Records Management Essentials

Agenda

- Why is records management important?

- Records management principles and activities

- Strategies to assist your efforts

- Practical steps moving forward

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What should we care?

IMPORTANCE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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Managing Records

- Records:
  - A byproduct of government business

- Records management:
  - Pertains to all records, regardless of format
  - Occurs throughout their lifecycle
  - Involves more than just a 'Records Manager'

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Why Manage Records?

- Legal or compliance reasons

- Importance/value of the information

- Preservation & protection

- Organizational and individual benefits

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Legal

- Insure compliance with federal and state laws
  - Local Government Records law
  - Commissioner's Regulations
  - FERPA, FOIL, HIPAA, FRCP
- Protect organization and individual stakeholders
  - Litigation protection; lower risk; fine avoidance
  - Respond to e-discovery requests
- Individual and corporate responsibility
  - Insure compliance with institutional policies

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Importance and Value

- Administrative
  - Needed to be able to perform your job
- Fiscal
  - Invoices, contracts, tax collection
- Legal
  - Contracts and agreements, mandated reporting
- Historical
  - Significant event, recording; Institutional memory

Preservation and Protection

- Preserve heritage

- Institutional memory

- Identify and preserve essential records

- Disaster Protection and business continuity

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Individual & Organizational Benefits

- Easier access
  - Easier to find (less to search through)
  - Easier to figure out what can be disposed
  - Easier to manage
  - Improved service to constituents via instant access

- Lower costs
  - Less kept, equals less space needed (physical and electronic)
  - Reduce records volumes
  - Improve efficiency

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Why not just keep everything?

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RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES
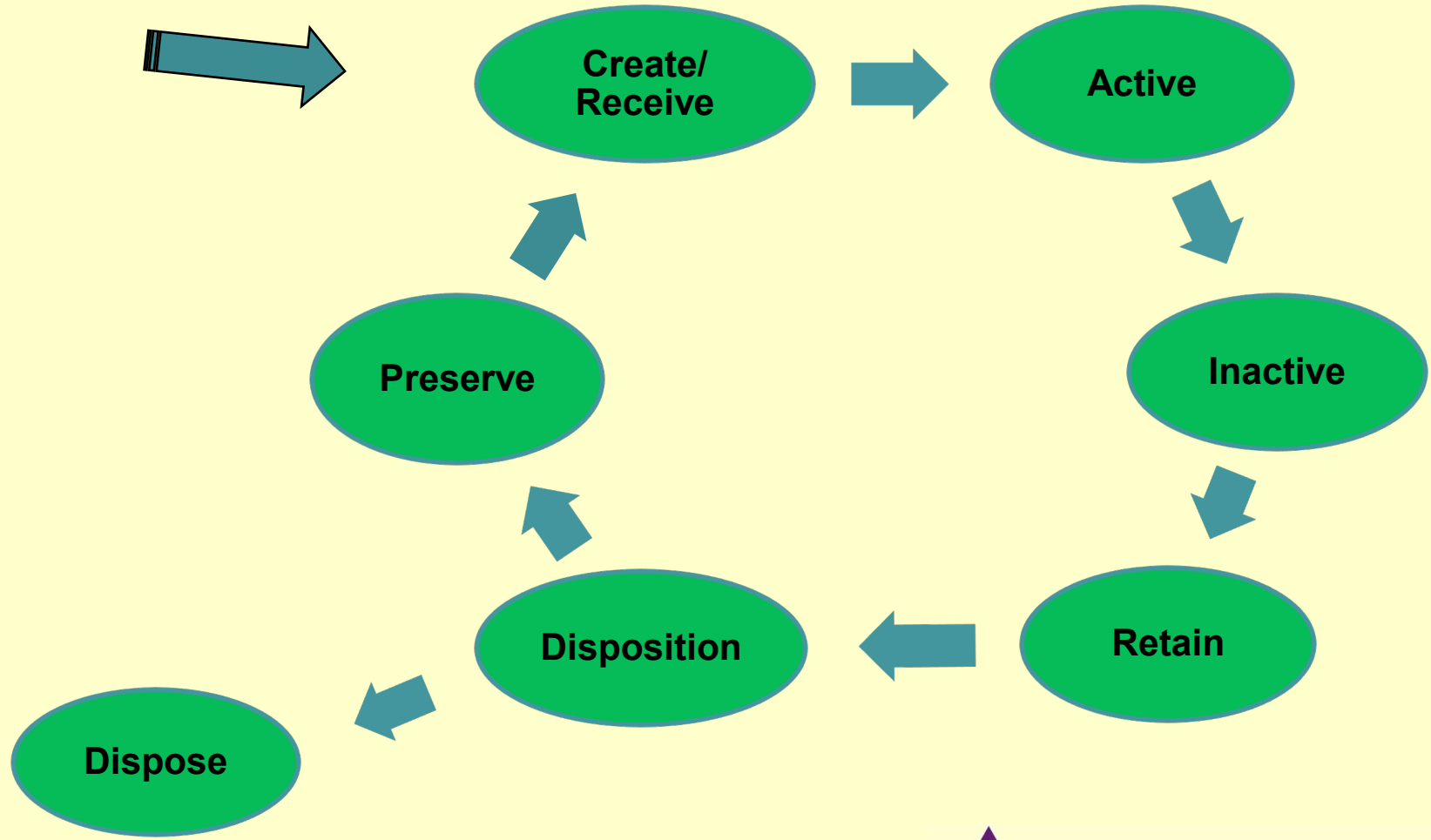
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Seven Step Process

1. Know what you have
2. Know what must be kept and for how long
3. Make accessing records easier
4. Dispose of records not required to keep
5. Protect and preserve essential records
6. Document your policies and procedures
7. Teach others each of the above

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RM Lifecycle

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RM Continuum

- Records Management is not an end point

- Interject steps within lifecycle to facilitate process

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Examples

- Proper file naming when *creating*
- Separating short term retention from long term
- Moving inactive records to lower cost storage
- Placing files in boxes for easy disposal
- Naming records so *others* know what they are
- Separating records from non-records

Retention Schedules

- ♦ 1.[293] Report of audit of financial affairs
  - – a. Audit filed pursuant to Section 35, General Municipal Law, conducted by New York State Comptroller's Office or by New York City Comptroller or by an outside auditing firm:
  - – **RETENTION:** PERMANENT

- ♦ 1.[372] Payroll, including information on gross & net pay, base pay, taxes, and other Deductions
  - – a. Year-end payroll, including detailed information necessary for salary verification for retirement and social security purposes:
  - – **RETENTION:** 55 years

File Plan

- Adopt for both electronic & paper records
  - Establish naming conventions
  - Include what should be in each file
  - Anticipate retention period for easier purging
  - Do not use your own name in the folder's name
  - Avoid co-mingling short-term records with long-term

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Goals of a File Plan

1. Ease access to records
2. Identify records *consistently*
3. Simplify disposal of records after retention period
4. Meet compliance requirements
5. Make your job easier!

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What's in a Name?

What the heck is it?	Better name
• Minutes.doc	• Board Minutes 2008-01.doc
• Letter091609.doc	• Corr-ABC Event 091612.doc
• Subj: Helpful Info	• Subj: Project X Contract Info
• Purchases.mdb	• PurchasesFY07.mdb

File names should be as descriptive as practical

How Should I Store Them?

- Separate records series (groups of functionally-related records)
  - Nest folders within folders
    - "Invoices" subfolders includes "2009", "2010", etc.
    - "Project" subfolders includes "correspondence", "contract"
    - Avoid "orphan files"
- Follow *consistent* file naming conventions
- Use logical, specific names & dates if possible
  - Goal is to tell what the file is without opening it

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RMO's Responsibilities

- Oversee and coordinate records program

- Serves as liaison with departments

- Delegate responsibility as needed

- Promoting the program

- Follow State Archives' guidelines

- Education and awareness

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Board & CEO Responsibilities

- Support and promote a records program

- Designate RMO

- Individual and corporate responsbility

- Identify historical records & ensure protection

The right approach to assist in your efforts

STRATEGIES

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Strategies

- You cannot be a records management island

- Know what you have and what has to be kept

- Identify known issues (and areas needing clarification)

- Set up a plan to address

- Identify needed policies (for protection and enforcement)

- Get the word out (awareness and training)

- Continuous reinforcement and refinement

One size does not fit all

- Strategies will vary, depending on:
  - Volume
  - Frequency of use
  - Retention requirements
  - Age
  - Physical conditions
  - Level of confidentiality
  - Degree of importance (essential and value)

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Records Coordinators

- Cannot do it alone
  - Liaison between department and RMO
- Oversees departmental records storage areas
  - Source of information, direction, and assistance
- Informal becomes formal
  - Direct line of communications
- Attends training events & meetings as scheduled
- Follows establishes policies and procedures

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Records Management Team

Records Management Officer

Records Coordinators

Department & Division Staff

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Policies

- Document framework
  - Consistency
  - Continuity
  - Responsibility
  - Education
  - Legal support

- Document decisions impacting records
  - e.g. Follow NYS retention schedules, establishing and defining the RMO responsibilities

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And now what should I do?

PRACTICAL STEPS GOING FORWARD

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7 Step Process

1. Records Coordinators

2. Know what you have

3. Determine what to keep (retention schedules)

4. Project Planning - Start one area at a time

5. Training & awareness

6. Reinforcement

7. Continuous Refinement

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Formalize Records Coordinators

- Recruit coordinators

- Face-to-face

- Willingness and

- Keep in mind possible changes

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Inventory

- Purpose
  - Identify what you have
  - Where they are stored
  - Who is responsible for them
  - What has to be retained
  - What can be disposed
- Start one department at a time
- Refinement process

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Example

- Provide relevant section(s) of schedule as guide

- Minimum info to gather:
    - Records series title
    - Date ranges
    - Location
    - Volume
    - Owner
    - Original or copy
    - Retention requirements

- Tool

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E-record Considerations

- Identify primary applications *creating* records
  - e.g. financial system, permit issuance, case management application, land record system, etc.
  - Not document viewers (Acrobat Reader, Web browser), DVD/CD recording software, etc.
- Where is the record stored?
  - Within the same server as the application, separate local storage device (SAN, NAS), state agency system, vendor's location, etc.

Determine 'the' Record

- Which format?
  - Electronic or paper
- Which 'original'?
  - Contracts example
- Who is the custodian?
  - Department Head, Clerk, Records Manager, etc.

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Disposal

- Dispose of what you can

- Multi-level approval process
  - Record owner, Records Manager/RMO, auditor
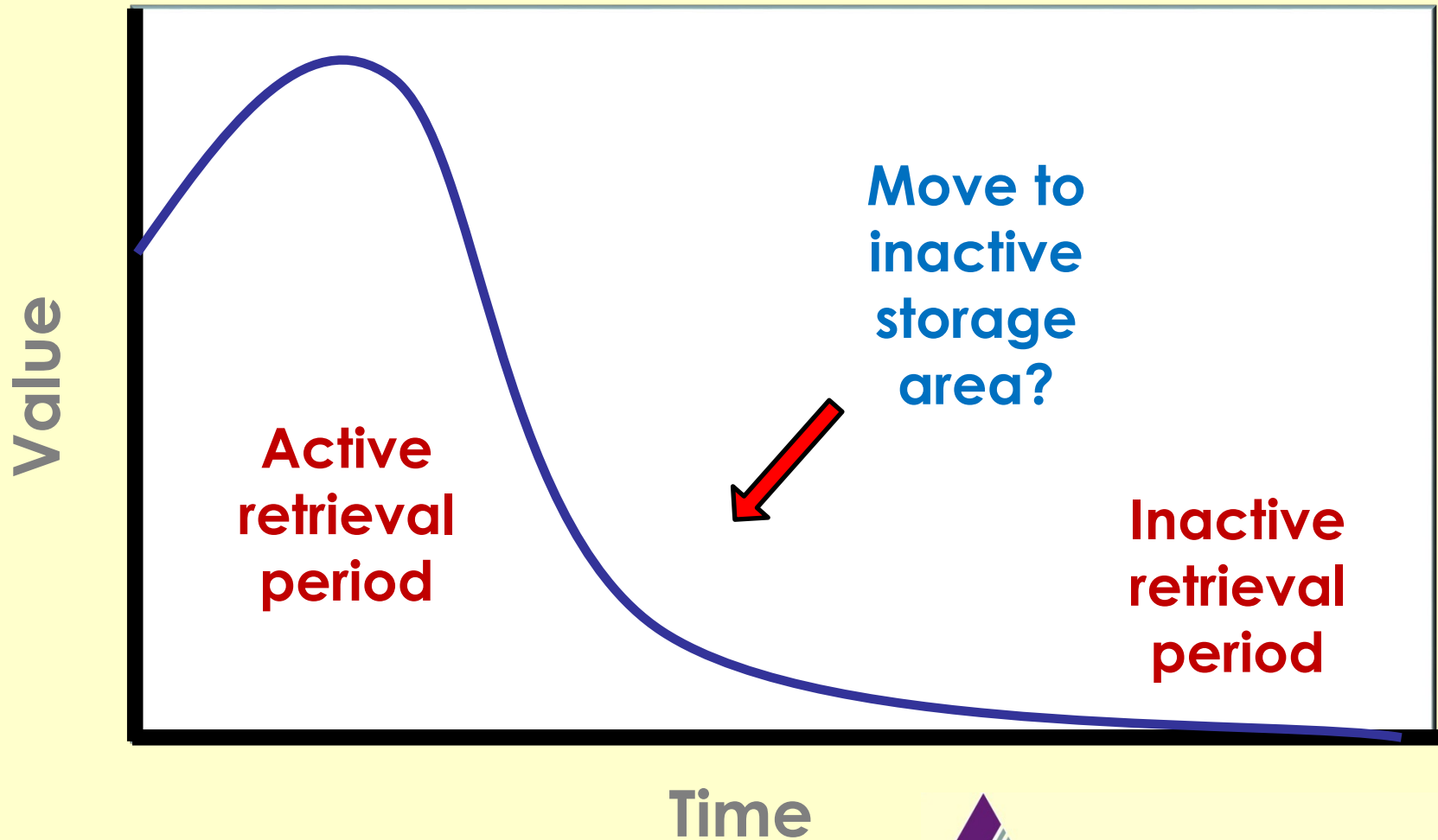
- Shred

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Project Planning

- What was discovered during inventory?

- What areas are you unsure of - clarify

- Prioritize
  - Determine low hanging fruit
  - Areas needing more resources (time, capital, etc.)

- Set realistic multi-year plan

- Communicate

- Revisit and revise

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Active vs Inactive Records

Value

Active retrieval period

Move to inactive storage area?

Inactive retrieval period

Time

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Ease Transition

- Move inactive records to inactive storage
- File centrally, when possible
  - Controlled inactive storage area
  - Box and label inactive paper records
  - Use appropriate storage equipment
- Verify disposition
- Update inventory tool
- Dispose when appropriate

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Labeling Inactive Records

- **Box inactive records and _label_ using the appropriate retention schedule**

ABC COUNTY STORAGE LABEL

Department:	**Treasury**
Sub-Unit:	**Accounts Payable**
Records Series Title:	**Purchase Order**
Records Series Desc:	**PO's for Office Supplies**
Schedule #: CO-2;	**Records Series: 1.[598]**
Inclusive Dates:	**January 2009 *To*: December 2009**
Location:	**Treasury Basement Room**
Disposal Date:	**Jan 2016**
Box # :	***2 of 5***

Preservation

- Physical environment

- Security

- Handling

- Storage & format

  - Paper, microfilm or certain e-formats (PDF/A or TIIF)

Disaster Management

- Identify essential and valuable records

- Identify risks

- Assess risk

- Reduce risks

- Prepare response plan & business continuity plan

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Awareness & Training

- Develop strong communication links with Records Coordinators & department heads
  - Regular meetings
- Keep governing body informed
  - Align RM activities into their goals
- Annual clean up day
- Webinars & workshops

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LAST WORD OF ADVICE

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Six Reminders

1. Determine what needs to be kept (official copy)
2. Delegate responsibility
3. File consistently according to file plan
4. Maintain an inventory
5. Hold clean up days once a year
6. Know what resources are available

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Remember…

- It took years to get where you are today

- Eat the elephant one bite at a time

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Resources

- Your NYS Archives representative
  - Regional Advisory Officer (RAO) for local governments
- New York State Archives webinars & workshops
- Your peers
- ARMA
- National Archives and Records Administration

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Records Management Essentials

Thank you!

For more information:
www.archives.nysed.gov

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