



September 19, 2024

Subject: Retention of Records at State Record Center

Purpose

The Delaware Public Archives (DPA) is issuing this policy for use by all agencies in state and local government in Delaware. The purpose of this policy is to clarify and update procedures for public records sent to the State Record Center.

Background

All public records go through a lifecycle of creation, use, maintenance, and disposition. Some records are maintained by the originating agency for a specified retention period, then destroyed; other records have enduring archival value and are sent to DPA for permanent preservation. Records that contain personally identifiable information and/or are not of enduring archival value are sent to the State Record Center. The disposition instructions for a given record series can be found in the record retention schedules published by DPA in cooperation with state agencies. Agencies needing a copy of the statewide general record retention schedules or their agency-specific record retention schedule should contact their assigned DPA Records Analyst for assistance.

DPA is equipped with secure, climate-controlled vaults for the permanent preservation of archival records in its custody. DPA also maintains records on behalf of state agencies, both on-site in DPA's vaults or off-site at a contracted storage vendor. As DPA's collection of archival records grows, more and more space is needed for permanent preservation of these records; therefore, records sent to the State Record Center are sent to off-site storage.

Each record sent to off-site storage incurs an upfront cost, plus a smaller regular storage cost. Due to the remarkable volume of records created by state agencies, as well as the fact that maintenance of records in the State Record Center is provided by DPA at no cost to agencies, DPA must be prudent in managing these costs.

Policy

- I. Unless otherwise noted, DPA will not accept new transfers of records to the State Record Center if the records are not subject to an effective retention period at the State Record Center of at least 10 years.
 - a. The effective retention period is the actual number of years the records would be eligible to stay at off-site storage based on the date span of the records, regardless of the retention period specified in the retention schedule.

- II. In conjunction with applicable agencies, DPA will update record retention schedules so that any record series with a retention instruction that would send the record to the State Record Center for a period of less than 10 years will instead be maintained at agency for the retention period.

Effective September 19, 2024