionality not well developed enough yet to allow staff and supervisors to measure performance to acceptable timeframes. Performance standards must be set profession by profession in 2015 for the 200+ credential types.	80%: Increased electronic tracking and management of applications leads to fewer gaps in service and timelier processing. Begin use of online initial application functionality to improve customer service, decrease processing time and free up OPR staff time for existing paper applications.
License renewals: Every license renewal will be processed within 3 days.	95%: In calendar year 2014, more than 95% of renewal applicants renewed online. Those who participate in online renewal receive rapid turnaround because data entry by staff is not required. This leaves the staff free to process paper application quickly.	100% : Increasing confidence in, and usage of, online renewal, moving some professions to mandatory online renewal.
Increase use of online renewal.		100% online participation is the desired outcome within a few years.
Discipline: Unprofessional conduct complaints processed within one year.	75%: Average processing time has dropped from 270 days to around 240 days for calendar year 2014. Cases over two years have dropped from 40 to 20. There are still a significant number of cases going beyond one year, which is not unusual for cases needing prosecution and disciplinary action. New tracking on investigation, prosecution and case management times is assisting management in focusing on eliminating delay areas.	90%: Better case and staff management with the eLicense system will reduce timelines. 10-15% of cases should necessarily and appropriately go beyond the one year mark.
Professional outreach: Outreach efforts will concentrate on improving communications with the professionals we regulate. It is part of our goals to educate professionals as to their responsibility to consumers and the marketplace, as well as to provide guidance as to how they can comply with the practice standards required of their professions.	Licensee interaction with OPR is improving but is still infrequent at best. Increased use of email and valid email addresses obtained through online renewal facilitate better communication. A new website in the last year has also improved the information available to licensees.	Increased use of email communication to valid licensee email addresses and expanded use of the new website to reach licensees.

Consumer Outreach:	Still very little is done in the way of	More information is available
Outreach efforts will focus on	outreach to consumers. The focus is on	with the new website.
educating consumers about	reacting to complaints in this complaint-	Consumer FAQs should be
their rights, and ways they can	driven system. The new website allows	developed in the coming year.
help protect their interests.	us to track web traffic.	

Licensing performance measures are important to determine how many licensees we are serving and how efficiently we are doing so. Some of the reporting functionality we now have can measure volume and days, though this is not completely reflective of the actual workload.

	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15 estimated
Licensing						
Licensees	56,853	56,131	59,187	56,146	60,388	60,000
New licenses issued	9,958	9,361	9,647	8,122	7,960	8,000
Percent issued within 3 business days	NA	NA	80	80	80	90
Applied for initial application online	0	0	0	0	200	500
Percent applied for initial app. online	0	0	0	0	7%	15%
Number renewals issued	21,062	33,288	20,060	34,089	19,876	33,000
Percent issued within 3 days (est.)	50%	75%	90%	90%	98%	99%
Number renewed online	3,839	21,867	12,803	25,115	18,981	25,000
Percent renewed online	18%	66%	65%	74%	95%	98%

OPR can also measure its effectiveness through the volume and timeliness of the enforcement function. While the complaints received have steadily increased over the years, average days to process those complaints continues to decrease.

						FY15
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	estimated
Enforcement						
Complaints received	621	791	822	739	801	800
Complaints disposed	612	661	747	807	831	800
Complaints investigated	386	512	389	489	431	455
Average investigation time (days)	NA	NA	NA	105	90	90
Percent investigated within 200 days	NA	NA	NA	85%	89%	90%
Cases charged	212	175	213	219	160	180
Complaints resulting in discipline	203	233	167	134	130	140
Average days complaint to disposal	335	291	264	270	264	250