

## RESOLUTION NO. 2024-28

A RESOLUTION of the City Council of the City of Ellensburg adopting a records management policy.

WHEREAS, City of Ellensburg officials and employees are responsible for capturing records that document the work of the city and retaining them in accordance with retention schedules approved by the Washington State Archives' Local Records Committee; and

WHEREAS, a records management workgroup consisting of records subject matter experts from Community Development, Finance, HR, IT, Police, and Public Works, as well as the City Clerk and the Public Records Officer, drafted the City of Ellensburg Records Management Policy to align with current state laws and city needs; and

WHEREAS, the records management workgroup participated in a Lean process improvement engagement July 15-18, 2024, facilitated by the Washington State Auditor's Center for Government Innovation's Lean specialist, to refine the draft policy; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager and department heads have reviewed the draft policy and recommended the City of Ellensburg City Council adopt the Records Management Policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Ellensburg, Washington, as follows:

**Section 1.** The City Council hereby adopts the Records Management Policy attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

**Section 2.** The City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager, or their designee, to establish Records Management Procedures and training materials consistent with this resolution and policy, and to revise the policy as may be required.

**Section 3.** This resolution and policy shall take effect immediately.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Ellensburg this 21st day of October 2024.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attest:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk



## EXHIBIT "A"

# Records Management Policy

Managing public records is an essential function and legal responsibility of all city employees.

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to educate employees how to identify, preserve, retain, and disposition city records in compliance with approved retention schedules.

## 2. Definitions

As used in this policy, the following terms are defined:

### **Archival (Appraisal Required)**

Public records which may possess enduring legal and/or historic value and must be appraised by the Washington State Archives (WSA) on an individual basis. \*

### **Archival (Permanent Retention)**

Public records that possess enduring legal and/or historic value and must **not** be destroyed. Local government agencies must either transfer these records to Washington State Archives or retain and preserve these records according to archival best practices until such time as they are transferred to Washington State Archives. \*

### **Conversion**

The activity of converting the agency's public records from one form (source records) to another (converted records) through the processes of imaging (digitization or microfilm preservation) or data migration (digital or magnetic). \*

### **Destruction**

Causing documents to be made permanently unreadable. Destruction of records must be irreversible. This means that there is no reasonable risk of the information being recovered again (e.g., data remanence and reassembling of strip-shredded documents). Failure to ensure the total destruction of records may lead to the unauthorized release of sensitive information. The most convenient, effective method for paper records is crosscut shredding into very small pieces.

### **Disposition**

The stage of records management where an action is taken to either destroy, permanently retain onsite, or transfer records as appropriate.

### **Electronic Information System**

A system in which computerized records (electronic records) are collected, organized, and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, access, and disposition.

## **Electronic Records**

Any information in a format that only a machine can process, including but not limited to video or audio tape, punch card, email, voicemail messages, text messages, and word processing files. The electronic record includes its metadata.

## **Essential Records**

Public records that local government agencies must have in order to maintain or resume business continuity [during and] following a disaster. While the retention requirements for essential records may range from very short-term to archival, these records are necessary for an agency to resume its core functions following a disaster.\* See [RCW 40.10.010](#).

## **Local Records Committee (LRC)**

The committee established by [RCW 40.14.070](#) to review and approve disposition of local government records through records retention schedules. \*

## **Metadata**

Information describing the contents and context of data files; often referred to as “data about data”. This includes but is not limited to date of creation, access information, database schema, author/sender, and electronic routing information.

## **Naming Conventions**

A standard pattern for naming files or records, e.g., naming all files in the format of “yyyy-mm-dd-subject” or “case number, last name, first name”.

## **Permanent Records**

See Archival (Appraisal Required) and Archival (Permanent Retention) above.

## **Preservation**

Systematically maintaining and keeping secure, a record in its entirety, including its metadata. This term covers materials not only filed, stored, or otherwise systematically maintained but also those temporarily removed from existing filing systems.

## **Primary Record Holder**

The employee who creates the record or is first to receive the record created by a non-employee.

## **Public Records Officer (PRO)**

The Public Records Officer is designated by City Council resolution whose responsibility is to serve as a point of contact for members of the public in requesting disclosure of public records and to oversee the city’s compliance with the public records disclosure requirements of the [Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW](#).

## **Record (Public)**

[RCW 40.14.010](#) – Definition and classification of public records. “... The term ‘public records’ shall include any paper, correspondence, completed form, bound record book, photograph, film/video, sound recording, map drawing, machine-readable material, compact disc meeting current industry ISO specifications, or other document, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and including such copies thereof, that have been made by or received by any agency of the State of Washington in connection with the transaction of public business...”

## **Records with Minimal Retention Value**

Records created or received by the [city] which are typically of short-term, temporary informational use. \* Records with minimal retention value are described in Section 6 of the Local Government Common [Records Retention Schedule \(CORE\)](#).

## **Records Administrator**

An employee in each department, designated by the department director, who supervises disposition of the department’s records by applying the retention requirements found in approved records retention schedules and ensures that [RCW 40.14](#) and [WAC 434-640](#), disposition of records takes place as soon as possible after records have met their minimum retention requirements.

## **Records Retention Schedule**

A document approved by the LRC that specifies required retention periods for a record series and provides ongoing disposition authority for the record series after its approved retention period has been satisfied. In addition to the [Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule \(CORE\)](#), there are additional [retention schedules specific to certain departments](#).

## **Records Series**

A group of records performing a specific function, which is used as a unit, filed as a unit, and may be transferred or destroyed as a unit. A records series may consist of a single type or a number of different types of documents that are filed together to document a specific function. \*

## **Retention Period**

The minimum length of time a record is required to be kept based on its content and function. A record’s retention period is determined by the state Local Records Committee and is listed in a records retention schedule.

## **Secondary Records**

Copies of records (created or received), provided the agency retains its primary copy of the record in accordance with the current approved minimum retention period. \*

\* [Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule \(CORE\), Version 5.0 \(October 2024\), Glossary, pp 190-192.](#)

### 3. Policy

City of Ellensburg employees are responsible for retaining records that document the work of the city, and disposing of them when allowed, in accordance with retention schedules approved by the Washington State Archives' Local Records Committee.

Department Directors shall designate a department Records Administrator responsible for coordinating records management within their department, including but not limited to:

1. Knowing, understanding, and enforcing city records management policies and procedures
2. Ensuring department staff understand and comply with the records management policies and procedures
3. Assisting staff with identifying public records, interpreting records retention schedules, converting records, scanning and tossing non-archival records, obtaining appraisals, and transferring archival records to the WA State Archives
4. Approving records destruction requests
5. Periodically attending records management and public records trainings, but no less than once every four years

#### 3.1 Identifying Public Records

Public records are defined by three key criteria in [RCW 40.14.010](#):

1. Made by or received by any agency in the State of Washington (the city)
2. In connection with the transaction of public business
3. Regardless of physical form or characteristics

A record provides evidence of an agency's decisions and actions, and therefore has a retention value.

#### 3.2 Preserving Public Records

City employees shall retain all public records that document the work of the city. These records, regardless of format or media, shall be retained in their native format (unless approved for digitization and destructions (scan and toss)) for the minimum period required by retention schedules approved under [RCW 40.14](#) and [WAC 434-635](#).

Employees shall adhere to the city's records management policies and procedures. Each department shall, at a minimum:

1. Maintain records in their entirety
2. Identify temporary, permanent, essential, and archival records
3. Organize records to ensure searchability/accessibility and security
4. Physically or electronically segregate essential records
5. Periodically audit procedures and adherence to them

### 3.2.1 Electronic Records

Unless otherwise defined by the city, records retention requirements apply to all electronic information systems:

1. Original format: all electronic records must be kept in the record's original format. This demonstrates the authenticity of the record, maintains the context of the record, and preserves both the record and its metadata.
2. Conversion: conversion of a primary record from one data format to another is allowable only if all original metadata is preserved. Examples of when it is appropriate to convert data formats include new versions of software from the same vendor or moving from software of one vendor to that of another. Converting to a different format does not change retention requirements.
3. City systems: The IT Department is responsible for maintaining the city network and its storage systems. The primary record holder is responsible for maintaining and retaining their records within the city system. Electronic backups of city systems are short term and for disaster recovery only, and as such shall not be relied upon for records management and retention.

### 3.2.2 Organizing Records

The goal of the city's records management policy and procedures is to help employees preserve and dispose of records as required by state law. We must keep records safe and accessible until disposition is allowed by the record retention schedules produced by the WA Secretary of State. To efficiently identify records that have met their retention requirements, they must be organized by record series.

Departments shall adhere to the city's records management policy for organizing records, or they may create and document a record filing structure policy which must be approved by the City Manager.

Minimum requirements for a proper filing structure:

1. Label files and folders in a way that the contents and retention/disposition requirements are easily discerned
2. Use the filing structure department wide, allowing for differences within operating units of the department
3. Separate or clearly designate records of minimal retention value from other records
4. Separate or clearly designate essential records from other records
5. Do not store records that have differing retention periods in catch-all folders (such as email inbox and sent items)
6. To the extent possible, use the same filing structure for hardcopy and electronic records (including email)

### 3.3 Disposition of Public Records

Records at the end of their retention period will be reviewed for their disposition. Secondary copies and other records with minimal retention value, as defined in the Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule, will be destroyed when they are no longer needed for city business. Records may be

retained longer than the required minimum period only if the need is documented by the department's Records Administrator.

All records not on legal hold or subject to a public records request must be destroyed when they have passed their retention period and any documented extensions. Destruction of records with a retention of greater than one (1) year shall be documented on the City of Ellensburg [Public Records Destruction Log](#).

At a minimum, each department shall ensure that:

1. Procedures are established and followed for disposition of all records.
2. After the retention requirements have been met for records that are listed as archival or potentially archival according to the Secretary of State Retention Schedule, the department shall contact the regional archives for appraisal and possible transfer.
3. All records scheduled for destruction are disposed of in a manner that ensures irreversible destruction of any sensitive, private, proprietary, or security information. See the city's [records management procedures](#).

### 3.3.1 Public Records Requests and Legal Holds

The city is prohibited from destroying a public record, even if it is past its records retention requirement or about to be lawfully destroyed under a retention schedule, if a public records request has been made for that record. Additional retention requirements might apply if the records may be relevant to actual or anticipated litigation. The city is required to retain the record until the record request and litigation has been resolved (additional retention may be required beyond resolution based on a new retention period). Any question regarding public records requests and legal holds should be directed to the Public Records Officer and the City Attorney's Office.

### 3.3.2 Digitizing and Destroying (Scanning and Tossing)

For early destruction after digitization (scanning), see the city's [Paper-to-Digital Conversion Policy](#) and current Local Government Common Records Retention (CORE) schedule, section 5.5 Records Conversion.

## 3.4 Transfer of Public Records

Records considered archival (permanent retention) must be retained and preserved according to archival best practices until such time as they are transferred to the Washington State Archives. [RCW 40.14.030](#), [WAC 434-615-030](#)

Transfer of records that require appraisal or permanent retention must be coordinated with the State Archivist.

## 3.5 Training

Department Directors are responsible for ensuring their employees are trained on the Records Management Policy and procedures. Training will be provided either by the City of Ellensburg or a city approved online or other course.

### 3.6 Enforcement

Violation of the city's Records Management Policy may result in progressive discipline (including possible termination) and/or criminal investigation in accordance with city policies and applicable laws.

## 4. Resources

For additional information and resources, see the City of Ellensburg's [CityNet](#) website and the Secretary of State webpage [Managing City Records](#).

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Adopted by Ellensburg City County, Resolution 2024-28, November 4, 2024