

# Records Management for Managers & Supervisors

## Requirements and Responsibilities

## Wisconsin Public Records Board

Protecting legal, financial and historical interests of the state and local government in public records.

### **WHERE ARE PUBLIC RECORDS DEFINED?**

- 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 PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT?**

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

### **WHAT RECORDS RESPONSIBILITIES DO MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS HAVE?**

- Ensure staff has basic knowledge about records management
- Document program area business activities and decisions
- Know program area business records and ensure they managed according to an approved records disposition authorization (RDA)
- Ensure public records are disposed in accordance with an approved RDA
- Safeguard confidential, sensitive, and personally identifiable information (PII) such as personnel records
- Communicate records roles and responsibilities to your employees
- Ensure records are filed for safe storage and efficient retrieval
- Identify and transfer records prior to employee departures
- Have a method to identify legal holds that halt records disposition

### **WHAT PUBLIC RECORDS DO MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS TYPICALLY HAVE?**

- Records pertaining to Boards, Councils, and Committees
- Policy and procedure documentation
- Program area activity, production and employee reports and files
- Project reports and files
- Business related memos or correspondence
- Open records requests and responses
- Reports to senior management
- Calendars, schedules and logs of daily activities

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

## What is a Public Record?

### Created in the course of public business

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

### Received for action

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

### Mandated by statute or regulation

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

## What Qualities do Public Records Have?

### Document government unit 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*

## Where Might Public Records Occur?

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

Email and voicemail

Text and instant messages

Social media

Websites

Audio and video recordings

Calendars

Documents

Spreadsheets and databases

Personal devices if used for government unit business

Maps and blueprints

## What is a Retention/Disposition Schedule?

Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs):

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

## How Do I Manage My Public Records?

### Policies

- Learn your government unit's records management policies
- Know which records disposition authorization (RDA) relates to your program records

### Filing

- File public records to allow for easy access over time
- File records in accordance with your government unit's approved filing system to simplify retrieval

### People

- Contact your Records Officer or designated Records Custodian with questions

### Disposition

- Dispose of records according to approved RDA

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

## What is Not a Public Record under Wis. Stat. § 16.61(2)(b)?

### Reference materials and stock copies

Examples: *vendor catalogs, blank forms*

### 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 for personal use*

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

### Unsolicited email (internal or external)

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