

B8595HC

2.D38-5

Copy 1

**DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
AN ARCHIVING AND RECORDS
MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR THE
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ETHICS COMMISSION**

S. C. STATE LIBRARY

JUL 26 2007

STATE DOCUMENTS

**AMI R. FRANKLIN
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ETHICS COMMISSION**

FEBRUARY 28, 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page Number</u>
I. Introduction	3
II. Problem Statement	3
III. What is Records Management?	4
IV. The Records Officer's Responsibilities	5
V. Implementation Plan	7
VI. References	11

Introduction

The State Ethics Commission was created in 1976 and is responsible for the enforcement of the Ethics Reform Act of 1991 to restore public trust in government. The mission of the State Ethics Commission is to carry out this mandate by ensuring compliance with the state's laws on financial disclosure, lobbyist/lobbyist's principal disclosure and campaign disclosure; regulating lobbyists and lobbying organizations; issuing advisory opinions interpreting the statute, educating public office holders and the public on the requirements of the state's ethics laws; conducting criminal and administrative investigations of violations of the state's ethics laws; and prosecuting violators either administratively or criminally.

At the present time, all duties of the State Ethics Commission are carried out on paper. The Commission has only had two major archiving sessions which occurred within the past ten years; therefore, the impact on internal customers could be tremendous and greater agency organization would benefit external customers.

Problem Statement:

The State Ethics Commission does not have a firm policy on records management for old material whether it be sending the information to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History or destroying the information that is no longer needed and notifying the South Carolina Department of Archives and History of this destruction of records.

My project goal is to draft an effective and efficient records management system for the agency. The implementation of a records management system will enable the agency to have easier access to information regarding the destruction of old records and any records that have been or will be transferred to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

What is Records Management?

“Records management ensures that information is available when and where it is needed at minimum cost. Effective records management, however, is more than simply a cost saver and more than merely a filing and storage system. It is a management plan for the creation, organization, use, retention, disposal, and selective preservation of records. All documentary materials made or received by an agency (except library books and museum artifacts), regardless of physical form or characteristics – papers, microforms, computer tapes and disks, maps, photographs, film, sound recordings, and so forth – are defined in law as records.” **(Taking the lead, page 2)**

As a state government agency, it is our responsibility to make and keep accurate detailed records of our work and be as organized as possible to benefit our internal and external customers. A record can be any information relating to the work of an agency regardless of who created it or how the information was recorded. Most records are paper documents; however, technology has also given us the capabilities to have sound recordings, computer tapes or disks and microfilm.

The Records Officer's Responsibilities

The Records Officer is responsible for managing records so that the mission and functions of the agency are supported. This ensures that the agency works effectively and efficiently. The Records Officer is responsible for collecting any information that is needed to conduct business; creating records that control and document the agency's policies, procedures, transactions, and decisions; maintaining a current inventory of records; ensuring that no records are destroyed without legal authorization; establishing and implementing approved records retention and disposition schedules, which govern how long, where and in what form records must be kept and when records can be destroyed or transferred to proper archiving agency; identifying vital records (records needed to resume business in the event of a disaster) and archival records (records that have enduring value for administrative, legal, historical, and other research purposes) and taking precautions to protect them; administering public access to records and protecting personal data systems in accord with law; and educating agency staff to understand records management requirements. **(Taking the lead, page 1)**

Section 30-1-20 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended, designates the chief administrative officer of each agency as the official records custodian and authorizes that official to appoint a records officer to carry out the records management responsibilities of the agency. The agency records officer is responsible for coordinating the agency's program for the management of all records--both paper and electronic--and for serving as the agency's liaison with the Department of Archives and History's Archives and Records Management Division in the administration of that program. Under the program, records are inventoried, retention schedules are established,

micrographics, optical disk and other applications are applied as necessary, inactive records are properly stored, and records are disposed of at the proper time in accordance with approved records retention schedules.

The agency information/records officer:

1. Works with records management analysts from the Archives to develop specific retention schedules for all appropriate agency records, regardless of physical form or format (i.e., paper files, computer files, photographs, audio/video recordings, etc.). Records surveys and inventories are conducted and information on the organizational structure and function of the agency is supplied.
2. Secures agency review and approval for specific records retention schedules.
This review includes all legal as well as administrative requirements
3. Implements general retention schedules and approved specific records retention schedules by:
 - transferring records to the State Records Center or to the Archives as scheduled, according to transfer procedures.
 - approving the disposal of records stored in the State Records Center when retention periods are met.
 - securing approval for the disposal of records designated for destruction after reformatting onto microfilm, optical disk, or any other medium created by a new technology.

4. Notifies the Archives when new records series are created and when changes in recordkeeping--from manual to electronic, for example--will require new or revised schedules.
5. Appoints individuals as needed to serve as records liaison officers with both agency and Archives staff.
6. Confers regularly with Archives staff to solve records management problems.

(Duties and Responsibilities, page 1)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To implement a Records Management Policy my first step was to discuss the policy need with the Executive Director of the agency. Pursuant to the meeting, approval was obtained, as the Executive Director agreed this was a justifiable need for the agency. After final approval, the Executive Director instructed me to go ahead with the research and drafting of the policy.

The timeframe to implement this plan will be approximately one year. This is due to the month chosen for the staff to work on archiving their records.

To implement the policy there should be no cost to the agency other than supplies needed to pack any records that will be sent to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The cost for boxes and packing tape should not exceed \$500.00. There will be no cost associated with the removal of old records to be destroyed. The

South Carolina Department of Corrections Recycling Program does not charge for once a year pick up service, and my goal is to have one purge cycle per year.

The only obstacle that I foresee with the implementation of a Records Management Policy would be getting the staff, who will be the key stakeholders, to support the policy which would be something new for all staff members. My goal is to overcome this obstacle through the support of the Executive Director and through training the staff about the policy, teaching them the proper procedures for records management and showing the staff how proper records management will benefit them in their day to day duties.

I plan to provide the staff with information regarding records management obtained from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and with the necessary supplies for the staff to complete transfers of records to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

I will use fiscal year 2007-2008 as a practice year for records management and begin implementing the records management policy on July 1 at the beginning of the new fiscal year. The initial year will be used to observe how well the policy works as well as to incorporate any potential changes which may be needed. This will ensure a refined and smoother process in future years.

After the first archiving session is complete, I plan to seek feedback from the staff regarding the process, and then meet with the Executive Director to discuss any changes that need to be implemented.

Since the State Ethics Commission is comprised of only eight full-time employees and three part-time employees, I do not plan to use any formal data collection methods to measure the results of our first archiving session. I plan to hold informal meetings with the staff to get the feedback needed to improve the process since the staff will be the key stakeholders during the implementation of this new policy. I will hold a planning meeting in July 2007 to discuss the policy and ask the staff questions such as:

1. How much time do you anticipate that it will take for you to complete the archiving for your job duties?
2. Do you need someone to assist you with this task?
3. What supplies do you need to complete make this task easier?

I plan to conduct another meeting after all archiving has been completed and ask the staff this question:

Now that your department has been archived and is up to date, how much time do you anticipate that it will take next year to complete your archiving?

There are approximately one hundred file drawers in our file room which hold our two most requested forms. Through the destruction or transfer of forms which are over four

years old, which according to statute is the length of time required to keep the records, I anticipate reducing our filing system by at least twenty percent.

In fiscal year 2006 the State Ethics Commission received 7,257 requests to review forms. Through the destruction or transfer of forms which are over four years old, the time it takes a staff member to locate a file should be greatly reduced. This reduction will eliminate the over flow in the agency's currently overburdened file cabinets thus creating a less cluttered filling area and reduce staff frustrations related to locating files. Normally, the wait time a customer endures while a staff member locates their requested file(s) is up to five minutes. With an up to date filing system, the customer wait time will be reduced.

REFERENCES

Taking the lead: the program manager's role in records management – SC Dept. of Archives and History Division of Archives and Records Management.

Duties and Responsibilities of State Agency Records Officers, SC Dept. of Archives and History, December 7, 2000.