



NEWS *on the record*

Winter 2023

Upcoming Events

Local Government Committee Meetings

April 18 @ 10:30 AM

July 18 @ 10:30 AM

October 17 @ 10:30 AM

Emergency Preparedness Workshop

May 8 @ 10 AM

May 10 @ 10AM

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Records Management Grant Recipients

BY LAUREN HARMON

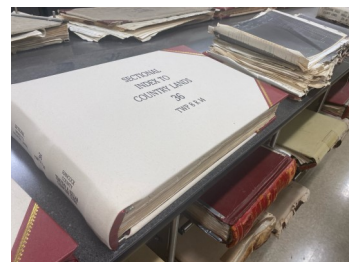
On January 20, 2023, the Board of Trustees at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) awarded grants to Hancock, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Leake, Marion, Sunflower, and Union counties – totaling \$50,000.

In July 2022, all counties participating in the Local Government Records Program were invited to apply for this grant. The recipients could be reimbursed up to \$10,000 for proposed records management projects, which could include repairing historical books, digitizing records, and purchasing shelving. All proposals had to provide matching funds of at least twenty percent of the total funds requested. The total awards granted could not exceed \$50,000. Applications closed on October 3.

These grant funds are generated from surplus monies sent to MDAH by counties collecting the one dollar records management fee as

described in *MS Code* §25-60-5. The *Code* authorizes MDAH to re-grant funds back to the counties for this purpose.

The selected projects included having marriage records scanned and indexed, replacing old, substandard shelving, and repairing worn land records books. These projects can begin as soon as grant awardees are notified.



All counties not chosen are encouraged to apply when applications open on **July 3**.

The Local Government Records Office is excited to be able to offer this service to participating counties to further fulfill its mission to advise and assist with the management and preservation of local government records.

Local Government Records Committee

The Local Government Records Committee held its quarterly meeting on January 17, 2023, at the William F. Winter Building in Jackson. David Pilcher, the Archives & Records Services Director, presided over the meeting. There were numerous record retention schedules added and amended – all pertaining to personnel records listed in the all local governments schedule.

GSL 05-01a amends the retention for **Personnel File, Official Record** from fifty-five (55) years after earliest date of hire to seven (7) years after termination of employment. It was determined that the only records that should be maintained for fifty-five (55) years dealt with retirement. GSL 05-01b creates a new schedule for **Retirement Documentation** with a retention of fifty-five (55) years after earliest date of

hire, or seven (7) years after termination of employment, whichever is later.

GSL 05-06 amends **Job Applicants, Not Hired to Applicant Records** – broadening the types of records that could fall under the retention of two (2) years after final decision on position applied for. This includes all records related to the selection process and justification for non-hire, like job applications, pre-employment assessments, and denial letters.

GSL 05-10 covers **Pre-Employment Documents** – all records related to the hiring process like job descriptions and advertisements. These records should be maintained until superseded.

GSL 05-11 states that **Pre-Employment Assessments, Hired** (like Civil Service Exams) should be maintained

three (3) years, while GSL 05-12 states **Employee Licenses/Certificates** should be maintained until superseded.

GSL 05-13 and GSL 05-14 deal with **training records**, replacing previous schedules GSC 15-18, GSC 08-19, GSM 17-18, and GSM 08-08.

Finally, the committee approved the disposal of various records from Lauderdale County, including county cash books and tax receipts dating from 1900 to 1920.

All proposed retention schedules and committee materials are located at <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/local-government-public-notice>.

Healthy Records Program Workshop

BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Participants Per Day		
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
44	35	33

Participant Representation By Entity					
Counties	Cities	Libraries	Schools	Colleges	Unknown
28	17	3	2	7	5

Long-Term Digital Preservation

BY LAUREN HARMON

The **Digital Preservation Coalition** states digital preservation “refers to the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary” . . . broadly defined to assure the wide variety of actions that could be taken. Traditionally, preservation means maintaining records in their original format, but digital preservation could mean that records must be transferred from said original format to remain accessible.

The constant evolution of technology means that digital information will always be vulnerable because of technology obsolescence. This means that equipment, hardware and software, becomes inadequate for service. Whether records are born-digital or digitized, the risk remains the same – all records should continuously be monitored to assure access.

Hardware and software cannot exist unchanged . . . floppy disks or CDs cannot be kept in a storage closet with the expectation that the information will remain accessible in ten to twenty years. This problem should be recognized and countered – all files have hardware and software dependencies.

However, it should also be understood that not all records need to be kept in perpetuity. Not all physical records need to be digitized, nor do digitized records with short retention periods need to be of great concern for long-term preservation. In reality, this discussion only revolves around permanent or long-term records.

There are several preservation strategies that have been explored – refresh, migrate, or emulate.

- Refresh – copying files from one physical storage medium to another, addressing potential decay and obsolescence issues
- Migrate – copying data from one hardware or software configuration to another
- Emulate – combine hardware and software to reproduce essential characteristics from one computer onto another

I understand these strategies are complex. The Local Government Records Office provides one recommendation that might be easier to handle – backups.

To prevent records from being lost, we recommend that there be backups. There should always be three copies of important records – the primary copy that allows constant access, as well as two backups that are stored on different media types (e.g., hard drive and optical media) that could prevent data loss. This provides a short-term solution to the growing problem of technology obsolescence.

For more information, visit <https://www.dpconline.org/handbook>



Call to Municipal Governments

Per Section 25-60-5 of the *Mississippi Code*, all municipal officials or employees that collect filing fees for public records **must** collect an additional \$1 per document in accordance with the law.

This is **NOT** a tax. It is simply an additional \$1 on top of already collected filing fees.

For questions, please contact Lauren Harmon.



Records Spotlight: Personnel Files

BY TIM BARNARD

In 1998, the first local government retention schedules for personnel records were approved. The retention of personnel files was set at fifty-five (55) years so that an employee would have access to any records needed to obtain retirement benefits. When I worked in Harrison County, we had a employee of over sixty years! The only reason she retired then was that she could no longer get a ride to work from her assisted living facility. While state agencies rely on PERS for their retirement-related records, not all local governments utilized that option.

As our staff interacted with local personnel/human resource offices, we realized that not all the items in the personnel file need to be

kept that long. So, we split the schedule into two separate schedules at the last committee meeting (see page 2). Now, the main personnel file needs to be kept only seven (7) years after an employee leaves; the personnel officer can separate those records needed for retirement purposes and retain them for the fifty-five (55) years.

We hope this will lessen the burden on personnel and records management staff. Also, it is possible that these long-term records could be scanned and kept electronically, as long as there are plans to migrate them over the years (see page 3).

If you have any questions about these records, we are here to serve you!

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