

## State Records Manual

### Records Officer

A Records Officer is a year-round, full-time agency official who possesses a broad understanding of programs and records of an agency and who is designated by the agency head to coordinate the agency records program or programs for the management of all agency records – regardless of format or final disposition. To more effectively manage the records of the agency, agency heads may choose to appoint more than one records officer.

#### Duties:

Oversees and facilitates agency efforts to inventory, evaluate and schedule records and develop methods to control the creation, maintenance and disposition of records. Notifies State Archives and Records Bureau when new records series are created and when changes in record keeping require new or revised schedules. Works with assistant state archivists from the State Archives and Records Bureau to develop or revise records series retention and disposition schedules for all agency records, regardless of physical form or format.

Assists agency personnel in determining the correct records series schedules to apply to agency records. Reviews transfer forms for accuracy and completeness by comparison to the current approved schedules prior to signing and forwarding the transfer request to the State Archives and Records Bureau for final approval. Assists in the coordination of the physical transfer of records. Maintains a master set of completed transfer forms for the department.

Assists the agency head in preparing a Department Information Sheet listing the records officer(s) and authorized users appointed by the agency head. Obtains agency head signature and forwards Department Information Sheet to the State Archives and Records Bureau. Requests and receives records on behalf of non-authorized agency users. Facilitates urgent agency retrieval requests by giving one-time-only, temporary authorizations for non-authorized users.

Coordinates agency review and completion of disposal notices for records eligible for destruction at the State Records Center. Forwards original completed and signed disposal forms to the State Archives and Records Bureau for destruction implementation. Maintains a master set of Notices of Intent to Destroy and Disposal Certificate for the department. Coordinates the authorized destruction of records, which occurs within the agency.

Attends training sessions and implements training programs to assist agency staff in following records management procedures.

Notifies and seeks advice from the State Archives and Records Bureau in the event of a disaster related to agency records.

## Cleaning Out Files

### What must I keep and how long must I keep it?

As state employees, virtually all of us bear the responsibility of managing records, all records - whether they are records that must be kept permanently or records that are kept for a pre-determined length of time and then destroyed. Records that range from original records that document the program functions and responsibilities of all state agencies to copies of technical catalogs and manuals kept solely for the convenience of multiple users.

As you do your part to manage the ever-growing expanse of state government records, please keep in mind three very important points:

1. Record means a document, book, paper, electronic record, photograph, sound recording, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, produced, executed, or received pursuant to law in connection with the transaction of official business of state government. Record does not include library and museum related material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes or stocks of publications and unprocessed forms.
2. Records are state property. All records made or received by or under the authority of or coming into the custody, control, or possession of public officials of the state in the course of their public duties are the property of the state and shall not be mutilated, destroyed, transferred, removed, or otherwise damaged or disposed of, in whole or in part, except as provided by law or by rule.
3. Iowa Code Chapter 305 gives the State Records Commission the authority and responsibility to develop records series retention and disposition schedules. These retention schedules describe the length of time records series of an agency or multiple agencies must be retained in active and inactive status and provide authorization for a final disposition of the records series by destruction or permanent retention. In order to implement the approved retention schedules at the agency level, agency heads are responsible for appointing one or more records officers to be the point of contact with the state archives and records program. Every records officer has a copy of the state records manual which includes retention schedules for all state government records.

As you participate in clean out your files day, use your agency records officer and the State Records Commission approved retention schedules to assist you in determining:

1. which records are still active and therefore must be kept in your office for a pre-determined length of time
2. which records are now eligible for transfer to the state records center
3. which records can be destroyed directly from your office, and finally
4. which records can be transferred to the State Archives for permanent preservation.

### Retention of Electronic Records

The State Records Commission, pursuant to Iowa Code section 305.8(1)(a) and(g), is developing guidelines on agency maintenance of non-permanent records in electronic records keeping systems. The Commission is not yet prepared to adopt binding guidelines, in part, because it continues to solicit feedback and input from affected agencies. **The following guidelines should accordingly be viewed as informal advice and not as a binding statement of requirements.**

Questions or comments concerning the guidelines may be forwarded to [jeffrey.dawson@iowa.gov](mailto:jeffrey.dawson@iowa.gov).

## **Recommended Guideline for the Retention of State Records in Electronic Form**

The purpose of the State Records Commission, as defined in Iowa Code Chapter 305, is to adopt government information policies, standards, and guidelines to do all of the following:

- Provide for economy and efficiency in the creation, organization, maintenance, administrative use, security, public availability, and final disposition of government records.
- Ensure creation of proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of state government agencies to protect the legal and financial rights of the state and of persons directly affected by the government's activities.
- Identify and preserve state government records that document the history and development of the state.

In recent months the Commission has seen an increase in the number of records series retention and disposition schedules for records in electronic form being submitted for review and approval. We are also aware that many electronic records have no formally defined records schedules. Records schedules specifically define: a) the retention period for State records; and b) the ultimate disposition of the records (i.e. either destruction at a future date or permanent retention).

Iowa Administrative Code section 671—7.4(2) states that “a record scheduled for permanent preservation in an agency shall be retained in the agency in perpetuity.

- a. An agency shall maintain a record scheduled for permanent preservation in the agency in a manner that will ensure the continued availability of an accurate, authentic, reliable record in perpetuity.
- b. An agency shall make a record scheduled for permanent preservation in the agency available in perpetuity for public inspection and copying in accordance with agency fair information practices rules.”

Those records with a defined retention period and destruction date (referred to as non-permanent records) should meet the same criteria for availability and integrity for the duration of their retention period.

### **State Agency Responsibility for the Availability Electronic Records**

It is the responsibility of state agencies to ensure that non-permanent records created and maintained in electronic systems remain accessible for their prescribed retention period. This requires taking into account the issues of refreshing, migration, backup, and security when planning, implementing, and administering electronic systems. Back-ups produced for system recovery purposes do not serve a recordkeeping function and do not substitute for security copies of records.

To ensure the accessibility of non-permanent records in electronic systems for the duration of the records' prescribed retention period, state agencies should establish internal procedures for creation, use, maintenance, storage, retention, preservation, and disposition of state records in electronic form. The procedures should:

- Integrate the management of electronic records with other records and information technology resources of the agency;
- Identify the electronic records created, used, received, or maintained by the agency to ensure the records appear on the agency's records retention schedules;
- Ensure the development and maintenance of documentation of electronic records systems used by the agency that specifies the characteristics necessary for reading or processing the records, including a narrative description of the system and the physical and technical characteristics of the records;
- Ensure the retention of the agency's electronic records until a disposition period has been approved by the State Records Commission;

- Ensure that an electronic record's content, structure, and context<sup>1</sup> are evident and easily retrieved and understood;
- Protect any confidential, privileged, proprietary, or security information;
- Provide for the management of records maintained on the agency's website to ensure that web content is trustworthy, complete, accessible, and durable for as long as the records retention schedule applicable to those records requires;
- Provide a security plan to prevent unintentional or unauthorized addition, modification, deletion, or corruption of electronic records and to ensure routine back-up of essential information against loss due to equipment malfunction, power interruption, human acts, and natural events;
- Provide for the transfer of long-term and permanent electronic records from an existing system to a new system if it is evident that the existing system (hardware, software or both) will become obsolete or inoperable;
- Ensure the agency's electronic records are readable and accessible for as long as the applicable records retention schedule requires; and
- Ensure the consideration of the following factors before the selection of a storage media or the conversion of an electronic record from one media to another:
  - Length of the retention period for the record;
  - Maintenance necessary for the entire life cycle of the record;
  - Cost of storing and retrieving the record;
  - Time needed to retrieve the record;
  - Portability of the medium, including the readability of medium by multiple manufacturers; and
  - Transferability of the record from one medium to another.

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<sup>1</sup> Each record has three components, including content (substance of the record); structure (format of the data and internal organization of record content); and context (organizational, functional, and operational circumstances surrounding the record's creation, receipt, storage, use; also includes creation, modification, and disposition dates and record's relationship with other records.)