FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
at Jacksonville

Records Management Plan for Your Office

This document, resources, and provided links are adapted from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's process which outlines 10 major steps to establish and maintain a records management program for your campus, center, department, or office.

(Source: http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/10plan.htm).

As an employee of FSCJ, you will be creating and using public records. There are statutes and rules governing the use and destruction of all public records.

Following good records management practices will not only help you and the College meet the legal requirements. They will also benefit your office in other ways including:

- ✓ Improving access to information.
- ✓ Controlling the amount of materials taking up valuable office space.
- ✓ Reducing operating costs.
- ✓ Minimizing litigation risks.
- ✓ Safeguarding vital information.
- ✓ Supporting better management decision making.
- ✓ Preserving FSCJ history.

Step One: Determine who's responsible and what resources are needed.

Review the Records Management Coordinators list for your campus or center at http://www.fscj.edu/discover-fscj/gov-admin/records-management/records-responsibilities.

Step Two: Identify records needed to document activities/functions.

Conduct an inventory of materials in your office. Include empty offices, closets, and other areas where materials may be stored. Document, at a minimum, where materials are located, volume of materials, and format. When you have an idea of the scope of materials in your office, you may need to go back to Step One and review/update the resources needed to complete the project.

An inventory will help you identify which materials are:

- ✓ Records
- ✓ Reference Materials (non-records)
- ✓ Personal papers (non-records)
- ✓ Extra copies of documents, publications, and forms (non-records)

Resources

National Archive's Frequently ask Questions About Records Inventories: http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/faqs/inventories.html)

Step Three: Establish your procedures/recordkeeping requirements.

Now that you know what you have in your office, the project team needs to determine:

- ✓ If the record will be kept in a centralized area or decentralized at someone's desk.
- ✓ The types of documents that are included in the record files.
- ✓ How draft documents, working papers, and concurrence copies will be handled.
- ✓ Who will be responsible for maintaining the record copy (records custodian).

Note: Non-record materials, such as convenience copies and personal papers, need to be maintained separately.

Resources

EPA Centralized vs. Decentralized Filing: http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/central.htm.

Step Four: Match your records to the records schedule.

In this step, you will match the records identified in your inventory with the records schedule. Records schedules provide information on how long records are to be kept and what happens when they are no longer needed in the office. Retention periods as stated in the schedule are mandatory.

Resources

FSCJ Records Schedules: http://www.fscj.edu/discover-fscj/gov-admin/records-management/records-retention-schedules.

Contact the FSCJ Office of Records Management, if you cannot find an appropriate records schedule or if you need an updated schedule.

Step Five: Prepare a File Plan.

Now that you know what records you have and what the appropriate records schedules are, you can begin to organize your records.

Resources

The University of Florida's Records Management Office has created a File Plan Guide (http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/records/Records/Training/10step/FilePlan.aspx) that may be useful as you develop your file plan.

Step Six: Document your recordkeeping requirements and procedures.

Prepare a file plan document that gives details on: 1) how your records are organized and maintained; 2) who is responsible for what task; 3) when the task should be completed; and 4) what happens to the records when they are no longer needed in the office.

Step Seven: Clean out records that are beyond approved retention period.

Once you have created your file plan, you can begin to organize the records. You should get rid of those materials in your office that are not needed. If authorized by the records schedule, you can:

- ✓ **Retire** records that are no longer needed in the office to off-site storage
- ✓ **Transfer** permanent records to College Archives, if appropriate
- ✓ **Recycle** materials that have passed their approved retention period.

Remember to shred materials containing confidential or personal information according to FSCJ disposal rules.

Step Eight: Organize your records.

Now you can begin to implement your file plan. First, prepare folders and organize documents within the folders. Follow the procedures established in your file plan.

- ✓ Place reference sheets in folders, when necessary, to refer users to the location of related non-paper materials such as maps, drawings, videotapes, etc.
- ✓ Organize electronic documents residing on individual computer or local network servers using the file plan.

Step Nine: Maintain your records on a consistent basis.

Once everything is organized, it is important to keep it current and up to date. Be sure to:

- ✓ File new materials on a regular basis.
- ✓ Protect records containing confidential or personal information.
- ✓ Establish a check-out system to track the location of your records so you always know where they are.
- ✓ Clean out inactive materials on a regular basis, as per written procedures.
- ✓ Retire eligible records to College Archives.
- ✓ Clean out superseded or obsolete reference materials.

Step Ten: Train and train some more.

Now you have a file plan. You have cleaned out all the unnecessary materials and organized the necessary materials. You aren't done yet though. You need to be sure all staff members and any other people who might create records for your campus, center, department, or office know about their recordkeeping responsibilities. Records coordinators need to brief senior management on the importance of your records management program and train office staff on how it works. You can contact the contacting the Office of Records Management for more information on training.