new york state archives

Government Records Management System
USER MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The New York State Archives (NYSA) designed the Government Records Management System (GRMS) to aid local governments and state agencies storage, retrieval, and disposition of records. The system as designed can be used effectively or the users can easily tailor it to their records situation. State Archives' personnel are not responsible for customizing the software; the government or agency accepts the application as designed.

The system was designed to manage all records, active and inactive, in all records formats. However, it is most effective in managing inactive records stored in records storage boxes.

The system is designed in Microsoft Access 2016. The New York State Archives does **NOT** offer general Access training, only training for this application. If necessary, the Archives suggests users arrange for training with local vendors.

Users that familiarize themselves with basic records management theory, practice and jargon will find the system easier to use. The State Archives suggests users attend NYSA workshops, on managing inactive records, and read NYSA publications, especially #49, *Administration of Inactive Records* to educate themselves on basic records management principals.

Both the State Archives *State Agency General Schedule* and *Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1)* are available as spreadsheet files that users may want to import into the database. For more information contact the State Archives.

I. LOADING THE DATABASE

You can request a copy of the GRMS by emailing RECMGMT@nysed.gov or download it from the archives website at www.archives.nysed.gov and save it to your computer.

To use the application first open Microsoft Access and then click File then Open. Click on the file *Government Records Management*, then click open. The *MainDataEntryForm* loads automatically.

The GRMS has four main sections: main records data, file folder listing, checkout system, and reports. The software displays all sections on one screen for easy use and access

Sample data is included to ease the learning process and demonstrate the applications capabilities. Users should delete the sample data before entering their own. To do this, exit the form, click on the Queries tab in the left-hand menu and then click on the query *DeleteSampleData*. This will clear all the sample data.

II. ENTERING A RECORD IN THE MAIN RECORDS DATA SECTION

The first field is the ***Container Number.*** In this field enter the assigned number of a records container, e.g., a storage box, filing cabinet drawer, etc.

Next tab to the ***Location*** field and enter the location code of the record. The code may include any combination of six alphabetic or numeric characters. (See NYSA publication #49, *Administration of Inactive Records* for information on locator systems.)

In the ***Department*** field, enter a two-character code for the department that created or holds legal custody of the record for example, TC for Town Clerk, BD for Building Department, or PS for Pupil Services.

In the ***Record Status*** field enter one of three letters: **A** for active, **I** for inactive, or **D** for destroyed. This field capitalizes automatically when exited. Please Note: If you do not use one of these 3 letters, the Active, Inactive and Destroyed reports will not work.

The next field is ***Record Series Title.*** Enter the name of the records series, e.g. purchase orders, town board minutes, or canceled checks. This field is limited to 120 characters. Also, follow strict naming conventions. See *Helpful Hints* on page 7.

In the ***From Date*** field enter the earliest date of any record within that container. The date may be entered using dashes or slashes between the month, date, and year. The software will automatically convert it to a mm/dd/yyyy format. For example, 2-3-02 will appear as 02/03/2002.

In the ***To Date*** field enter the latest date of any record within that container. Again, the date may be entered using dashes or slashes between the month, date, and year.

In the ***Volume*** field enter the volume of records within that container expressed in cubic feet, for example, 1.5, 2, .25, etc.

The next field is a check box to identify the record series as ***Permanent.*** If the record has a permanent retention period in the applicable State Archives' retention schedule or if it has been determined to have historic value, click on the small box and a check mark will appear in the field. To remove the checkmark simply click on the field again.

The ***Schedule Item #*** field has two sections. The first is a drop-down menu where you choose the assigned retention schedule for your local government or state agency. ("GEN" stands for the general retention schedule for state agencies. "LGS-1" stands for the retention schedule for local governments. "OCA" stands for Office of Court Administration schedules.) In the second section, enter the retention schedule item number. This is a unique number next to each item description in the schedules.

The next field is the ***Retention Period.*** Enter the retention period for the records series expressed in years only. If the record has a permanent retention period, enter 9999. If the retention period is less than a year, enter it as 1. Also, check the **Permanent?** field. In some cases, a record series may have a conditional or event-based retention period. For example, "three years after youngest child attains the age of 18." In these cases, leave the retention period field empty and make a note of the retention in the *comments* field.

In the ***Disposition Date*** field enter the date when the record's retention period expires. Calculate this date by adding the retention period to the "to date" of the record plus one day, e.g., a box of cancelled checks with a date span of 1999-2000 would have a disposition date of January 1, 2007. The to date in this example is 2000. The retention period for cancelled checks is 6 years. It is assumed the latest exact date in the series is December 31, 2000. Add one day to this and you arrive at January 1, 2007. If the record series is active and still open, leave both the "to date" and the disposition date empty. If the record is permanent leave the disposition date field empty.

Next is the ***Comments*** field where any comments may be entered. This field is limited to 200 characters.

The last field in the main section is the ***Date Destroyed***. Enter the date destroyed **only after** a record is physically destroyed. After entering the date destroyed change the *Record Status* to "D" for destroyed.

III. FILE FOLDER LISTING

Use the File Folder Listing in those case where the records are frequently requested and accessed at the file folder level, e.g. personnel files, social services case files, or student files. The file folder listing section is linked to the main records section. The ***Container Number*** field will automatically fill each time the tab key is hit. Enter the name or number of each file within the container in the ***File Name or Number*** field. Also, use this section if the container holds more than one records series.

IV. CHECK-OUT SYSTEM

Use this section to document the retrieval of a record from its storage location, e.g. a box of inactive records from the records storage room.

The ***Container Number*** field is linked to the Container Number Field in the main records section and automatically fills by hitting the tab key.

In the ***File*** field, enter the file name or number. If a whole box is retrieved from inactive storage, simply enter "whole box taken."

In the ***Date Retrieved,*** enter the date that the file was retrieved.

In the ***Person*** field, enter the name of the person who retrieved or received the file.

In the ***Date Returned*** field, enter the date that the file was returned to its container.

V. REPORTS

The GRMS was built with 13 pre-designed reports. The report section appears on the right side of the screen and contains 13 labeled command buttons. To run a report simply click the command button. Some reports will prompt you for more information before running. This criterion is referred to as a "parameter value." To obtain a short description of each report, hold the mouse pointer over the command button.

Active Records: This report returns all records with an active status (any record with an "A" in the status field). The report lists the records series title, date span, the department, container number, location, and record status. The total volume of all active records appears in the header.

Department List: This report lists all records held by a particular department regardless of record status. When you click on the report's command button, a "parameter value" dialog box appears prompting you to enter the Department Code. Enter the two-digit Department Code and click OK. The report lists records series title, date span, container number, location, record status, and disposition date.

Destroyed Records: This report lists all destroyed records i.e., all records with a record status of "D."

Destruction Authorization: This report creates a form listing all records authorized for destruction by specified department. To create the form, click on the *destruction authorization* reports button. A parameter box appears prompting you to enter the earliest date. Enter the date and click OK. The parameter box then prompts you for the latest date, enter the date and click OK. Another parameter box appears prompting you to enter the department code. Enter the desired code and click OK. A printable form appears, listing the container number, records series title, date span, schedule number, retention period, and disposition date. The form also has an authorization section for required signatures.

Disposition Report: This report lists all records eligible for destruction. Click on the command button, a “parameter value" dialog box prompts you to enter the earliest date in the range. Enter the earliest date range the following format: mm/dd/yyyy. You must enter it in this format, or the system cannot identify the requested records. Another parameter prompts you to enter the latest date in the range in the same format as above. The disposition report lists the following information: container number, location, records series title, department code, date span, retention schedule item number, retention period, and disposition date.

Find a File: This report locates the container number and location of a particular file. Click on the Find a File report button and a parameter value box prompts you to enter the file name or number file you are searching for.

Folder Listing: This report creates a contents list for a records container. Click on the folder listing report and a parameter box prompts you to enter the desired container number. Enter the number and click OK. The report lists all folders or files within the container.

Inactive Records: This report returns a list of all inactive records (records with a record status of “I.”) The report will list records series title, the date span, department, container number, and the location. The total cubic footage of inactive records appears in the report header.

List All Records: This report lists all records held with an active or inactive record status. (Note: records with a destroyed status (code D) no longer exist and will not appear on this report.) The report header contains the total volume of records. This report may satisfy the FOIL requirement for all local governments and state agencies to maintain a subject listing of records in their custody.

Outstanding Retrievals: This report returns a listing of all records retrieved but not returned. It lists the container number, file name or number, the date retrieved, and the person who retrieved it.

Permanent Records: This report lists all records with a permanent retention (all records that have a check mark in the Permanent? field.) The report lists the records series title, date span, department, schedule item number, and location.

Records Series: This report will give you a listing of all containers that hold a particular records series. Click on the report button, a parameter box prompts you to enter the name of the records series. Type the name of the desired series and click OK. The system creates a report listing the records series title, date span, department, location, container number, and record status. In the header of the report the retention schedule item number and retention period for the record series are listed.

Retrieval History: This report lists all records retrieval from a particular container number. When you click on the report button, a parameter box prompts you to enter the container number. The report lists the file name or number taken, the date it was taken, the person who retrieved or received the file, and the date it was returned.

VI. QUERIES

There are several queries in this database, however, most are used by the system to design reports. Two will prove valuable, however:

> **DeleteDestroyedRecords -** erases all trace of the record from the database, after the record has been destroyed
>
> **DeleteSampleData** - clears all sample data from database

VII. HELPFUL HINTS

1. Remember, establish naming conventions that enforces consistent data entry rules. This ensures all reports work as designed that you can locate the data you need. For example, always use the same records series name. Don't enter Purchase Orders, P.O.'s and Vouchers for the same record series.

2. You can search for one particular record without running one of the reports by placing the cursor in the appropriate field, e.g. Records Series Title, then clicking on Find at the top of the screen. This opens a dialog box where you can enter the name of the record and then click "find next." This will bring you to the desired record.

3. If your local government or agency uses only one retention schedule or opts to use this database to track only inactive records you can simplify the data entry by using "default values." To enter a default value for Record Status, click on the table's tab and open the table "MainData" then click on the View menu and then click design view. Next click on the field name "Record Status." At the bottom of the screen place the cursor in the default value field and type an "I" in the field. Now the Record Status field will auto-fill with the letter I. This same process can be used for all other fields where the value entered will be identical for each record.

4. If your organization chooses not to use one of form's sections you can hide that section to ensure no one inadvertently enters data there. For example, if you want to hide the Check Out section of the form open the form and then click on View then Design View. Right mouse click on the Check Out section and choose "Properties." In the "Visible Field" change the selection "Yes" to "No"