

# Records Management for Managers & Supervisors

## Requirements and Responsibilities

For More Information:  
<http://publicrecordsboard.wi.gov> or  
Contact Your Agency Records Officer

### WHAT ARE WISCONSIN'S LAWS RELATED TO PUBLIC RECORDS?

- Wis. Stat. § 16.61(2)(b) defines "public records" for the purposes of records retention and disposition
- Wis. Stat. § 19.32(2) defines "records" for purposes of the records access and disclosure provisions of Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31-19.39 (known as the public records law or the open records law)

### WHY RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

- Ensure statutory and regulatory compliance
- Support discovery and public records requests
- Preserve the rights of citizens to access public records
- Support better decision making
- Safeguard vital information
- Preserve organizational memory
- Reduce operating costs
- Minimize litigation risk

### WHAT PUBLIC RECORDS RESPONSIBILITIES MIGHT YOU HAVE?

- Ensure your program area business activities and decisions are documented, as appropriate
- Know program area public records and ensure they have an approved records schedule
- Safeguard confidential, sensitive and personally identifiable information (PII)
- Ensure public records are filed for safe storage and efficient retrieval
- Ensure public records are only disposed of in accordance with an approved schedule
- Establish methods to address legal holds and halt public records disposition
- Identify and transfer public records prior to employee departures
- Ensure staff is knowledgeable about records management
- Communicate records roles and responsibilities to employees

### WHAT PUBLIC RECORDS MIGHT YOU HAVE?

- Information pertaining to advisory boards, councils and committees
- Program, policy and procedure development documentation
- Program area activity, production and employee reports and files
- Business-related memos or correspondence
- Public records requests and responses
- Reports to senior management
- Calendars, schedules and daily activity logs
- Meeting materials

***Wisconsin Public Records Board (PRB): Protecting the legal, financial and historical interests of the state in public records.***

## What is a Public Record?

### Created in the course of business

Examples: *correspondence and memos (paper and electronic), agreements, studies, reports*

### Received for action

Examples: *Information or public records requests, controlled correspondence*

### Mandated by statute or regulation

Examples: *statutorily required programs, administrative records, dockets, equal rights complaints*

## How Do I Manage My Public Records?

### Policies-Records Schedules

- Identify public records and how long to keep them
- Know what to do with them afterwards

### Filing

- Use or develop a filing system to organize and categorize public records

### People

- Communicate records roles and responsibilities
- Know your Records Officer or coordinators. Contact them with questions.

*Note: Your agency may **only** legally dispose of public records as approved by an authorized records schedule*

## What Qualities Do Public Records Have?

### Document state activities

Examples: *calendars, meeting minutes, project reports*

### Support financial obligations or legal claims

Examples: *grants, contracts, litigation case files or audits*

### Communicate agency requirements

Examples: *guidance documents, policies, procedures*

## What is a Retention/Disposition Schedule?

Retention schedules:

- Group and describe related public records.
- Mandate **how long** public records are kept (retention).
- Mandate **what happens** to public records at the end of that time period (disposition).
- Are promulgated as policy via statewide [General Records Schedule \(GRS\)](#) or agency specific Record Disposition Authorization (RDA).

## Where Might Public Records Occur?

*Note: **Information content** determines what constitutes a record and not the format in which the information is generated.*

### Email and Voicemail

**Social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.**

### Websites

### Videotapes/DVDs

### Webcasts/Webinars

### Calendars

**Documents, spreadsheets, databases**

**Personal devices if used for agency business**

### Audio recordings

### Maps and blueprints

## What is Not a Public Record?

### Reference materials and stock copies

Examples: *vendor catalogs, phone books, agency publications, blank forms*

### Duplicate copies

Examples: *copies of records (paper or electronic) for convenience or reference purposes only*

### Draft or working papers

Examples: *draft documents without substantive comments, rough notes, calculations.*

*(It should be noted that some drafts are needed to support a decision trail or are otherwise required by an RDA)*

### General announcements and unsolicited email (internal or external)

Examples: *reminders received by all staff, listserv messages, spam*