



Office of Information Affairs

Departmental Records Management Senior Official Entrance Quick Guide

Why Records Management?

- Ensures statutory and regulatory compliance
- Preserves the rights of the Government and citizens
- Supports better decision making
- Safeguards essential information
- Preserves organizational knowledge
- Minimizes litigation risks

What is a Record?

Records are **everything and anything created and received on behalf of USDA**, in any format.

What are nonrecords?

Published or processed information kept only for reference, such as a dictionary, or a copy of the cafeteria hours. Nonrecords must be maintained as business assets.

What are personal papers?

Information about you, only you, and no one else but you.

Who owns Agency information?

Records created or acquired while conducting Government business **are the property of the United States Government, regardless of where they were created or received.**

Records Lifecycle



USDA Policy and Guidance

- [Office of Information Affairs](#)
- [Departmental Records Management](#) Web Page
- [USDA Records Management Training](#)
- [DR 3080-001](#), *Records Management*
- [DR 3085-001](#), *Vital Records Management Program*
- [DR 3090-001](#), *Litigation Retention Policy for Documentary Materials including Electronically Stored Information*
- [DR 3099-001](#), *Records Management Policy for Departing Employees, Contractors, Volunteers and Political Appointees*
- [AgRecords](#) Web Page

Records Management Laws and Regulations

- [Federal Records Act of 1950](#), as amended (44 U.S.C., Chapters 29, 31 and 33)
- [E-Government Act of 2002, Section 207](#)
- [Title 36, CFR Parts 1220 through 1239](#)
- [Title 18, U.S. Code § 2071](#) establishes criminal penalties for the unlawful concealment, removal, or destruction of Federal records
- [Title 18, U.S. Code § 793, 794 and 798](#)

What are your Records Responsibilities?

- Complete annual mandatory [USDA Records Management Training](#).
- Review the complete list of your [Records Responsibilities](#).
- Document the work you do on behalf of USDA.
- Ensure records are managed appropriately and can be accessed by authorized staff.
- Do not delete, destroy, or dispose of records without [Agency Records Officer](#) approval.
- Identify and transfer records to authorized individuals prior to departure.
- Do not remove or allow Federal records to be removed from the Department.
- Promote and support Records Management activities in your organization.
- Ensure all files subject to preservation hold, such as litigation hold, or Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, are identified and available for continued preservation.
- Prior to departure, schedule with your [Agency Records Officer](#) to complete the Exit Clearance Interview, [AD-3001](#) and checklist, provide all copies of records requested for official review.

How do you organize your Records?

- Separate personal papers from records and information; and
- Work with Records Management to organize, store, and manage the information you create and receive.

What Types of Records do Senior Officials typically have?

Records and information may be generated within Government channels, submitted by private parties, or some form of communication that is sent to the agency. Including, but not limited to:

- Calendars, schedules, and daily logs;
- Electronic messages, generated or received on a computer or mobile device, such as chat, text, and direct messages;
- Email, correspondence, faxes, letters, teleconference, or phone message notes;
- Records and information pertaining to committees, councils, and meetings;
- Material for internal and external meetings, including handouts and notes;
- Recordings, such as internal or external meetings or voicemail;
- Records that document the development of policies and programs;
- Reports to Congress or the President; and
- Speeches and testimony.

How to Identify Records and Information

If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, it is a **record**:

- **It contains information about USDA, its customers, collaboration, or business.**
- Does it contain informational value as evidence of your organization’s functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operation, mission, programs, projects, or activities?
- Is it material that originated in another office or outside USDA, but on which you commented or took some sort of action?
- Does it document business actions, such as: what happened, what was decided, what advice was given, who was involved, when it happened, the order of events, and decisions?
- Is it an original document related to agency business that does not exist elsewhere?
- **Records can be in any format, including but not limited to electronic documents, data systems, text, chat, electronic messaging, recordings, and email messages.** Think content, not format.

Contact Us

For further Records Management information, please contact the Departmental Records Management Program in the General Counsel’s Office of Information Affairs:

[Alexis Graves](#), Director, Office of Information Affairs, (202) 690-3318

[Beatriz Collazo](#), Departmental Records Officer, (202) 923-5012

Records Mailbox: USDADepartmentalRecords@usda.gov