

# Records Management Basics & RDA Development



**Records Management Division  
Secretary of State Tre Hargett**

**01.18.2023**

# Why are you here?



- The Public Records Commission (PRC)
  - Created by statute to determine and order the proper disposition of state records. TCA § 10-7-302, TCA § 10-7-303
  - Members include:
    - ✦ Secretary of State
    - ✦ Comptroller of the Treasury
    - ✦ State Treasurer
    - ✦ Director of Legal Services
    - ✦ Commissioner of General Services
    - ✦ Attorney General
    - ✦ Executive Director of Historical Society
    - ✦ Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court

# Statue Authorizing the PRC



The PRC is authorized to direct the State Department to initiate, through the Records Management Division, any action it may consider necessary to accomplish more efficient control and regulation of records holding and management in any agency.

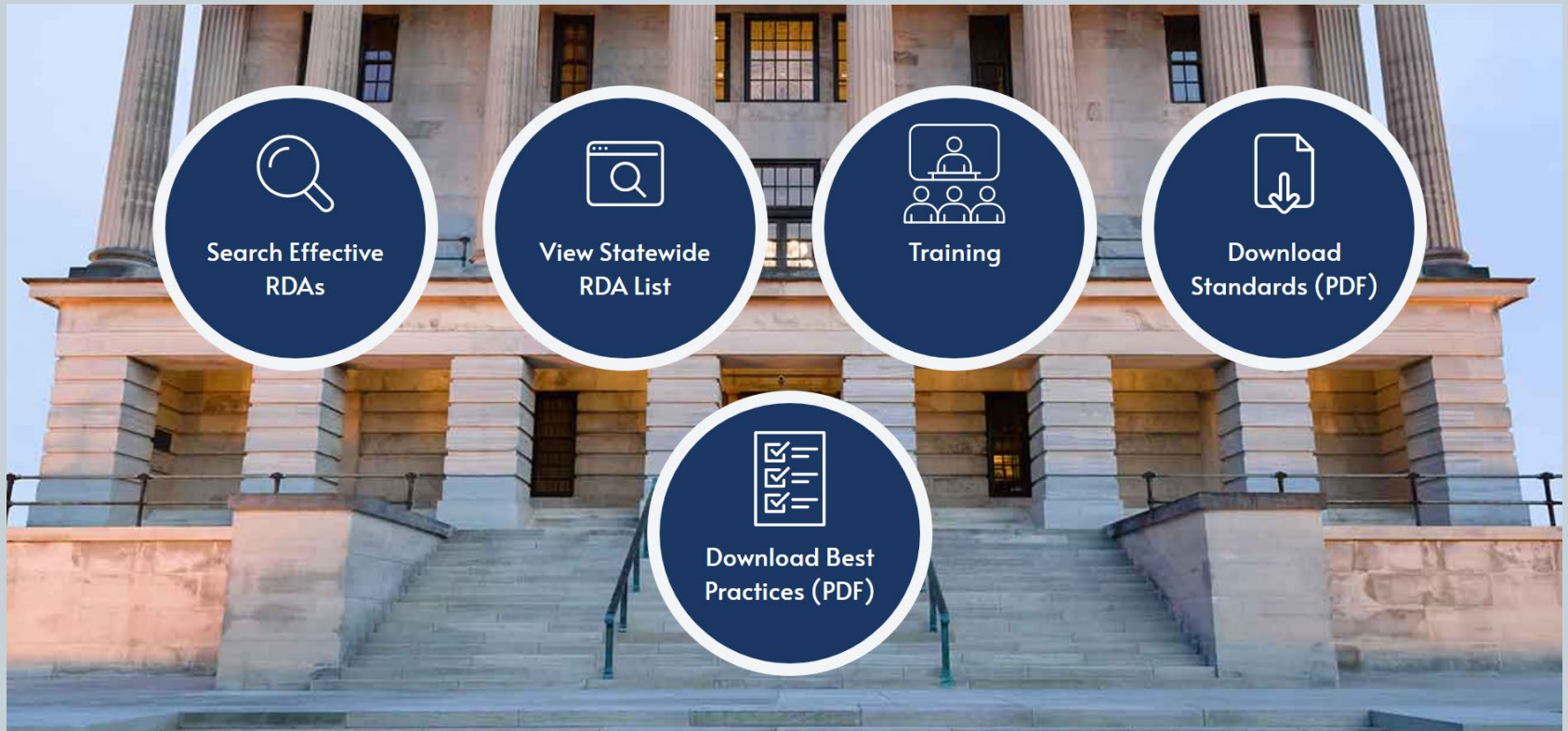
Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-302.

# What are the Records Officer's responsibilities?



- Create, revise, and retire RDAs.
- Compile and submit the Records Holding Report.
- Approve records destruction reports (CRDs).
- Track agency records destruction.
- Maintain Vital Records Control (VRC) security access status for agency personnel.
- Work with legal counsel and information services to advise division coordinators.

# RMD Resources



Search Effective  
RDAs

View Statewide  
RDA List

Training

Download  
Standards (PDF)

Download Best  
Practices (PDF)

[sos.tn.gov/rmd](https://sos.tn.gov/rmd)

# What is a Record?



- “Public record or records’ or ‘state record or records’ means all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency.” T.C.A. § 10-7-301(6)
- The test for determining whether a record is public is “whether it was made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency.” *Griffin v. City of Knoxville*, 821 S.W. 2d 921, 924 (Tenn. 1991).

# What is a Record?

## Physical Records

Budget Documents

Payroll Documents

Contracts

Revenue Reports

Investigation files

Audit reports

Personnel files

## Non-Records

Brochures

Reference Materials

Catalogs

Bulletins

Trade Journals

Manuals

# What format(s) are your records in?



## • Physical Records

- Paper
- Microfilm
- Microfiche
- Videos
- Photographs

## • Electronic Records

- Servers
- Computer files
- Documents on a collaborative workspace
- CD/DVD



# RDA Development



# What is an RDA?



- “Records Disposition Authorization” means the official document utilized by an agency head to request authority for the disposition of records. The Public Records Commission shall determine and order the proper disposition of state records through the approval of Records Disposition Authorizations T.C.A. § 10-7-301(8)

# Statewide RDA



- Before creating a new RDA, it is important to make sure the record series is not already covered under a Statewide RDA.
- Statewide RDAs document records that state agencies have in common (fiscal, administrative, and personnel records, etc.)

# Agency-Specific RDA



- Before creating a new RDA, it is important to make sure the record does not already have an RDA.
- This applies to records that are unique to a state agency's operations and mission. The schedules identify records that the agency produces, collects, receives, or retains in carrying out its special functions.

## Examples

- Surveys
- Case Files
  - Audits
  - Projects
  - Programs

# Retention Schedule



- Establishing a retention schedule requires appraising the use and value of information, as well as researching regulations that may govern retention.
- Retention schedules are not merely suggestions. Records cannot be destroyed before the stated period, nor should they be retained longer than the stated period unless they are involved in:
  - Investigations
    - Litigation
    - Audit
  - The Freedom of Information Act

# Advantages of a Retention Schedule



- Ensures that an agency or department is following both state and federal laws.
- Verifies that records with legal, fiscal, or administrative purposes are not destroyed prematurely.
- Determines when records may be transferred to State Records Center or other location for permanent storage.
- Details essential records protection plan.

# Advantages of a Retention Schedule, cont'd.



- Ensures the preservation of historical records.
- Indicates the privacy status of a records series.
- Reduces cost by:
  - Allowing records that are no longer useful to be legally destroyed.
  - Reduce the space and equipment necessary for filing records in paper or electronic format.

# Destruction



- The method of destruction depends on criteria described in the Records Disposition Authorization.
- Records that are deemed confidential, private, or sensitive will be shredded for a fee by VRC to ensure that the information is protected.
- Records not requiring confidential destruction may be recycled.
- Any records may be confidentially destroyed on request.
- Confidential records destruction services are also available for offices not using VRC's storage services.



# Certificate of Records Destruction

- When records are destroyed, a Certificate of Records Destruction form must be submitted to Records Management.
- Records Management maintains all the CRDs and uses this information to monitor the record destruction process to ensure compliance with RDA requirements and statewide policies.

Tennessee Secretary of State



Certificate of Records Destruction

Agency *	Division *	Address/Location *	Allotment Code *
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Record Series Title *	RDA Number *	Date range of records disposed * (MM/YY) to (MM/YY)	Volume *
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Record Series Title	RDA Number	Date range of records disposed (MM/YY) to (MM/YY)	Volume
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
		Volume Type *	
		<input type="radio"/> Cu. Ft.	
		<input type="radio"/> GB	
		<input type="radio"/> Other	
		<input type="text"/>	
		Volume Type	
		<input type="radio"/> Cu. Ft.	
		<input type="radio"/> GB	
		<input type="radio"/> Other	
		<input type="text"/>	

# RDA Web Application

Create, Revise, and Retire  
your RDAs

Visit

<https://rmd-rda.tnsos.net>

An official website of the Tennessee Secretary of State.

Tennessee Department of State  
**Records Disposition Authorization**  
a publicly searchable database

[Search](#) [Dashboard](#) [Contacts](#) [RDA Requests ▼](#) [Revision Requests ▼](#) [My account](#) [Log out](#)

### Search All Effective RDAs

A Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) defines the proper storage and disposal method for a State record series. It includes a description of the record series, a retention schedule, destruction method, and other information.

The Records Management Division of the Tennessee Department of State is charged with ensuring that State Agencies retain and store State records in a proper manner.

Fulltext search

Filter by Agency  Filter by Effective Year

### Effective RDAs

1 - 50 of 835 search results

RDA NUMBER	TITLE	AGENCY	EFFECTIVE DATE
SW-U15	College/University Clinic Records	Statewide	2019-11-12
SW-U16	College/University Animal Care Records	Statewide	2019-11-12
SW-U17	College/University Non-Closeout Capital Project Files	Statewide	2019-11-12
11365	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Mining Files	Dept. of Environment & Conservation	2019-11-12
11367	Benefit Administration Enrollment and Authorization Forms	Dept. of Finance and Administration	2019-11-12
11370	TDOC Employee Training Records	Dept. of Correction	2019-11-12

# Core Data

19

## Record Series Title

- Determine a unique, descriptive title for the record series. Titles should clearly identify the subject and/or functions of the records. Please spell out any acronyms.

## Records Series Abstract

- Describe the purpose of the records series, indicating:
  - ✦ What documents are included in the records series.
  - ✦ Any specific details that may be helpful!

## Records Series Active

- Indicate whether the records series is still in use—in other words, whether more files of this type are being generated.

## Request New RDA

**View** Test Results Build Settings References

1  
Contact Info

2  
Core Data

3  
Worksheet

4  
Confirm

5  
Complete

\* Indicates required field

**Record Series Title \***

**Record Series Abstract \***

Indicate the content of the record series by a detailed description of the form, content, and purpose of the record series.

**Record Series Active \***

☐ Yes ☐ No

# File Cut Off

20

## Cut Off at End of \*

- Select -

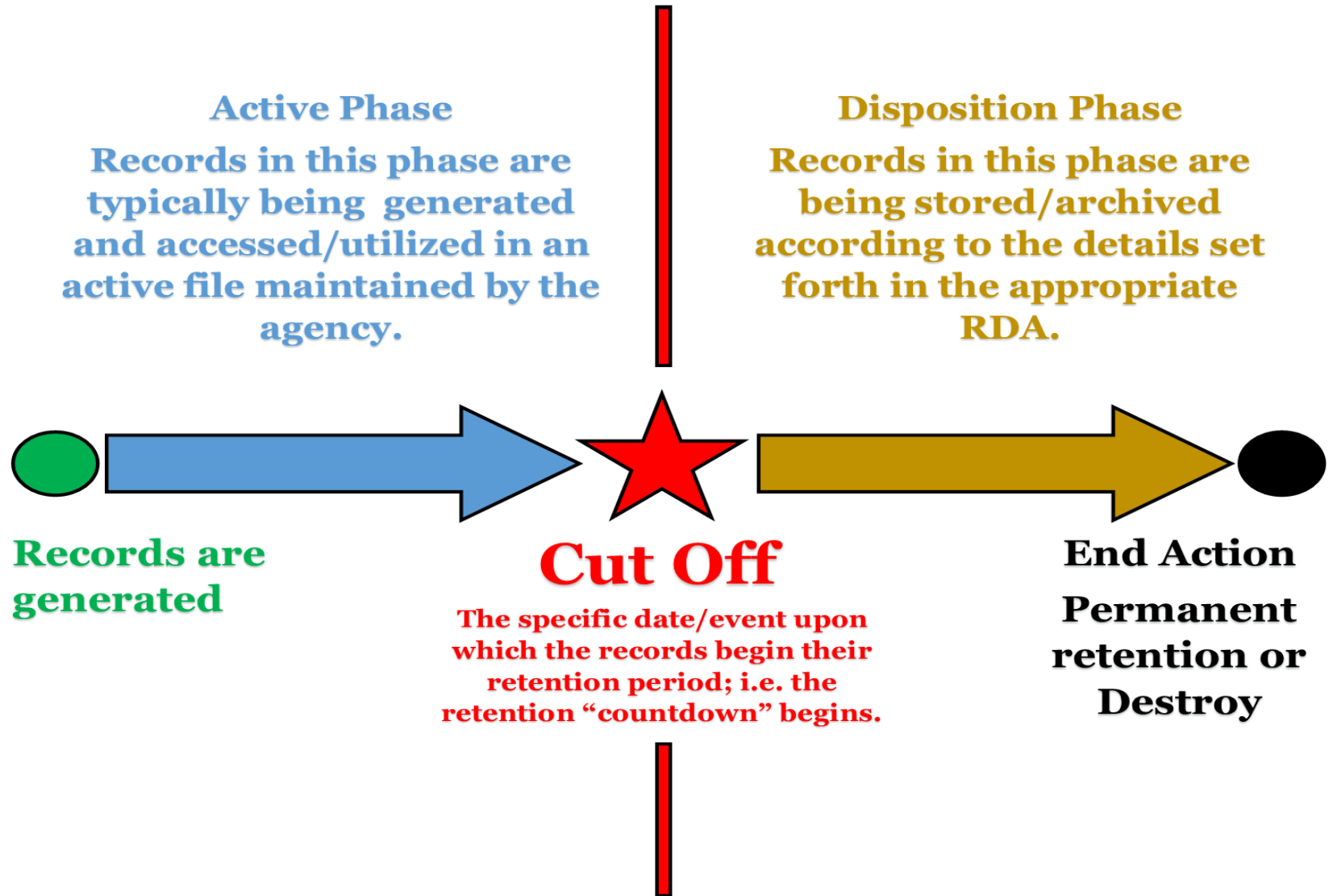
- Select -

Calendar Year

Fiscal Year

Other

- **File Cut Off**
  - The file cut off date is a break or stop in the filing of a current records series, based on a predetermined event.
- **The Web Application provides the two most common choices:**
  - Fiscal Year
  - Calendar Year
- **Select other and provide an explanation if:**
  - Federal Fiscal year
  - Academic year
  - The close of a case
  - The end of a grant or program



# Retention

22

## Total Retention

- The total amount of time your agency is responsible for the retaining the record series—from file cutoff to final disposition. This includes any time the records may be held at the State Records Center.
  - ✦ For example: Records that are kept in agency for 10 years and then transferred to VRC for 10 years would equal 20 years total retention.

## Retention End Action

- Options: “permanent” or “destroy.”

### Total Retention \*

 Years Months

### Retention End Action \*

☐ Permanent ☐ Destroy

Indicate the final disposition

# Disposition Notes

23

- Provide a description of the life of the records series. Include the following:
  - ✦ Explain how the record is received or generated.
  - ✦ Identify the event that triggers the retention countdown.
  - ✦ Describe any reformatting (paper, electronic, etc.).
  - ✦ Detail where the record is stored and if/when it is transferred
  - ✦ State the retention
  - ✦ Describe the final disposition of the record series
  - ✦ Describe any work processes that make the requested retention necessary.

Disposition Notes \*

Include any specific requirements regarding how the record is stored and maintained, based on the value of the records and how long the records are needed to conduct state business.

# Disposition Notes, cont'd.



- Files are cut off when the employee terminates, then maintained for ten years.
- Records may be maintained in either paper or electronic format if the electronic content has been verified for completeness, accuracy, and usability.
- Records in paper format may be transferred to the State Records Center.
- Records in electronic format shall be maintained in Strategic Technology Solutions (STS) approved software and server environment.
- Any sensitive or confidential information contained therein shall be destroyed according to standards for destruction of confidential information.



# RDA Worksheet

25

- The Worksheet portion of the RDA describes how files will be arranged, categorized, accessed, and stored.
- This information reflects good filing practices and ensures the right file can be retrieved quickly for the lowest possible cost.

## Request New RDA

View Test Results Build Settings References

1

Contact Info

2

Core Data

3

Worksheet

4

Confirm

5

Complete

\* Indicates required field

### File Arrangement

Indicate if the indexing is by alpha, numeric, or other method.

### Record Location

Specify address, building, room, etc.

### Media Format Generated

☐ Electronic ☐ Paper ☐ Film ☐ Other

### Media Format Stored

☐ Electronic ☐ Paper ☐ Film ☐ Other

# File Arrangement

26

- Describes how files are organized. The most common methods of arranging documents are alphabetical, numerical, chronological, or alphanumeric. Sometimes files will be arranged by case number or grant number.

## File Arrangement

Indicate if the indexing is by alpha, numeric, or other method.

# Media Format Generated and Media Format Stored

27

- A particular record series may include multiple formats, such as paper, electronic, or microfilm. This information is useful for TSLA in their appraisal of the records' value. Provide information about the record format in all stages of its life: how it is received, stored, and, if applicable, archived.

## Media Format Generated

☐ Electronic ☐ Paper ☐ Film ☐ Other

## Media Format Stored

☐ Electronic ☐ Paper ☐ Film ☐ Other

### Media Format Generated

☒ Electronic ☒ Paper ☐ Film ☐ Other

### Electronic Media Format Generated \*

☒ Text ☐ Raster Image ☐ Vector Graphics ☐ Audio ☐ Video ☐ Spreadsheet/Database ☐ Presentation ☐ Email ☐ Other

### Paper Media Format Generated \*

☒ Sheet ☐ Book ☐ Oversized ☐ Other

### Media Format Stored

☒ Electronic ☒ Paper ☐ Film ☐ Other

### Electronic Media Format Stored \*

☒ Text ☐ Raster Image ☐ Vector Graphics ☐ Audio ☐ Video ☐ Spreadsheet/Database ☐ Presentation ☐ Email ☐ Other

### Paper Media Format Stored \*

☒ Sheet (letter/legal) ☐ Book ☐ Oversized (map/blueprint) ☐ Other

# Date Range, Annual Accumulation, Current Volume

28

## Date Range

- Provide the range of years of accumulated records covered by this RDA by completing the fields “Series Beginning Date” and “Series End Date.”

## Annual Accumulation

- Provide an estimate of the volume of records created, received, and retained in a year for the series in questions.

## Current Volume

- Provide an estimate of the total volume of records covered by this RDA, from the earliest to the most recent, in all storage locations.

Series Beginning Date

Indicate the beginning date of the record series.

Series End Date

Indicate the end date of the record series. If record series is still being created, use the word current

Annual Accumulation

Please indicate any of the following that apply: paper in cu ft., electronic records in gigabytes, microfilm in rolls, and microfiche in cards.

Current Volume

Please indicate any of the following that apply: paper in cu ft., electronic records in gigabytes, microfilm in rolls, and microfiche in cards.

# Record Value

29

## Historic Value

- These records are especially important as they document our state's history; they contain important information about persons, places, or events, or are valuable because of age or rarity. The Tennessee State Library and Archives determines the Historical Value of records desired for permanent retention.
  - For example: A lease signed by Andrew Jackson, Historical and Architectural Records.

## Administrative Value

- These records are necessary for day-to-day operations, to conduct current or future business transactions, or to document the establishment of policy or programs.
  - Some examples include correspondence, studies, and reports.

### Record Value

☐ Administrative ☐ Fiscal ☐ Historic ☐ Legal

Indicate the type or types of value the record series has for your organization. Please check all that apply.

# Record Value, cont'd.

30

## Legal Value

- These records have a mandated retention by statute or regulation. The Division of Records Management requests assistance from the Office of General Counsel in order to determine the legal value of records.
  - Examples include leases, deeds, student records, medical records, and court case files.

## Fiscal Value

- These records document the fiscal responsibilities and transactions of an agency or department, such as receipt, payment, transfer, adjustment, or encumbrance of public funds. Most financial records usually lose value once an audit has been completed. However, certain records series may be governed by regulations beyond audit, such as federal regulations or contract language.
  - Examples include cancelled checks, deposit slips, invoices, receipts, and purchase orders.

# Audit Requirements

31

- In order to ensure an effective government for the citizens of Tennessee, all records are subject to audit by the Comptroller's Office.
- Please indicate whether the record series is subject to Federal Audit and use the space provided to list the interested agencies.

## Audit Requirements \*

- Select -

Indicate if the record series is subject to State, Federal or both types of audits.

# Information Shared Outside of the State

32

Indicate if the record series is shared with federal agencies or agencies of other states. If “yes,” please list the agencies.

Information Shared Outside of the State \*

☒ Yes ☐ No

List the Agencies \*



# Essential Records

33

- Essential records contain information required by an agency to function or to reestablish operations immediately in the event of a disaster.
  - ✦ Without these records, public interest could be adversely affected by unplanned expenditures, lost revenue, lost information and efficiency, and disruption of operation. While some records have historical value, they may not be administratively necessary to keep an agency running or to provide to citizens.

## Essential Record \*

Yes - Original

Indicate if the records are essential and if it is the original or duplicate. Essential records require high accessibility and/or are critical to the: continuation or resumption of operations, re-creation of the legal and financial status of government in the state, or protection and fulfillment of obligations to the citizens of the state.

## Essential Record Media Type \*

- Select -

Indicate the media in which the essential record is kept.

## Essential Record Stored \*

Indicate the location of the original essential record as well as any copies maintained by your organization. List any agencies that the original or a copy is sent to, such as TN State Library and Archives.

# Confidentiality

34

- Indicate whether any state or federal regulations restrict access to the records.
- Records that are deemed confidential must be covered by statute and a copy of the statute must be attached.
- Records that are not declared confidential by statute are classified as public.
- While some public records may contain sensitive information, the record itself may not be legally confidential.
- The option to note that a record series contains sensitive information has been added for clarity.

**Is the Record Series Confidential \***

☒ Yes ☐ No

**Confidential Legal Citation \***

List the statute classifying the record series as confidential.

**Does this Record Series Contain Sensitive Information? \***

☐ Yes ☒ No

# Retention

35

- Agency Retention is the total time the records are kept in agency.
- Records Center Retention Period is the total time records are kept at the records center.
- Agency Retention and the Records Center Retention should equal the Total Retention located in the core data.
  - For Example: If records are kept in agency for 5 years and then sent over to VRC for 5 years, the total retention is 10 years.

## Agency Retention

Indicate how long the records series is to be maintained in the agency.

## Records Center Retention Period

Indicate how long the records series is to be maintained at the State Records Center.

# Legal Citation

36

- Indicate if the record series is covered by statute or rule:
  - Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA)
  - Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
  - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), etc.
- Cite any authority governing creation, management, retention, and/or disposition of series.
- Note any agency, state, or federal law, regulation, or policy.

## Legal Citation

If the record series is required by federal or state statute, cite the statute and retention period in which the record series is to be maintained.

# Uploads

37

## Records Sample Upload

- The sample should be representative of the record series.
- Be sure to redact any protected information that may be in the sample.

### Record Sample (PDF) \*

[Choose File](#) No file chosen

[? Upload requirements](#)

## Legal Citation Upload

- Any statute covering:
  - Retention
  - Confidentiality
- If the record series is governed by multiple citations, please combine them into a single PDF and attached in the application.

### Legal Citations (PDF)

[Choose File](#) No file chosen

[? Upload requirements](#)

## Electronic Records Plan Inventory

If the records are maintained electronically, this section must be fully completed.

It is recommended that you get the information for this entire section of the RDA from someone in the agency's IT office.

The entire Electronic Records Plan Inventory must be completed.

- System Name
- IT-ABC Number
- Hardware Description
- Software Description
- System Location
- Backup Procedures
- Disaster Recovery
- Data Migration Description
- Metadata Description

# PRC Process

39

- After the RDA is completed, submit it to your analyst for review; make sure to communicate with your Records Analyst throughout the RDA writing process.
- If there are no issues, your analyst will send the RDA to a formal review process.
- The RDA will then be reviewed by the Records Management Division, TSLA, and Audit.
- Once the RDA has been reviewed, the agency may respond to any recommendations.
- The completed RDA then goes before the PRC.
- Only upon PRC approval does the RDA become effective.

# Why do you need all this information?

40

- The PRC requires that the information be provided on the RDA.
- This process is, ultimately, required by law, and this effort flows from the PRC's resolution to ensure our state is complying with Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-303 (d) and § 10-7-509 (a).



# Remember...

41

- According to T.C.A. § 10-7-303, records are not to be destroyed without an RDA.
- No records shall be scheduled for destruction without the unanimous approval of the voting members of the Public Records Commission. Approval for the destruction scheduling from the Commission is received through the RDA process. All agencies shall destroy records using state-approved procedures.
- Records Management is available to assist you by advising on the development, utilization, retention, disposition, and destruction of records.

# Thank you for your attention!



- Please reach out to your Records Analyst with any questions.
- The Advanced RDA training will take place in March and go into greater detail on the steps to create, revise, or retire an RDA.