

Are YOU preserving Nevada's Documentary Heritage?

A Self-assessment Exercise for Keepers of Records

There are three parts to this exercise: (1) questions designed to help you assess just how well you are managing and preserving your records; (2) a brief bibliography to help you find information you need, including some pertinent websites; and (3) a priorities assessment to help you plan to meet the challenges you identify.

Questions about your Paper Records:	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Can you find specific records or files when needed?			
2. Do you have adequate space, shelving, and cabinets to store <u>active</u> records?			
3. Are all records storage spaces secure?			
4. Do you have climate-controlled space to store <u>permanent</u> records?			
5. Are storage spaces clean, free from bugs, rodents, etc.?			
6. Is space for permanent records protected from sunlight?			
7. Do you have a budget for preserving deteriorating records?			
8. Do you have a budget for microfilming records?			
9. Do your microfilms meet ANSI standards?			
10. Do you have a budget to scan or digitize records to improve access?			
11. Do you store blueprints and drawings separately, flat in oversize drawers?			
12. If you have audio and video tapes or cassettes, are they stored away from heat, electrical wiring?			
13. Is there a person whose job description includes responsibility for managing records?			
14. Is there a person whose job description includes responsibility for implementing a records retention schedule?			
15. Is there a person whose job description includes responsibility for developing a preservation plan?			
16. Is the preservation plan in place and being implemented?			
17. Is there a person whose job description includes responsibility for creating a disaster preparedness plan?			
18. Is the disaster preparedness plan in place and are people trained?			

Questions about your Electronic Records.	Yes	No	Don't Know
19. Are you able to apply a records retention schedule to electronic records?			
20. Is there a person -- or team -- responsible for your system (back-ups, training, trouble shooting, etc.)?			
21. Is someone responsible for determining which electronic records must be preserved?			
22. If you share a database (or are part of a data warehouse such as a GIS system), do you know which agencies are responsible for each set of data?			
23. Do you know who is responsible for migrating data from older to newer systems?			
24. Do you have a budget for data migration?			
25. If you do <u>not</u> migrate data, do you maintain the necessary "heirloom" soft- and hardware so that you can gain access to older databases?			
26. Do you keep information about how databases or other software applications were created?			
27. Do you store your back-ups remotely from the operating systems?			
28. Do you have a budget for maintaining permanent electronic records?			
29. Are you able to honor an Open Records request for information stored in electronic format in a timely manner?			
30. Do you have an E-mail policy?			
About Disaster Preparedness . . .			
31. Do your offices have fire/smoke detection systems?			
32. Are they hard-wired to central station or emergency services?			
33. Are your storage spaces equipped with detection systems?			
34. Are they hard-wired?			
35. Do offices and storage spaces have sprinklers?			
36. Do offices have panic alarms?			
37. Do storage spaces have intruder alarms?			
38. Do you have "maps" indicating the location of your records?			
39. Have you prioritized what you would try to save in case of disaster?			
40. Is there an emergency evacuation plan?			
41. Do you know where to find (buy) materials needed to salvage damaged records?			
42. Do you have names, telephone numbers and responsibilities for your			

emergency response team?			
	Yes	No	Don't Know
43. Have local police and fire services been included in your disaster preparedness planning so that they know who to call, how to minimize damage to your records?			
44. Have you made plans for what to do in case of a power failure?			
45. Have you identified and planned for alternative emergency operating site(s)?			
46. Would your insurance pay for the recovery or restoration of your paper or electronic records?			
Some additional Questions for Historical Societies and other non-governmental organizations . ..			
47. Do you have a collections policy?			
48. Do you have records of your accessions?			
49. Do you have written agreements with your donors?			
50. Are your arrangement and description procedures adequate?			
51. Are your finding aids satisfactory?			
52. Are copies available outside your organization -- or is the information available on-line?			
53. Do you have preservation/conservation policies implemented?			

If you answered “Don’t Know” to any of the above questions, or if you want to learn more about archives and records management, try these sources. The printed materials are available through the Nevada State Library & Archives. The Association of Records Managers and Administrators and the Society of American Archivists both have publications catalogues that include materials for all knowledge and experience levels.

Printed Materials:

Tribal Government Records Management Manual (1986); *Local Court Records Retention Manual* (1988)
Local Governments Records Manual (1996)

Help can be found at:

Nevada State Library & Archives:
100 North Stewart Street
Carson City, NV 89701
827-5210, or their website:
<http://www.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/recman/htm>

Association of Records Managers & Administrators
4200 Somerset Drive #215
Prairie Village, KS 66208
1-800-422-2762, or their website:
<http://www.arma.org/hq>

Society of American Archivists
600 South Federal Street, #504
Chicago, IL 60605
1-312-922-0140, or their website:
<http://www.archivists.org>

ARMA Rio Grande chapter (links to many records management/archives sites)
<http://www.flash.net/~survivor>

Local government links:
<http://www.quest-net.com/~raymond.cunningham/locgov.htm>

Conservation and disaster planning:
<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu> -or-
<http://www.amigos.org>

If you answered **NO** to any of the questions in Part 1 of this Self Assessment, **it is**

entirely possible that your historical records will NOT survive.

Take another look at those questions you answered negatively. Then rank your priorities for correcting these problems on the table below.

Remedy	Must do in next budget cycle	Do within next 5 years	We'll get to it.
Develop or improve and implement relevant departmental policies			
Improve Storage Conditions			
Improve Finding Aids			
Get the right equipment and supplies for storage			
Apply Records Retention Schedule to paper records			
Apply Schedule to Electronic Records			
Assign responsibility for Records Management to someone; make sure person has budget and authority to do the job.			
Microfilm older records			
Preserve records at greatest risk of deterioration			
Scanning/digitizing to improve access and preserve originals			
Develop and Implement Disaster Plan			
Provide staff with training in records management and electronic records			
<i>And for Non-government organizations</i>			
Increase public support / membership			
Encourage greater use of materials			
Clean up processing backlog			
Solicit new collections / materials			
Develop / improve collections policy			
Develop / improve preservation policy			
Improve support from parent organization			

Good luck. Please feel free to contact the Nevada State Library & Archives or a member of the SHRAB (Appendix A) for assistance, if necessary.

