

15. Public Relations

Public Relations is an outward-facing function of state agencies. Agencies document activities, promote initiatives, publicize accomplishments, provide instruction, and gather feedback from constituents.

Table of contents (A comprehensive listing of all record types is available on the Functional Schedule page at <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/state-government-agencies/functional-schedule>):

- 15.1 [Agency Publications](#)
 - 1511 [Brochures/Pamphlets](#)
 - 1512 [Media File](#)
 - 1513 [Official Publications](#)
 - 1514 [Publications Management](#)
 - 1515 [Social Media and Websites](#)
- 15.2 [Community Relations](#)
 - 1521 [Awards](#)
 - 1522 [Constituent Comments, Complaints, and Petitions](#)
 - 1523 [Constituent Requests](#)
 - 1524 [Customer Call Center Recordings](#)
 - 1525 [External Surveys](#)
 - 1526 [Public Hearings](#)
 - 1527 [Public Records Requests](#)
- 15.3 [Development](#)
 - 1531 [Acknowledgments](#)
 - 1532 [Donor Lists](#)
 - 1533 [Fund Drive Materials](#)
- 15.4 [Marketing and Publicity](#)
 - 1541 [Advertisements](#)
 - 1542 [Audio-Visual Materials](#)
 - 1543 [Forms, Style Sheets, and Templates](#)
 - 1544 [Press Releases](#)
 - 1545 [Speeches](#)
- 15.5 [Programming and Training](#)
 - 1551 [Agendas, Exhibits, and Programs](#)
 - 1552 [Announcements](#)

1553 [Educational Materials](#)

1554 [Invitations](#)

1555 [Registration Materials](#)

1556 [Training Materials](#)

Appendix: [Records That Will Transfer to the State Records Center](#)

Public Relations records are best organized by record type and then chronologically within each record type. Of the record types identified for the public relations function, a number of them are iterative in nature and hold no value beyond the next successive version. These record types, such as brochures (RC No. 1511), should be destroyed in office when they are superseded or obsolete. Other record types are collected to facilitate the public relations function and have a relatively short-term administrative value. These record types, such as External Surveys (RC No. 1525), should be destroyed in office when their reference value ends. For several record types, the agency must determine which particular records have historical significance and retain these records in office permanently or transfer them to the State Archives of North Carolina, as designated in the disposition instructions; those records without historical significance will be destroyed in office. Several record types have a specified retention period, which is why it is recommended to organize these records chronologically; for instance, in January 2018, any Public Records Requests (RC No. 1527.2) that were completed in or before 2015 can be destroyed.

Due to the nature of public relations records, confidentiality generally does not attach to these records. However, be aware that constituents may include personal identifying information in complaints or service requests they submit, in which case, G.S. § 132-1.10 confers confidentiality.

These Functional Schedules apply to records in all media, unless otherwise specified. The State Archives of North Carolina recommends that agencies develop a file plan that documents the owners of record copies, internal definitions of reference value, and record formats. (A sample is available on the records management tools page at <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/rm-tools>.) Information about the NC Public Records Act, confidentiality, destructions, audits and litigation actions, and electronic records can be found in the overview to the functional scheduling initiative. A key for the Functional Schedule along with definitions of important records management terms can be found in the glossary to this schedule.

15.1 Agency Publications

DEFINED: Publications created at agency expense.

SEE ALSO: Directories and other compilations of resources and information are under AGENCY MANAGEMENT. Payments for agency publications are under FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT; contracts for publications are under LEGAL. The coding for websites is under INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.

15.1

| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|--|---|---|---|
| 1511.S | Brochures/Pamphlets | ephemeral materials produced for marketing or registration purposes; also includes annual financial summary reports solely created for public distribution (e.g., Annual Comprehensive Financial Report [ACFR]) | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1512.R | Media File | reference copies of newspaper, magazine, and other media clippings concerning the agency, agency officials, and other topics of interest | RETAIN UNTIL: Reference value ends ± THEN: Destroy Agency Policy: _____ | |
| 1513.T | Official Publications | record copies of agency materials published in print or online | Transfer to State Publications Clearinghouse, State Library of North Carolina: a) <i>Publications for sale</i> : 5 copies b) <i>Free publications (printed)</i> : 2 print copies AND an electronic copy, or 10 print copies c) <i>Free publications (no print run)</i> : 1 electronic copy | <u>Authority</u> G.S. § 125-11.5 through 11.10 |
| 1513.S | | surplus copies of agency printed materials | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1514.5 | Publications Management SEE ALSO: Contracts (LEGAL) | correspondence and other related records regarding the design and creation of agency publications | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 5 years THEN: Destroy* | |

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.

∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.

± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction "destroy when reference value ends." Please use the space provided.



| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|--|--|---|----------|
| 1515.A | Social Media and Websites | social media sites and other websites that have historical content or have been identified for long-term retention for the purposes of institutional memory and planning; also includes comments and private messaging | PERMANENT (appraisal required) ∞ ¹ | |
| 1515.5 | SEE ALSO: Reference Files (AGENCY MANAGEMENT); Advertisements (below); Audio-Visual Materials (below); Press Releases (below); Announcements (below) | social media sites and other websites containing routine content; also includes comments and private messaging | RETAIN UNTIL: Posted/Received PLUS: 5 years THEN: Destroy | |
| 1515.S | SEE ALSO: Web Management and Operations Records (INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) | other related records produced in planning and executing agency’s online presence | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |

¹ The State Archives can review state agency websites and social media accounts to determine if they should be captured by the Archives. If they appraised as non-archival your analyst will provide guidance for self-capture. Please contact the records analyst for your agency to request an appraisal.

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.
 ∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.
 ± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.

15.2 Community Relations

DEFINED: Records produced in the course of interactions with the agency’s community.

SEE ALSO: Advertisements, Press Releases, and Speeches are under Marketing and Publicity. Reports that are aggregated from surveys are under AGENCY MANAGEMENT. Any billing statements generated for public records requests are under FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. The records of Public Hearings that are reviewing proposed administrative rules are under GOVERNANCE; those convened by the Office of Administrative Hearings or the North Carolina Industrial Commission are under LEGAL; those related to compliance investigations are under MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE. Customer calls that convey complaints against employees should be handled according to the HUMAN RESOURCES schedule. Complaints that necessitate investigations or litigation or audits should be subsumed into the relevant records under HUMAN RESOURCES or LEGAL or MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE. Original petitions delivered to the General Assembly are under GOVERNANCE.

| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|--|---|--|----------|
| 1521.P | Awards | records concerning significant awards by the agency recognizing community contributions | PERMANENT (appraisal required) ∞ | |
| 1521.5 | | records concerning routine awards by the agency recognizing community contributions | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 5 years THEN: Destroy | |
| 1522.1 | Constituent Comments, Complaints, and Petitions SEE ALSO: Complaints (HUMAN RESOURCES); Petitions, Rule Making Proceedings (GOVERNANCE); Improper Conduct Investigations, Investigation and Hearing Records (MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE) | records concerning positive comments as well as objections, dissatisfaction, or disagreements with actions or positions taken or not taken by the agency; includes petitions signed by constituents requesting action | RETAIN UNTIL: Closed PLUS: 1 year THEN: Destroy* | |
| 1523.1 | Constituent Requests | includes requests for service or information (RFI) | RETAIN UNTIL: Closed PLUS: 1 year THEN: Destroy* | |

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.

∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.

± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction “destroy when reference value ends.” Please use the space provided.

| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|---|---|---|----------|
| 1524.< | Customer Call Center Recordings SEE ALSO: Complaints (HUMAN RESOURCES) | recordings of calls to customer service centers made for quality assurance and training purposes | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 30 days THEN: Destroy* | |
| 1525.R | External Surveys SEE ALSO: Reporting (AGENCY MANAGEMENT) | surveys distributed to and collected from constituents addressing agency services, policies, and other concerns | RETAIN UNTIL: Reference value ends ± THEN: Destroy Agency Policy: _____ | |
| 1526.P | Public Hearings | minutes and/or transcripts of hearings | PERMANENT | |
| 1526.1 | SEE ALSO: Agency Hearings (LEGAL), Rule Making Proceedings (GOVERNANCE) | agendas, notices, speaker sign-up sheets, and other related records | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 1 year THEN: Destroy* | |
| 1527.2 | Public Records Requests SEE ALSO: Accounts Receivable (FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT) | requests submitted by persons seeking access to agency records and documentation of agency response <i>NOTE: These disposition instructions apply only to the request, internal agency records related to searching for and preparing responsive records, and communication of response; the documents that are responsive to public records requests should be handled according to their respective disposition instructions (e.g., speaker sign-up sheets from a public hearing can be destroyed after 1 year; publications management materials can be destroyed after 5 years). However, if the agency also retains separate copies of the documents that are responsive to public records requests, they may also be destroyed 2 years after completion of the request</i> | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 2 years THEN: Destroy* | |

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.

∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.

± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction "destroy when reference value ends." Please use the space provided.

15.3 Development

DEFINED: Records concerning agency efforts to encourage donations of materials or services in support of agency activities.

SEE ALSO: The documentation of financial contributions is under FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

15.3

| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|--|---|---|----------|
| 1531.1 | Acknowledgements | copies of acknowledgements sent to donors | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 1 year THEN: Destroy | |
| 1532.S | Donor Lists | contact information for individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in supporting agency activities | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1533.1 | Fund Drive Materials SEE ALSO: Accounts Receivable (FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT) | records documenting the organization and promotion of fund drives and other special events in which the agency participated for the purpose of fundraising; includes records concerning solicitations requesting and donations providing money or in-kind donations for agency programs | RETAIN UNTIL: Complete PLUS: 1 year THEN: Destroy | |

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.

∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.

± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction "destroy when reference value ends." Please use the space provided.

15.4 Marketing and Publicity

DEFINED: Records concerning overall public relations of the agency.

SEE ALSO: Contact lists are under AGENCY MANAGEMENT. Recordings of governing body meetings are under GOVERNANCE. Office surveillance recordings are under RISK MANAGEMENT.

15.4

| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|--|---|---|----------|
| 1541.P | Advertisements | print or online ads that promote agency initiatives or publicize agency activities and have historical significance | PERMANENT | |
| 1541.S | | routine print or online ads that promote agency initiatives or publicize agency activities | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1542.P | Audio-Visual Materials | images, recordings, and films produced by or for the agency that have historical significance | PERMANENT (appraisal required) ∞ | |
| 1542.S | SEE ALSO: Governing and Advisory Body Minutes (GOVERNANCE), Workplace Security Records (RISK MANAGEMENT) | routine images, recordings, and films produced by or for the agency | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1543.S | Forms, Style Sheets, and Templates | blank forms, style sheets, templates, and letterhead used to establish agency branding | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1544.P | Press Releases | press releases that have historical significance | PERMANENT (appraisal required) ∞ | |
| 1544.S | | routine press releases; includes public service announcements (PSAs) | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1545.A | Speeches | historical speeches delivered by agency officials | PERMANENT (archival) ∞ | |
| 1545.R | | routine speeches delivered by agency officials | RETAIN UNTIL: Reference value ends ± THEN: Destroy Agency Policy: _____ | |

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.

∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.

± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction "destroy when reference value ends." Please use the space provided.

15.5 Programming and Training

DEFINED: Records concerning events and educational outreach organized by the agency.

SEE ALSO: Educational materials produced by licensed educators working within schools as well as training required for professional or recreational licenses are addressed under EDUCATION. Training provided to agency personnel is under HUMAN RELATIONS. Any financial information and payments collected from registrants are under FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. Any release forms required to participate in agency-sponsored events are under LEGAL.

| RC No. | Record Types | Description | Disposition Instructions | Citation |
|--------|---|--|--|----------|
| 1551.P | Agendas, Exhibits, and Programs | agendas, handouts, presentations, and programs produced for agency events and exhibits that have historical significance | PERMANENT (appraisal required) ∞ | |
| 1551.S | | routine agendas or programs produced for agency events and exhibits | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1552.S | Announcements | announcements sent concerning agency events | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1553.S | Educational Materials | materials produced for usage by teachers; includes lesson plans, activities, and other related records | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1554.P | Invitations | invitations sent concerning agency events that have historical significance | PERMANENT | |
| 1554.S | | routine invitations produced for agency events | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1555.S | Registration Materials | registrations, confirmations, and other logistical materials related to agency events | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |
| 1556.S | Training Materials SEE ALSO: Coursework (EDUCATION), Employee Training Materials (HUMAN RESOURCES) | agendas, handouts, presentations, and other related records produced for agency training events for external audiences | RETAIN UNTIL: Superseded/Obsolete THEN: Destroy | |

* No destruction of records may take place if audits or litigation are pending or reasonably anticipated.

∞ See appendix for list of item numbers for records that should transfer to the State Archives.

± The agency shall establish and enforce internal policies setting minimum retention periods for the records that DNCR has scheduled with the disposition instruction "destroy when reference value ends." Please use the space provided.



Records That Will Transfer to the State Records Center

1515.A Social Media and Websites: Electronic records will transfer immediately to the custody of the Archives.

Appendix

| Agency | Series Title | Item Number |
|---|--|-------------|
| Natural and Cultural Resources, Department of | State Agencies' Website Preservation (Electronic) File | 47744 |

1521.P Awards: Transfer to the State Records Center when reference value ends for immediate transfer to the custody of the Archives.

| Agency | Series Title | Item Number |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Natural and Cultural Resources, Department of | Junior Historian Awards Day File | 23100 |
| | North Carolina Awards Committee File | 766 |
| | North Carolina Heritage Awards File | 42187 |

1542.P Audio-Visual Materials: Transfer to the State Records Center when reference value ends for immediate transfer to the custody of the Archives.

| Agency | Series Title | Item Number |
|---|---|-------------|
| Natural and Cultural Resources, Department of | North Carolina Symphony Photographs File | 977 |
| | State Historic Sites Documentaries File | 4083 |
| | State Parks Public Information Media File | 35193 |

1544.P Press Releases: Transfer to the State Records Center when reference value ends for immediate transfer to the custody of the Archives.

| Agency | Series Title | Item Number |
|--|---------------------|-------------|
| Administration, Department of | News Releases File | 136 |
| Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of | News Releases File | 8958 |
| Environmental Quality, Department of | News Releases File | 2485 |
| Insurance, Department of | Press Releases File | 11629 |
| Public Instruction, Department of | News Releases File | 1228 |
| Public Safety, Department of | News Releases File | 9570 |

The RC No. listed beside each Record Type is found on the Functional Schedule; the Item Number is a tracking number that is used only for records that are stored at the State Records Center.

An index or box inventory should accompany any records that transfer to the State Records Center for temporary storage or for eventual transfer to the custody of the Archives.



1545.A Speeches File: Transfer to the State Records Center when reference value ends for immediate transfer to the custody of the Archives.

| Agency | Series Title | Item Number |
|--|--|-------------|
| Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of | Commissioner of Agriculture Speeches File | 37726 |
| Auditor, Office of the State | Speeches File | 9464 |
| Commerce, Department of | Secretary of Commerce Speeches File | 302 |
| Environmental Quality, Department of | Secretary of Environmental Quality Speeches File | 47654 |
| Health and Human Services, Department of | Secretary of Health and Human Services Speeches File | 1615 |
| Information Technology, Department of | State Chief Information Officer Speeches File | 47360 |
| | Center for Geographic Information and Analysis Speeches File | 36016 |
| Insurance, Department of | Department of Insurance Speeches File | 3376 |
| Investigation, State Bureau of | State Bureau of Investigation Director Speeches File | 14020 |
| Justice, Department of | Attorney General Speeches File | 2358 |
| Labor, Department of | Commissioner of Labor Speeches File | 2445 |
| Natural and Cultural Resources, Department of | Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources Speeches File | 759 |
| Public Instruction, Department of | State Superintendent’s Speeches File | 33443 |
| Revenue, Department of | Secretary of Revenue Speeches File | 48483 |
| Secretary of State, Department of the | Speeches File | 47990 |
| Transportation, Department of | Secretary of Transportation Speeches File | 2943 |
| Treasurer, Department of State | State Treasurer Speeches File | 50831 |
| Wildlife Resources Commission, North Carolina | Executive Director Speeches File | 35977 |

Appendix

The RC No. listed beside each Record Type is found on the Functional Schedule; the Item Number is a tracking number that is used only for records that are stored at the State Records Center.

An index or box inventory should accompany any records that transfer to the State Records Center for temporary storage or for eventual transfer to the custody of the Archives.



1551.P Agendas, Exhibits, and Programs: Transfer to the State Records Center when reference value ends for immediate transfer to the custody of the Archives.

| Agency | Series Title | Item Number |
|---|--|-------------|
| Information Technology, Department of | North Carolina Geographic Information System Conference File | 36012 |
| Natural and Cultural Resources, Department of | Museum of History Exhibits File | 826 |
| | NCMA Exhibition File | 857 |
| | NCMA Mary Duke Biddle Gallery File | 861 |
| | North Carolina Natural Science Museum Exhibits File | 9205 |
| | North Carolina Symphony Publicity File | 976 |
| | State Capitol Events File | 49234 |

Appendix

The RC No. listed beside each Record Type is found on the Functional Schedule; the Item Number is a tracking number that is used only for records that are stored at the State Records Center.

An index or box inventory should accompany any records that transfer to the State Records Center for temporary storage or for eventual transfer to the custody of the Archives.

Glossary

Audit

The Society of American Archivists *Dictionary of Archives Terminology* defines an audit as “an independent review and examination of records and activities to test for compliance with established policies or standards, often with recommendations for changes in controls or procedures.”¹ The North Carolina Office of the State Auditor defines three types of audits that can be performed for state agencies²:

Glossary

- Financial Statement Audits that “determine whether an agency’s financial statements are fairly presented”
- Performance/Financial Related Audits that “provide independent and objective appraisals of agency management practices and operational results”
- Information Systems Audits that “evaluate risks relevant to information systems assets and assess controls in place to reduce or mitigate these risks”

Many state agencies also have an internal auditor’s office that is responsible for assessing whether agency employees, units, and business operations are in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as agency policies and procedures. Some agencies are also responsible for auditing work of external organizations, including consultants and subrecipients. Agencies in receipt of funding from outside sources may be subject to audits to verify the appropriate expenditure of these funds. Audits may be performed on a routine recurring basis; they also may be prompted by concerns reported to the State Auditor’s Hotline.

Historical Value

The term historical value is used interchangeably with archival value. The Society of American Archivists *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* defines it as “the importance or usefulness of records that justifies their continued preservation because of the enduring administrative, legal, fiscal, or evidential information they contain.”³ 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.

¹ Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*.

² <https://www.auditor.nc.gov/auditsreviews/types-audits>

³ *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*

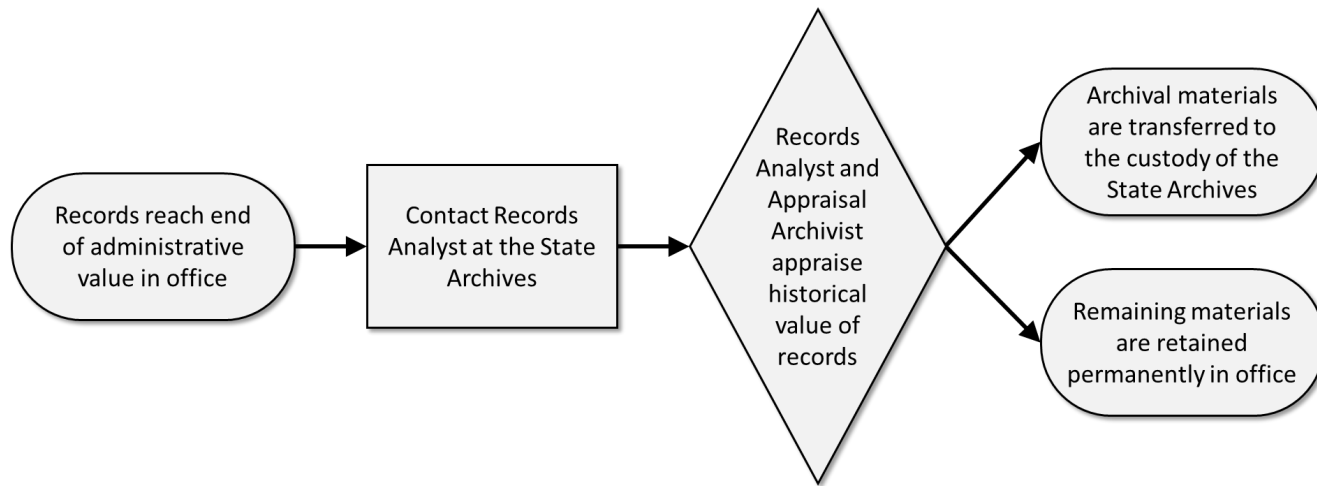
The State Archives of North Carolina (SANC) has further elaborated selection criteria that help distinguish records with archival value:

- Do they protect the rights and property of constituents and organizations?
- Do they have a long-term impact on constituents 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?

Glossary

Records with historical value are identified with one of three designations in the Disposition Instructions:

- PERMANENT: These records will be retained in office permanently.
- PERMANENT (appraisal required): When these records no longer have administrative value in office, the agency will contact the Government Records Section so the records can be appraised by a records analyst and an appraisal archivist. These individuals will determine whether the records should be retained in office permanently or transferred to the custody of the State Archives of North Carolina.



- PERMANENT (archival): These records will transfer to the State Records Center so they can be transferred to the custody of the State Archives of North Carolina.

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.”⁴ The record copy is the one whose retention and disposition is mandated by these Functional Schedules; 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. To facilitate this process, SANC has provided a sample file plan for agency use (available on the state agency records management page at <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/government/rm-tools>). In identified cases where records overlap between state agencies, SANC has specified on the schedules which agency is considered the record owner.

Record Custody

The agency that creates or receives a record is the legal custodian of that record and responsible for fulfilling any retention requirements and public records requests. If an agency transfers records to the State Records Center for temporary storage prior to destruction, those records remain in the legal custody of the originating agency. Any records requests must be authorized by the originating agency, and ultimate destruction must also be authorized by that agency. If an agency transfers archival records to the State Records Center, once those records have been accessioned by the State Archives, their legal custody transfers to the State Archives. From that point forward, all records requests should be channeled through the State Archives. In a few instances, records transfer to the State Records Center to be held in permanent security storage (indicated by a © on the Functional Schedule); in these cases, the records remain in the legal custody of the originating agency.

Reference Value

The disposition instruction to destroy in office when reference value ends is usually applied to records that were not created by the recipient. Reference files include materials that have no regulatory authority for the recipient and are received from outside the agency or from other units within the agency; subject files containing informational copies of records organized by areas of interest; and reference copies of records where another individual or agency is responsible for maintaining the record copy. The agency is given the discretion to determine how long these records should be retained before destruction, and this decision should be documented in a file plan or other policy so that all members of the agency can be consistent in their handling of these records.

⁴ Ibid.

Transitory Records

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 the *Functional Schedule for North Carolina State Agencies* 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 the analyst assigned to your agency.

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 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 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, as 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 should be retained according to the disposition instructions for the records series encompassing the forms’ function.

Key



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

RC No. – a unique identifying number assigned to each record type for ease of reference

| Function No. | Sub-function No. | Record Type No. | Retention Abbreviation |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 15 | 4 | 5 | A |

The example above indicates the numbering scheme for Speeches (1545.A):

- Public Relations is the 15th function
- Marketing and Publicity is the 4th sub-function under Public Relations
- Speeches are the 5th record type under Marketing and Publicity
- Retention abbreviations provide a quick method of identifying the retention requirement for a particular record:

| | |
|---|--|
| A | transfer to the State Archives |
| P | retain in office permanently or contact the State Archives for appraisal |
| R | destroy in office when reference value ends (<i>NOTE: Agencies shall establish internal policies to ensure consistency in retention and destructions.</i>) |
| S | destroy in office when superseded or obsolete |
| T | transfer completed record to another record series |
| < | retention period shorter than 1 year |
| | any numerical designation indicates the number of years the record should be retained. A number followed by a + indicates a retention period that extends less than 12 months beyond the specified number of years |

Record Types – groupings of records that are “created, received, or used in the same activity.”¹

Description – a description of the records, often including the types of records that can be frequently found in that series

¹ Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*.

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 (either by destruction or transfer to the State Archives). For any records that will transfer to the State Records Center, either for temporary storage or for transfer to the State Archives, consult the Appendix for the item number that is necessary to track these records. **Note:** No destruction of records may take place if litigation or audits are pending or reasonably anticipated.

Key

This border on the right and left of the Description and Disposition Instruction cells indicates a record that belongs to a particular agency, as identified in the Description. If other agencies possess copies of this record, they are reference copies that can be discarded when their reference value ends.

The Disposition Instructions include a number of triggers that begin the retention period:

- *Adoption of plan:* With a record such as a strategic plan, the retention period begins as soon as the plan is adopted by the governing body.
- *Closed:* With a record such as an investigation, the retention period begins once the case is closed.
- *Complete:* With a record such as a report, the retention period begins once the report has been finalized.
- *Execution of plan:* With a record such as a business plan, the retention period begins once the plan has been carried out.
- *Reference value ends:* Once the content of a record is no longer useful or significant, it can be destroyed. This disposition is usually applied to records that were not created by the agency.
- *Service ends:* With a record relating to an elected or appointed office, the retention period begins once the term of service ends.
- *Superseded or Obsolete:* With any record that is produced in versions, an older version can be destroyed when the new version is received.

Several symbols are used within the disposition instructions:

- ∞ archival records that should transfer to the State Archives for permanent retention
- Ω records that transfer to the State Records Center for temporary storage before destruction
- © records that transfer to the State Records Center for permanent security storage

Citation – a listing of references to statutes, laws, and codes related to the records series. Citations can include Authorities (governing the creation of records), Confidentiality (limiting access to public records), and Retention (setting a retention period).

- CFR = citation from the Code of Federal Regulations
- G.S. = citation from the North Carolina General Statutes
- NCAC = citation from the North Carolina Administrative Code
- USC = citation from the United States Code