

The Illinois Records Management Survey

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THE National Records Management Council of New York has been awarded the contract for a records management survey for the executive branch of the State government of Illinois. This survey will be concerned almost wholly with a study of how to create records in such a manner as to improve the efficiency of the State government and at the same time provide adequate documentation of the State's activities. Private industry has long been alert to the relationship between streamlined records and managerial efficiency, but governments have been slow in applying businessmen's techniques to these problems. Earlier surveys in other State and local governments have hardly gone beyond making minor improvements in present systems and putting existing records under retention schedules. The Hoover Commission's reports have pointed out tremendous economies possible for the Federal government in the field of records management, but thus far the work done at Washington has been piecemeal, agency by agency.

The Illinois survey, which will cover all administrative agencies in the State government, will be the most comprehensive study made by any government to date. One feature will be a serious attempt to relieve businessmen and private individuals of paper-work required of them by the State. The Federal Government has barely touched upon this field, though with astounding results. Because of the scope of the survey and the precedents expected to be set, the bidding has aroused great interest on the part of newspapers, the equipment and microfilm industries, and government officials in this and other States.

The Sixty-ninth General Assembly of Illinois at its 1955 regular session appropriated \$200,000 for a "survey of records of the State of Illinois designed to devise efficient and economical methods of

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creating, managing, keeping and disposal of such records." The secretary of state is to "employ a specialist or an organization of specialists in the field of records management to conduct a survey of records of the State of Illinois and to make reports and recommendations to the appropriate officials of the State." An advisory committee, named in the act, comprises the secretary of state, the state treasurer, the auditor of public accounts, the attorney general, and the director of finance.

It is noteworthy that this survey is being sponsored by high State officials other than the Archivist, although of course she has long advocated such a survey. The project forms one of a continuing series of studies aimed at greater efficiency and economy in State government. In this connection may be mentioned: the work of the Commission on Revision of Statutes, a continuing commission created in 1937; the research of the Legislative Council, also created in 1937; the standardization of State position and salary rates, under study since 1943; the activities of the State Employees' Retirement System, created in 1943; the disposal of State records, under the jurisdiction of the State Records Commission, also dating from 1943; the 1951 report of the Schaefer Commission on Reorganization of State Government (popularly called the "Little Hoover Commission"), which has been continued informally by the Institute of Government at the University of Illinois and by the Illinois State Taxpayers Federation; the construction of the new State Office Building, which has brought together under one roof State departments formerly scattered all over the city of Springfield; and the creation of the State Personnel Department, which will apply scientific management procedures, effective July 1, 1957, to employment in both civil service and patronage positions.

For the new survey, the secretary of state, Charles F. Carpentier, asked the State Records Commission to act as a technical advisory group and to recommend "a list of those Record Management Firms which in its judgment, are most competent and experienced and deal exclusively in this field." Since it is impracticable to write specifications for such professional work, these firms were invited to submit proposals based upon what each firm felt it could contribute to the State's records economy within the limits of the appropriation. The proposals received, however, were too varied in contents to serve as a basis for selection of bidders.

From the suggestions made in the proposals and from their own knowledge of the State's needs, the State Records Commission was able to define the areas which the survey is to cover. The "Sug-

gestions for Bidders" reproduced below were sent to each of the companies that expressed a desire to bid. Quality being of greater importance than price, each bidder was instructed to spell out his proposed approach to each of the areas listed. The replies given in the bid indicated whether or not the firm was qualified technically to undertake the work.

Two qualifications in particular were deemed essential: first, experience in the field of public administration; and second, comprehension of the basic difference between governmental and private business archives, namely, the fact that government records have value for documentation beyond and often in quite different fields from their value for purely administrative purposes. These two requirements proved weak elements in bids by firms with experience limited to industrial records. Of the 12 firms that bid, only 4 were considered by the State Records Commission as qualified on the basis of past experience with governmental records.

The officials of the State of Illinois are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and expenses incurred and for the generous assistance given by members of the records management companies in helping to formulate the program.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIDDERS

- I. Objectives of survey
 - A. Increase in the efficiency of state administration through better practices in record making and keeping.
 - B. Elimination of unnecessary paper work in the State government in the field of
 1. Records created by State agencies for administrative purposes.
 2. Reports required to be filed and records required to be kept by private individuals and firms doing business with the State or subject to State regulation or supervision.
 - C. Orderly and planned retirement of records as they cease to have value for current administrative purposes.
 - D. Ensure the creation of a permanent core of records which will give adequate documentation for the various activities of the State government.
- II. Areas of survey
 - A. General area
 1. HB 1093 contemplates that all agencies in the Executive branch of the Illinois State government shall be included in the survey including the constitutional officers, departments under the civil administrative code, and all other offices, boards,

commissions, or agencies in the executive branch of the State government.

2. Priorities as to State agencies to be surveyed and the scope of the survey to be made for the respective agencies shall be established by the Advisory Committee.

B. Specific areas of survey

1. Survey of existing State records

- a. The preparation of an inventory of existing State records with suggested retention schedules is NOT contemplated as a part of the work of the survey.
- b. The contractor will limit his survey of existing records to
 - (1) A study of the desirability of continuing, discontinuing or modifying each category of records now being made and recommending retention schedules for those series which are to be continued.
 - (2) Calling the attention of the heads of State agencies to non-current or semi-current records in their offices and storage agencies which should be sent to the Archives, destroyed as obsolete or kept in the form of microfilm copies.
(All destruction of records and substitution of microfilm copies must, by law, be approved by the State Records Commission.)
 - (3) Advice shall be given to State agencies in establishing procedures and techniques for weeding of files and selection of suitable disposal procedures.

2. Creation of records (birth control of records)

- a. Records made by the agencies themselves.
 - (1) Analysis of records needs, aimed at improving the quality and reducing the volume of each element of paper work.
 - (a) Documentation (permanent records).
 - (b) Controls: issuance control (including among other things, design and control of forms); reports control; correspondence control; case folders controls; filing systems; other applicable controls.
 - (c) Office procedures as they affect or are affected by records making.
 - (2) Integration of paper work crossing agency lines.
- b. Reduction of paper work required by the State on the part of individuals, small business men and firms.
 - (1) Reports required to be made to State agencies.

- (2) Records required to be kept for purposes of State regulation or inspection.
- 3. Microfilm program
 - a. The Contractor shall
 - (1) Evaluate the present microfilm program in each State agency, including applications and utilization of equipment.
 - (2) Indicate areas where microfilming is suitable; establish criteria for determining the relative economy of microfilming records and preserving the records in their original form.
 - (3) Shall advise agencies in setting up procedures for making microfilm which will conform to the standards set by the State Records Commission.
- 4. Mechanization applied to records. (Mechanical, magnetic, electrical and electronic office equipment)
 - a. The contractor shall
 - (1) Evaluate machine applications to existing paper work problems.
 - (2) Study utilization of equipment now in use in State agencies.
 - (3) Establish standards and guides for evaluating and selecting business machines.
 - (4) Make recommendations as to areas in which manual methods are more economical, spelling out reasons for such recommendations.
 - b. The Contractor shall *not*
 - (1) Sell, lease, install or operate such mechanical equipment, even though such equipment may be provided from agency funds.
- 5. Standards for quality of paper, filing supplies (including file folders, file guides, labels, index cards) and other materials used in making or keeping records, also other physical aspects of records making and keeping shall be recommended.
- 6. Methods for preserving and continuing the benefits of this records management survey shall be recommended by the Contractor.
 - a. Training of agency staff in the principles of records management.
 - b. Assistance to State agencies in compiling procedural manuals.
 - c. Recommendations as to creation of the office of a State records management officer (or officers) and the establish-

ment of a State records center or other intermediate care of records.

- d. The Contractor shall set forth necessary legislation to implement his recommendations.
7. Each bidder may include a separate statement as to the unique or particularly strong features of his proposals to which he wishes to call especial attention.
8. Each bidder shall make a statement, as specific as possible, as to his proposed handling of each of the areas set forth in II above.

III. Information about bidders

- A. Lists of clients with dates of completion (or expected completion) of contracts; information as to the size of the contract (in monetary or other terms).
- B. History of the company.
- C. Information concerning the top personnel in the firm (the names, and educational and experience background of each).
- D. Information concerning employees to be assigned to this survey.
 1. Who are they and what are their backgrounds?
 2. How long have they been employed by the bidder?
 3. What types of employees will be brought in for specialized phases of the survey? Where and how recruited?
 4. Nature of proposed supervision of the survey work.
 5. Any other information concerning the bidder's organization and methods of operation which would be pertinent to or helpful in evaluating the proposals, or its officers.
- E. In what other business enterprises is the bidding firm or its officers financially interested?—such as manufacture, leasing or sale of filing, microfilm or other records equipment, operation of commercial records centers, microfilm services, installation or sale of filing systems, making of office management surveys, offering research services or any other types of commercial enterprise related to records making or keeping?

IV. The Bid

- A. Cost of survey (spelled out as to what bidder is including)
 1. The bidders are notified that costs of administrative operations incidental to the survey by the Secretary of State and the Advisory Committee, and salaries of liaison officer or officers while on leave from regular State jobs are to be paid from survey funds.
 2. The proposal must state the number of employees and their job classification and the rate charged for each classification. The

proposal must state the time the contract is expected to be completed and must set forth a total bid price.

3. The contractor will be paid monthly in accordance with the work done under the contract for that month. All vouchers for such monthly payment should be itemized for each job classification indicating the number of employees, the time worked during the period payment is requested and the rate charged for each job classification. Payment shall be made by the Secretary of State in such amount as, in his best judgment, reflects the percentage of work done to the total amount to be done under the contract.
- B. The bidder will state how soon after the contract is signed he will engage in operations under the contract.
- C. Work must be completed and report made to the Advisory Committee not later than April 1, 1957.
- D. Sealed Bids shall be filed with the Secretary of State by 12 noon, C. S. T., Monday, October 3, 1955.