



Robert W. WOODRUFF LIBRARY
Atlanta University Center

UNDERSTANDING RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Archives - Serves as the institutional memory of an organization and plays an integral role in the management of the institution's information resources; identifies, acquires, and maintains records of enduring value.

Records management - The systematic and administrative control of records throughout their life cycle to ensure efficiency and economy in their creation, use, handling, control, maintenance, and disposition (destruction or permanent preservation).

Records Management Program - The activities, policies, and procedures within an organization to implement records management.

Record - Data or information in a fixed form that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and retained as evidence of that activity for future reference. A record encompasses all media and formats including written, drawn, photography, computer generated, audio and video recordings.

Vital Records -Emergency operation records immediately necessary to begin recovery of business after a disaster, as well as rights-and-interests records necessary to protect the assets, obligations, and resources of the organization, as well as its employees and customers or citizens; essential records.

Retention Schedule - A document that identifies and describes an organization's records, usually at the series level, provides instructions for the disposition of records throughout their life cycle. Defines the length of time records need to be kept or retained.

General Retention Schedule – Describes records and develops disposition (length of time records should be kept) by business function rather than a specific program unit. (e.g. annual reports, correspondence, committee files, etc.)

Program Specific Retention Schedule – Describes records and develops disposition (length of time records should be kept) tailored specifically for a program unit.

Five Values of Records

- Operating
- Administrative
- Fiscal
- Legal
- Historical

Life Cycle of Records

- Creation or receipt
- Active Use
- Inactive Use
- Final Disposition

Requirements for Records Management Program

- Authority to Act
- Trained Staff
- Space
- Equipment
- Advisory Body

Information adapted from *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, Richard Pearce-Moses, ed. Society of American Archivists, 2005; and *Records and Information Management: Fundamentals of Professional Practice*, William Saffady, ARMA International, 2004.