Records Retention Schedule
ELCA Churchwide Organization

Programmatic Units

The ELCA Constitution mandates a records management system and provides for the archives of this church ELCA Constitution [13.41.02.f and g]. The ongoing cooperation of all staff is required to fulfill this constitutional responsibility.

The information that is retained in hard copy or electronic files is the property of the Churchwide Office. Such information is not the property of the staff member to use, remove, retain personally, or to destroy at will. Staff members are the custodians of the documents they retain. [CC89.4.1.111]

For the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA, as for all organizations, information is one of the three key assets—together with people and money—necessary for our work, and which commands our stewardship.

The benefits of good records management are:

- Faster retrieval of information for the staff who work with the records,
- Fewer lost or misplaced records,
- Control of the life cycle of records,
- Compliance with legal, fiscal, and administrative requirements,
- Protection for this church's vital and historical records,
- Space saving and reduced expenditure for physical and electronic document storage,
- Selection of appropriate media for active and permanent records.

Most of the information you create or use will fit into one of the following categories. Please observe the time schedule and special instructions for managing your records.

Two Records Retention Schedules are available:

1. The *Records Retention Schedule for Programmatic Records* is designed to cover most of the records generated by our programmatic units.
2. The *Records Retention Schedule for Business Records* is designed to address the legal, fiscal, and administrative needs of our business offices.

Additional information on how to maintain your active records and how to go about transferring your records to the Archives or the Records Center is contained in the *Records Management Manual for the Churchwide Organization*

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Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Correspondence	Letters and e-mail	Route significant e-mail, with your response, to folders that can be mined for future electronic preservation. Print out significant e-mail for the historical record. The e-mail kept in the e-mail system will be deleted every 41 days.	Send printed copy of significant e-mail, with your response, to the Archives annually or when a project has been completed.
Minutes of boards, advisory, and program committees	Protocol minutes include exhibits, executive committee, conference call, and executive session minutes.	Send one copy of protocol minutes—including exhibits, executive committee, conference call, and executive session minutes—to the ELCA Archives, ELCA Constitution [13.41.02.a]; retain one copy in the unit.	Upon publication, send one copy to the Archives.
Unit financial records	• financial reports • budget development working papers • journal vouchers • expense reports • check requests • invoices	After the year-end reports are reconciled, the primary value for these records is the development of the next year's budget.	Destroy unit records after 2 years.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Unit personnel records for churchwide organization staff	• applications • resumes • personnel actions • time sheets • performance appraisals	No records over one year old should be retained in the unit.	Send all personnel records to the Human Resources Unit.
Personnel records for persons related to the unit	• persons employed by the unit	If the persons are employed or endorsed by the unit, these records are governed by policy set for each unit depending on the content of the files.	Send documents containing career history to the Archives at the termination of employment.
	• persons employed by other organizations	No personnel records should be maintained in the unit.	.
Records supporting the development of official statements, documents, and recommendations for action.	• original mandate • grant application • minutes of committee, team or task force • drafts • reports of focus groups and hearings • correspondence and responses, including e-mail and Listserv • Web site presentation • articles relating to the study • final document	Send print and electronic copies of the study draft and the final version of the document to the Library for cataloging. The electronic version will be linked to the bibliographic record in the Library catalog. Unless essential to the development of the document, resource material from outside sources should be destroyed.	Send the entire project to the Archives within one year after adoption or completion of the project.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Events, conferences, training programs, and assemblies	• mandate for the event • planning material • correspondence, including e-mail • minutes (if applicable) • grant application • promotional and programmatic material • audio visual materials • sermons and speeches • Web site presentation	These records are useful for planning and have significant historical value.	Send to the Archives within one year following the event.
	• contracts	Retain original in the unit for 10 years. Send copy to OS/Legal for review.	Destroy after 10 years.
	• insurance policies	Should be contracted through and preserved by Risk Manager in OS	
	• completed commercial general liability, automobile liability, and worker compensation injury incident reports • completed claim forms and insurance claim settlement documents	Send to the Risk Manager in the Office of the Secretary who retains in OS for 2 years.	Transfer to the Records Center for 13 years and then destroy.
	• meeting history (from the convention center) • hotel room pick-up report (from	These may be retained for planning the next similar event and then destroyed.	Destroy after 3 years.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
	• evaluation questionnaires of the event • registrations • ballots • invoices	Evaluation "reports" may become part of the archival record. .	Destroy registrations, ballots, questionnaires, and invoices within one year or as soon as they are no longer useful.
Relationship with organizations, including but not limited to, synods, congregations, agencies, associations, schools, camps, and global partners	• correspondence, including e-mail, with responses • governing documents • minutes of governing boards or councils • consultations • statistical reports and trend analysis • property related documents • insurance policies • training materials • organization program and promotional material • newsletters and news articles • documents for special events • budgets, annual financial statements, and audit reports	**Do not** include personnel records in these organizational files. Program area directors must help maintain the central file, and they should destroy the duplicates in their possession when they are no longer of current use.	Send the central file to the Archives at 4-year intervals.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Relationship with ecumenical partners and organizations	• governing documents • correspondence, including e-mail • travel itinerary and briefings • dialogues and consultations	Applies to all units in ecumenical conversations.	Send to the Archives at 4-year intervals.
	• interpretive material • histories • worship materials • sermons and speeches • audio visual materials		Send copies of the programmatic material to the Archives as produced.
	• financial records		Destroy after 2 years.
Grants given to individuals, agencies, or organizations	• policy documents • applications accepted/denied • reports and evaluations • correspondence, including e-mail with responses • contracts • interpretive material • committee minutes • final financial accounting	If necessary, transfer to the Records Center for temporary storage. (See personnel guidelines regarding student records for scholarship recipients.) Some of this information may be included and preserved in the recipient's record in the ELCA Constituent Information System (ECIS).	Send to the Archives at 4-year intervals.
	• monthly financial reports		Destroy monthly financial reports after 2 years.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Program, interpretation and training resources	• project proposal • program planning material, including minutes • grant application • contracts • copyright information • field test reports • correspondence, including e-mail • reviews and evaluations • resources produced (print, audio visual, electronic) • e-courses and publications ..... • invoices	When the resource exist exclusively in electronic format, place in a restricted file in an accessible location like the K:\ drive for future archival evaluation and preservation. Audio visual products should be accompanied by extensive written transcripts.	Send to the Archives within one year after the conclusion of the project. ..... Destroy invoices after one year.
Policy and procedure documents	• paper copy • Web editions	Retain in the unit until superseded.	Send to the Archives as issued.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Databases	The ELCA Constituent Information System (ECIS includes data and reports for congregations, agencies, institutions, rostered leaders, and persons using the services of the ELCA.) • registrations • nominations	The ELCA constituent Information system (ECIS) will keep all data in memory and migrate forward. A few databases, such as the registration and nomination databases, remain active until migrated to ECIS.	Reports generated by ECIS for specific programs should accompany programmatic materials to the Archives. Destroy forms.
Documents of a legally sensitive nature relating to persons or institutions	• documents related to persons • documents related to institutions	Always maintain these in a separate, restricted file, and destroy copies after the matter is concluded.	If action is taken, the copy of record resides with the General Counsel for the time deemed appropriate.
Journals, newsletters, news releases prepared by the program area	• print journals • electronic journals	Retain in the unit until it has ceased publication or been superseded. When the resource exists exclusively in electronic format, place in a restricted file in an accessible location like the K:\ drive for future archival evaluation and preservation.	Send to the Archives as issued. Print out copies of electronic journals and newsletters for the Archives.

Records Series	Contents	Instructions	Final Disposition
Topical resource material, reports, and professional journals from outside sources.	• newsletters • journals • reports • conference publications • pamphlets • training materials	This dated material is of temporary value. Articles from professional journals may be retrieved electronically via OCLC FirstSearch. Check with the librarian.	Once each year, clean these files and dispose of material that is over 4 years old.