



# Guidelines for Determining what Information Should be Filed

File **substantive** records. They document...

## 1. The important work functions you or your office are responsible for

*Records that describe:*

- a. How these functions were carried out
- b. The key activities involved in accomplishing them
- c. Significant actions or transaction that occurred (or didn't occur)
- d. The sequence of these processes
- e. People who were involved or responsible
- f. People who had knowledge of an important event or action

## 2. Important deliberations and decisions made in your office

*Records that describe:*

- a. The issues that were at stake
- b. What was recommended/decided and when
- c. The people who were involved and what their roles were
- d. The outcomes of the deliberations or decisions

## 3. Policy development and enforcement

*Records that explain:*

- a. Why the policy was developed
- b. The people who were involved or consulted in developing it
- c. The person who approved it and the date of approval
- d. Dates of amendment or update and the changes that were made
- e. The person who approved these changes and date of approval.

#### 4. Projects or programs of your office

*Records that explain:*

- a. The objectives and scope of the project or program
- b. How the project/program originated
- c. Who the main stakeholders were
- d. The information was given to external audiences. Publications that were produced.
- e. Training that was given to staff and others.
- f. What the budget was and how money was spent.
- g. What the outcomes were. Was it a success? Why or why not?

#### 5. Records that appear in the *Records Retention Schedule*

Available at <https://archseattle.org/about-the-archdiocese-of-seattle/archives-and-records-management-public/archives-policies/>

### Examples of Substantive Records:

- Meeting materials (agendas, minutes, handouts, action items)
- Final versions of reports, advice and recommendations
- Drafts or revisions with information about a decision or approval that is not available elsewhere
- Records of contact between an office and its “clients,” (parents of students, parishes, Chancery departments, etc.)
- Important telephone, email, and face-to-face conversations
- All records showing that services have been provided or obligations have been satisfied
- Etc. This is not a complete list.

### Do not file **transitory** records

- Are only needed for a short time in order to complete a routine action or prepare a final record
- Are not necessary to understand office or committee business (do not document policy formation/application, important decisions, or mission related activities/projects of the office)
- Are duplicates or are maintained by another staff member
- Do NOT appear in the *Records Retention Schedule*

### Examples of Transitory Records:

- Transmittal letters/emails that only serve to mention an attachment or enclosure document

- Advertising or outside marketing material
- Meeting or scheduling arrangements
- Announcements or invitations to events
- Unnecessary duplicates
  - Convenience copies
  - CC copies (unless you are the main staff member responsible for the matter)
  - Copies of check requests and other financials that Accounting maintains (unless needed for office business)
- Simple messages resulting from routine interactions (e.g. request to call someone, request for information)
- Drafts and revisions that are not needed to document decisions/approvals
- Outlines, calculations, preliminary notes, etc. once the final document is complete (unless they contain important information that is not available elsewhere)