



Harris County, Texas

1001 Preston St., Suite 934
Houston, Texas 77002

Commissioners Court

Request for Court Action

File #: 21-6910

Agenda Date: 12/14/2021

Agenda #: 139.

Department: Universal Services

Department Head/Elected Official: Richard Noriega, MG (ret.)

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Policy

Project ID (if applicable): N/A

Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Participation (if applicable): N/A

Table with 4 columns: Name, YES, NO, ABSTAIN. Rows include Judge Lina Hidalgo, Comm. Rodney Ellis, Comm. Adrian Garcia, Comm. Tom S. Ramsey, and Comm. R. Jack Cagle.

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Request for approval of the Amended Harris County Records and Information Management Plan, Amended Harris County Records Control Schedule, and to authorize the Harris County Records Management Officer to transmit to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) in accordance with the Texas Local Government Code 203.026 and Texas Local Government Code 204.041(d).

Background and Discussion:

On December 10, 2019, Commissioner Court approved the current Records and Information Management Plan and Records Control Schedule. The updates requested in this court submission are a refresh of those two documents to reflect revisions due to organizational changes within Harris County, changes requested by various departments to increase useability, and any changes due to updates in Texas Statutes.

Specific changes in the Amended Records and Information Management Plan include:

- 1. Clarification on Roles & Responsibilities.
2. Creation of the Records Liaison Officer role within departments.
3. Improved guidance on electronic content, including Office 365.
4. Clarity on the role of Universal Services in supporting departments in responding to Public Information Requests.
5. Including the role of the Office of County Administration in the Records Management process, which previously did not exist in the last adoption of the Plan.

The Amended Records Control Schedule changes include:

- 1. Changes in the retention requirements adopted by the TSLAC since the previous version of the Records Control Schedule
2. Inclusion of Elections Administration Department records as these were previously managed by the County Clerk (elections) and Tax Assessor/Collector (voter registration).
3. Changes from Law Enforcement to delineate between classes of misdemeanors and investigations.

- 4. Changes requested by Children's Assessment Center to increase the retention of their case files due to changes in the statute of limitations within Texas.
- 5. Changes requested by County Attorney Office to increase Jail Medical Record retention to match Harris Health.

In accordance with the Records Management Policy Plan adopted by Commissioner Court on December 10, 2019, the County Records Management Committee, consisting of representatives for the County Attorney, District Attorney, and County Auditor, have reviewed and approved this Amended Records and Information Management Plan and Amended Records Control Schedule.

Expected Impact:

All Harris County Departments with the exception of the County Clerk, District Clerk, and Tax Assessor/Collector will begin using the new Records and Information Management Plan and Records Control Schedule immediately upon approval by Commissioners Court. Communications of the updates will be communicated to directly to Department Heads or their designated Records Liaison Officer.

Alternative Options:

None

Presented to Commissioners Court

December 14, 2021

Alignment with Goal(s):

Approve: G/R

- Justice and Safety
- Economic Opportunity
- Housing
- Public Health
- Transportation
- Flooding
- Environment
- Governance and Customer Service

Prior Court Action (if any):

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken

Location:

Address (if applicable):

Precinct(s): Countywide

Fiscal and Personnel Summary			
Service Name	Records Management		
	FY 21-22	FY 22	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Labor Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Incremental Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
Choose an item.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Choose an item.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Choose an item.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Current Budget	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Choose an item.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Choose an item.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Additional Budget Requested	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Funding Sources	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
Total Personnel	-	-	-

Anticipated Implementation Date:

Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note: Not an emergency, disaster, or COVID-19 related item

Contact(s) name, title, department: Jeremy Brown, Sr. Manager Legislative and Records Management, Universal Services and Brian Foster, Harris County Records Management Officer, Universal Services

Attachments (if applicable):



Records & Information Management Plan ***Information Governance Program***

Harris County, Texas

Prepared by:
Harris County Universal Services

Reviewed and Approved by:
The County Attorney's Office
The District Attorney's Office
The County Auditor's Office

November 1, 2021

Table of Contents

I. OVERVIEW	3
II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
III. RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS	8
IV. Appendix A:	14
V. Appendix: B	15
VI. Appendix C.....	17

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PROGRAM
RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

HARRIS COUNTY AND HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

I. OVERVIEW

A. Applicability

This plan is applicable to:

- (1) all appointed Harris County officials and their staff and all Harris County Flood Control District officials and employees;
- (2) all elected Harris County officials who have elected or will elect to participate in the County program as is permitted by TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §203.005(g), as amended.

B. Purpose

The Harris County, Texas (County) Records and Information Management Plan (Plan) is adopted in compliance with TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §203.005 to establish the framework of rules and guidelines for handling all County Records and Information throughout their lifecycles, including creation, access, use, storage, retention, and disposition.

This Plan ensures the satisfaction of legal obligations, regulatory requirements, and operational needs for Records and Information by establishing consistent and accountable information management and recordkeeping practices throughout the County.

The Records Management Program has been superseded by the Information Governance (IG) Program, which governs all Information, including Records. This Plan is a component of the IG Program.

C. Definitions

Record – Recorded Information created or received by Harris County or any of its officers or staff pursuant to the laws of the state of Texas or in the transaction of public business. Includes documents, papers, letters, books, maps, photographs, sound or video recordings, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic media, or other information recording media, regardless of physical form or characteristics and regardless of whether public access is open or restricted under the laws of the state of Texas.

Non-Record – Recorded Information of temporary value (sometimes referred to as Transitory Information) or which does not constitute a Record. Includes:

- (a) Extra identical copies of documents created only for the convenience of reference, research, or office convenience.

- (b) Physical records that have been imaged and that image is the official record.
- (c) Preliminary drafts and reference notes compiled in the preparation of a Record.
- (d) Notes, journals, appointment books, diaries, day calendars and similar documents an employee may use for personal convenience.
- (e) Blank forms.
- (f) Stocks of publications.
- (g) Correspondence, messages, and documents of a personal or professional nature that an employee or official may keep at his or her office that do not document public business; or
- (h) Reference material, including books and information files that do not document official actions.

Information – A set of data that provides meaning or context. Includes Records and Non-Records.

Information Governance Program – The Information Governance (IG) Program resides within the Universal Services Department providing overall strategy for information within the County, balancing the risk that information presents with the value that information provides. Information Governance helps with legal compliance, operational transparency, and reducing expenditures associated with legal discovery. IG provides input to county departments to establish a consistent and logical framework for employees to handle data through their information governance policies and procedures. These policies guide proper behavior regarding how organizations and their employees handle electronically stored information (ESI).

Archival Record - Records that have historical value and are preserved permanently by Harris County.

Active Records – Frequently used records needed to perform current operations.

Chief Information Officer - the Executive Director of the Harris County Universal Services Department.

Chief Information Security Officer – The CISO function for the County resides within Universal Services and provides information security policy, guidance, and operations for the entirety of Harris County.

Essential Record - any Record of Harris County necessary to the resumption or continuation of operations of Harris County in an emergency or disaster, to the re-creation of the legal and financial status of Harris County, or the protection and fulfillment of statutory or constitutional obligations of Harris County or Harris County officials.

Official Actions - any action by a public official or employee to comply with a constitutional requirement, statute, regulation, or County or departmental policy.

Permanent Record - any record of Harris County for which the retention period on the approved Records Control Schedule is given as “permanent.”

Records Custodian - the appointed or elected public officer who is in charge of a Harris County department.

Records Liaison Officer – Person/s designated by the Department Head to assist in developing and implementing of the RIM plan and Records Control Schedule at the department level.

Records Management - the application of management techniques for the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records for the purposes of reducing the costs and improving the efficiency of record keeping. The term includes the development of records control schedules, management of filing and information retrieval systems, protection of Essential and Permanent Records, economical and space-effective storage of inactive records, control over the creation and distribution of forms, reports, and correspondence, and the management of micrographics and electronic and other records storage systems.

Records Control Schedule - a document prepared by or under the authority of the Records Management Officer listing the records maintained by offices or departments of Harris County, their retention periods in accordance with the Texas Local Government Records Act, TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 203.001 *et seq.*, as amended, and other Records disposition information that the records management program may require.

Retention period - the minimum time that must pass after the creation, recording, or receipt of a Record, or the fulfillment of certain actions associated with a Record, before it is eligible for destruction

Inactive Records – Records that do not have to be readily available, but which must be kept for legal, fiscal, or historical purposes.

D. Policy

Harris County policy is that all officers and staff members shall manage and protect Information according to its value and risk, as established in the Information Governance (IG) Program. The IG Program provides for the efficient, economic, and effective controls for managing all County Information from creation to ultimate disposition, consistent with the requirements of the TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§203.001, Texas Administrative Code Title 13, Chapter 7, and accepted records and information management best practices.

This Policy is supplemented by the following County documents:

- Records Control Schedule (*hyperlink will be added to final document*)
- [County Personnel Regulations](#)
- [County Equipment, Media, and Services Policy](#)
- Departmental Records Management Procedures Manual (unique for each department)

E. Public Property

- 1) All Harris County Information is the property of Harris County. No County official, employee, or contractor has, any personal or property right to such Information under their position, even though he or she may have developed or compiled them. Harris County forbids the unauthorized destruction, removal, or use of its Record and Non-Record Information.
- 2) The County reserves the right to access and review the content of all Information created, stored, transmitted, or received using County systems and resources except as provided by law. Staff should not expect any right to privacy with respect to such documents and communications.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The successful implementation of this Plan relies on the coordinated efforts of several Information Governance and Records Management Roles spread throughout Harris County Departments and Agencies.

A. Records Management Officer

The role of the Records Management officer is specified in TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 203.025(a), as amended. The Harris County Records Manager Officer role resides in the Universal Services Department.

The Records Management Officer per TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 203.023 shall:

- Assist in establishing and developing policies and procedures for a records management program for Harris County.
- Administer the records management program and assist to Record Custodians for the purposes of reducing the costs and improving the efficiency of recordkeeping.
- Distribute to the Office of County Administration, and department heads up to date information regarding Texas laws and administration as they pertain to local government records.
- The RMO will work with the Office of County Administration to identify instances of non-compliance with the policies and procedures of the RIM Plan or of the TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 203.001 and [Texas Administrative Code Title 13, Chapter 7](#).
- The RMO will provide guidance in the approval of the County-Wide Records Management Fund expenditures.

The Records Management Officer will provide guidance and assistance in implementing the RIM Plan, and any policies or procedures required by Texas Law, to all department heads, their records liaison officers, and elected officials, through on-site consultation and the creation of a policies and procedures manual.

For additional responsibilities of the Records Management Officer see Appendix A.

B. Information Governance Technology Committee

The Information Governance (IG) Technology Committee is responsible for establishing the IG Program vision and strategy, aligning Program initiatives according to the vision, and monitoring the development and implementation of the vision. The Committee members will nominate staff to participate on various working groups within the IG Program. The Committee may recommend county-wide policies to the Office of County Administration and final adoption by Commissioners Court.

The IG Technology Committee shall be comprised of:

- Committee Chairs to lead the meeting – the County Auditor and County Attorney
- Records Management Officer to represent the program and provide leadership
- HCUS Enterprise Program Manager for meeting facilitation and guidance
- Records Liaison Officer referral to represent the departments/agencies

C. Records Management Committee

A Records Management Committee is hereby established and shall consist of:

- 1) The County Records Management Officer,
- 2) The County Attorney or their designated representative,
- 3) The District Attorney or their designated representative; and
- 4) The County Auditor or their designated representative.

The Committee shall:

- 1) Review and approve amendments to the Records Control Schedule before they are submitted to the Commissioner's Court; and
- 2) Review and approve all Formal Records Destructions in accordance with the Records Control Schedule prior to submission to Commissioner's Court.

D. Department Heads

Department Heads shall:

- 1) Cooperate with the Records Management Officer in carrying out the policies and procedures established in Harris County for the efficient and economic management of Records and Information and in carrying out the requirements of this plan.
- 2) Adequately document the transaction of government business and the services, programs, and duties for which the Department Head and their staff are responsible.
- 3) Maintain the Records in their care and carry out their arrangement, description, preservation (including migrating and refreshing electronic media as necessary), and disposition.
- 4) Establish, as necessary, internal policies and procedures to facilitate compliance with this RIM Plan, the Texas Local Government Records Act, and the informational needs of the department. Such internal policies may require the minimum retention or mandatory destruction of Records and transitory information and restricting access to specific systems and areas.
- 5) Designate, in writing, a staff designee to serve as the department Records Liaison Officer.

E. Records Liaison Officer

Each Department Head may designate, in writing, a member of their senior staff to serve as Records Liaison Officer to implement of the RIM Plan in the department. Department Heads may serve as their own Records Liaison or may appoint two or more Records Liaisons Officers for different sections of their office. Persons acting as Records Liaison Officer shall be thoroughly familiar with all the Information created and maintained by the department. They shall have a thorough knowledge of the security policies and practices set forth by the Harris County Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

Records Liaisons Officer shall:

- 1) Assist the Records Management Officer in the development and maintenance of the County Records Control Schedule;
- 2) In cooperation with the Records Management Officer, coordinate and implement the policies and procedures of the RIM Plan in their department;
- 3) Represent the department on the Information Governance Technology Committee;
- 4) Disseminate information to department staff concerning the Information Governance Program; and
- 5) Provide leadership to department staff members who interact with the Harris County Records Center.

III. RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

All County employees, contractors and agents are responsible for complying with Records and Information Management policies and procedures, and relevant laws and regulations. Specific responsibilities include:

- 1) Creating, receiving, and managing Records as part of their daily work according to established departmental policies and procedures.
- 2) Evaluating Records to determine their appropriate classification and storage requirements.
- 3) Disposing of Records and Non-Records according to established Records and Information Management policies and procedures.

A. Creation and Capture

Records provide documentation of governmental business transactions, decisions, operations, and other official activities. The latest, complete, and final version constitutes the Record. All drafts, duplicates, and convenience copies are Transitory or Non-Records to be retained as long as they are of administrative value or otherwise required by law, regulation, or this plan.

All Records should be created and composed professionally and concisely using appropriate language and facts. Employees, contractors, and agents are expected to capture and retain County Records in an approved recordkeeping system.

B. Use and Access

Public Records must be available both for business purposes and, except as where otherwise provided for by law, accessible to the public as expressed by the Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code. All County employees, contractors, and agents must take reasonable steps to protect the security of Records and Information and prevent unauthorized access to those documents excepted from disclosure by the Public Information Act or made confidential by other law or regulation. They must behave ethically in relation to their privileged access to Information.

Records within a given department may be accessed for operational purposes only by employees designated by the Department Head. Access to others may be granted by the Department Head, based on the business need.

The County Records Management Officer has access to all Records for litigation, investigation, and audit support, to the extent allowed by law,

C. Storage

Records are considered active while they relate to current or in-process activities and are routinely referenced; Records become inactive when the activities they refer to are closed or completed, or they are no longer referenced regularly. Active Records must be stored in an approved recordkeeping system (whether manual or electronic).

Active Records and Information must be reviewed regularly to dispose of Information with no administrative value and move inactive Records to inactive storage, flagged for destruction review or preservation as historical Records.

Inactive Records must be stored to ensure their protection, usability, and integrity for the period prescribed in the Records Control Schedule. Physical Records must be stored on County premises or in an approved off-site storage facility. Electronic Records must be stored in County systems or with vendors approved by the Chief Information Officer or designee. Whether on-site or off-site, storage facilities and systems, , must protect Records from corruption, degradation, environmental or other physical harm, and unauthorized access. Inactive records, regardless of format, should include the “closing”, “to”, or “end date” of that record to calculate the end of its retention period.

1. *Physical Records Storage*

Departments may choose to store records on-site, or in an approved off-site storage facility, where they can be conveniently, securely, and economically retained in accordance with [Texas Administrative Code Title 13 Chapter 7, Subchapter F](#) until they can be disposed of under the County Records Control Schedule. All County Departments have access to the Harris County Records Center (HCRC), free of charge, which is under the direct control and supervision of the Universal Services Department. HCRC shall continue to keep current policies and procedures regulating the operations and use of the records center and ensuring the execution of the RIM Plan.

Additionally, in cases where the electronic version is designated the Official Record, hard copy/paper copies are considered duplicates or transitory and are not required to be kept.

All departments retaining physical records must be knowledgeable of disaster prevention and recovery measures and designate a professional entity that will assist in the recovery of damaged Records. Furthermore, if damage to Records or to an area containing Records occurs, the Records Management US Helpdesk and Risk Management should be notified immediately.

Any office or facility retaining paper or analog records must:

- a) Allow for the storage of records at least 4 inches above the floor and at least 4 inches from exterior walls.
- b) Offer protection against unauthorized access and theft,
- c) Have an active and regularly inspected Fire Suppression System,
- d) Have a pest management plan,
- e) Offer additional protection against direct sunlight, or other hazards,
- f) For records held permanently or for an extended period, be in an environment in which a temperature of 70 degrees and relative humidity between 40 and 50% can be maintained to prevent mold.

2. *Electronic Records and Information Storage*

Harris County utilizes a variety of systems and media to store Records and Information. Universal Services Department and other County departments operating information systems are directed to:

- a) Ensure that information systems provide for access, security, and the recovery of Information in the event of an emergency.
- b) Design and implement systems that reproduce Records as they appear in their original form.
- c) Design systems to ensure the retention of Records throughout their required retention periods and that when a system is replaced all Records are to be migrated to the new system.
- d) Design and implement systems to permit the destruction/deletion of Records upon the expiration of the retention period as established by the County Records Control Schedule.
- e) Collect and maintain any metadata and media-specific Information necessary to access the Records.
- f) Additional requirements are found under the [Texas Administrative Code Title 13 Chapter 7, Subchapter C.](#)

County Records maintained in electronic systems that are in compliance with 13 TAC 7 Subchapter C are considered the Record; any physical copies of such Records are considered Non-Records, eligible for immediate destruction, and must not be retained longer than the Record.

D. Retention and Destruction

The County Records Control Schedule identifies and describes County Records and specifies how long each Record must be retained based on its operational, legal, or historical value to the County, along with the two exceptions below.

The first exception is a destruction hold, which is an order to preserve and protect Records during or in anticipation of litigation, investigation, inspection, or audit. The duty to preserve Records subject to destruction holds supersedes the scheduled retention and destruction of Records. Under a hold order, all Records and Information (regardless of administrative value) may be retained for longer than the period prescribed in the Records Control Schedule and may not be destroyed, even if otherwise eligible until the hold order is lifted

The second exception is an expunction order which is a court order that requires the destruction of all case files, offense reports, investigations, and other records relating to a criminal case. Upon receipt of an expunction order, every recipient must comply with the instructions of the court. The court's instructions may include but are not limited to destroying or returning the case files to the court, obliterating names in dockets and indexes, deleting electronic files, and otherwise destroying or altering Records associated with the case to protect the identity of the accused.

1. Records Control Schedule Maintenance and Approval

- a) The Records Management Officer, in cooperation with Department Heads through their Records Liaison Officers shall maintain and update as needed the County Records Control Schedule listing all Records created or received by county departments participating in the County-wide Program and the retention period for each Record.
- b) The Records Control Schedule shall be monitored and amended as needed by the Records Management Officer regularly to ensure that it is in compliance with Records Control Schedules issued by the state of Texas, and that it continues to reflect the record-keeping procedures and needs of the departments and the Information Governance Program of Harris County.
- c) Before its adoption, an Amended Records Control Schedule must be approved by the members of the Records Management Committee, Office of County Administration and Commissioners Court.
- d) Within 30 days following Commissioner Court approval, the Records Management Officer must submit the amended Records and Information Management Plan to the Director Texas State Library and Archives Commission certifying that the Harris County Records Control Schedule is in compliance with the TSLAC Local Government Schedule. TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 203.026, as amended.

2. Records Control Schedule Implementation

The approved Records Control Schedule shall be implemented by Department Heads and Records Liaison Officers according to the policies and procedures of this plan.

A Record whose retention period has expired according to an approved Records Control Schedule should be destroyed unless:

- a) A request for the Record has been made in accordance with applicable Texas law;
- b) The subject matter of the Record is responsive to anticipated or pending litigation including a discovery motion or subpoena that has been received by the appropriate Harris County official.

3. Records Destruction

There are two authorized procedures for destroying County Records.

- a) The Informal Records Destruction process does not require the affirmative authorization of the Commissioners Court. The Records must be in possession of the owning department and the Department Head or a designated subordinate authorizes the destruction of the Records. The Department Head is responsible for ensuring that there are no outstanding Public Information Act requests, that the Records are not needed for legal proceedings or investigations, and that they have reached the age required under the Records Control Schedule. Departments should develop internal procedures to accomplish and document the destruction.
- b) The Formal Records Destruction process includes the concurrence of the Records Management Committee and the Office of County Administration, and the approval of the Commissioners Court. The Records are listed on a form that identifies the records by classification according to the Records Control Schedule, dates covered, and quantity. The custodian (or Department Head), Records Management Officer, and members of the Records Management Committee must endorse the form which is presented to Commissioners Court for final approval.

A Formal Records Destruction is:

- 1) Required whenever the Records Center is destroying Records held for another department or agency.
- 2) Permitted whenever the department determines that the sensitivity or intrinsic value make it prudent to document fully the review process and official approval for the destruction of the Records.

The Records Management Officer shall keep accurate Records of Formal Records Destructions.

4. Electronic Deletion and Programmed Destruction

The deletion or destruction of electronic Records is subject to the same requirements as physical Records and must follow the Formal or Informal Records Destruction process described above.

County departments and agencies keeping Records electronically are authorized to program into their systems a mechanism for the automated deletion of Records at the end of their required retention period under the County-wide Records Control Schedule, provided that such automated destruction can be overridden for documents subject to a Public Information Act Request, or to a destruction hold including a legal, investigation, inspection, or audit hold.

In such cases where electronic systems are retired or updated and the Records on those systems are destroyed or deleted, the approval of all affected Department Heads, the Records Management Committee, Office of County Administration and Commissioners Court is required for any Records not being migrated to the system replacing the old one.

5. *Non-Record Destruction*

Any material excluded from the definition of County Records, whether in paper or electronic form—including electronic communications, may be destroyed when its usefulness to the department has ceased, unless:

- a) A request for the Information has been made in accordance with applicable Texas law; or
- b) The subject matter of the Information is responsive to a legal or audit hold.

Such material shall not be sent to the County Records Center. Department Heads shall direct individuals maintaining the files to routinely discard such items. No Record of such destruction is needed.

E. Web and Social Media

All Information created and posted by agency staff and citizens on external county websites and any social media sites are subject to and must comply with this document and with the Harris County Records Control Schedule. It is the responsibility of the posting agency to assure that content is properly identified and maintained according to its record series. Information posted on such sites must be periodically reviewed and identified as Record or Non-Record Information. Records must be captured and managed according to the stipulations in this plan.

F. Archives

The Harris County Archives is the repository for records that are determined by the Harris County's Archivist to be of value in documenting the history of Harris County, the life, and times of its citizens, and the social, intellectual, political, economic, educational, or leisure time activities of both the inhabitants and businesses within the County. Working with the Records Management Program, the Archives acquire these records from both public and private donors through established professional archival practices.

IV. APPENDIX A:

Additional Responsibilities of the Records Management Officer

- 1) Monitor records retention schedules and administrative rules issued by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to determine if the RIM Plan and County Records Control Schedule are in compliance with state regulations.
- 2) Ensure that the maintenance, preservation, imaging, microfilming, destruction, or other disposition of County Records is carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures under the RIM Plan and the requirements of Texas Law and this plan.
- 3) Facilitate and document the destruction of Records disposed of under the Records Control Schedule and the estimated cost and space savings as a result of such disposal or disposition.
- 4) Direct Records Liaisons or other personnel in the conduct of Records inventories in preparation for the development of Records Control Schedules and the requirements of Texas law and this plan.
- 5) Act as the Records Custodian for those Records for which the office of origin cannot be determined, Records of defunct offices unless the Records have been transferred to the custody of another County office, Records that the County acquires coincidental to the acquisition of property unless those Records are required by a County department to maintain or administer the asset, and for existing offices for programs no longer overseen by the department head if the department head transfers them to the Records Management Officer.
- 6) Plan for and coordinate records disaster preparedness and disaster response.
- 7) Plan, formulate, and prescribe Records disposition policies, systems, standards, and procedures.
- 8) Develop procedures to ensure the permanent preservation of historically valuable Records of the County and their accessioning into the archives.
- 9) Ensure the [Delegation of Authority Form](#) is Signed by the appropriate Elected Official and provided to TSLAC.

V. APPENDIX: B

Best Practice for departments using electronic information storage system

Reminder: *It is the responsibility of each staff member to classify records correctly and assure they are accessible to other staff members as needed to perform their job.*

Office 365 Tools

Outlook (Email)

- Email is for communication, sharing information, and occasionally used for the dissemination of records. Thus, some correspondence created or received via Email, is a record. Each employee must be able to identify what is and is not a record in an Email. Any content determined to be a record, should be saved in a permanent format, such as pdf or pdf/a for greater than 20-year retention, and saved to an approved electronic record management system within 30 days. Record content that requires native format to enable understanding of the content (such as Excel) should be stored in the native format.
- The Email system is NOT a records repository. A proper records repository must be available to other employees with a business need to access the records, it must be able to protect a record during its lifecycle and destroy the record at the end of its retention period.
- Records and Information sent or received via Email (including attachments) must be identified, classified, stored, retained, and destroyed according to the same criteria as other Records and Information. Email Records and Information must be retained in an appropriate electronic system that supports records management and litigation requirements (which may include preservation-in-place models), including the capability to identify, retrieve, and retain Records for as long as they are needed.

OneDrive

Each employee has access to their own OneDrive through the Microsoft 365 Suite. OneDrive is the preferred and recommended platform for storing working and living documents pertaining to and created by individuals for the purpose of his or her own notes and work product. It has collaboration capability but not as robust as Teams (see below). Official Records must not be stored on OneDrive.

Teams

Teams is used for project tracking, collaboration, and storage of working documents and is not to be used for the permanent storage of finalized or complete records. Once collaboration on a working document is complete, finalized, and determined to be the official record, it must be transferred to the department's SharePoint or OpenText.

SharePoint

SharePoint is a platform capable of not only collaboration but for storing records and administratively valuable information for longer periods of time. Working copies, directories, and other records that are updated periodically, and accessible by department employees can be stored here.

OpenText

The Harris County Universal Services Department has the strategic goal of migrating records into OpenText, the official and preferred electronic records storage system repository. However, until this initiative is complete, SharePoint, may be used. Note, that all the requirements put forth by 13 TAC Chapter 7 Subchapter C, and this policy must be met regardless of the system used to store records.

Network File Shares

It is not recommended that records and other information be stored on Network File Shares (NFS). Any newly created content should be saved to One Drive, Teams, SharePoint, or OpenText as appropriate. Any departments transferring electronic records from Network File Shares to another storage system should ensure the deletion from the NFS.

Metadata

Metadata is data that provides supplemental information about records and information that make it easier to identify, index, and access. It can be both descriptive and technological. Each electronic record should include the minimum metadata to ensure accessibility, discoverability, security, and integrity of the record.

Detailed Guidance

Please contact the Harris County Records Management Officer for additional guidance, recommendations, and assistance on transitioning into the O365 ways of working.

VI. APPENDIX C.

Public Information Act Requests (PIA)

The Universal Services Information Governance team supports departments in responding to PIA requests in the searching and delivery of relative content to the department contact point for Office 365 systems. This process requires a proactive request from the Department Head or their delegate to conduct the search. Universal Services will only deliver that content to the department requesting or County Attorney Office if requested by the department. Universal Services will NOT deliver content to any other department.

Litigation Support

The Universal Services Information Governance team supports the County Attorney Office in planning and execution of discovery processes to support the preservation and collection of information potentially responsive to anticipated or actual litigation whether in state or federal courts. This support is initiated by managing counsel within County Attorney Office and affirmative support from the Department Head or their delegate prior to the collection of content. responding to PIA requests in the searching and delivery of relative content to the department contact point for Office 365 systems. The team will only deliver that content to the department requesting or County Attorney Office. Universal Services will NOT deliver content to any other department.