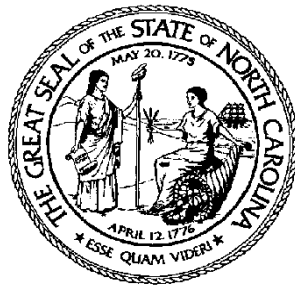


# RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE

## PROGRAM RECORDS SCHEDULE: LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL UNITS



Issued By:



North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
Division of Archives and Records  
Government Records Section

October 1, 2021

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## **Program Records Retention and Disposition Schedule: Local Public School Units**

The records retention and disposition schedule and retention periods governing the records series listed herein are hereby approved. This approval extends to and includes the program operational records in the **2021 Program Records Schedule: Local Public School Units**:

10. Academic Program and Curriculum Records
11. Extracurricular Program Records
12. Individual Schools' and Central Office Administrative Records
13. Operations Records
14. Student Records

In accordance with the provisions of Chapters 121 and 132 of the *General Statutes of North Carolina*, it is agreed that the records do not and will not have further use or value for official business, research, or reference purposes after the respective retention periods specified herein and are authorized to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of by the agency or official having custody of them without further reference to or approval of either party to this agreement.

### **Destructions**

G.S. § 121-5 authorizes the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to regulate the destruction of public records. Furthermore, the local government agency agrees to comply with 07 NCAC 04M .0510 when deciding on a method of destruction. The North Carolina Administrative Code states:

“(a) Paper records which have met their required retention requirements and are not subject to legal or other audit holds should be destroyed in one of the following ways:

1. burned, unless prohibited by local ordinance;
2. shredded, or torn up so as to destroy the record content of the documents or material concerned;
3. placed in acid vats so as to reduce the paper to pulp and to terminate the existence of the documents or materials concerned; or
4. sold as waste paper, provided that the purchaser agrees in writing that the documents or materials concerned will not be resold without pulverizing or shredding the documents so that the information contained within cannot be practicably read or reconstructed.

(b) When used in an approved records retention and disposition schedule, the provision that electronic records are to be destroyed means that the data and metadata are to be overwritten, deleted, and unlinked so the data and metadata may not be practicably reconstructed.

(c) When used in an approved records retention and disposition schedule, the provision that confidential records of any format are to be destroyed means the data, metadata, and physical media are to be destroyed in such a manner that the information cannot be read or reconstructed under any means.”

All local government agencies should maintain logs of their destructions either in the minutes of their governing board or in their Records Management file. Confidential records will be destroyed in such a manner that the records cannot be practicably read or reconstructed.

***Public records, including electronic records, not listed in this schedule are not authorized to be destroyed.***

### **Audits and Litigation Actions**

Records subject to audit or those legally required for ongoing official proceedings must be retained until released from such audits or official proceedings, notwithstanding the instructions of this schedule.

### **Electronic Records**

All local government agencies and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources concur that the long-term and/or permanent preservation of electronic records requires additional commitment and active management by the agency. Agencies agree to comply with all policies, standards, and best practices published by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources regarding the creation and management of electronic records.

Local government agencies should consider retention requirements and disposition authorities when designing and implementing electronic records management systems. Any type of electronically-created or electronically-stored information falls under the North Carolina General Assembly's definition of public records cited above. For example, e-mail, text messages, blog posts, voicemails, websites, word processing documents, spreadsheets, databases, and PDFs all fall within this definition of public records. In addition, G.S. § 132-6.1(a) specifies:

"Databases purchased, leased, created, or otherwise acquired by every public agency containing public records shall be designed and maintained in a manner that does not impair or impede the public agency's ability to permit the public inspection and examination of public records and provides a means of obtaining copies of such records. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require the retention by the public agency of obsolete hardware or software."

Local government agencies may scan any paper record and retain it electronically for ease of retrieval. If an agency wishes to destroy the original paper records before their assigned retention periods have been met, the agency must establish an electronic records policy, including putting into place procedures for quality assurance and documentation of authorization for records destructions approved by the Government Records Section. This electronic records policy and releases for destruction of records must be approved by the Government Records Section. Agencies should be aware that for the purpose of any audit, litigation, or public records request, they are considered the records custodian obligated to produce requested records, even if said records are being maintained electronically by an outside vendor. Therefore, contracts regarding electronically stored information should be carefully negotiated to specify how records can be exported in case a vendor goes out of business or the agency decides to award the contract to a different vendor.

### **Reference Copies**

All local government agencies and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources agree that certain records series possess only brief administrative, fiscal, legal, research, and reference value. These records series have been designated by retention periods that allow these records to be destroyed when "*reference value ends.*" All local government agencies hereby agree that they will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction "*destroy when reference value ends.*" If a local government agency does not establish internal policies and retention periods, the local government agency is not complying with the provisions of this retention schedule and is not authorized by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to destroy the records with the disposition instruction "*destroy when reference value ends.*"

### **Record Copy**

A record copy is defined as "The single copy of a document, often the original, that is designated as the official copy for reference and preservation."<sup>1</sup> The record copy is the one whose retention and disposition is mandated by this schedule; all additional copies are considered reference or access copies and can be destroyed when their usefulness expires. In some cases, postings to social media may be unofficial copies of information that is captured elsewhere as a record copy (e.g., a press release about an upcoming agency event that is copied to various social media platforms). Appropriately retaining record copies and disposing of reference copies requires agencies to designate clearly what position or office is required to maintain an official record for the duration of its designated retention period.

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<sup>1</sup> Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*.

### **Transitory Records**

Transitory records are defined as “record[s] that [have] little or no documentary or evidential value and that need not be set aside for future use.”<sup>2</sup>

North Carolina has a broad definition of public records. However, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources recognizes that some records may have little or no long-term documentary or evidential value to the creating agency. These records are often called transitory records. They may be disposed of according to the guidance below. However, all public employees should be familiar with their appropriate retention schedule and any other applicable guidelines for their office. If there is a required retention period for these records, that requirement must be followed. When in doubt about whether a record is transitory or whether it has special significance or importance, retain the record in question and seek guidance from a DNCR records analyst.

Routing slips and transmittal sheets adding no information to that contained in the transmitted material have minimal value after the material has been successfully transmitted. These records may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of after receipt of the material has been confirmed. Similarly, “while you were out” slips, memory aids, and other records requesting follow-up actions (including voicemails and calendar invites) have minimal value once the official action these records are supporting has been completed and documented. These records may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of once the action has been resolved.

Drafts and working papers, including notes and calculations, are materials gathered or created to assist in the creation of another record. All drafts and working papers are public records subject to all provisions of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes, but many of them have minimal value after the final version of the record has been approved, and may be destroyed after final approval, if they are no longer necessary to support the analysis or conclusions of the official record. Drafts and working documents that may be destroyed after final approval include:

- Drafts and working papers for internal and external policies
- Drafts and working papers for internal administrative reports, such as daily and monthly activity reports;
- Drafts and working papers for internal, non-policy-level documents, such as informal workflows and manuals; and
- Drafts and working papers for presentations, workshops, and other explanations of agency policy that is already formally documented.

Forms used solely to create, update, or modify records in an electronic medium may be destroyed in office after completion of data entry and after all verification and quality control procedures, so long as these records are not required for audit or legal purposes. However, if the forms contain any analog components that are necessary to validate the information contained on them (e.g., a signature or notary’s seal), they must be retained according to the disposition instructions for the records series encompassing the forms’ function.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

It is further agreed that these records may not be destroyed prior to the time periods stated; however, for sufficient reason they may be retained for longer periods. This schedule supersedes previous versions of this schedule and any localized amendments; it is to remain in effect from the date of approval until it is reviewed and updated.

**APPROVAL RECOMMENDED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent



Sarah E. Koonts, Director  
Division of Archives and Records

**APPROVED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Governing Body



D. Reid Wilson, Secretary  
Department of Natural and Cultural  
Resources

Local Public School Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective: October 1, 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ✓ According to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 121-5(b) and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-3, you may destroy public records only with the consent of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). The State Archives of North Carolina is the division of DNCR charged with administering a records management program. This schedule is the primary way the State Archives of North Carolina gives its consent. Without approving this schedule, your agency is obligated to obtain the State Archives of North Carolina's permission to destroy *any* record, no matter how insignificant.
- ✓ Each records series listed on this schedule has specific disposition instructions that will indicate how long the series must be kept in your office. In some cases, the disposition instructions are simply "retain in office permanently," which means that those records must be kept in your office forever. In other cases, the retention period may be "destroy in office when reference value ends." An agency may have reference copies of materials, meaning "a copy of a record distributed to make recipients aware of the content but not directing the recipient to take any action on the matter" (from Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*). Your agency must establish and enforce internal policies by setting minimum retention periods for the records that the State Archives of North Carolina has scheduled with the disposition instructions, "destroy when reference value ends."
- ✓ E-mail is a record as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 121-5 and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132. It is the content of the e-mail that is critical when determining the retention period of a particular e-mail, including attachments, not the media in which the record was created. It is important for all agency employees and officials to determine the appropriate records series for specific e-mails and retain them according to the disposition instructions listed with the identified record series.
- ✓ The State Archives of North Carolina recommends that all agency employees and officials view the tutorials that are available online through the State Archives website in order to familiarize themselves with records management principles and practices. The State Archives of North Carolina's online tutorials include topics such as records management and scanning guidelines.
- ✓ The State Archives of North Carolina creates security preservation record copies for minutes and selected other records of governing bodies and commissions, adoption records, and maps and plats. Agencies can request copies of the digital images made during this process. Contact the appropriate Records Management Analyst to begin this process.
- ✓ If you have records that are not listed in this schedule, contact a Records Management Analyst. An analyst will discuss the nature of the records with you to determine if the records have historical value. If the records do not have historical value, we will ask you to complete a [Request for Disposal of Unscheduled Records](#) (page A-18) for records that are no longer being created.
- ✓ In order to protect against unauthorized or improper disclosure, custodians of student records should be familiar with **20 USCA 1232g**, the federal **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**. Provisions of this act governing access to student records and release of information from them should be applied along with **N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-402**, the state statute governing student records.

- ✓ The following federal and state legislation contains requirements that affect the maintenance of student educational records. “Records” as defined in Section 99.3 of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (34 CFR 99.3) regulations means any information or data recorded in any medium, including but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, and microfiche. “Educational records” means records which (1) are directly related to the student and are maintained by an agency or institution or (2) by a party acting for the party or institution.

I. 34 CFR 99.20: *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974: Request to Amend Records*

- a) The parent of a student or an eligible student who believes that information contained in the educational records of the student is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the student may request that the educational agency or institution that maintains the records amend them.
- b) The educational agency or institution shall decide whether to amend the education records of the student in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of the request.
- c) If the educational agency or institution decides to refuse to amend the education records of the student in accordance with the request, it shall so inform the parent of the student or the eligible student of the refusal and advise the parent or the eligible student of the right to a hearing under Section 99.21 (34 CFR 99.21).

II. 34 CFR 300.624: *Education of Individuals With Disabilities Education Act: Destruction of Information*

- a) The public agency shall inform parents when personally identifiable information collected, maintained, or used under this part is no longer needed to provide educational services to the child.
- b) The information must be destroyed at the request of the parents. However, a permanent record of a student’s name, address, and phone number, his or her grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed may be maintained without time limitation.

**Comment:** Under Section 300.624, the personally identifiable information of a disabled child may be retained permanently unless the parents request it be destroyed. Destruction of records in accordance with an approved retention schedule is the best protection against improper and unauthorized disclosure. However, the records may be needed for other purposes. When informing parents of their rights under this section, educational agencies should remind them the information contained in the records may be needed by the child or the parents to qualify for future services or benefits. If the parents still request the information be destroyed, the educational agency may only retain information described in b).

III. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C, Article 29: *Elementary and Secondary Education: Protective Provisions and Maintenance of Student Records: Student records; maintenance; contents; confidentiality.*



- a) The official record of each student enrolled in North Carolina public schools shall be permanently maintained in the files of the appropriate school after the student graduates, or should have graduated, from high school unless the local board determines that such files may be filed in the central office or other location designated by the local board for that purpose.
- b) The official record shall contain, as a minimum, adequate identification data including date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data, and such other factual information as may be deemed appropriate by the local board of education having jurisdiction over the school wherein the record is maintained. Each student's official record also shall include notice of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-390.7 through 115C-390.11 and the conduct for which the student was suspended or expelled. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall expunge from the record the notice of suspension or expulsion if the following criteria are met:
  - (1) One of the following persons makes a request for expungement:
    - a. The student's parent, legal guardian, or custodian.
    - b. The student, if the student is at least 16 years old or is emancipated.
  - (2) The student either graduates from high school or is not expelled or suspended again during the two-year period commencing on the date of the student's return to school after the expulsion or suspension.
  - (3) The superintendent or the superintendent's designee determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to maintain safe and orderly schools.
  - (4) The superintendent or the superintendent's designee determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the child.
- c) Notwithstanding subdivision (b)(1) of this section, a superintendent or the superintendent's designee may expunge from a student's official record any notice of suspension or expulsion provided all other criteria under subsection (b) are met.
- d) Each local board's policy on student records shall include information on the procedure for expungement under subsection (b) of this section.
- e) The official record of each student is not a public record as the term "public record" is defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-1. The official record shall not be subject to inspection and examination as authorized by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-6.
- f) The actual address and telephone number of a student who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the General Statutes or a student with a parent who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the General Statutes shall be kept confidential from the public and shall not be disclosed except as provided in Chapter 15C of the General Statutes.

## LEGEND FOR RECORDS SCHEDULE

This records retention and disposition schedule applies to records in all media, unless otherwise specified.



– symbol designating that one or more records in this series may be confidential or may include confidential information.

**Item #** – an identifying number assigned to each records series for ease of reference.

**Series** – “a group of similar records that are . . . related as the result of being created, received, or used in the same activity.” (From Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*). Series in this schedule are based on common functions in government offices.

**Records Series Title** – a short identification of the records in a series, based on their common function.

**Series Description** – a longer description of the records in a series, often including the types of records that can frequently be found in that series. This information is included underneath the Records Series Title.

**Disposition Instructions** – instructions dictating the length of time a series must be retained and how the office should dispose of those records after that time.

**Citation** – a listing of references to statutes, laws, and codes related to the records series. Citations can include:

- Authority: governing the creation of records
- Confidentiality: limiting access to public records
- Retention: setting a retention period

Throughout this schedule, items that cross-reference other items within this schedule are indicated with a SEE ALSO reference. If you hover your cursor over one of these items, you will see the hand tool that will enable you to click on the item to follow the link to that location.

### **AUDITS: PERFORMANCE**

Records concerning internal and external audits conducted to assess the function of government programs. Includes reports, working papers, corrective measures, and other related records.


SEE ALSO: Audits: Financial (STANDARD 2: BUDGET, FISCAL, AND PAYROLL RECORDS).

*Sample records series title and description with cross-reference included*

**No destruction of records may take place if litigation or audits are pending or reasonably anticipated. See also AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION, page A-5.**

**STANDARD 10: PROGRAM OPERATIONAL RECORDS – ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM RECORDS**

Records concerning the development and administration of the local public school unit’s curriculum and instruction, including special academic programs such as academically and intellectually gifted programs, education for students with disabilities, and vocational education.

ITEM #	STANDARD 10: ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
10.01	<p><b>COURSE MATRIX</b> Records concerning the scheduling of courses at a school. Includes timetable reports, teacher assignments, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Student Scheduling Records (STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS).</p>	Destroy in office after superseded or obsolete.	
10.02	<p><b>CURRICULUM RECORDS</b> Records used to establish course requirements and scope for various areas of study. Includes approved instructional resources, objectives, methods of evaluation, handbooks, curriculum course guides, pacing guides, assessment guides, and testing guides.</p>	<p>a) Retain in office permanently documentation of major revisions developed or initiated by the local public school unit or board of education.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records when superseded or obsolete.</p>	
10.03	<p> <b>EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP RECORDS</b> Follow-up studies of former students of educational programs.</p>	Destroy in office after 5 years.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402

\* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated. See **AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION**, page A-5.

± The agency hereby agrees that it will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.

ITEM #	STANDARD 10: ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
10.04	<p><b>EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM RECORDS</b> Records concerning the development and implementation of a local public school unit’s educational programs, including programs for academically gifted students, programs for students with disabilities, and career and technical education programs.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Educational Program Placement Records (STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS).</p>	Destroy in office 5 years after superseded or obsolete.	
10.05	<p><b>STANDARDIZED TEST ADMINISTRATION RECORDS</b> Records concerning the administration of standardized tests. Includes testing materials, proctor guidelines and reports, anonymized and aggregated testing data, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Standardized Test Responses and Scores (STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS).</p>	<p>a) Destroy in office test materials according to directions from the Department of Public Instruction, Accountability Services Division.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records after 3 years.</p>	
10.06	<p><b>TEACHER LESSON PLANS</b> Records created by teachers for the classes or subjects they teach. Includes syllabi, pacing guides, worksheets, discussion notes, tests, problem-solving materials, class recordings, and other related records used to obtain an instructional objective.</p>	Destroy in office when superseded or obsolete.	

10: Academic Program and Curriculum


\* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated. See **AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION**, page A-5.

± The agency hereby agrees that it will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.

**STANDARD 11: PROGRAM OPERATIONAL RECORDS – EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAM RECORDS**

Records concerning the administration of programs for students that are not directly related to the granting of diplomas and certificates.

*Note:* Records concerning individual student enrollment and achievement in academic programs are found in Standard 14: Student Records.

ITEM #	STANDARD 11: EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAM RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
11.01 	<p><b>ATHLETIC PROGRAM RECORDS</b> Records concerning athletics programs. Includes student eligibility records, physical exams, parental consent forms, waivers, application forms, entry forms, schedules, participation requirement forms, and other related records.</p>	Destroy in office 2 years after program season ends.	Confidentiality: 42 USC 1320d-6
11.02	<p><b>STUDENT AWARDS AND HONORS RECORDS</b> Records concerning awards and honor societies. Includes applications, lists of eligible students, lists of recipients, teacher evaluations and comments, and lists of students selected for honor society membership.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, Scholarship Records (STANDARD 2: BUDGET, FISCAL, AND PAYROLL RECORDS).</p>	Destroy in office when reference value ends.± Agency Policy: Destroy in office after _____	
11.03	<p><b>STUDENT ELECTION RECORDS</b> Records concerning student elections for club officials, student government, pageants, resolutions, and other school-related polling.</p>	Destroy in office when reference value ends.± Agency Policy: Destroy in office after _____	

\* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated. See **AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION**, page A-5.

± The agency hereby agrees that it will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.

ITEM #	STANDARD 11: EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAM RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
11.04	<b>STUDENT ORGANIZATION RECORDS</b> Records concerning student organizations at schools. Includes membership lists, records of activities, scrapbooks, minutes (when produced), and other related records.	a) Retain in office records with historical value permanently. b) Destroy in office remaining records when reference value ends.± Agency Policy: Destroy in office after _____	
11.05	<b>STUDENT PUBLICITY RECORDS</b> Records of student-created content circulated on official channels. Includes audio and video broadcasts, print publications, and content created for social media platforms.	a) Retain in office records with historical value permanently. b) Destroy in office remaining records after 1 year.	

11: Extracurricular

\* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated. See **AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION**, page A-5.

± The agency hereby agrees that it will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.


**STANDARD 12: PROGRAM OPERATIONAL RECORDS – INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS’ AND CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS**

Records created and received by individual school and central office staff in the performance of job-related activities.

ITEM #	STANDARD 12: INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS’ AND CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
12.01	<p><b>AGGREGATED REPORTS AND DATA</b></p> <p>Reports and data compiled by individual schools or local public school units from individual school reports or aggregated student data and submitted to state agencies or the General Assembly due to state or federal requirements. Includes second month reports, school violence reports, principals’ monthly reports, salary information reports, superseded reports, and other related records; as well as reports required to be submitted per the terms of a grant.</p>	<p>a) For reports and data submitted per the terms of a grant, follow disposition instructions for Grants in the <i>General Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies</i>.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records after 3 years.</p> <p><i>Retention Note: Individual reports and data may be permitted or required to be submitted through centralized electronic student data portals, depending on requirements issued by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. In these cases, the retention periods apply to the local public school unit’s instance of the data submitted through these portals.</i></p>	
12.02	<p><b>FIELD TRIP AUTHORIZATIONS</b></p> <p>Records concerning the authorization of school-sponsored trips by the school or central office administration. Includes date(s) of trip, purpose, destination, itinerary, academic justification, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Parent/Guardian Authorization Records (STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS).</p>	<p>Destroy in office after 1 year.</p>	

\* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated. See **AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION**, page A-5.

± The agency hereby agrees that it will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.

ITEM #	STANDARD 12: INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS' AND CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
12.03	<b>SCHOOL LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER RECORDS</b> Records concerning the management of school libraries and media centers. Includes holdings and circulation records as well as patron records.	Destroy in office when superseded or obsolete.	
12.04	<b>STUDENT HANDBOOK</b> Records concerning handbooks or similar items supplied to students to communicate attendance policy, disciplinary policies and procedures, graduation requirements, academic policies, and general school rules and regulations	a) Retain 1 copy in office permanently. b) Destroy in office remaining copies when reference value ends.± Agency Policy: Destroy in office after _____	
12.05	<b>TEACHER AND STAFF ALLOTMENT WAIVERS</b> Applications to and waivers received from the State Board of Education to vary from standard allocations and allotments of teachers and staff in statutorily-mandated positions.	Destroy in office 5 years after expiration.	
12.06	 <b>TITLE IX RECORDS</b> Records of complaints and any actions, including supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment.	a) Destroy in office investigation records 7 years after resolution of matter and expiration of all appeal rights. b) Destroy in office training records after 7 years.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g  Retention: 34 CFR 106.45(b)(10)

12: Individual Schools' and Central Office

\* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated. See **AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION**, page A-5.


± The agency hereby agrees that it will establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that Natural and Cultural Resources has scheduled with the disposition instruction "destroy when reference value ends." Please use the space provided.



**STANDARD 13: PROGRAM OPERATIONAL RECORDS – OPERATIONS RECORDS**

Records concerning support operations for public schools, including nutritional services and student transportation.




13: Operations

ITEM #	STANDARD 13: OPERATIONS RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
13.01	<b>FOOD SERVICE PROGRAMS</b> Records concerning food service programs. File includes daily meal production records, commodity inventory reports, analysis reimbursement/claim reports, verification reports, and other related records created according to U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations.	Destroy in office after 3 years.*	
13.02	 <b>FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS APPLICATIONS</b> Applications for free and reduced-price meals.	a) Destroy in office any rejected applications after 1 year. b) Destroy in office remaining records 3 years after expiration.*	Confidentiality: G.S. 115C-402 G.S. 132-1.10(b)(5)
13.03	<b>SCHOOL BUS ROUTES</b> Records concerning routes designed for school buses. Includes descriptions of routes, maps, passenger lists, bus run reports, and other related records.	Destroy in office 3 years after superseded or obsolete.	
13.04	<b>SEAT BELT RECORDS</b> Records concerning the use and installation of seat belts and other restraint systems in school buses. Includes consent forms.	Destroy in office when superseded or obsolete.	

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**STANDARD 14: PROGRAM OPERATIONAL RECORDS – STUDENT RECORDS**  
 Records concerning individual enrollment and achievement of students within the local public school unit.

ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.01 	<b>ACADEMIC ACTION AUTHORIZATIONS</b> Records concerning changes made to students' cumulative records.  SEE ALSO: North Carolina Cumulative Records (below).	Destroy in office 2 years after student graduates or withdraws.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.02 	<b>ATTENDANCE RECORDS</b> Records of each student's daily, weekly, monthly, and/or yearly school attendance. Includes check-in/check-out logs, and individual classroom attendance reports.	a) Post information to student's cumulative record (North Carolina Cumulative Records, below) pursuant to local board of education requirements. b) Destroy in office classroom attendance records after 1 year. c) Destroy in office remaining records after 5 years.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.03 	<b>DISCIPLINE RECORDS</b> Records concerning adverse student behavior. Includes violent incident reports, discipline profile reports, disciplinary action plans, classroom detention notices, in-school and out-of-school suspension records, correspondence between parents/guardians and school personnel, behavior logs, incident reports, documentation of actions taken by school officials and/or law enforcement officers, and other related records.	a) Post information to student's cumulative record (North Carolina Cumulative Records, below) pursuant to local board of education requirements. b) Destroy in office remaining records after 5 years.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.04 	<p><b>DRIVER EDUCATION RECORDS</b> Records concerning students' eligibility to obtain learner's permits or provisional driver's licenses. Includes driving eligibility forms, permit/license revocation letters, driver education completion certificates, and other related records.</p>	<p>a) Post appropriate information to student's cumulative record, if required by the local board of education. b) Destroy in office remaining records when student reaches 18 years of age or obtains a high school diploma or its equivalent, whichever occurs first.</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p>
14.05 	<p><b>EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT RECORDS</b> Records concerning the placement of students in educational programs. Includes student evaluations, aptitude tests, performance records and reports, apprenticeship and cooperative placement records, and other related records.</p> <p>For placement records of students covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, see Specially Differentiated Instruction for Children with Disabilities Records (below). SEE ALSO: Educational Program Records (STANDARD 10: ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM RECORDS).</p>	<p>Destroy in office 5 years after student is no longer enrolled in program.</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p>
14.06 	<p><b>ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL RECORDS</b> Records documenting when students enroll in or withdraw from school, including transfers to other schools or districts. Includes student information sheets and withdrawal forms.</p>	<p>a) Post information to student's cumulative record (North Carolina Cumulative Records, below) pursuant to local board of education requirements. b) Destroy in office remaining records after 3 years.</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p>

14: Student Records

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.07 	<b>GRADES</b> School's and classrooms' records documenting individual student grades. Includes teacher grade books, progress reports, grade reports for each grading period, semester or midterm averages, final averages, student report cards, and marks gathering forms. Also includes student promotion status.	a) Post information to student's cumulative record (North Carolina Cumulative Records, below) pursuant to local board of education requirements. b) Destroy in office classroom grade records after 1 year. c) Destroy in office remaining records after 5 years.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.08 	<b>GUIDANCE RECORDS</b> Records concerning counseling and advisement sessions with students. Includes session notes and reports, interview forms, student test profiles, aptitude test scores, approved schedule forms, recommendations, references, career planning forms, correspondence, and other related records.	Destroy in office after 5 years.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.09 	<b>HEALTH ASSESSMENT FORMS</b> Records required to be submitted to schools as a condition of the student's enrollment and used by school health staff as a baseline to develop student health records. Includes health assessment transmittal forms, symptom checklists, and physician records.	Destroy in office after 1 year.	Authority: G.S. 130A-440 G.S. 130A-441  Confidentiality: 42 USC 1320d-6 G.S. 115C-402

14: Student Records

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.10 	<p><b>HEALTH CARE PLANS</b> Records documenting planned health care for individual students, including emergency action plans, asthma action plans.</p> <p>For physicians’ orders and documentation of medical actions taken for the student, see Health Records (below). For health care plans generated under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, see Reasonable Accommodations for Children with Disabilities (below).</p>	<p>a) Destroy in office 10 years after superseded or obsolete plans for students whose care is funded by Medicaid.*</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records when superseded or obsolete.</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 42 USC 1320d-6 G.S. 115C-402</p>
14.11 	<p><b>HEALTH RECORDS</b> Records documenting medical care given to students. Includes physicians’ orders, medical permissions, medication authorizations and administration logs, treatment orders, diet orders, outside medical records, and other related records.</p>	<p>a) Destroy in office immediately outside medical records not relevant to providing care of accommodation in school.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records when student reaches 30 years of age and has not received services in 10 years.*</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 42 USC 1320d-6 G.S. 115C-402</p>
14.12 	<p><b>IMMUNIZATION RECORDS</b> Student immunization records received by the school as a condition of enrollment. May also include documentation of a student’s religious or medical exemptions to the immunization requirement.</p>	<p>a) Transfer to student’s new school upon request.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records when student is no longer enrolled in the school.</p>	<p>Authority: G.S. 130A-155(b)</p> <p>Confidentiality: 42 USC 1320d-6</p>

14: Student Records

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.13 	<p><b>INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FILE</b> Records concerning international students enrolled at the school. Includes I-20, copy of alien registration receipt cards, copy of arrival-departure record (I-94), copy of certificate of eligibility for J-1 visa status (DS-2019), statement of financial eligibility, correspondence, and other related records.</p>	<p>Destroy in office 3 years after student graduates or separates from the school.*</p>	<p>Authority: 8 CFR 214.2(f) 8 CFR 214.3(k)</p> <p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g</p> <p>Retention: 8 CFR 214.3(g) 22 CFR 62.10(h)</p>

14: Student Records

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.14 	<p><b>NORTH CAROLINA CUMULATIVE RECORDS</b> Cumulative record of students’ elementary and secondary educational career. Pursuant to G.S. 115C-402, includes “adequate identification data including date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data, and such other factual information as may be deemed appropriate by the local board of education having jurisdiction over the school wherein the records is maintained.” Also includes notice of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed and the conduct for which the student was suspended or expelled (unless expunged according to provided criteria). Also includes information on disclosure of student records to certain parties under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Student Health Information Disclosure Records (below).</p>	<p>a) For students who transfer to another school, transfer student’s cumulative record to the school receiving the transfer. Destroy original school’s cumulative records for that student upon confirmation of records’ receipt.</p> <p>b) Retain in office permanently all student information required by G.S. 115C-402 and the local board of education. <i>(Note: If other information had been stored with the cumulative record, it can be purged according to the retention periods outlined for the individual items within this Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.)</i></p> <p>c) Destroy in office suspension or expulsion notices in accordance with G.S. 115C-402.</p> <p><i>Retention Notes: According to the Department of Public Instruction, transcript data stored in a student information system management platform (e.g., PowerSchool) does not constitute a sufficient permanent record. Local Public School Units (LPSUs) must maintain analog (paper or microfilm) cumulative records once the student graduates or leaves the school system. It is recommended that permanent records be microfilmed for permanent preservation 5 years after the student graduates or would have graduated. See Microfilm, page A-Error! Bookmark not defined..</i></p> <p><i>Charter schools that close should transfer all cumulative records to the traditional public school district encompassing the individual school’s geographic location.</i></p>	<p>Authority/ Confidentiality/ Retention: G.S. 115C-402</p>

14: Student Records

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.15 	<p><b>PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION RECORDS</b> Records concerning permissions granted and denied to the school. Includes emergency contacts, field trip permissions, recusals from optional class material, names of persons allowed to remove student from school, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Field Trip Authorizations (STANDARD 12: INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS' AND CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS).</p>	Destroy in office when superseded or obsolete.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.16 	<p><b>PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTACT AND CONFERENCE RECORDS</b> Records concerning interactions, including correspondence and meetings, between parents/guardians and teachers and/or other school officials, including counselors and coaches. Includes correspondence (including e-mail), parent conference forms, and other related records.</p>	Destroy in office after 1 year.	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402

14: Student Records

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.17 	<p><b>REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</b> Records concerning the identification and accommodation of students with disabilities defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. Includes health-related plans, instructional plans, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Health Care Plans (above); Specially Differentiated Instruction for Children with Disabilities Records (below); and GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, Civil Rights Records (STANDARD 6: LEGAL RECORDS).</p>	Destroy in office 3 years after superseded or obsolete.*	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.18 	<p><b>SPECIALLY DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES RECORDS</b> Records used to identify and accommodate children with disabilities who are eligible for specially differentiated instruction under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Includes assessments and medical reports, individual education plans (IEPs) and forms, multidisciplinary team reports, screenings, placements, referrals, parent/guardian consent and notification forms, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Reasonable Accommodations for Children with Disabilities (above).</p>	<p>a) Notify parents, guardians, surrogate parents, or eligible students when records are no longer needed to provide educational services. Destroy said records upon request of the individual(s) notified.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office remaining records 5 years after student is no longer receiving specially differentiated instruction.</p> <p><i>Retention Note: The parent, guardian, surrogate parent, or eligible student must be notified prior to destruction of personally identifiable information so copies of records can be provided if desired. Information must be destroyed at the request of parents if no longer needed to provide educational services to the child (34 CFR 300.624).</i></p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p> <p>Retention: 34 CFR 300.624</p>

14: Student Records


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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.19 	<p><b>STANDARDIZED TEST RESPONSES AND SCORES</b> Student test responses to and scores on standardized tests administered by schools. Also includes modified versions of standardized tests.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Standardized Test Administration Records (STANDARD 10: ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM RECORDS).</p>	<p>a) Post information to student’s cumulative record (North Carolina Cumulative Records, above) pursuant to local board of education requirements.</p> <p>b) Destroy in office student answer documents, including responses and modified versions, 6 months after test scores are received.</p> <p>c) Destroy in office test scores after 3 years.</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p>
14.20	<p><b>STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION DISCLOSURE RECORDS</b> Records and logs concerning access to and disclosure of student protected health information (PHI).</p> <p>SEE ALSO: North Carolina Cumulative Records (above).</p>	<p>Destroy in office 6 years from date of creation or 6 years from date when applicable documentation was last in effect, whichever is later.</p>	<p>Authority: 45 CFR 164.508</p> <p>Retention: 45 CFR 164.528(a)(1)</p>
14.21 	<p><b>STUDENT SCHEDULING RECORDS</b> Records documenting a student’s course selection and timetables. Includes course load by student reports, course selection and verification reports and slips, student scheduling reports, and other related records.</p> <p>SEE ALSO: Course Matrix (STANDARD 10: ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM RECORDS).</p>	<p>Destroy in office when superseded or obsolete.</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p>
14.22 	<p><b>STUDENT SELECTION RECORDS</b> Records documenting the selection of students at selective schools such as magnet schools, early college programs, year-round schools, and charter schools. Includes selection criteria, applications, recommendations and student waivers for right of access, transcripts, committee and review records, appeals, correspondence, and other related records.</p>	<p>a) Destroy in office selection criteria after superseded or obsolete.</p> <p>b) Post information to accepted student’s cumulative record (North Carolina Cumulative Records, above) pursuant to local board of education requirements.</p> <p>c) Destroy in office remaining records for accepted students 2 years after enrollment.</p> <p>d) For non-enrolled students and denied applications, destroy in office 1 year after application period.*</p>	<p>Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402</p>

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ITEM #	STANDARD 14: STUDENT RECORDS		
	RECORDS SERIES TITLE	DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS	CITATION
14.23 	<b>STUDENT WORK</b> Records created by students. Includes classwork, homework, term papers, assignment books, notebooks, responses to locally-generated assessments, and other related records.	Destroy in office after 1 year (if not already returned to student).	Confidentiality: 20 USC 1232g G.S. 115C-402
14.24	<b>TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS</b> Records documenting requests for student transcripts.	Destroy in office after 1 year.	

14: Student Records

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## MANAGING PUBLIC RECORDS IN NORTH CAROLINA

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### ***Q. What is this “records retention and disposition schedule”?***

- A.** This document is a tool for the employees of local government agencies across North Carolina to use when managing the records in their offices. It lists records commonly found in agency offices and gives an assessment of their value by indicating how long those records should be retained. This schedule is also an agreement between your agency and the State Archives of North Carolina.

This schedule serves as the inventory and schedule that the State Archives of North Carolina is directed by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 121-5(c) and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-8 to provide. It supersedes all previous editions, including all amendments.

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### ***Q. How do I get this schedule approved?***

- A.** This schedule must be approved by your governing body for use in your agency. That approval should be made in a regular meeting and recorded as an action in the minutes. It may be done as part of the consent agenda, by resolution, or other action.
- 

### ***Q. Am I required to have all the records listed on this schedule?***

- A.** No, this is not a list of records you must have in your office.
- 

### ***Q. What is “reference value”?***

- A.** Items containing “reference value” in the disposition instructions are generally records that hold limited value, which is typically restricted to those documenting routine operations within the office. A minimum retention period should be established by the office for any items containing the phrase “destroy in office when reference value ends” in the disposition instructions.
- 

### ***Q. Do the standards correspond to the organizational structure of my agency?***

- A.** Records series are grouped into standards to make it easier for users to locate records and their disposition instructions. You may find that the groupings reflect the organizational structure of your agency, or you may find that records are located in various standards depending on the content of the record. The intent of the schedule’s organization is to provide an easy reference guide for the records created in your agency.
- 

### ***Q. What if I cannot find some of my records on this schedule?***

- A.** Sometimes the records are listed in a different standard than how you organize them in your office. Be sure to check the Index and utilize the search function on the PDF version of the schedule to facilitate the location of records series. If you still cannot locate your records on the schedule, contact a Records Management Analyst. We will work with you to amend this records schedule so that you may destroy records appropriately. The Request for Change in Records Schedule form (see page A-17) can be used for such requests.
- 

### ***Q. What are public records?***

- A.** The *General Statutes of North Carolina*, Chapter 132, provides this definition of public records:
- “Public record” or “public records” shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data-processing records, artifacts, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or

characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business by any agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions. Agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions shall mean and include every public office, public officer or official (State or local, elected or appointed), institution, board, commission, bureau, council, department, authority or other unit of government of the State or of any county, unit, special district or other political subdivision of government.

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**Q. Is any person allowed to see my records?**

- A.** Yes, except as restricted by specific provisions in state or federal law. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-6 instructs:

“Every custodian of public records shall permit any record in the custodian’s custody to be inspected and examined at reasonable times and under reasonable supervision by any person, and shall, as promptly as possible, furnish copies thereof upon payment of any fees as may be prescribed by law. ... No person requesting to inspect and examine public records, or to obtain copies thereof, shall be required to disclose the purpose or motive for the request.”

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**Q. What about my confidential records?**

- A.** Not all government records are open to public inspection. Exceptions to the access requirements in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-6 and the definition of public records in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-1 are found throughout the General Statutes. You must be able to cite a specific provision in the General Statutes or federal law when you restrict or deny access to a particular record.
- 

**Q. Am I required to make available to the public copies of drafts that have not been approved?**

- A.** Yes, even if a report, permit, or other record has not been finalized, it is still a public record subject to request. Any record that is not confidential by law must be provided when a request is received, whether it is “finished” or not.
- 

**Q. What do I do with permanent records?**

- A.** Permanent records should be maintained in the office that created the records, forever.

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) is charged by the General Assembly with the administration of a records management program (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 121-4 (2) and § 132-8.1) and the maintenance of “a program for the selection and preservation of public records considered *essential* to the operation of government and to the *protection of the rights and interests of persons*” (§ 132-8.2). Permanent records with these characteristics require preservation duplicates that are human-readable (paper or microfilm). Some examples of these characteristics include:

- Affect multiple people, without regard to relation
- Have significance over a long span of time
- Document governance
- Document citizenship

Examples of records with these characteristics:

- Minutes of governing bodies at the state and local levels are the basic evidence of our system of governance, and are routinely provided for the public to read.

- Records, such as deeds and tax scrolls, about land document changes in ownership and condition. Counties maintain offices expressly for the purpose of making those records available to the public. Other records in local and state governments document potential public health hazards, such as hazardous materials spills.
- Adoptions, marriages, and divorces document changes in familial relationships. Though adoptions are confidential (not available for public inspection), they document changes in inheritance and familial succession.
- Court records, such as wills, estates, and capital cases, affect people within and across family groups, are made available for public inspection, and often involve transactions related to the examples above.

See the Human-Readable Preservation Duplicates policy issued by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/digital-records/digital-records-policies-and-guidelines/human-readable-preservation>) and check with a records analyst to determine whether your permanent records require a preservation duplicate.

**Q. *What is historical value?***

- A.** Historical records document significant events, actions, decisions, conditions, relationships, and similar developments. These records have administrative, legal, fiscal, or evidential importance for the government or its constituents. Two criteria for determining historical value are inherent interest and extraordinary documentation:
- Inherent interest is created by non-routine events, by the involvement of famous parties, and by compelling contexts. For instance, foreclosure proceedings from the 1930s have high historical value because they date from the era of the Great Depression.
  - Extraordinary documentation is found in records that shed light on political, public, or social history. For instance, the records from the replevin case that returned the Bill of Rights to North Carolina hold more historical value than most property case files because of the political history intertwined with this case.

SANC has further elaborated selection criteria that help distinguish records with historical value:

- Do they protect the rights and property of residents and organizations?
- Do they have a long-term impact on residents and organizations?
- Do they document the core functions of an agency?
- Do they document high-level decision-making that shapes an agency's policies or initiatives?
- Do they summarize an agency's activities?

Call a Records Management Analyst for further assistance in assessing historical value.

**Q. *What if I do not have any records?***

- A.** Nearly every position in government generates, receives, or uses records. Computer files of any kind, including drafts and e-mail, are public records. Even if your records are not the official or final version, your records are public records. Not all records have high historical, legal, or fiscal value, but they all must be destroyed in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate records schedule.

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***Q. I have a lot of unsorted records. What's a good first step for getting a handle on these records?***

**A.** We encourage you to create a file plan of what records you have. When you create this plan, you can match each record to its placement on this schedule or on the appropriate retention schedule. A sample file plan is available on page A-20. Having a file plan can help you strategize how to best organize your physical or digital records. A file plan is also useful in disaster planning and scheduling destructions.

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***Q. May I store our unused records in the basement, attic, shed, etc.?***

**A.** Public records are public property. Though we encourage agencies to find places to store records that do not take up too much valuable office space, the selected space should be dry, secure, and free from pests and mold. Your office must ensure that records stored away from your main office area are well protected from natural and man-made problems while remaining readily available to your staff and the public.

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***Q. Our old records are stored in the attic, basement, or off-site building, etc. Are we required to provide public access to these records?***

**A.** Yes, as long as the records are not confidential by law. You should also be aware that confidentiality can expire.

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***Q. Aren't all our old records at the State Archives of North Carolina?***

**A.** Probably not. The State Archives of North Carolina collects only very specific types of records from local government offices. Contact a Records Management Analyst for more information about which records are held or can be transferred to the State Archives of North Carolina for permanent preservation.

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***Q. I found some really old records. What should I do with them?***

**A.** Call a Records Management Analyst. We will help you examine the records and assess their historical value.

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***Q. Can I give my old records to the historical society or public library?***

**A.** Before you offer any record to a historical society, public library, or any other entity, you must contact a Records Management Analyst. Permanent records must be kept either in your offices or at the State Archives of North Carolina.

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***Q. Whom can I call with questions?***

**A.** If you are located west of Statesville, call our Western Office in Asheville at (828) 250-3103. If you are east of Statesville, all the way to the coast, call our Raleigh office at (919) 814-6900.

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## AUDITS, LITIGATION, AND OTHER OFFICIAL ACTION

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**Q. Why is there an asterisk in the disposition instructions of so many items on this schedule?**

**A. No record involved in a pending or ongoing audit, legal, or other official action may be destroyed before that audit or action is resolved.**

A legal hold or litigation hold means that records that are the subject of the legal hold or litigation hold must be preserved and thus must not be destroyed until officially released from the hold. A legal hold or litigation hold is placed when either an official discovery order is served on the agency requesting the production of the records in question (for a litigation, regulatory investigation, audit, open records request, etc.) or litigation is pending and the agency is thus on notice to preserve all potentially relevant records. You must also ensure that for a claim or litigation that appears to be reasonably foreseeable or anticipated but not yet initiated, any records (in paper or electronic formats) relevant to such a claim or litigation are preserved and not destroyed until released by your General Counsel. The records in question must not be destroyed until the completion of the action and the resolution of all issues that arise from it regardless of the retention period set forth in this schedule.

We have used an asterisk (\*) in the disposition instructions to mark records series that are commonly audited, litigated, or may be subject to other official actions. However, any record has this potential. Records custodians are responsible for being aware of potential actions, and for preventing the destruction of any record that is, or may be reasonably expected to become, involved in an audit, legal, or other official action.

Records used during routine audits may be destroyed when the governing body accepts the audit, if the records have completed the retention period listed in this schedule. If time remains in the retention period, the records must be maintained for the remainder of the period. The auditor's working papers must be kept according to the schedule. (On the General Records Schedule for Local Government Agencies, see Audits: Performance (Standard 1) and Audits: Financial (Standard 2).) Should a dispute arise over an audit, the records that were audited should be retained until that dispute is resolved.

The attorney representing the agency should inform records custodians when legal matters are concluded and records will no longer be needed. Following the conclusion of any legal action, the records may be destroyed if they have met the retention period in the schedule. Otherwise, they should be kept for the remaining time period.



## TRANSITORY RECORDS

Transitory records are defined as “record[s] that [have] little or no documentary or evidential value and that need not be set aside for future use.”<sup>3</sup>

According to North Carolina General Statutes § 121 and § 132, every document, paper, letter, map, book, photograph, film, sound recording, magnetic or other tape, electronic data processing record, artifact, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received in connection with the transaction of public business by any state, county, municipal agency, or other political subdivision of government is considered a public record and may not be disposed of, erased, or destroyed without specific approval from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources recognizes that some records may have little or no long-term documentary or evidential value to the creating agency. These records are often called “transitory records.” The following questions and answers discuss types of transitory records commonly created in state government. They may be disposed of according to the guidance below. However, all public employees should be familiar with the *General Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies*, their office’s Program Records Retention and Disposition Schedule, and any other applicable guidelines for their office. If any of these documents require a different retention period for these records, follow the longer of the two retention periods. When in doubt about whether a record is transitory, or whether it has special significance or importance, retain the record in question and seek guidance from the analyst assigned to your agency.

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**Q. What do I do with routing slips, fax cover sheets, “while you were out” slips, memory aids, etc.?**

- A.** Routing slips and transmittal sheets adding no information to that contained in the transmitted material have minimal value after the material has been successfully transmitted. These records may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of after receipt of the material has been confirmed. Similarly, “while you were out” slips, memory aids, and other records requesting follow-up actions (including voicemails) have minimal value once the official action these records are supporting has been completed and documented. Unless they are listed on the *General Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies* or your office’s Program Records Retention and Disposition Schedule, these records may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of once the action has been resolved.

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**Q. What about research materials, drafts, and other working papers used to create a final, official record?**

- A.** Drafts and working papers are materials, including notes and calculations, gathered or created to assist in the creation of another record. All drafts and working papers are public records subject to all provisions of General Statute § 132, but many of them have minimal value after the final version of the record has been approved, and may be destroyed after final approval, if they are no longer necessary to support the analysis or conclusions of the official record. Drafts and working documents which may be destroyed after final approval include:
- Drafts and working papers for internal and external policies

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<sup>3</sup> Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*.

- Drafts and working papers for internal administrative reports, such as daily and monthly activity reports
- Drafts and working papers for internal, non-policy-level documents, such as informal workflows and manuals; and
- Drafts and working papers for presentations, workshops, and other explanations of agency policy that are already formally documented.

---

***Q. What if I have forms designed and used solely to create, update, or modify records in an electronic medium?***

- A.** If these records are not required for audit or legal purposes, they may be destroyed in office after completion of data entry and after all verification and quality control procedures. However, if the forms contain any analog components that are necessary to validate the information contained on them (e.g., a signature or notary's seal), they should be retained according to the disposition instructions for the records series encompassing the forms' function.

See also the State Archives of North Carolina's guidance on digital signatures found at: <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/digital-records/digital-records-policies-and-guidelines#digital-signatures>

## DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

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### ***Q. When can I destroy records?***

- A.** Each records series listed on this schedule has specific disposition instructions that indicate how long the series must be kept in your office. In some cases, the disposition instructions are “Retain in office permanently,” which means that those records must be kept in your offices forever.
- 

### ***Q. How do I destroy records?***

- A.** After your agency has approved this records retention and disposition schedule, records should be destroyed in one of the following ways:
- 1) burned, unless prohibited by local ordinance;
  - 2) shredded, or torn so as to destroy the record content of the documents or material concerned;
  - 3) placed in acid vats so as to reduce the paper to pulp and to terminate the existence of the documents or materials concerned;
  - 4) sold as waste paper, provided that the purchaser agrees in writing that the documents or materials concerned will not be resold without pulverizing or shredding the documents so that the information contained within cannot be practicably read or reconstructed.

The provision that electronic records are to be destroyed means that the data, metadata, and physical media are to be overwritten, deleted, and unlinked so that the data and metadata may not be practicably reconstructed.

The data, metadata, and physical media containing confidential records of any format are to be destroyed in such a manner that the information cannot be read or reconstructed under any means.

— N.C. Administrative Code, Title 7, Chapter 4, Subchapter M, Section .0510

Without your agency’s approval of this records schedule, no records may legally be destroyed.

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### ***Q. How can I destroy records if they are not listed on this schedule?***

- A.** Contact a Records Management Analyst. An analyst will discuss the nature of the records with you to determine if the records have historical value. If the records do have historical value, we will discuss the possibility of transferring the records to the State Archives of North Carolina to be preserved permanently.

If the records do not have historical value, we will ask you to complete a Request for Disposal of Unscheduled Records (page A-18) if the records are no longer being created. If the records are an active records series, an analyst will help you develop an amendment to this schedule so that you can destroy the records appropriately from this point forward.

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***Q. Am I required to tell anyone about the destructions?***

- A.** We recommend that you report on your records retention activities to your governing board on an annual basis. This report does not need to be detailed, but it is important that significant destructions be entered into the minutes of the Board. See a sample destructions log that follows (and is available online at the State Archives of North Carolina website, <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/rm-tools>).



## ELECTRONIC RECORDS: E-MAIL, BORN-DIGITAL RECORDS, AND DIGITAL IMAGING

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### ***Q. When can I delete my e-mail?***

**A.** E-mail is a public record as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 121-5 and § 132. Electronic mail is as much a record as any paper record and must be treated in the same manner. **It is the content of each message that is important.** If a particular message would have been filed as a paper memo, it should still be filed (either in your e-mail program or in your regular directory structure), and it should be retained the same length of time as its paper counterparts. **It is inappropriate to destroy e-mail simply because storage limits have been reached.** Some examples of e-mail messages that are public records and therefore covered by this policy include:

- Policies or directives;
- Final drafts of reports and recommendations;
- Correspondence and memoranda related to official business;
- Work schedules and assignments;
- Meeting agendas or minutes
- Any document or message that initiates, facilitates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction; and
- Messages that create a precedent, such as issuing instructions and advice.

*From the Department of Cultural Resources E-Mail Policy (Revised July 2009),  
available at the State Archives of North Carolina website*

Other publications (available online at the [State Archives of North Carolina website](#)) that will be particularly helpful in managing your e-mail include tutorials on managing e-mail as a public record and on using Microsoft Exchange.

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### ***Q. May I print my e-mail to file it?***

**A.** We do not recommend printing e-mail for preservation purposes. Important metadata is lost when e-mail is printed.

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### ***Q. I use my personal e-mail account for work. No one can see my personal e-mail, right?***

**A.** The best practice is to avoid using personal resources, including private e-mail accounts, for public business. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-1 states that records “made or received pursuant to law or ordinance *in connection with the transaction of public business* by any agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions” are public records (emphasis added). The fact that public records reside in a personal e-mail account is irrelevant.

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**Q. *We have an imaging system. Are we required to keep the paper?***

- A.** You may scan any record, but you will need to receive approval from the Government Records Section in order to destroy paper originals that have been digitized. Your agency must develop an electronic records policy and then submit a Request for Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means. You can find these templates in the Digital Imaging section of the State Archives of North Carolina website (<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/digital-records/digital-records-policies-and-guidelines#digital-imaging>). Contact a Records Management Analyst for further instructions on how to develop a compliant electronic records policy.

**Permanent records** must have a security preservation copy as defined by State Archives of North Carolina's [Human-Readable Preservation Duplicate Policy](#) (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-8.2):

Preservation duplicates shall be durable, accurate, complete and clear, and such duplicates made by a photographic, photo static, microfilm, micro card, miniature photographic, or other process which accurately reproduces and forms a durable medium for so reproducing the original shall have the same force and effect for all purposes as the original record whether the original record is in existence or not. ... Such preservation duplicates shall be preserved in the place and manner of safekeeping prescribed by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

**The preservation duplicate of permanent records must be either on paper or microfilm.**

**Non-permanent records** may be retained in any format. You will need to take precautions with electronic records that you must keep more than about 5 years. Computer systems do not have long life cycles. Each time you change computer systems, you must convert all records to the new system so that you can assure their preservation and provide access.

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**Q. *Computer storage is cheap. Can I just keep my computer records permanently?***

- A.** The best practice is to destroy all records that have met their retention requirements, regardless of format.

---

**Q. *What are the guidelines regarding the creation and handling of electronic public records, including text messages and social media?***

- A.** There are numerous documents available on the State Archives of North Carolina website (<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/digital-records/digital-records-policies-and-guidelines>). Topics covered include shared storage, cloud computing, e-discovery, trustworthy digital public records, digital signatures, e-mail, social media, text messages, websites, digital imaging, metadata, file formats, database indexing, and security backups.

Note that e-mail, text messages, and social media should be handled according to their content. Therefore, this schedule does not include a records series that instructs you on how to handle one of these born-digital records by format; instead of focusing on how the information is disseminated, consider what content is contained in the e-mail, text message, or social media post. For instance, an e-mail requesting leave that is sent to a supervisor should be kept for 3 years. (On the *General Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies*, see Leave Records (STANDARD 4: HUMAN RESOURCES RECORDS).)

## SECURITY PRESERVATION COPIES OF RECORDS

Cumulative Records (see page 13) should be microfilmed to state standards established by the State Archives of North Carolina. Paper records that have been microfilmed may be destroyed if the microfilm has been verified and quality control procedures completed. LPSUs must retain an analog (paper or microfilm) copy of cumulative records permanently. LPSUs may transfer the microfilm to the State Archives to be held in security storage. If the LPSU transfers the microfilm to the State Archives for security storage, this microfilm can act as the LPSU analog records. Digital images of the records created during the microfilming process can be utilized as the access copy of the record. These digital images can be utilized for transcript purposes.

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***Q. What is the advantage to having security preservation copies of records stored with the State Archives?***

- A.** Having duplicate copies of essential records in a separate location mitigates the risk that you may lose the only physical copy of a given record in a disaster or other records loss event. Maintaining offsite duplicates of records, regardless of format, is a good practice to adopt.

The State Archives creates duplicate copies on microfilm because of the durability of the medium. Silver negative microfilm does not decay for hundreds of years, ensuring that your records maintain their integrity over time.

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***Q. What records will the State Archives back up for us?***

- A.** The State Archives provides security imaging services for minutes of major decision-making boards and commissions. We will also image records of adoptions for Social Services agencies as well as maps and plats from Registers of Deeds offices. Once those records are imaged, they are converted to security microfilm. We will store the silver negative (original) microfilm in our security vault. Contact the Records Management Analyst in charge of imaging coordination for the most current information.

---

***Q. How do I start the process of backing up the above listed records?***

- A.** We have three processes for creating backup film copies of these records. First, you can send photocopies of your approved minutes to us in the mail. Simply include a copy of the **Certification of the Preparation of Records for Security Preservation Copy** form (available online at the [State Archives of North Carolina website](#)) with each shipment. For more detailed instructions, contact a Records Management Analyst.

Secondly, you can bring us your original books. We will film them and return them to you. This process is most useful when you have more minutes to film than you are willing to photocopy. It is important to remember that a representative of your office or ours must transport the original books in person so that the custody of the records is maintained. You should not mail or ship your original minutes. Contact the Records Management Analyst in charge of imaging coordination to schedule an appointment for your books to be imaged. We will make every effort to expedite the filming so that your books will be returned to you as quickly as possible.



Finally, you can submit these records to the State Archives electronically. Please see our procedures in "[Transfer of Minutes in Digital Formats for Microfilming](#)" or contact the Records Management Analyst in charge of imaging coordination for more information.

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***Q. In the event of a records loss, how do I obtain copies of the security preservation copies stored at the State Archives?***

- A.** Contact the Records Management Analyst in charge of imaging coordination who will help you purchase copies of the microfilm from our office. You can then send those reels to a vendor who can either make new printed books or scan the film to create a digital copy.
- 

***Q. Can I obtain digital copies of the security preservation records?***

- A.** Yes, you can request digital copies of records when you submit them to the State Archives for initial reproduction. Contact the Records Management Analyst in charge of imaging coordination to initiate a request for digital duplicates.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE

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### ***Q. What should I do in case of fire or flood?***

- A.** Secure the area, and keep everyone out until fire or other safety professionals allow entry. Then, call our Raleigh office at (919) 814-6903 for the Head of the Government Records Section or (919) 814-6849 for the Head of the Collections Management Branch. If you're in the western part of the state, call our Asheville Office at (828) 250-3103. On nights and weekends, call your local emergency management office.

***DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE OR CLEAN ANY RECORDS.***

Damaged records are extremely fragile and require careful handling. Our staff are trained in preliminary recovery techniques, documenting damage to your records, and authorizing destruction of damaged records. Professional vendors can handle larger disasters.

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### ***Q. What help do you give in case of an emergency?***

- A.** We will do everything we can to visit you at the earliest opportunity in order to provide hands-on assistance. We can assist you in appraising the records that have been damaged so that precious resources (and especially time) are not spent on records with lesser value. We can provide lists of professional recovery vendors that you can contact to preserve your essential and permanent records.
- 

### ***Q. What can I do to prepare for an emergency?***

- A.** We provide training on disaster preparation that includes a discussion of the roles of proper inventories, staff training, and advance contracts with recovery vendors. If you would like to have this workshop presented, call a Records Management Analyst.
- 

### ***Q. What are essential records?***

- A.** Essential records are records that are necessary for continuity of operations in the event of a disaster. There are two common categories of records that are considered essential:
- **Emergency operating records** – including emergency plans and directives, orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments, selected program records needed to continue the most critical agency operations, as well as related policy or procedural records.
  - **Legal and financial rights records** – these protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of the individuals directly affected by its activities. Examples include accounts receivable records, Social Security records, payroll records, retirement records, and insurance records. These records were formerly defined as “rights-and-interests” records.

Essential records should be stored in safe, secure locations as well as duplicated and stored off-site, if possible.

## STAFF TRAINING

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***Q. What types of workshops or training do you offer?***

**A.** We have a group of prepared workshops that we can offer at any time at various locations throughout the state. Contact a Records Management Analyst if you are interested in having one of the workshops presented to your agency. We will work with you directly to develop training suited to your specific needs. Our basic workshops are:

- Managing public records in North Carolina
- Disaster preparedness and recovery
- Confidentiality
- Organizing paper and digital files
- Digital communications

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***Q. Will you design a workshop especially for our office?***

**A.** Yes, we will. Let a Records Management Analyst know what type of training you need.

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***Q. Are workshops offered only in Raleigh?***

**A.** No, we will come to your offices to present the workshops you need. We have no minimum audience requirement. We will also do presentations for professional associations, regional consortiums, and the public. To arrange a workshop, please call the State Records Center at 919-814-6900 or contact a Records Management Analyst (<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/local/analysts>).

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***Q. Is there a fee for workshops?***

**A.** Not at this time.

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***Q. Are the workshops available in an online format?***

**A.** We can offer a virtual workshop for your agency upon request. For descriptions of available webinars, see <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/training/webinars>. You can also find several online tutorials available on the State Archives of North Carolina website (<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/training/online-tutorials-and-resources>).





## Request for Disposal of Unscheduled Records

### AGENCY INFORMATION

Requestor name

Location and Agency [e.g., County/Municipality + Department of Social Services]

Phone and email

Mailing Address

In accordance with the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 121 and § 132, approval is requested for the destruction of records listed below. These records have no further use or value for official administrative, fiscal, historical, or legal purposes.

RECORDS TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	INCLUSIVE DATES	QUANTITY	RELEVANT STATUTORY REGULATIONS	PROPOSED RETENTION PERIOD

Requested by:

Signature Title Date

Approved by:

Signature Requestor's Supervisor Date

Concurred by:

Signature Assistant Records Administrator State Archives of North Carolina Date





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