Records Management
Presented by:
Rachel Martin

Objectives
After this workshop, you’ll be able to:
• Implement a new records management system
• Perfect filing techniques
• Streamline and improve records management procedures

With the person sitting next to you,
Describe how your tribe or organization manages its important records or documents.
So what is Records Management?

Definition

- **Records management** is the control of the life cycle of a record from its creation, through processing, checking, maintenance, and protection, to its destruction.

- **A record** is any form of recorded information.
  (paper, microfilm, computer tapes or disks, photographs, audio and video tapes, drawings, blueprints, maps and historical documents, etc.)

How Are Records Created?

Records are created in two ways:

1. As incoming documents received from an outside organization or individual.
2. They may be created internally.
Records Life Cycle

Records usually have a four stage life cycle consisting of:

1. Creation of the record
2. Use and maintenance
3. Retention (Storage) after active use
4. Disposition and destruction

Stage 1 — Creation of the Record

- Records are created in many forms including paper, film media, pictures, magnetic tape, video tape or electronically through stand alone and networked computers on hard drives, floppy discs, CD-ROM drives, magnetic tape or various printer media.

Stage 2 — Use and Maintenance

- This covers the period of active use and can range from a few days to several years. During this period, users frequently refer to the record and need quick access to it. Most records have an active life of one to two years.
Stage 3 — Retention (Storage)  
After Active Use

• This period begins when the record is removed from the department’s or organization’s active and back-up files and is sent to a central “inactive” record retention storage area.

• During this “retention” period, the record is kept either because of legal or contractual requirements or because of a user’s infrequent reference needs.

Stage 3 — Retention (Storage)  
After Active Use

• Examples of records requiring permanent retention would include but not be limited to:
  – Tribal Historic Documents
  – Enrollment Documents
  – Precedence Setting Court Cases
  – General Ledgers
  – Tribal Ordinances
  – Land Trust Documents
  – Deeds

Stage 4 — Disposition & Destruction

• Record destruction occurs when the organization no longer needs the record and is no longer required by contract regulations or law to keep it.

• Special precautions must be taken to insure that destruction is total for confidential or proprietary records.

• They must be destroyed so that they may not be recreated.
Records Management Process

• The Records Management is therefore the process by which records are controlled from their creation, through both active and inactive periods, to their permanent retention or destruction.

Records Management Process

An effective Records Management System:

– Prevents the creation of unnecessary records and unnecessary copies of those records.
– Ensures the efficient, economical use of records in both active and inactive stages
– Dictates the use of a uniform filing system, supplies and equipment

Records Management Process

An effective Records Management System:

(\textit{cont.})

– Provides for the efficient retrieval and use of records
– Provides a schedule for retention of inactive records and destruction method
– Keeps records management costs at a minimum
Three Basic Problems in Records Management

1. How to control the output of an abundance of information and documents.
2. How to separate useful information from unneeded documents.
3. How to organize and maintain remaining records so that they are readily available and easily accessible.

Ask yourself the following questions before creating records…

Remember that record retention costs money and requires space:

1. Who may create records?
2. Where are records created?
3. When are they created?
4. How are they created?
5. Why are they created?
6. What is the philosophy of management in records creation?

Benefits of a Records Management Systems

- Space savings. Implementing a retention schedule and destroying unnecessary records can reduce 40% of the space occupied by records.

- Reduce costly misfiles. Properly designed filing systems reduce the misfile rate.
## Benefits of a Records Management Systems

- **Faster retrieval of information.** Improving filing systems can enhance the process and speed record retrieval.
- **Furnish accurate and complete information when, where and to whom when required to effectively manage and operate the tribal organization.**

## Benefits of a Records Management Systems

- **Render maximum service to the user.**
- **Makes necessary information available and in a useful format.**
- **Expenditures for filing equipment are reduced.**

## Benefits of a Records Management Systems

- **Compliance with legal retention requirements is made easier.**
- **Controls the creation of records.**
- **Protects archival and other vital records.**
- **Retains only those records that have a specific value to the tribal organization or are legal requirement.**
Filing Methods

• Problems arise when organizations do not have the expertise to establish the most effective filing system and do not regard filing as a priority until they can't find a record.

• Therefore, records managers must use a variety of filing systems, depending on the type of record and the ways that the record will need to be retrieved.

• There are several filing systems:
  – Alphabetic
  – Geographic
  – Numeric
  – Subject
  – Chronologic

Alphabetic Filing Method

• This system's primary virtue is its simplicity.

• The alphabetic filing system is easy to install in a small office but in a larger one, where more than one person is filing, consistency is important.
Numeric Filing Method

- Numeric indexing systems are used more and more because computers handle numbers more efficiently than alphabetic characters.

- There are many different types of numeric systems: chronological, sequential, significant (codes), decimal-numeric, and even alpha-numeric.

Samples of various types of numeric systems are:

- Serial
- Chronological/Tickler
- Coded Numeric
- Alpha-Numeric
- Block Codes
- Terminal Digit

Numeric Filing Method

- The advantages of a numeric filing system are that they help batch records within categories.

- For example, when a tribal organization works with a funded program, all relevant material can be marked with the numbers assigned to the projects so they can be properly identified.
Subject Filing Method

- With subject filing, the main difficulty is classification.
- Deciding where to file a document and where and when to cross reference it requires careful thought.
- All subjects should be clearly defined in writing, and this information should be given to all filing personnel.

What method works best for you?

Thank You

Enjoy the Conference!