

Document Code No.: INF-15-4-2-EP

Title: Management of King County Public Records

Affected Agencies: All King County offices, departments, officials, boards, commissions or committees as well as all associated individuals including employees, board members, volunteers, contractors, grantees and similar entities.

Authorities: King County Code; WAC 434, RCW 42.56, RCW 40.14

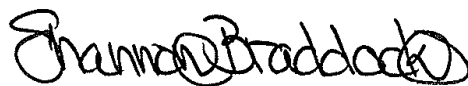
Keywords: Records, Archives, Public Records, Records Management, Records Retention, Disposition, Records Destruction, Public Disclosure, Digital Records, Native Format, Electronic Records, electronic records management system, Content Manager (CM), enterprise content management system, Preservation, Archival

Sponsoring Agency: Records and Licensing Services Division



King County

Executive signature: _____



Date signed and effective: 11/24/2025

I. Purpose

This policy provides the framework to ensure that King County's records are effectively and efficiently managed throughout their lifecycle in accordance with records management law, regulations, and best practices. This policy also establishes responsibilities for fulfillment of these requirements, as well as outlining accountability measures to ensure compliance.

Applicability and Audience This policy applies to all King County offices, departments, officials, employees, boards, commissions, committees, and the members of the boards, commissions or committees, volunteers, or similar entities as well as contractors and grantees, all of whom have legal obligations under the authorities stated in the header, regardless of whether they are also subject to any other records management policy.

II. Definitions

Agency Records Officer: "Agency Records Officers" are the individuals appointed by the Agency Director to work with the King County Records Management Program to establish and implement records management best practices within their agency.

Archival Records: "Archival Records" are records designated in a records retention schedule and/or appraised by the County Archivist as having enduring historical value and/or a research use beyond the use for which the record was created.

Disposition: "Disposition" is the action that happens to records at the end of their retention period. There are two options for disposition: destruction or transfer to the King County Archives.

Electronic or Digital Records: "Electronic Record" or "Digital Record" means any record that exists in an electronic format on analog or digital media. Examples include but are not limited to: email messages and attachments, audio/video recordings, electronic documents, digital images and databases.

Content Manager (CM): "Content Manager (CM)" is King County's enterprise records management system. It is an application that is used to manage the inventory of inactive physical records stored at the King County Records Center; a repository in which the

County's inactive electronic records are collected, organized and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and legal disposition; and can also be used to manage active electronic records from the point of their creation.

Inactive Records: A record that has reached its cutoff date and is no longer needed to conduct current business but must be retained until the end of its retention period.

King County Archives: "King County Archives" is the repository operated by King County where archival records are collected, preserved and made accessible to the public. King County Archives is designated as the official repository of the County's archival records, (King County Code 2.12.035). Records transferred to the King County Archives are in the custody of, and become the property of, King County Archives.

King County Records Center: "King County Records Center" is the official repository of King County's inactive physical records. It is a facility operated by King County with responsibility for the controlled storage of inactive records and the disposition of records at the end of their retention period. Records stored in the Records Center remain in the legal custody of the agency that created or received them.

King County Records Management Program: "King County Records Management Program" is the program responsible for providing tools, resources and education needed to implement mandated records management law, regulations, procedures, and best practices countywide. The King County Records Management Program serves all offices, departments, boards, commissions, committees or similar entities of the County.

Records Retention Schedules: "Records Retention Schedules" outline the management, preservation and disposition of public records and provide the authorization for county agencies to legally dispose of their records at the end of their life cycle.

III. Policy

A. All records created or received in the course of County business are and remain the property of King County.

B. Each department shall appoint an Agency Records Officer to implement records management best practices within their agency.

C. The leadership within each department shall meet with their Agency Records Officer at least quarterly to discuss the status of records management within their agency.

D. Each Agency Records Officer shall develop and provide oversight for the records management program within their agency.

E. The Agency Records Officer shall ensure that records management practices adhere to the most current version of the Records Management Manual available via the internet from the executive department responsible for archives and records management functions, unless granted an exception by the King County Public Records Committee for legitimate business reasons.

F. Each department shall properly file and organize all records created or received in the course of business, regardless of format.

- G. Compliance with records retention schedules is mandatory on the part of all departments and employees.
- H. Each department shall properly disposition physical and electronic records in accordance with approved legal records retention schedules and related County policies and procedures.
- I. No records shall be dispositioned or removed from County custody without proper authorization.
- J. No records shall be dispositioned that are necessary for compliance with the Public Records Act, audit, investigation and/or legal action while the subject of any public records request, audit, investigation and/or legal action.
- K. No record with an archival designation of Archival - Appraisal Required (Potentially Archival) shall be destroyed without prior appraisal and approval by the King County Archivist.
- L. Content Manager (CM) is the official repository of King County's inactive electronic records.
- M. Each department shall use the King County Records Center for storage of inactive physical records. All physical records at the Records Center must be entered into Content Manager (CM).
- N. Each department shall use the King County Archives as the official repository for King County's Archival Records, unless granted an exception by the County Archivist.
- O. King County employees shall properly manage and retain records within their control.

IV. Implementation Plan

- A. This policy becomes effective for all King County offices, departments, officials, employees, boards, commissions, committees, and the members of the boards, commissions or committees, volunteers, or similar entities as well as contractors and grantees, all of whom have legal obligations under the authorities stated in the header on the date it is signed County Executive. Implementation shall be spearheaded by the Public Records Committee and by the executive department responsible for archives and records management functions. Separately elected officials shall be encouraged to treat this as a model policy and adopt a similar policy for their own agencies.
- B. The Director of the executive department responsible for archives and records management functions is responsible for communicating this policy to the County Executive and executive leadership team. The Director of the Records and Licensing Services Division is responsible for communicating this policy to the Public Records

Committee. Agency Records Officers are responsible for communicating this policy to the management structure within their respective agencies and other appropriate parties.

V. Maintenance

- A. This policy shall be maintained by the executive department responsible for archives and records management functions. Changes to the policy may be proposed by the Archives and Records Management Program in the Records and Licensing Services Division of the Department of Executive Services, or the Public Records Committee.
- B. This policy will automatically expire five (5) years after its effective date. A new, revised, or renewed policy will be initiated by the Records and Licensing Services Division or its successor agency prior to the expiration date.

VI. Consequences for Noncompliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in a number of consequences, including noncompliance with record retention requirements and an inability to properly respond to public records requests. These consequences carry with them risks of fines, fees and legal action. Individual employees who fail to carry out the duties associated with this policy may receive additional training in this area and may have their failure to comply reflected in performance feedback.

Appendices: None. Refer to the Records Management Program's internet website for the most current version of retention schedules, procedures, best practices, and guidance documents.