

Public Library Records in Wisconsin

Records, Retention, and Storage

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SCLS All Directors Meeting
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Questions We Will Answer Today

- Why do we have to keep records?
- What is a record?
- Who is responsible?
- How do I respond to record requests?
- How do I properly retain my records?
- How can I organize and store my records?
- Where can I go for help?

Why Keep Records?

- Sometimes called “Sunshine Laws”
- People should not be in the dark about workings of the government
- Essential to strength of democratic society
- Every record presumed to be public

What is a Record?

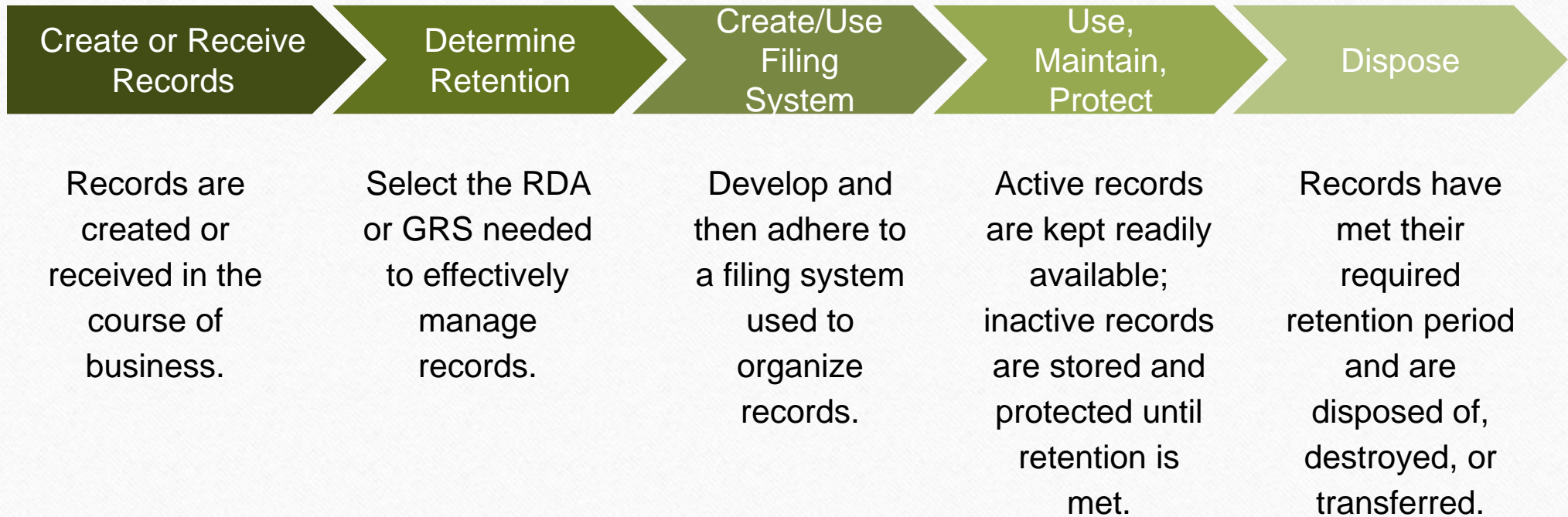
Record

- Anything containing information about government business
- Can be paper or electronic
- Location does not matter
 - Office devices
 - Personal devices

Non-record

- Duplicates
- Purely personal property
- Unsolicited items
- Reference materials
- Drafts and notes

Life Cycle of a Record



Who is Responsible?

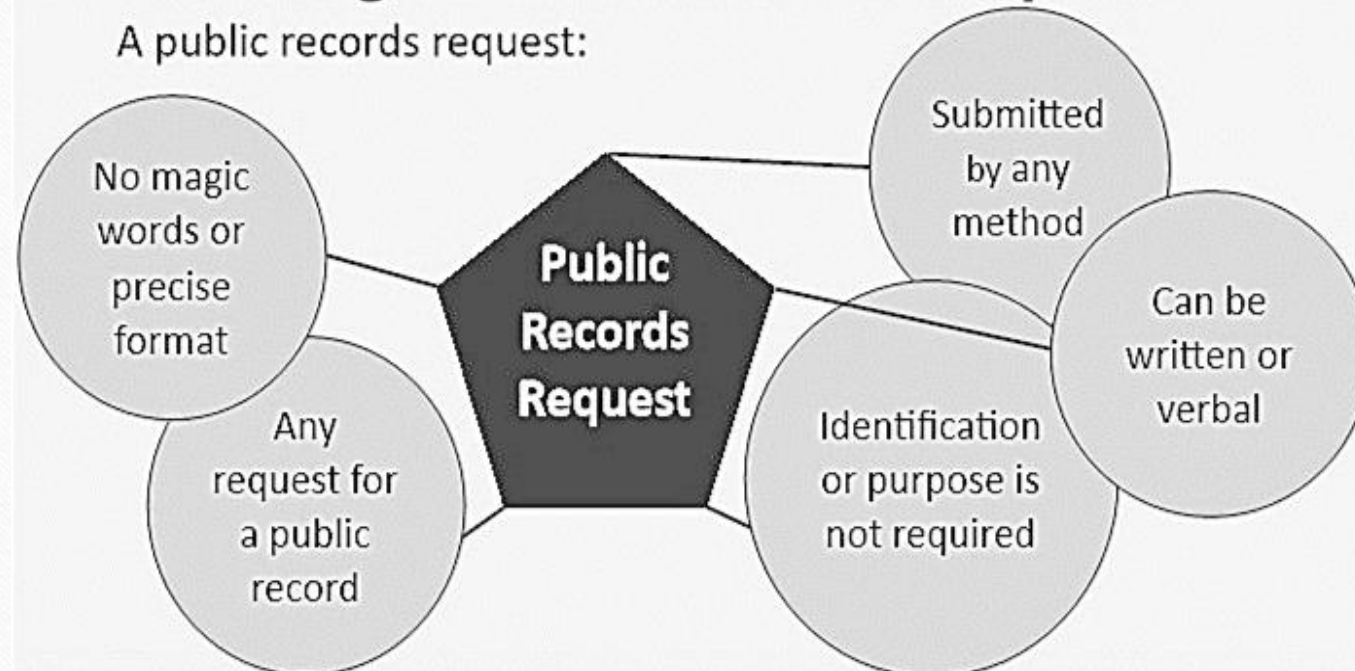
Who is the official records holder?

- Created or received the records as part of job responsibilities
- May depend on the record
- Using personal device for library business
 - May be any type of device
 - Includes personal email
 - Retain if transition to new device
 - Purely personal property not a record

Responding to Records Requests

Handling A Public Records Request

A public records request:



Records Custodian Responsibilities

Locate and review the records

1. Find all of the records
2. Remove any information that is confidential under law
3. Tell what is being withheld

Provide the requestor with updates

Keep the requester updated of your progress if you can't find the records right away.

Respond timely

Respond as soon as practicable and without delay!



Determining the Retention of Records

General Records Schedule (GRS)

- Should be adopted by the board
- Determine minimum amount of time that a record should be kept
- States how a record must be disposed of
- Always make sure no pending requests, audits, or lawsuits before disposition!

Adopting the PL GRS

- No longer required to notify WHS when disposing of records
- If you don't, you must create your own
- Consistency in records management
- Know what you have/don't have

GRS Walkthrough

General Records Schedule (GRS) Wisconsin Public Libraries and Public Library Systems and Related Records

1. **Start at the first section** (page 3) if you think your record is library specific.
2. **Check the Closed Series section next**, if you think your record is library specific but you cannot find it in the first section.
3. **Jump to the Revision History section** if your record is general, as in, not specific to library work (e.g., HR, Payroll, Budget, Facility, etc.)
 - a. Click the link in the header to get to the General Records Schedules

Organization and Storage

Efficient Organization

- Located when needed
- Available for use/decision-making
- Records request response within appropriate time frame
- Unexpected requests can be resolved quickly

Public Records at the Library

- Ensure compliance
- Safeguard vital information
- Preserve organizational memory
- Reduce costs, minimize litigation risk
- Improve productivity
- Promote transparency

Organization and Storage

Electronic Format Requirements

- accessible
- accurate
- authentic
- reliable
- legible
- readable throughout the record life cycle

Organization and Storage Tips

- Best Practices for Organizing Electronic Records
- Best Practices for Naming Electronic Records
- Develop a file structure
 - Retention Schedule XYZ (5 years and destroy)
 - 2023
 - 2022
 - 2021
 - 2020
 - 2019

Tips for Keeping Notes and Drafts

Recognize

- Think about your documents

Organize

- Label, keep in separate folders or space
- Reconsider mingling notes with records

Remember

- Items may later become records

Disposition of Records

Records may only be disposed of when

- Retention schedule has not expired and there is no update or revision in progress
- Retention period has been met
- No audit, litigation, or records requests

Records containing PII must be kept & destroyed securely
(locked/shredded)

Important Resources and Contacts

Best Overall Resource

- [PR Law Compliance Guide](#)

The Authority on Public Records/Open Meetings

- [Office of Open Government](#)
- PR/OM Help Line: 608-267-2220, opengov@widoj.gov

The Place for GRS, Explanations, Adoption

- [WI Public Records Board](#)
 - [Guidance & Best Practices](#)
 - [Managing Web Records](#)
 - [Social Media Records](#)
 - [Email Records](#)
 - [Transitioning Employees](#)

Other Resources and Contacts

WHS - Local Government Records

- [Digitization Projects](#)
- [Electronic Records](#)
- [Notifying WHS of Obsolete Records](#)
- [Records Management Guidelines](#)

Local Government Records Archivist
(Questions on Retention/Notification):
govararc@wisconsinhistory.org

- WI Administrative Code
 - PI [6](#) (systems)
 - PI [12](#) (e-records requirements)
- WI Statutes: [16](#), [19](#), [43.30](#)
- DPI [Records Management Page](#)
- SCLS Staff – Shannon Schultz
 - 608-246-7975
 - sschultz@scls.info