Using Records Retention Schedules:
What Are Records Series?

Purpose: Provide guidance to state agencies and local government entities on the purpose and components of records series.

A records series provides the retention period for records created or received as the result of a specific agency function or activity. A records series may consist of a single type or a number of different types of documents that document a specific transaction. Below is an example of a records series from the Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS2011-167 Rev. 0</td>
<td>Charity Fundraising</td>
<td>Retain for 6 years after end of fiscal year then Destroy.</td>
<td>NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Fundraising</td>
<td>Records documenting the agency’s coordination and support of and/or participation in charity fundraising campaigns, including promotion of employee payroll deductions. Includes, but is not limited to: • Decision process for selecting charity campaigns to support; • Communication between the agency and charities; • Dissemination of charity information; • Arrangements and promotion of campaign events. Excludes authorizations of payroll deductions covered by GS50-03E-01.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Column 1: Disposition Authority Number (DAN)**
A Disposition Authority Number (DAN) is a control number for a specific records series in a retention schedule. This column also displays the amount of times a records series has been revised.

**Column 2: Description of Records**
The title and description of a records series describes the type of records that fall under that DAN. A description might contain some specific examples of records that fall under that DAN, but additional types of records may also be covered, but not listed. A description may also include examples of records that do not fall under that series and direct users toward the correct DAN.

**Column 3: Retention and Disposition Action**
The retention period for a records series consists of two parts:
1. The time period the records need to be retained
2. When that time period begins

Retention periods begin after a certain transactional event has occurred, such as the end of a fiscal year, the fulfillment of a contract, or the disposition of an asset. Once the minimum retention period for a record has been met, a records series will authorize one of the following records disposition actions:
1. Destroy
2. Transfer to State Archives for Permanent Retention
3. Contact State Archives for appraisal and selective retention

**Column 4: Designation**
This column lists the archival designation for a records series that is tied to its disposition action (Non-Archival, Archival—Permanent, or Archival—Appraisal Required). This column also indicates whether or not a records series is considered essential for business continuity in the case of disaster. If a records series is designated as Essential, agencies should create backup copies and store them offsite to ensure their survival and access in the event of a disaster.

Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from Washington State Archives:

[www.sos.wa.gov/archives](http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives)
[recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov](mailto:recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov)