

Idaho Commission for Libraries Public Records Policy

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Purpose & Legal Citations

The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) Records Policy is established:

1. To provide evidence of our tax-funded operations and respond efficiently and transparently to public records requests,
2. To preserve and secure institutional knowledge and resume services to the public quickly after experiencing disasters or significant transitions, and
3. To participate in the creation and documentation of state history by preserving items of cultural or historic value.

This policy is used in conjunction with the ICfL Record Retention Schedule and the ICfL Records Staff User Guide to comprise the agency's record management system. The record management system was informed by guiding statute and additional resources including, but not limited to:

- Idaho Code §67-4126: The Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) is responsible for records management services for state government and to require historic records to transfer to the agency.
- Idaho Code §67-4131: ISHS may develop rules and procedures pertaining to records management services.
- Idaho Code Title 74, Chapter 1: Idaho Public Records Act.
- State of Idaho Records Manual – Published July 1, 2021, <https://history.idaho.gov/records-center/>
- General Records Retention Schedule – Published July 1, 2021, <https://history.idaho.gov/records-center/>

Glossary of Key Terms

Archival – Any record that has been determined to have significant, enduring cultural or historical value for the agency, library community, or general public.

Creator – The individual who creates or directs the creation of a document and who has primary responsibility for the content, use, distribution, maintenance, and storage of the document.

Document – Any item, digital or physical, that contains content or information pertaining to the agency's activities, or the transaction of business, or the conduct of affairs. Examples include (but are not limited to) reports, correspondence, mailing lists, databases, audio or video recordings, handouts, and presentation slides.

Record – A single document or set of documents that meet the following criteria: (1) produced by the agency or for which the agency is the primary custodian, and (2) identified in the records retention schedule, and (3) retained or managed by the agency to serve as evidence of the agency's activities, and (4) is the original or official copy of the document(s). Working drafts and duplicate copies of documents are not considered records but may be retained as needed for staff reference.

Record Retention Schedule – A list of records produced by the agency indicating how long such records should be retained and any special instructions related to storage or disposal.

Retention Period – The retention period is the length of time which the agency should retain, maintain, and make available to the public a particular record or group of records, as indicated in the records retention schedule.

Vital – Records that contain the information required to re-establish or continue an organization’s operations in the event of a disaster. They enable day-to-day business of the agency. While some vital records are also classified as permanent and considered archival (such as Board minutes), many vital records are not. A classification of “vital” signifies that a record should be stored in a manner that makes it accessible and protected in the event of an emergency so that staff can access the document to continue or recreate its business operations.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of agency personnel as related to records maintenance.

Records Manager

The ICfL shall designate a member of its management team to serve as the agency’s Records Manager. This designation will be indicated in the staff member’s official job description. The responsibilities of the Records Manager are outlined below.

- Plan, formulate, and coordinate the implementation of the agency’s record management system, including its policies, guidelines, retention schedule, and any related processes or procedures.
- Review components of the agency’s record management system on a regular basis, at least annually, to update or amend as needed.
- Provide records management advice, training, and assistance to agency leadership and staff
- Ensure that records are destroyed, transferred, or moved to storage on a regular basis and in accordance with the agency’s record retention schedule, and coordinate the implementation of such actions with appropriate staff.
- Serve as the agency’s primary contact point for official public records requests and maintain the agency’s Public Records Request guidelines.

Designated Records Staff

The agency shall designate a member of staff to support the day-to-day operations of the agency’s records management activities. Unless otherwise specified, this staff person will be the technical records specialist. This position’s records-related responsibilities shall be indicated in the official job description and align with the agency’s current processes and procedures. A general summary of this position’s responsibilities is provided below:

- Provide operational support for day-to-day activities related to the agency’s records management system.
- Intake, maintain, and inventory the agency’s permanent and archival records as indicated in this policy.
- Coordinate the storage and transfer of permanent and archival records.
- Coordinate the secure bulk destruction of non-digital agency records on a regular basis.
- Provide technical assistance to agency staff in the maintenance and destruction of non-permanent and non-archival records.

ICfL Staff

In general, employees of the ICfL are responsible for managing their own non-permanent records, including filing, storage, and destructions/disposal. Staff are also responsible for submitting permanent and archival records to the Designated Records Staff for permanent storage.

Records as Public Property

As a state agency, all documents produced by the ICfL are considered state records. All state of Idaho records are declared to be the property of the citizens of Idaho. No government official or employee has, by their position, any personal or property rights to such records even though they may have developed or compiled them. The unauthorized destruction, removal, or private use of such records is prohibited.

Public Records Requests

Public records requests submitted to the ICfL shall be handled according to the agency's Public Records Request Guidelines, which govern how to provide public access to agency records. These guidelines are maintained and updated by the Records Manager and posted in a location that is available to the public.

Disaster Preparedness

The ICfL shall include in its Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) strategies for the safe keeping, recovery, and maintenance of vital and archival records in the case of an emergency.

Records Storage & Destruction

All documents created by agency staff while conducting their jobs are considered property of the state and shall be stored and destroyed in a secure manner.

Non-Permanent/Non-Archival Records

All non-permanent/non-archival records shall be stored by their creator until those records have met their retention period and can be destroyed according to the records schedule. It is the responsibility of the record creator to securely delete or destroy the non-permanent/non-archival records they produce or for which they have primary responsibility. When a record does not have a single or specific creator, the appropriate team manager or supervisor shall have primary responsibility for ensuring the storage and destruction of the document, or for designating a member of staff to do the same.

Records shall be saved and stored electronically wherever possible, including scanned copies of physical documents, except where conversion to an electronic document is not feasible, poses a security risk, or otherwise poses a significant burden to agency staff.

All electronic records which have not yet exceeded their retention period should be saved on the agency's networked or online electronic storage system, or a designated location with security features and regular back-ups. Such records should not be stored on individual computers, thumb-drives, or other locations that lack either security features or regular back-ups.

Where electronic storage is not feasible, records shall be stored in their physical form, including paper, disc, or cartridge. Physical records shall be stored securely and away from any potential hazards, including flood, fire, mold, theft, or unauthorized access.

Any record containing sensitive personally identifiable information (PII) such as dates of birth, social security numbers, home addresses and phone numbers, personal email addresses, disability or medical status, and personnel issues, shall be stored in a secure location with access to such records restricted to only those staff who require such records in order to carry out their job duties.

Permanent and Archival Records

All permanent and archival records shall be stored in such a manner as to preserve and maximize their longevity. Archival records submitted to and accepted by the Idaho State Archives (ISA) shall be stored by the ISA according to their policies and practices. Permanent records stored by the Idaho Commission for Libraries (the agency) and not submitted to the state archives shall be stored electronically wherever possible, including scanned copies of physical documents, except where conversion to an electronic document is not feasible, poses a security risk, or otherwise poses a significant burden to agency staff.

Permanent electronic records retained by the agency shall be stored in a location that is secure and backed up regularly, whether on the agency's primary electronic storage system or private network. Electronic items retained for permanent storage shall be stored in a designated location that is separate and distinct from the agency's active and non-permanent electronic records.

Permanent electronic records retained by the agency shall be converted to and stored in the most compatible file format that is least likely to degrade or become obsolete.

Permanent records retained by the agency that cannot be stored electronically, shall be stored in a physical format, including paper, disc, or cartridge. Physical records shall be stored in such a manner as to preserve and maximize their longevity, including the use of archive quality boxes. Such records shall be stored securely and away from any potential hazards, including flood, fire, mold, theft, or access by unauthorized persons.

Records Inventory and Access

The agency shall create and maintain an inventory of all permanent and archival records, both physical and electronic, retained by the agency or transferred to the state archives. The inventory shall include information sufficient to identify and locate the record and to retrieve the record or refer interested parties to its location. The inventory shall be maintained by the designated records staff, and any specific processes or procedures associated with the records inventory and tracking shall be outlined and updated in that position's desk manual.

The designated records staff shall coordinate or assist as appropriate in the retrieval of inventoried permanent and archival records for the purpose of fulfilling a public records request or to facilitate staff access to the records.

Permanent & Archival Records

Any record determined to be archival in nature shall be treated as a permanent record (PM). However, not all permanent records are considered archival. Records determined to be archival in nature shall be offered to the Idaho State Historical Society when they are no longer needed for local access at the agency. Permanent records not offered to, or accepted by, the State Historical Society archives must be stored and retained by the agency on site or at a designated storage location.

The determination of “archival” status may be indicated for certain records in the records schedule. However, this determination is not intended to be exclusive. The agency has discretion to assign archival status to any record it deems of sufficient value, regardless of the retention period indicated in the schedule. The ICfL will consult with the ISHS on any record where the historic or cultural value is in question or unclear.

The Records Manager or designated records staff shall coordinate with the Idaho State Archives to transfer applicable records to the state archives on a regular basis, but no less than once per year.

Permanent and archival records should be retained by their creator until they are no longer in use or being actively referenced and until they are no longer needed for carrying out regular agency operations. After this point, permanent and archival records shall be submitted by their creator to the designated records staff for processing and storage. The basic steps for submitting such records shall be communicated to agency staff through written guidelines. Additional administrative or operational procedures related to the records submission process shall be outlined in the desk manual for the designated records staff.

Record Retention Schedule

The ICfL shall establish and maintain a records retention schedule. This schedule shall include the following minimum components:

- A list of the potential and actual documents produced by the agency, categorized by operational function or other similar designation
- A unique identifier or number assigned to each subset of records that allows the documents to be identified and tracked, as appropriate, through the agency’s records inventory
- A description of each subset of records that allows users to identify and manage such records
- An assigned retention period
- A designation, where applicable and appropriate, of vital and archival status