

## Retention Schedules

Justin Dragosani-Brantingham  
Government Records Archivist  
Kansas State Historical Society  
jdragosani@kshs.org, 785-272-8681 ext. 287



## What is a Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

A timetable that identifies a record grouped into series, listing its description, appropriate length of time to be retained, its disposition, and even authority or restrictions throughout its life cycle.



## What Can a Records Retention Schedule Do?

- Ensure compliance with records laws
- Identify and protect vital records
- Determine appropriate records media
- Maximize use of appropriate storage
- Eliminate unnecessary handling
- Improve retrieval efficiency
- Provide security for restricted records
- Provide control throughout the records' life cycle, including their final disposition.



## A Retention Schedule/program Immediate Benefit

Organizations without retention programs can often remove from higher-cost offices areas as much as 55% of records being kept there--as either obsolete (to be destroyed immediately) or inactive (must be retained but may be transferred to a low-cost records center" (Robert Allerdig, CRM, FAI, Records Management Consultant).



## KSHS Mission

KSHS, founded in 1875 by newspaper editors, has this mission: to identify, collect, preserve, interpret, and disseminate materials and information pertaining to Kansas history in order to assist the public in understanding, appreciating, and caring for the heritage of Kansas.

We certainly can accomplish this through records management.



KSHS records management section seeks to provide the knowledge and skills training that will enable participants to effectively manage and preserve records and provide recordkeeping education to ensure compliance with state and/or federal regulations.

This is facilitated through the publication of the State and Local Government Management Manuals in 1997; participation in quarterly State Records Board meetings to review and/or modify state and local records retention schedules; presentations across Kansas; the KSHS website; and correspondence by email, post, fax or telephone.



## The Life Cycle of Records

<i>Creation</i> Receiving or generating information for the first time	<i>Active/Current</i> Using or referring to it regularly in the course of business
<i>Inactive/Noncurrent</i> Infrequent need, but kept for fiscal, administrative, legal, or historical purposes	<i>Disposition</i> The final fate of a record: how long will it be kept, by whom, and under what conditions



## Types of Retention Schedules

- General. Includes records series not found in all offices such as correspondence, or accounts payable, contracts, or subject files, etc.
- Office Specific. Includes records unique to an office, such as deed records, notices of approved intents to drill, emergency dispatch logs.



## Steps to Developing a Records Retention Schedule

- Professional staff must coordinate the program—designate a records officer
- Contact the KSHS records management section or and/or other government entities; even public or private organizations or companies for guidance
- Obtain management support
- Interview the records custodians
- Inventory/survey all records
- Conduct legal research
- Appraise the records
- Design a final draft
- Get commentary on a final draft
- Approve and disseminate the schedule



## Responsibility and Authority

The records management officer should be given the responsibility and authority to coordinate:

- Development of a records retention schedule
- Legal destruction of obsolete records
- Development of micrographics, electronic and data processing systems
- Training of staff or other persons on techniques



## The Support of Management

Support from the top down provides for a successful records management program. Management reviewing a records management proposal can be convinced by:

- Cost savings and cost versus overall benefit
- Consequences of a legally deficient records program (i.e., loss of rights, litigation, loss of time and money)
- Good publicity
- Space savings
- Better utilization of resources (people and money)



## Support of Management (continued)

Get management to “buy into” a records management program including a records retention schedule. Develop a strategy to address the records retention schedule that has management authority mandating it. Records custodians can be reluctant to share, but under these circumstances will have little choice. The opposite is also true. Sometimes it is management that does not see the value in it, especially if it makes them more accountable.



## Surveying Steps

- Select and train personnel required for the project
- Interview records custodians
- Examine records
- Complete survey form for each records series
- Review records statutes/regulations on a local, state, and federal level



## Records Schedule Survey Sample

A screenshot of a web-based form titled "LOCAL RECORDS SURVEY/INVENTORY FORM". The form has several sections with labels and input fields, including "Organization Name", "Location", "Series Title", "Custodian Name", "Contact Info", "Retention", and "Disposition".

## Completing the Inventory Form

- 1-3. Describe the records' organizational unit.
4. Indicate the most exact location of the record series.
5. Identify the records custodian and his/her title.
6. Enter the contact info for the records custodian.
7. Provide a title that most accurately describes the records series. Avoid pseudonyms or nicknames.



## Completing the Inventory Form (continued)

Ask yourself:

- Are the records interfiled?
- Do the records have a common function?
- Do the records have the same retention and disposition requirements?



## Completing the Inventory Form (continued)

8. Summarize the nature and purpose of the record series. Explain why a series was created and its function. Make a complete list of types of documents in a series. Avoid repeating the series title.
9. Be as inclusive with the dates as possible.
10. Provide information on the types of record formats.
11. How are the records arranged?



## Completing the Inventory Form (continued)

12. What are the records stored in? The volume of any container can be found by multiplying the length x width x depth and dividing the total by the number 1728.
13. Is the record still created, and at what rate of accumulation?
14. What is the record usage and how does it change? Low record usage could mean a change in record storage.



## Completing the Inventory Form (continued)

15. Is this the record copy or a convenience copy? Technology plays a large part in this.
16. Decide if restrictions exist, and cite exact reason.
17. Note any statutes or regulations that affect management of the record series.
18. Provide the recommendation for retention.
19. Provide the recommendation for final disposition.



## Completing the Inventory Form (continued)

20. Is it a vital record?

Vital records are essential to the continuity of services during a disaster or the restoration of daily business when it has been interrupted.

- Identify and select for protection records vital to the continuation of business
- Vital records can be accessed or reconstructed quickly to resume operations
- Part of agency disaster prevention plan



## Completing the Inventory Form (continued)

21. Provide any significant information or additional comments about the records.
22. List the name of the person(s) who completed the inventory form. Be specific. Avoid initials.
23. Give the contact information of the person(s) who completed the form.
24. Record the date the inventory was completed.



## Appraising Means Analyzing Records' Values

In order to establish the final retention and disposition of a record, it is necessary to appraise it through four key values:

- Administrative
  - Used in performing current and future work. Includes policy and operational.
- Fiscal
  - Financial transactions and accounting. Includes attention to audit requirements.



## Appraising (continued)

- Legal
  - Evidence of legally enforceable rights or actions. Includes legal decisions, opinions, agreements such as contracts, records of actions taken such as claims.
- Historical
  - Even after possibly losing Administrative, Fiscal, or Legal value, these records provide authentic essential evidence of enduring value. Includes organizational origin and structure, policies or actions, and events.



## Sample Retention Schedule Entry



## How to implement a schedule

Once you have a schedule, what do you do with it?

- Maintain upper management support to enforce it
- Disseminate it via the appropriate media or mode
- Train agency personnel to follow it
- Conduct an annual purge
- Establish or modify the filing system, for paper and electronic formats



## Creation of New Records Series

- Consistent training of agency personnel, either annually or at intervals. It could be all encompassing or thematic based on need.
- Reminders – calendar and fiscal years
- Reevaluation. This could mean a regular committee meeting, meeting of the records officer with management, or other procedure where any additions or modifications are addressed.



## State Records Board

The State Records Board meets quarterly at KSHS to decide on additions or modifications to the state or local government general and office/agency specific retention schedules.

- It has authority over all state and county records.
- It has recommending authority only over municipalities or townships.
- KSHS prepares documentation, and assists, records and implements its decisions.



## KANSAS RECORDS STATUTES

Government Records Preservation Act

(K.S.A. 45-401 through 45-413)

Public Records Act

(K.S.A. 75-3501 through 75-3518)

Kansas Open Records Act

(K.S.A. 45-215 through 45-229)

Municipality Retention Periods

(K.S.A. 12-120 through 12-121)



## Applicable Records Laws

Several state laws impact the management of local government records. Section 45-217 (f)(1) of the Open Records Act defines public records as *Any recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, which is made, maintained or kept by or is in the possession of any public agency ...* See also K.S.A. 45-402 (d) and K.S.A. 75-3501.



## Applicable Records Laws continued

Section 45-217 (e)(1) defines a public agency as *The state or any political or taxing subdivision of the state, or any office, officer, agency instrumentally thereof, or any other entity receiving or expending and supported in whole or in part by public funds appropriated by the state or by public funds of any political subdivision of the state.* The term political subdivision is synonymous with local government. See also K.S.A. 45-402 (b).



## Municipal Records Schedules

There are only two statutes that specifically govern KS Municipal records retention.

It is recommended that municipalities follow these, and use county schedules or other established city schedules as examples to develop their own.



## KSA 12-120

The only "hard" authority for municipal records retention in Kansas.

It lists only 11 record series retention periods



## KSA 12-120

- Claims and purchase orders attached thereto, five years
- Warrants or warrant checks, paid, five years
- Duplicates of receipts, three years
- Duplicates of utility bills sent to customers, three years
- Accounting records of utility customers, three years
- Duplicates of licenses issued for license fees or taxes, three years
- Bonds of officers or employees, 10 years



## KSA 12-120 continued

- Insurance policies, five years, the period beginning at expiration of the policy unless a claim is pending
- Cancelled checks, five years
- Requisition and duplicate purchase orders, three years
- Bonds and coupons, if any, stamped paid or cancelled and returned by the fiscal agent, five years, the period beginning at the date of maturity of the bond or coupon



## KSA 12-121

Nothing in KSA 12-121 shall be deemed to apply to records, documents or papers not specifically mentioned nor to authorize the destruction of records, documents or papers which in their nature should be preserved permanently, nor to prohibit destruction of records, documents or papers obviously of only temporary value after a reasonable time.



## Municipal Schedule—Using County Schedules as a Guideline

- Approved record series common to most county agencies
- Establishes the minimum retention
- Generally reflects audit requirements
- Apply access restrictions with caution
- Be aware there may be other state or federal retention requirements

<http://www.kshs.org/archives/schedloc.htm>



## Summary

Records retention schedules are essential to a good records management program.

Governments, organizations, and companies all benefit in numerous ways from a timetable that identifies a record grouped into series, listing its description, appropriate length of time to be retained, its disposition, and even authority or restrictions throughout its life cycle.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS . . .

