



Records Management
Policies and
Procedures Essentials

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Objectives

- Understand legal and programmatic value
- Learn practical steps to develop your own
- Learn how to implement you own



Agenda

- Critical reasons why policies are needed
- What to should be included
- How to begin writing your own
- Practical steps to implement



WHY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE NEEDED?



Policy vs. Procedure

- Policy = What
 - General rule to be followed
 - Desired outcome that is broad in scope
- Procedure = How
 - Specific action or established method for reaching desired outcome
 - Detailed, precise in scope



Filing Example

- Policy
 - Use standard subject headings for all active files
- Procedure
 - Listing of allowable subject terms
 - Based on analysis of file contents & filing practices



FOIL Example

- Policy
 - Government will adhere to the Freedom of Information Law when providing access to records
- Procedures
 - Appointing a Records Access Officer
 - Responding to requests
 - FOIL exemptions
 - Training for all staff on FOIL
 - Providing a subject matter list



Reasons Needed

- Consistency
- Clarity
- Legal
- Longevity



Consistency

- Consistency of performance
- Ensure similar performance across organization
- Greater efficiency when all are on same page



Clarity

- Awareness tool
 - Provides greater awareness of the rules
 - Defines acceptable behavior regarding records
- Education tool
 - Reduce confusions & uncertainty in performing job
 - For new employees and retraining existing staff
 - Period reinforcement needed



Legal

- Supports decisions concerning records
 - Demonstrates rationale for public, staff and media
- Basis for legal defense concerning records



Longevity

- Foundation for RM program
- Avoid established policies from being forgotten
 - Successors carry on after staffing changes



Lack of Policy & Procedures

- Creates uncertainty & lack of trust
 - Among staff, public and third-parties
- Legal support risk
 - Unable to demonstrate intent to follow governing rules
 - May not minimize impact of non-compliance



Additional Policy Examples

- Examples:
 - Proper use
 - Email
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Security & protection
 - Access rights
 - Inactive records storage
 - Social media



Additional Procedure Examples

- Examples:
 - Disposal of records past retention requirements
 - Transfer of inactive records to Records Storage
 - Inventorying records
 - Handling FOIL requests
 - Organizing file folders



What other areas do you think should be addressed in written policies for RM?



Create a single strategy for initial developing and ongoing updates
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



Steps in Development Process

1. Get management support
2. Assemble a team
3. Gather existing information
4. Decide what else is needed
5. Assign subsections



Steps in Development Process

6. Write the draft
7. Review, refine and approve
8. Distribute the manual
9. Train staff
10. Include process to update the manual



Framework Approach

- Identify broad policy areas
- Determine procedures to implement each policy
 - Include existing documented procedures
 - Determine existing procedures needing refinement
 - Identify new procedures not developed yet



Framework Approach

- Assign responsibility
 - Include timeframes
- Review for clarity
 - Team review of submitted drafts



Goals for Writing a Manual

- Professional appearance
 - Avoid unattractive document
- Clarity in writing
 - Avoid rambling or lengthy wording
- Include what is important
 - Avoid unnecessary information
- Keep simple
 - Avoid being too complicated or difficult to use



Reiterative Process

- Understand continuous refinement model
 - Add individual policies or procedures as you go
- Need multiple minds and eyes involved
- Talk to your peers
- Review with your NYS Archives' representative



What do you see as the most challenging areas in writing a manual?

Do you have any suggestions to make the process easier?



Let's get started!
WRITING YOUR OWN



Policy Manual Outline

- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Policy sections (by general topic)
- Policy subsections (on specific subjects)
- Procedure entries
- Appendices



Important Sections

1. Introduction & program overview
2. Roles & responsibilities
3. Creation
4. Organization & access
5. Storage
6. Security & protection
7. Retention & disposition
8. Preservation



Introduction

- Program overview and purpose
 - Mission statement & scope of manual
 - Definition of "record" and records management
 - Acceptable use
- Legal framework
 - Support of local, state and federal record laws
- Update procedure
 - Rules on developing, reviewing & updating manual



Mission Statement

- Defines goals of program
 - Compliant with applicable laws
 - Organized and accessible records
 - Enhance public service through improved access
 - Maintain & preserve records during retention period
 - Efficient use of office space and staff time



Exercise

- Using a *bullet format*, list the subheadings you think should be included in your introduction



2. Roles and Responsibilities

- Defines responsibilities for:
 - Records Management Officer
 - Records Advisory Committee/Board
 - Department Records Coordinators
 - Information Technology staff



Exercise

- List the roles needed for your government?
- In bullet format, list each roles' responsibilities



3. Creation of Records

- Determining the "official copy"
- Acceptable storage formats
 - Hardcopy (paper & microfilm)
 - Electronic (native, TIFF, PDF/A, etc.)
- Social media oversight
- Web site oversight
- Mobile & personal device usage
- Forms management



Exercise

- What headings *and* subheadings should be included here?



4. Organization, Use & Access

- Intent
 - Acceptable use and access authority
 - Allow easy location of records by authorized person
- Public Access
- Freedom Of Information Law
- File Plan
 - Electronic folder & file naming convention
 - Active paper filing methods
 - Inactive paper file storage (e.g. box labeling)



Exercise

- What headings should be included here besides FOIL and a File Plan?
- What subheadings should be included here?



5. Storage

- Proper storage of all records formats
 - Environmental condition; Storage media, etc.
- Inactive records storage procedures
- Electronic Content Management System usage
- Third-party storage usage
 - Record storage centers
 - Hosted or 'cloud' storage for electronic



Exercise

- What subheadings should be included here?



6. Security & Protection

- Security procedures
- Essential records definition
- Protection of essential records
 - Disaster planning and response
 - Continuity of Operations Plan/Continuity of Government



Exercise

- What subheadings should be included here?



7. Retention and Disposition

- Information on retention schedules
- Rules on records destruction
- Keeping records longer than required
- Appraisal of records



Exercise

- What subheadings should be included here?



8. Preservation

- Microfilming procedures
- Digital scanning procedures
- Migration planning for electronic records
- Managing historical records
- Alienated records and replevin
- Programs for public outreach



Exercise

- What subheadings should be included here?



Appendix

- Appendix options
 - Local law or resolution
 - Retention and disposition schedule
 - Resolution adopting retention schedule
 - Sample forms



Exercise

- Is there any other item that would be important to include in an appendix?



Are there other sections you would include?

Any other important topics not addressed in previous discussions?



PRACTICAL STEPS TO IMPLEMENT



Establish Support Base

- Governing body & senior officials
- Key departments
- Records Coordinators



Getting Management Support

- Think in management's terms
- Agreement records management is core function
- Provide examples of the cost of non-compliance
- Must always promote records management



What to Do Now

- Get sample copies and governments' manuals
- Talk with peers about their efforts
- Check off the sections relevant to you
- Begin filling in, working on priorities
- Go slowly and methodically
- Ask for help, if needed



Putting it All Together

- Table of contents
- Sections (by general topic)
- Subsections (on specific subjects)
- Entries
- Appendices



Awareness & Education

- Adopt the manual formally
- Distribute the manual
- Report on the manual at meetings
- Include manual in staff orientations
- Update and distribute manual regularly



What other suggestions do you have to help ensure acceptance?



LAST WORDS OF ADVICE



Keep a 'To-Do' List

- Items to be completed
- New items needed to be addressed
- Items needed to be refined



Share

- Share manual within your local government
- Communicate with your Archives' representative



Revision Control

- Make sure first page has revision # and date
- Include plan to update manual at least annually



Thank you!

For more information:
www.archives.nysed.gov


