Records Management Guidance
File Planning Guidance

A file plan is a tool used for identifying a standard approach for organizing records managed by your agency. File plans provide the basic guidelines you need to effectively manage all of your records regardless of format. A file plan can be used for physical and electronic records and will identify elements of your files such as location, description of records, naming conventions, record retention and disposition information, and organization. File plans are helpful for organizing, accessing, and managing records through their lifecycle and improve efficiency in your work.

A file plan can contain any number of elements to help you organize and manage your records, but an effective file plan will:

- offer **quick** and **easy** storage and retrieval of information;
- ensure **integrity** and **continuity** of recordkeeping practices in the event of personnel changes;
- **align** with the retention periods of the records it contains;
- be **expandable** and **flexible** enough to meet users' needs.

TIP: Whenever possible, the file structure of your records should be the same wherever you store records; for example, electronic records should mirror the file structure of your paper records.

File plans should:

- Be accessible to, and used by, anyone in your office that creates, accesses, or manages files in your shared filing system.
- Be reviewed on a consistent basis to document any changes needed, such as new file types added, new records categories used, new retention requirements, new work-flow processes.

File plan templates:

- Records Management File Plan: Identifies the records categories you use in your agency, along with the retention requirements and demonstrates how your records are currently organized.
- File Planning Roadmap: The file roadmap, (generally best fit for electronic records) is organized by the active file structure you have in shared filing spaces, such as your Teams or SharePoint sites. The plan will provide a list of your electronic folders, map each of your file folders to their required records category and retention.

Both examples contain the same essential elements but demonstrate how you can build your file plan in any manner you choose. The main goal of the file plan is to document your records, their file structure, and identify their retention requirements.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

King County Records Management Program
206-477-6889 – records.management@kingcounty.gov
www.kingcounty.gov/recordsmanagement

8/2023

1 of 1