

# GREENE COUNTY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Administered by the County Office of Records and Information

Greene County Records Center and Archives  
535 Ledbetter Road, Xenia 45385  
937-562-6489

Please call for information regarding:

- Public Records Request guidance
- Preparation of Records Retention Schedules
- Disposal of inactive records
- Purchasing storage equipment
- Active filing solutions
- Changes of storage media—electronic or microfilm
- Transferring historical records to the Archives
- Any other records management questions

The mission of the Office of Records and Information is to advise and assist all county offices in the management, retention, disposition, storage, and preservation of their records, and provide environmentally controlled storage space for records of enduring historical and evidential value. The Office also commits to ensuring the availability and accessibility of those public records entrusted to it for the use of both present and future generations of Greene County residents.

The goal of the records management program is to keep all official records while they are of administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value, in the most effective format, and to ensure that unneeded records are safely, legally, and systematically destroyed.

Records are documents created or received by the county, regardless of their physical form or characteristics—e.g. electronic (including email), paper, and microfilm—in pursuance of legal obligations or the transaction of business.

Records management is the systematic control of records from creation or receipt, through processing, distribution, maintenance and retrieval, to ultimate disposition (protection and preservation, or destruction).

All records kept by county offices and agencies (other than Court Records—which are covered by Rule 26 of the Rules for Superintendence of the Courts of Ohio) must be listed on a Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition approved by the County Records Commission. The Greene County Records Commission is chaired by a member of the board of county commissioners, and includes the prosecuting attorney, the auditor, the recorder and the clerk of the court of common pleas. The county records and information manager serves as archivist and secretary to the Records Commission as provided for in ORC 149.38.

The Records Commission generally meets two times a year—in June and December (although other meetings may be scheduled, when necessary)—to approve schedules of records retention and disposal prior to forwarding them to the State Archives Local Government Records Program and the State Auditor for further approval, as required by law.

The records retention schedule includes a list of the records series held by the office, a brief description of them, the time for which they must be retained, and the medium in which they are kept (e.g. paper, electronic, microfilm). A records series is each group of related records serving a common purpose or function, which are usually kept together and filed as a unit, such as case files, purchase orders, monthly reports, etc.

## **A. RETENTION AND DISPOSITION OF RECORDS**

The Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition is the foundation of the county's records management program. All county offices have a legal and managerial responsibility to have an approved schedule, to use it regularly, and to keep it current. Retention periods on an approved schedule must reflect the administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical value of the information contained in each records series created and maintained by a county office. It is extremely important that the schedule be kept up to date. Whenever new records series are created, administrative needs change, or regulatory requirements are altered, the county archivist must be notified to write an addition to, or revise, the office schedule.

***To obtain an approved Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition for an office, the following steps should be taken:***

### **1. An Inventory of Records.**

The records inventory is an essential first step. Those offices without a current retention schedule should therefore contact the county archivist to conduct an inventory of the office's records. It provides a means to identify all the records series created or received in the office and to determine the inclusive dates of the records, their location and storage condition, the amount of space and equipment they occupy, and other useful information necessary for preparing the office schedule. It is very important to determine whether there are any federal or state regulations which govern the retention of the records; whether the records are official copies, or duplicates of records held elsewhere; how often the records are referred to; and the retention time recommended by those who use the records. The county archivist will interview those people in the office responsible for recordkeeping in order to obtain the relevant information.

### **2. The Appraisal of Records**

The county archivist will then analyze and evaluate the records listed on the inventory in order to designate retention periods for them. Records that reach a file should have administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value.

## **Administrative Value**

Records have administrative value if they are created to help accomplish the functions for which an office is responsible, such as organizational charts, policy statements and procedure manuals.

## **Legal Value**

Records have legal value if they contain evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations, or are necessary to fulfill legal requirements. Examples of these are records that provide the basis for action, such as leases, deeds, contracts, and records of action in particular cases, such as claim papers and legal dockets.

## **Fiscal Value**

Records have fiscal value if they pertain to financial transactions, such as budgets, ledgers, payrolls, and vouchers.

## **Historical Value**

Records have historical value if they have continuing value to the government or the people of the community, such as those records that document past events or those that can be used to plan for the future. Such records include certain court records, minutes of boards, and annual reports.

### **3. Writing Schedules of Records Retention and Disposition**

The county has two types of records retention schedules:

#### **i. The General Schedule**

The General Schedule lists records that are common to many offices. It includes such things as duplicates of official records held by another office, records of a transitory nature, such as telephone messages and routine correspondence, and records held simply for reference purposes, etc. Please note that the destruction of records listed on the General Schedule does not require a Certificate of Records Destruction.

#### **ii. The Office Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition**

The office schedule lists those records unique to the office and assigns retention periods for each type of record. After conducting the records inventory, the county archivist will write a draft schedule from the information provided, and will then return to the office to discuss and agree the proposed retention periods with the staff. When the schedule has been agreed at the office level, the department or agency head signs it.

### **4. Records Commission Approval**

The schedule will then be submitted to the Records Commission for approval at their next public meeting. Once the schedule is approved, the Chair of the Records Commission will also sign it.

## 5. State Archivist and State Auditor Approval

Following the open meeting of the Records Commission, the county archivist will forward the approved schedule to the State Archives Local Government Records Program (LGRP) staff who will in turn forward a copy to the Ohio Auditor of State. Each of these agencies is allowed sixty (60) days to review the schedule. **No records may be destroyed before the schedule is approved by these two agencies.** Once the schedule has been reviewed, approved, and signed, the LGRP staff will send a copy back to the county archivist, who will send a copy back to the originating office.

Once the fully approved Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition has been returned from the State Archives, records can be destroyed if they have reached the end of their retention period, or they can be transferred to the Archives if they are inactive and require long term or permanent retention.

### **To destroy records listed on a Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition:**

The records you wish to destroy **must** be listed on either the General Schedule, or your office's unique Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition.

If the records are listed on the General Schedule, you may destroy them without further authorization.

If the records are listed on your office Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition:

- Obtain a current Certificate of Records Disposal from the county archivist or ask the archivist to complete the form for you.
- When the form is completed the archivist will stamp it with an approval and return it to your office for disposal of the records.

If there are a large number of records to be destroyed, the county has a contract with Greene Inc., who will send people to pick up the records for confidential shredding, and provide you with a certificate of completion.

Call Greene Inc. at 937-376-8541 for current pricing and any other information regarding their shredding operations.

### **To transfer records listed on a Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition to the Records Center and Archives:**

The records you wish to transfer **must** be listed on your office's Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition. They must also be inactive (referenced fewer than ten times a year), with a long retention period or of permanent historical value. First, contact the county archivist to request the transfer. Remember:

- Your office's records remain in your office's legal custody. When transferred to the physical custody of the Records Center and Archives, they are still available to you for reference and research.

- Storage in the Records Center and Archives saves you valuable office space, and protects the records of enduring historical value listed on your office's Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition. The records are stored and maintained in the Records Center and Archives in an environmentally controlled, economical, centralized area using steel shelving and standardized storage container boxes.

Once it has been agreed that the records may be transferred to the County Records Center and Archives, they ***must*** be packed in one cubic foot records center boxes. This is for standardization, cost savings, and safety. (Exceptions are made only for maps, large bound books, and other such oversized material.) It is recommended that you use this type of box for records you store in your own area too. The box dimensions of 10"x12"x15" allow for the efficient packing of letter-size or legal-size documents. (Letter-size documents start at the 12" end, and legal-size documents start at the 15" end.) They are available from County Services, Supplies, on request at a reasonable cost. Please do not include hanging file folders, or three ring binders, which can damage your records and the boxes, in addition to taking up excessive space. Remove the contents, and place them in clearly identified file folders or file pockets.

Record storage boxes should be packed as follows:

- Pack the boxes as if they were file drawers, in the same order in which they are maintained in active files, with file folders all facing in the same direction.
- Limit the contents of any box to a single record series as itemized and described on your office's Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition.
- Leave 1.5 inches of space in each box to allow for the easy retrieval of files.
- Please do not over pack the box so that the lid does not go down firmly, or so the sides bulge. Over packed boxes will not fit on the shelving properly.
- Please do not lay additional files on top of the packed files.
- Prepare an inventory of the contents of each box. Keep the original for future retrieval information, and put a copy in the box.
- Mark the box in the assigned area with the name of your office, the record series name (as itemized on your office's Schedule of Records Retention and Disposition), the dates of the records (or the case file numbers), and the number of the box shipped (i.e. 3 of 20, for example).

Records Center and Archives staff will prepare a Records Center and Archives Transfer List form for each group of boxes sent to the Records Center and Archives. You will be sent a copy for your own records.

## **B. ELECTRONIC RECORDS**

### **1. Court Records**

The Supreme Court of Ohio has given the courts in Ohio the authority to use electronic media to create, maintain, and preserve its records. Rule 26 (D) Allowable Record Media, states that courts “may create, maintain, receive, record, copy, or preserve a record on traditional paper media, electronic media including text or digital images, or microfilm, including computer output to microfilm”.

### **2. Other County Records**

The Ohio Revised Code, Section 9.01 states that original records may be copied to other media, including microfilm, electronic data processing, or other machine readable means and, as long as they are properly authenticated, they have the same effect at law as the original records. They must, however, be made readily available to the public. Machines and equipment necessary to reproduce them in a readable form must therefore also be made available.

**NOTE:** While electronic records systems provide easy and efficient access to information, they are inherently unstable. Three conditions must be met for electronic records to be usable. First the software to read/translate them must be usable, second the hardware to read the media must be usable, and third the media itself must retain the electronic imprint.

Unlike paper based records, electronic records will not survive by accident. Migrating inactive data to new systems as software and hardware become obsolete is very costly and, especially after several migrations, can result in significant original data and information being lost. In addition, the Supreme Court Rules for Superintendence, Rule 26, E-3 states that the Ohio Historical Society can cause specified court records to be transferred to them, or to an institution or agency that meets their criteria, ***in the media and format designated by the OHS.*** Electronic systems may be fine for storing records having a retention period of fewer than ten years, provided that the systems are continually maintained and upgraded in a timely manner to preserve the information. It is, however, **not** recommended that they be considered a permanent storage system for records with a long retention period or of permanent historical value.

There are not currently any American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for electronic records systems. There are, however, ANSI standards pertaining to the use and storage of paper and microfilm for long term and permanent public records.

The Greene County Commissioners have passed a resolution, supported by the Records Commission and the Microfilm Board, which states that all county records with a retention period of greater than ten years must have a copy retained in either microfilm or paper format.

Please contact the County Archivist or the State Archives Local Government Records Program for more information regarding electronic records.

## **C. SCANNING AND MICROGRAPHICS**

**Administered by the Office of the County Recorder—Microfilm Division**

**Greene County Recorder  
69 Greene Street, Xenia 45385  
937-562-5274**

**The county scanning and microfilming service is available at no cost to county offices, for the digitizing and microfilming of county records. The main reasons for microfilming county documents include:**

- **To reduce storage space needs.**
- **To provide security copies of vital or historical records.**
- **To preserve information contained in records that are in poor physical condition.**

**Records of permanent value that are scanned are also always microfilmed. Microfilm has the advantage of media stability with archival quality and established legal acceptability when filmed and processed according to American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Microfilm has the longest record of service of any technology available today. It has been used to store and retrieve document-based information for over half a century. Moreover, accelerated aging tests indicate that archivally acceptable microfilm can preserve information from 400 to 500 years.**

**Offices wishing to use the services of the Microfilm Division must first have their Elected Official or Department Head sign a document certifying that the records filmed are true copies of official records. This certification is filmed with each set of records from that office presented for filming. Contact the Records Center and Archives for a copy of the form.**

**The Records Center and Archives houses an environmentally controlled vault for the storage and protection of all county microfilm master negatives. The Microfilm division will also provide the information electronically on CD discs for departmental use.**