

RECORDS

Public records are defined by law as "any written or recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which is produced or acquired in the course of public agency business." [1 V.S.A. § 317\(b\)](#)

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records management (also known as **Records and Information Management** or "**RIM**") is the "identification and management of public records to assure their authenticity and accessibility from creation to ultimate disposition." [3 V.S.A. § 117\(a\)\(1\)](#)

BENEFITS

RIM uses a combination of policies, procedures, and tools to align an agency's records and information to its business functions and needs. To do this, focus is placed on the life cycle of the records or data. The *records life cycle* is comprised of three general phases, all of which are interrelated: (1) creation or receipt; (2) maintenance and use; and (3) disposition.

By incorporating RIM into workflow, agencies have an appropriate and cost-effective way to manage their information and records as assets. This means that:

- Information valuable and important to the agency and its business functions is created and received;
- The right people have access to and use of the right information at the right time;
- Information vital to the agency and its functions is retained and readily available;
- Information appraised as archival is preserved; and
- Non-permanent information is destroyed when its retention requirements have been met.

A comprehensive records program, one that aligns RIM with business functions, should be a goal of every public agency. In fact, every public employee is responsible and accountable for the lifecycle management of records and information in his or her custody. Therefore a sound records program is to everyone's benefit.

VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), a division within the Office of the Secretary of State, is "charged with administering and implementing a records management program for state government in accordance with professional records and information management practices and principles." [3 V.S.A. § 117\(b\)](#) Also, public agencies may only destroy records in their custody if specifically authorized by law or through a record schedule approved by the State Archivist. [1 V.S.A. § 317a](#)

State agencies and departments are required to have a records management program approved by VSARA and implement and sustain records schedules that meet VSARA's requirements. [3 V.S.A. § 218](#)