

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL TRUSTEE FOR AMERICAN INDIANS

---

**IARMIM TRANSMITTAL SHEET**

DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	SUBJECT	ACTION
Chapter 4, Section 4.2	CONDUCTING ON-SITE RESEARCH OF FEDERAL RECORDS AT AIRR	NEW
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION		ISSUANCE DATE
Office of Trust Records 505-816-1620		<b>OCT 17 2011</b>

This release describes policy and procedures for conducting on-site research for federal agencies, contractors, and authorized users of federal records stored at the American Indian Records Repository.



---

Ethel J. Abeita  
Director, Office of Trust Records

---

**FILING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Insert: On the OST Enterprise Portal in the Resource Library under Program Offices, OCIO, Office of Trust Records, Indian Affairs Records Management Manual.

Indian Affairs Records Management  
Policy & Procedures Manual

---

**Effective Date:**

**Chapter:** 4.0 American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) Operations

**Section:** 4.2 Conducting On-Site Research of Federal Records at AIRR

**Originating Office:** Office of Trust Records (OTR)

---

**4.2.1 Purpose.**

This chapter establishes policy and procedures to conduct on-site research and access to federal records at the AIRR.

**4.2.2 Authorities.**

- A. 44 U.S.C. § 3101 and § 3301, Federal Records Act, Public Law 81-754.
- B. 5 U.S.C. § 552 and § 552a, Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.
- C. 25 U.S.C. § 4001, et. Seq., the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994, Pub. L. 103-412.
- D. 18 U.S.C. § 641 and § 2071, Concealment, Removal, or Mutilation Generally.
- E. 36 CFR, Chapter XII, National Archives and Records Administration, Subchapter B, Records Management.
- F. 36 CFR, 1228, Subpart G, Damage to, Alienation, and Unauthorized Destruction of Records.
- G. 41 CFR, Sub-Part C, Conduct on Federal Property
- H. 303 DM 6 Indian Fiduciary Trust Records (September 5, 2003).
- I. 441 DM 4, Investigation Requirements

**4.2.3 Policy.**

It is the responsibility of OTR, Division of Records Management Operations (DRMO) to provide on-site research services and access to federal records to authorized representatives of federal agencies, federal contractors, Tribal governments, Tribal representatives, and other researchers.

**4.2.4 Objectives.** The objectives of these procedures are to:

- A. Safeguard and preserve federal records.

Indian Affairs Records Management  
Policy & Procedures Manual

---

**Effective Date:**

**Chapter:** 4.0 American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) Operations

**Section:** 4.2 Conducting On-Site Research of Federal Records at AIRR

**Originating Office:** Office of Trust Records (OTR)

---

B. Maintain the integrity of federal records while providing necessary access to those records.

C. Provide uniform procedures for research activities.

D. Provide on-site support services to researchers.

**4.2.5 Responsibilities.** The responsibilities for the execution of this policy and compliance with the procedures shall be as follows:

A. Director, OTR. The OTR Director or designee shall approve requests for access to federal records at AIRR after consultation with the Department of Interior's (DOI) Office of the Solicitor (SOL); and, as necessary, from other DOI or OST offices, OTR managers and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) officials. The OTR Director reserves the right to deny or revoke research requests, as necessary.

B. Chief, DRMO. The Chief, DRMO or designee shall be consulted on whether specific requests can be accommodated on a case-by-case basis. The Chief, DRMO or designee shall accommodate approved on-site research requests at the AIRR, which includes:

1. Assigning an OTR employee to facilitate the research request.
2. Assigning space to accommodate the research activity.

**4.2.6 Procedures.**

A. To Request On-Site Visit/Access to Conduct Research at the AIRR. Submit all requests in writing, to the OTR Director for approval, and include the full name(s) of the individual(s) who will be researching federal records, date of proposed visit, a list of boxes to be researched, the need for any special equipment or service (i.e., laptop access, duplication services, etc.). The researcher must provide a general description of the research topic if the exact boxes are not known.

B. Legal Research Requests. Research requests from an Indian tribe or its representatives, federal agencies and/or its contractors related to a litigation matter, must be in writing and submitted to the DOI-SOL. The SOL will notify OTR Director in writing of the request, provide OTR with the name(s) of the researcher(s), box(es) to be reviewed and date(s) of research.

**Effective Date:**

**Chapter:** 4.0 American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) Operations

**Section:** 4.2 Conducting On-Site Research of Federal Records at AIRR

**Originating Office:** Office of Trust Records (OTR)

---

C. Non-legal/Non-litigation Research Requests. All research requests must be in writing providing the information as listed in step 4.2.6.A. above.

1. Requests from internal DOI offices, external federal agencies, and federal contractors must be submitted to the OTR Director for approval.
2. Requests from Tribes, individuals, or individuals conducting research on behalf of a Tribe must be submitted to the Department of the Interior Freedom of Information Act office in order to obtain copies of federal records.

D. Research Request. The OTR Director shall provide written notification of approval/disapproval on each research request submitted and provide a courtesy copy to the DRMO.

E. Security Requirements for Researcher(s). Researcher(s) must have an approved security background clearance performed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or a contractor or private company equivalent to those investigations performed by OPM, in order to access federal records.

Exception: After consultation with the SOL, OTR may waive the security clearance requirement on a case-by-case basis for general trust/non-Privacy Act materials only when the researcher is solely performing individual research. OTR will evaluate requests for waiver on security clearance requirements by non-legal researcher(s) on a case-by-case basis and when the researcher(s) will be at the facility for a one-time visit to conduct research. When a waiver is granted, an OTR employee will be assigned to the researcher(s) to ensure federal records are not removed, damaged, or destroyed.

F. Research Authorization Revocation. The OTR Director reserves the right to revoke authorization granted to any researcher at any time for non-compliance with established rules.

1. Failure to abide by the established rules will result in the revocation of permission to conduct research.
2. The revocation may last up to sixty (60) days for refusal to follow established rules and/or the Research Agreement (IARMM Form 4003).
3. The sponsoring organization of the researcher, if applicable, will receive a written notice from the Chief, DRMO of the decision to deny further research by the identified individual(s) beyond the sixty (60) day period.

**Effective Date:**

**Chapter:** 4.0 American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) Operations

**Section:** 4.2 Conducting On-Site Research of Federal Records at AIRR

**Originating Office:** Office of Trust Records (OTR)

---

4. Researcher(s) may appeal revocations to the OTR Director within thirty (30) days from the date of the written revocation notice. Decisions made by the OTR Director are final. OTR will deny access to AIRR during the appeal period.

5. The researcher's organization may re-apply for research privileges at the end of the revocation period.

#### **4.2.7 Procedures for Conducting On-Site Research.**

A. On-Site Research. First time researchers must become familiar with the rules by viewing the video "**Conducting Research at the American Indian Records Repository**". They must also review and sign the Research Agreement (IARMM Form 4003) prior to accessing federal records. Frequent researchers will be required to view the video and sign a new Research Agreement, every three (3) months.

B. Box Content Verification. Prior to conducting research, each researcher must verify the box contents match the BISS inventory of the box. An OTR employee will provide the researcher with instructions on how to complete this process. All researcher(s) must complete this process, including OTR research staff, using the applicable Box Content Verification Standard Operating Procedure, which will be provided to researchers by an OTR employee.

1. The BISS inventory will be used to verify the box contents.

2. An OTR employee will provide the researcher(s) with specific information on what constitutes a discrepancy and is reportable to OTR.

3. Once a researcher completes the verification process, an OTR employee must concur with the researcher's findings. The researcher will repeat the verification process upon completion of research, before the box is returned to NARA.

C. The OTR Director will receive a report of discrepancies discovered within five (5) working days after the end of the preceding month.

#### **4.2.8 Appendix.**

IARMM Form 4003, Research Agreement.

Flow Charts.

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL TRUSTEE FOR AMERICAN INDIANS

AMERICAN INDIAN RECORDS REPOSITORY

Research Agreement

Neither the American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) nor the records stored there are open to the general public. Research may be conducted when authorized by the Director, Office of Trust Records (OTR). RESEARCH ROOM RULES are in conformance with National Archives and Records Administration guidelines for security and preservation regulations to protect records.

The purpose of this research agreement is to:

1. Establish requirements for individuals that use and handle records at the AIRR.
2. Ensure records at the AIRR are safeguarded and preserved.
3. Prevent the destruction of federal records.
4. Ensure researchers are fully aware of the penalties for unlawful or accidental removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of federal records (or the attempt to do so), which includes a fine, imprisonment, or both (18 U.S.C. 641 and 2071). In addition, this agreement serves to make researchers aware they are subject to the provisions of 41 CFR, Subpart C – Conduct on Federal Property, as well as all rules and regulations issued and posted or distributed by the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) and OTR.

This agreement may be transferred to appropriate Federal, state, local or foreign agencies, when relevant to civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations or prosecutions. This information may be disclosed by OST/OTR in the performance of its duties. The information may be disclosed to the U.S. Department of the Interior, or to a court or adjudicative body in cases involving the mutilation or unlawful removal of records.

**The following requirements must be adhered to in order to conduct research at the AIRR.** The AIRR premises are protected by electronic and video surveillance systems. Upon arrival at the AIRR, all visitors are required to report to the main entrance. There is only one designated entry point to enter and exit the facility. All visitors are required to pass through a magnetometer. Persons who have pacemakers or other medical devices that might be disrupted (or give a false reading) by exposure to the magnetometer, should ask to be screened with a hand-held wand.

**Before you enter the Research Room:**

1. Only authorized individuals are allowed access into the AIRR. No other visitors are allowed to accompany the authorized individual. Presentation of a federal, state, or tribal issued photo identification card is required upon entering the AIRR.

2. Authorized individuals are assigned an OTR AIRR Temporary Visitor's badge, which must be visible and worn above the waist at all times while in the facility.
3. Established research hours are Monday thru Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Anyone needing to research earlier or later than the established research hours, must make prior arrangements with the Chief, Division of Records Management Operations (or designee) of the AIRR.
4. Personal property is subject to inspection by the on-duty Security Guard or an AIRR employee. In accordance with 41 CFR, Subpart C, federal agencies may, at their discretion, inspect packages, briefcases and other containers in the immediate possession of visitors, employees or other persons arriving on, working at, visiting, or departing from federal property. Upon the arrest of a person who violates the provisions of 41 CFR, Subpart C, federal agencies may conduct a full search of a person and the vehicle the person is driving or occupying.
5. Personal computers, laptops, personal digital assistants (PDAs), recording devices, flash drives, and hand held photo imaging devices (including cell phones) are not allowed in the facility. Official use of laptop computers and scanning equipment must be authorized by the OTR Director (or designee) and are subject to inspection upon entry and exit at the AIRR.
6. Notes, references, lists of records to be consulted, and other materials may be admitted if they are essential to the authorized individual's research work. However, the authorized individual must present these materials to the Chief, Division of Records Management Operations (or designee) upon entrance into the AIRR. These materials will be subject to inspection prior to exiting the AIRR.
7. Researchers must exercise all possible care to prevent damage to the records. Prior to entering or returning to the research room, authorized individuals must ensure hands are clean and free from lotions and hand sanitizers. Disposable gloves and masks are available upon request.
8. Researchers whose duties require handling Privacy Act records shall take care to protect the integrity, security, and confidentiality of the records at all times. Researchers shall not disclose any information contained in the Privacy Act systems of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of the individual to whom the record pertains. The Privacy Act of 1974, Title 5, U.S.C. 552a, contains provisions for criminal penalties for knowingly and willfully disclosing information.
9. Authorized researchers must view a video entitled "Conducting Research at the American Indian Records Repository" and read and sign this agreement prior to accessing the requested records.

Inside The Research Area:

1. Researchers are responsible for safeguarding the records that have been provided to them. Researchers may not bring items such as books, magazines, or newspapers unrelated to their research into the research area.

2. Use of pens, markers, highlighters, colored pencils, pressure sensitive notes such as Post-Its, are prohibited in the research area. OTR may provide notepaper and a pencil, upon request.
3. Eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum, mints, cough drops, or smokeless tobacco is prohibited. Disruptive behavior and inappropriate conduct is prohibited.
4. Prior to conducting research on box contents, each researcher must verify that the box contents match the BISS inventory of the box. If files appear to be out of order, the researcher must put in correct order according to the BISS inventory.
5. Researchers may work on **ONLY** one box or bound volume at a time. This means **ONLY** one box should be placed on the work area (desk or tabletop) at a time.
6. Researchers may work with **ONLY** one folder from a box at a time. A Charge-Out card is required. This card serves as an indicator to return the folder to its original order within a box.
7. The records should stay flat on the table at all times.
8. Do not leave folders out nor boxes open for any period of time while away from the research area.
9. Records must not be leaned on, fastened with clips or rubber bands, written on, folded, traced, or handled in any way to cause damage.
10. If records are disassembled for copying or imaging, only stainless steel staples or stainless steel paper clips may be used to reassemble documents. All supplies will be furnished by AIRR upon request.
11. Return box(es) to the designated area (streamliner, pallet, etc.) when finished with a box indicating it is ready to be confirmed that all contents are in the box and in the correct order according to the BISS inventory by an OTR employee.
12. Microfilm readers are limited. A researcher may use a reader as long as necessary so long as no one else is waiting to use the reader. A time limit will be imposed if others are waiting. Handling of microfilm must be with white or plastic gloves to avoid smudging the film.
13. When in doubt on how to handle records within a box, consult an OTR employee.

Researchers may have their privilege to conduct research at the AIRR revoked if they fail to abide by these rules in the research agreement, or if researcher by their actions demonstrate that they present a danger to the records or annoyance to other researchers or employees at the AIRR.

AIRR will revoke access for research for up to sixty (60) days for refusal to follow the rules. If applicable, the researcher's organization will receive a written notice from the Chief, Division of Records Management Operations, within five (5) working days of the decision to deny further research by the identified individual(s) beyond the sixty (60) day period. Revocations may be appealed to the Director,

Office of Trust Records, within thirty (30) days of the effective date of revocation. Organization(s) may re-apply for research privileges at the end of the revocation period. OTR will deny access to AIRR during the appeal period.

**I HAVE READ AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES AND REGULATIONS, AS IDENTIFIED IN THIS AGREEMENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS AGREEMENT IS VALID FOR THREE (3) MONTHS FROM THE DATE SIGNED.**

_____	_____	_____
PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
_____	_____	
ORGANIZATION	CONTACT NUMBER	

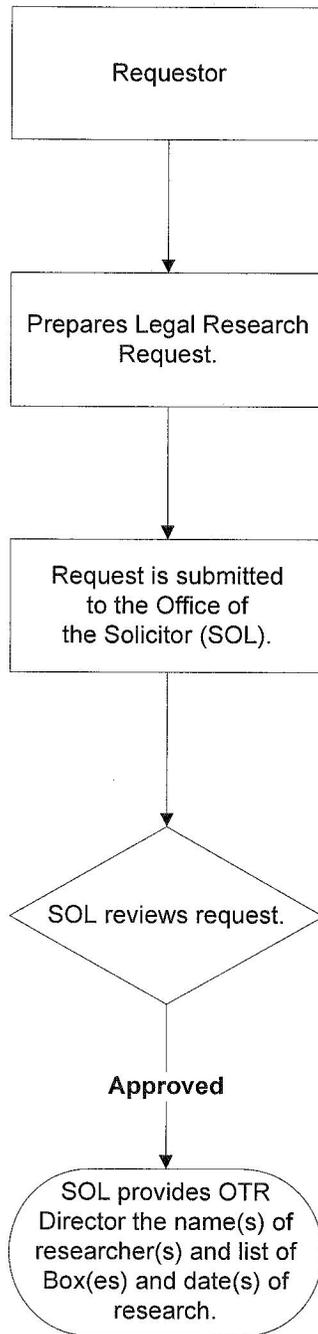
---

FOR OTR USE ONLY  
(Do not write below this line)

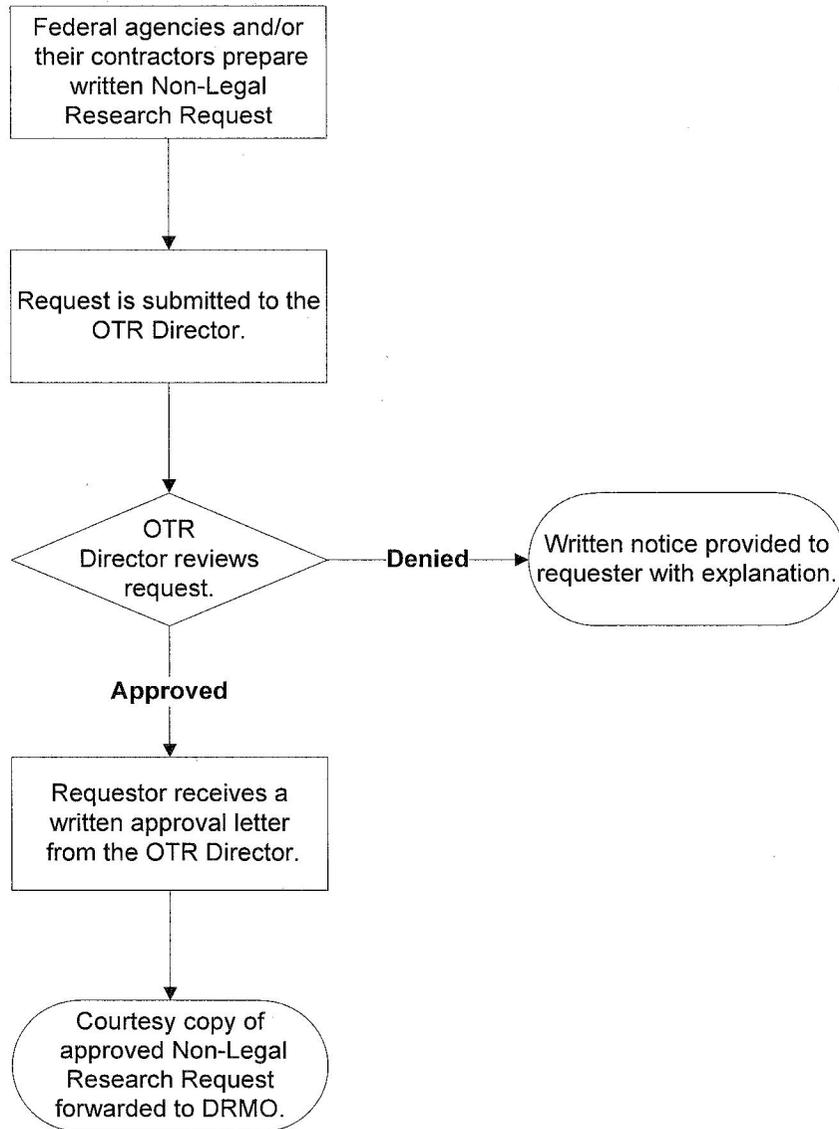
NOTES:

_____	_____
OTR EMPLOYEE	DATE

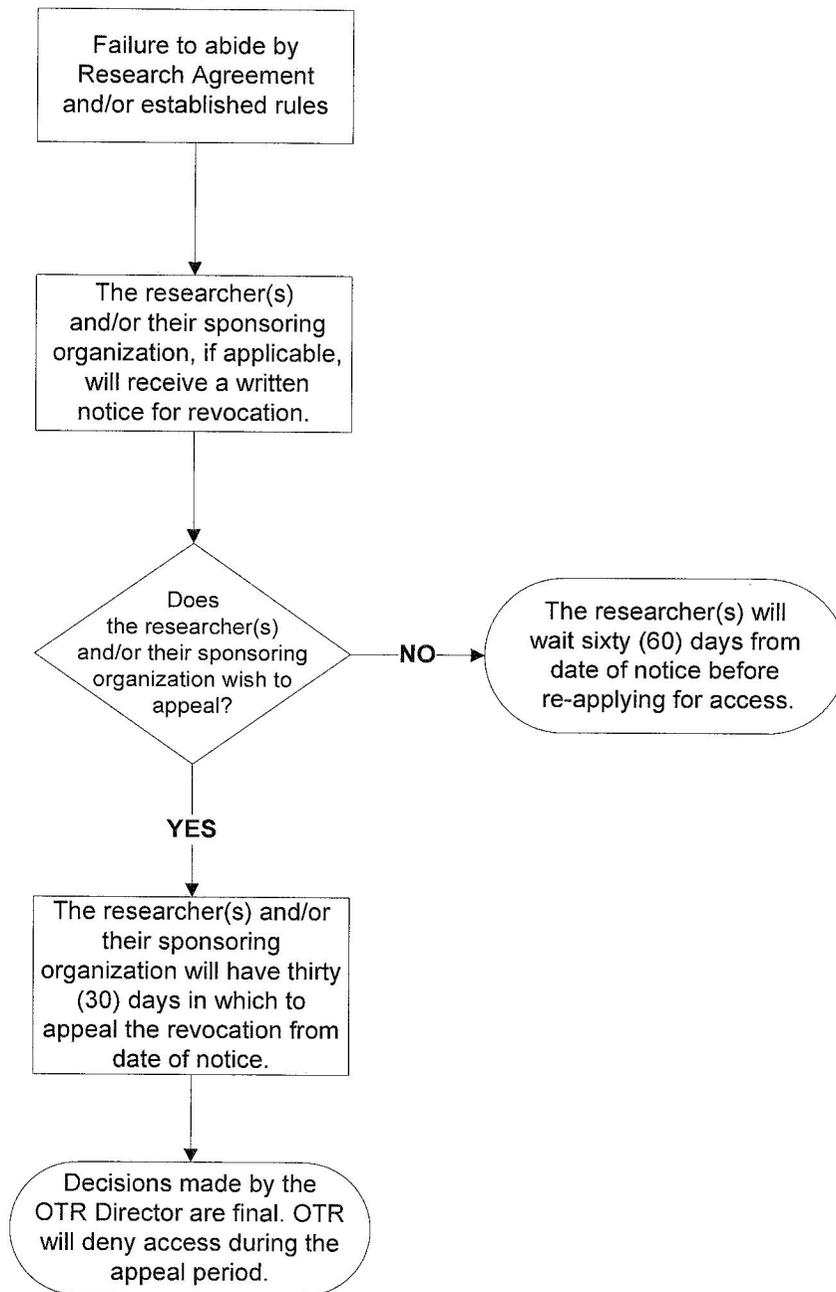
**Request for On-Site Research of Federal  
Records at the AIRR Related to Litigation**



**Non-Legal/Non-Litigation Research Requests  
for On-site Research of Federal Records at the  
AIRR by Federal Agencies and its Contractors**



## Revocation for Onsite Research at AIRR



**Visiting Researcher**  
**Box Content Verification Procedures**

