INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING REC-3, REC-4, AND REC-5 FORMS

These instructions provide a brief overview of the REC-3, REC-4, and REC-5 forms and information to be included on them. For more detailed assistance, contact Government Records Services at the State Archives at (518) 474-6926.

State agencies and public benefit authorities with statewide responsibilities use the REC-3, REC-4, and REC-5 forms to develop new Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs) and to revise existing RDAs for program units within the agency. Approved RDAs, also known as retention and disposition schedules, provide legal authorization for records disposition after the indicated retention periods.

The State Archives coordinates and administers the formal process for submission, review, and approval of records disposition requests. State agency Records Management Officers (RMOs) should submit completed forms to the State Archives when requesting authorization to establish or revise records retention and disposition schedules. The submitted forms should include one REC-3 form for each program unit, one or more REC-4 forms as needed for each program unit, and separate REC-5 forms for each set of records for which a new or revised disposition plan is being requested. Specific instructions for completing each of these forms are provided below. Completed forms should be submitted to the State Archives at the address shown on the REC-3 form.

The review and approval process begins with the submission of completed REC-3, REC-4, and REC-5 forms. State Archives staff reviews requests to ensure that proposed plans meet administrative, legal, fiscal, historical, and other needs for records retention. After State Archives staff completes any needed revisions in conjunction with the agency, they forward copies of the request forms to the Offices of the Attorney General and State Comptroller for review. At the end of the review process, the State Archivist approves requests and assigns Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) numbers to the records series. Approved requests are returned to the agency RMO who then notifies the program unit of the approved schedule.

To the extent possible, it is the State Archives' aim to work closely with agency RMOs to resolve disposition and scheduling issues before the formal review process takes place. RMOs are welcome to consult with State Archives staff, request assistance on developing records disposition requests, or request review of draft requests before they are submitted to the State Archives for formal approval.

RECORDS DISPOSITION REQUEST (REC-3)

The REC-3 form is a cover sheet for the REC-4 and REC-5 forms. It provides basic information about the agency and program unit, program unit mission and function, and requested action(s). One REC-3 form should be used for each program unit schedule.

SECTION A: IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAM UNIT AND CONTACT PERSON
ITEM 1: Enter the name of the agency in which the program unit is located.

ITEM 2: Enter the name of the major division under which the program unit is located. If none exists, leave this item blank.

ITEM 3: Enter the name of any subdivision between the major division and the program unit. If none exists, leave this item blank.

ITEM 4: Enter the name of the program unit.

ITEM 5: Enter the name and telephone number of the agency Records Management Officer (RMO).

SECTION B: PROGRAM UNIT MISSION AND FUNCTION
ITEM 6: Provide a brief narrative description of the mission, functions, and responsibilities of the program unit.

SECTION C: ACTION REQUESTED
ITEM 7: Place an “X” before the applicable action(s) as follows:

ESTABLISH SCHEDULE: Check this line if you are establishing a schedule for the program unit for the first time.

ADD ITEMS TO EXISTING SCHEDULE: Check this line to add new items to an existing program unit schedule.

REVISE DISPOSITION AUTHORIZATION NUMBERS: Check this line to revise or supersede an approved Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) with a new authorization. List the RDA number(s) to be revised or superseded.

OTHER (SPECIFY): Use this line to request any non-routine scheduling action that will not result in an ongoing schedule for the concerned records. Examples include the transfer of legal custody of records from one agency to another, a request for one-time transfer of archival records to the State Archives, or a request for one-time destruction of records. This line should also be used to request cancellation of obsolete program unit RDAs not being replaced by new RDAs.

ITEM 8: The agency RMO must sign and date the request. The signature constitutes the agency's certification that the records listed in the request do not have sufficient administrative, legal, fiscal, or other value to the agency to warrant their continued retention beyond the expiration of the proposed retention periods.

SECTION D: SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN and SECTION E: AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE

Leave blank. The State Archives will complete these sections at the time a schedule request is approved.

RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE (REC-4)

Complete one REC-4 for each program unit within an agency, using as many pages as needed. The REC-4 should list all currently approved Records Disposition Authorizations for the unit as well as those series for which Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs) are being revised or requested for the first time. By listing all series on the REC-4 form, the program unit ensures that the REC-4 is an up-to-date summary of all unit RDAs.

AGENCY: Enter the name of the agency in which the program unit is located.

PROGRAM UNIT: Enter the name of the program unit.

For each records series in the program unit, including those which have been previously approved for disposition, provide the following information:

AGENCY NUMBER: Indicate the unique number assigned by the agency to the records series, as included on the REC-5 form. Note that this number must be 8 characters or less (including blank spaces).

DISPOSITION AUTHORIZATION NUMBER: If the record series is already approved for disposition, enter the RDA number in this box. The existing RDA number should be entered even if the request is to revise that authorization. If a disposition authorization for a series is being requested for the first time, leave blank.

SERIES TITLE: List the series title from each REC-5 form completed by the program unit.

RECOMMENDED RETENTION AND DISPOSITION: Briefly summarize the proposed retention and disposition of records in the series as indicated on the REC-5 form, including the minimum length of time the records must be retained, the event that commences the retention period, and the final disposition of the records (Example: Destroy 2 years after expiration of contract). Verify that the information in this box matches the information on the applicable REC-5 form.

RECORDS SERIES DESCRIPTION (REC-5)

Complete one REC-5 for each records series for which a new or revised Records Disposition Authorization is being requested. A record series is a group of related records (such as board minutes, grant applications, or audit files) that are normally used and filed together, and which usually have the same retention requirements.

AGENCY NUMBER: Located at upper right hand corner of the REC-5 form. Assign a unique code (8 characters or less) to each REC-5 form to serve as a temporary control number. Agencies can use any coding system of their choice, although a common method is a combination of letters and numbers for each records series in a program unit. For example, if three REC-5s are being prepared for records in a Human Resources unit, they might be numbered HR-01, HR-02, and HR-03.

DISPOSITION AUTHORIZATION NUMBER: Located at upper right hand corner of the REC-5 form. Leave this box blank. The State Archives will assign a Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) number when the schedule is approved.

ITEM 1: Enter the name of the agency in which the program unit is located.

ITEM 2: Enter the name of the program unit.

ITEM 3: Enter the title of the records series. The title should indicate a name for the set of records that is clear to both outsiders and agency staff.

ITEM 4: Enter a brief description of the nature and contents of the records series that provides an accurate summary of the records. All acronyms should be spelled out. The description should include enough detail so that outsiders can readily understand the nature and contents of the records.

ITEM 5: Enter the year (only) of the earliest existing records in the record series, including records stored offsite. If the year is uncertain, indicate an approximate date (ex., “ca. 1985”).

ITEM 6: If records in the record series are still being created, enter “current.” If the records are no longer being created, enter the most recent year of existing records.

ITEM 7: Enter the approximate total volume of records in the series for each applicable format. Paper records should be measured in “cubic feet,” microfilm in “rolls,” and everything else in “items.” If actual counts are unavailable, use a best estimate.

ITEM 8: Enter the estimated annual growth in cubic feet of the records series for paper records only. Annual growth is the quantity of new records received and generated in a typical year.

ITEM 9: A “files management action” is a special action taken to separate inactive from active records or to implement final disposition, such as “inactive records are physically separated from active records and moved to storage.” If no files management action occurs, leave blank.

ITEM 10: Indicate the event that begins the retention period of records in the series. In most cases, the retention period begins after a period of time (such as the end of a calendar year) or as the result of a particular event (such as the expiration of a contract, close of a case, or when records are obsolete or superseded).

ITEM 11: Enter the period of time after the event stated in ITEM 10 for which the records will be retained to meet agency administrative, legal, fiscal, and other needs. If the records will be kept in the agency for that entire time, indicate that period on the line for “retain in agency.” If the records will be stored at the State Records Center for a time, indicate that period on the line for “retain in State Records Center.” The total retention period is the sum of those two periods.

If the unit plans to reformat the records to other media (such as by microfilming or imaging), describe that plan under “reformat.” Use “other” for a retention period that cannot be expressed by a unit of time (such as “retain until the completion of the next audit”) or for specific records in the records series that will have a retention period that differs from the other records in the series.

ITEM 12: Indicate the requested final disposition of the records at the end of the proposed retention period. In most cases, that disposition will be “destroy.” If the program unit proposes to transfer legal custody of the records to the State Archives after agency needs for the records have been met, because the records are considered to have enduring research or other value, indicate “transfer to State Archives.” Indicate “other” and specify the requested final disposition if the unit proposes to transfer some records to the State Archives while destroying other records, to retain the records permanently in the agency, or to transfer the records to another agency at the end of the retention period.

ITEM 13: Briefly explain the reasons for choosing the proposed retention period and disposition for the records in the series. If the proposed retention will satisfy some state or federal legal or regulatory requirement, provide a citation to that requirement.

ITEM 14: Use this item only when the agency is proposing to revise an existing Records Disposition Authorization (RDA). Indicate the RDA number that currently covers the records and how that RDA is being revised by the new plan.