

CHAPTER 305

STATE RECORDS AND ARCHIVES

Referred to in [§163.37](#), [303.2](#)

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305.1 Citation.

[This chapter](#) shall be known and may be cited as the “*State Archives and Records Act*”.
2003 Acts, ch 92, §4

305.2 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “Agency” means any executive or legislative branch department, office, commission, board, or other unit of state government except as otherwise provided by law.
2. “Archives” means records that have been appraised by the state records commission as having sufficient historical, research, evidential, or informational value to warrant permanent preservation and that have been transferred to the custody of the state archives.
3. “Commission” means the state records commission created in [section 305.3](#).
4. “Custody” means guardianship or control of records, including both physical possession, referred to as physical custody, and legal responsibility, referred to as legal custody, unless one or the other is specified.
5. “Designee” means an appointee of a commission member listed in [section 305.3](#), who is a year-round, full-time state employee, appointed to regularly represent the commission member in the activities of the commission for a period of at least two years.
6. “Government records program” means a systematic state government program for the creation, organization, administrative use, maintenance, security, public availability, and final disposition of records.
7. “Guideline” means a suggested method of operation for specific activities.
8. “Policy” means a basic statement describing the boundaries within which activities are to take place.
9. “Record” means a document, book, paper, electronic record, photograph, sound recording, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, produced, executed, or received pursuant to law in connection with the transaction of official business of state government. “Record” does not include library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes or stocks of publications and unprocessed forms.
10. “Records inventory” means a detailed listing of the volume, scope, and complexity of an agency’s records that is compiled for the purpose of creating records series retention and disposition schedules.
11. “Records officer” means a year-round, full-time agency official who possesses a broad understanding of programs and records of an agency and who is designated by the agency head to coordinate the records program or programs within the agency.
12. “Records series retention and disposition schedule” means a timetable established by the state records commission that describes the length of time a records series of an agency or multiple agencies must be retained in active and inactive status and provides authorization for a final disposition of the records series by destruction or permanent retention.
13. “Standard” means a specific rule or principle established to measure quality or value.

14. “*Vital operating record*” means a record containing information essential to continue or to reestablish an agency in the event of a natural or other disaster, allowing the re-creation of the state’s legal and financial status, and the determination of the rights and obligations of the state and its citizens.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §5](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1120, §1](#)

Referred to in [§22.16](#)

305.3 Commission created.

A state records commission is created. The commission shall consist of the following officials or their designees:

1. The secretary of state.
2. The director of the department of cultural affairs.
3. The treasurer of state.
4. The director of revenue.
5. The director of the department of management.
6. The state librarian.
7. The auditor of state.
8. The director of the department of administrative services.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §6](#); [2003 Acts, ch 179, §70, 84](#)

Referred to in [§305.2](#)

305.4 Commission purpose.

The commission shall adopt government information policies, standards, and guidelines to do all of the following:

1. Provide for economy and efficiency in the creation, organization, maintenance, administrative use, security, public availability, and final disposition of government records.
2. Ensure creation of proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of state government agencies to protect the legal and financial rights of the state and of persons directly affected by the government’s activities.
3. Identify and preserve state government records that document the history and development of the state.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §7](#)

305.5 Expenses.

Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but may receive their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §8](#)

305.6 Meetings.

The commission shall have its offices at the seat of government but may hold meetings in other locations. The commission shall meet quarterly and at the call of the chairperson.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §9](#)

305.7 Administration.

The department of cultural affairs, through the state archives and records program, is the primary agency responsible for providing administrative personnel and services for the commission.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §10](#)

305.8 Commission responsibilities.

1. The commission shall do all of the following:
 - a. Develop and adopt government information policies, standards, and guidelines for the creation, storage, retention, and disposition of records.
 - b. In consultation with the department of homeland security and emergency management, establish policies, standards, and guidelines for the identification, protection, and

preservation of records essential for the continuity or reestablishment of governmental functions in the event of an emergency arising from a natural or other disaster.

- c. Provide planning, policy development, and review for the government records program.
- d. Adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) that provide government information policies and standards.
- e. Adopt and maintain an interagency records manual containing the rules governing records management, as well as records series retention and disposition schedules, guidelines, and other information relating to implementation of [this chapter](#).
- f. Make recommendations, in consultation with the department of administrative services, to the governor and the general assembly for the continued reduction of printed reports throughout state government in a manner that protects the public's right to access such reports.
- g. Provide advice, counsel, and services to the legislative, judicial, and executive branch agencies subject to [this chapter](#) on the care and management of state government records.
- h. Report to the governor and the general assembly on the status of the government records program.
 - i. Perform any act necessary and proper to carry out its duties.
 2. The commission may do all of the following:
 - a. Examine records in the possession, constructive possession, or control of state agencies to carry out the purposes of [this chapter](#).
 - b. Enter into agreements and contracts.
 - c. Secure appropriations, grants, or other outside funding.
 - d. Appoint advisory committees of citizens, public officials, or professional consultants to secure advice on records issues.
 - e. Make, or cause to be made, preservation duplicates of records, which may include existing copies of original state records. Any preservation duplicate record shall be durable, accurate, complete, and clear, and shall be made by means designated by the commission.
 - f. Develop appropriate charges for services provided for the convenience of state agencies, the judicial and legislative branches, political subdivisions, or the public.
 - g. Provide advice and counsel to political subdivisions on the care and management of local government records.
 - h. Establish a centralized records storage facility.
[2003 Acts, ch 92, §11](#); [2003 Acts, ch 145, §286](#); [2003 Acts, ch 179, §157](#); [2005 Acts, ch 3, §60](#); [2005 Acts, ch 35, §30](#); [2005 Acts, ch 80, §2](#); [2013 Acts, ch 29, §49](#)

305.9 Department of cultural affairs responsibilities.

1. The department of cultural affairs shall do all of the following:
 - a. Provide administrative support to the state records commission through the state archives and records program.
 - b. Appoint a state archivist to head the state archives and records program.
 - c. Maintain all official records of the state records commission.
 - d. Provide training, advice, and counsel to agencies on government information policies, standards, and guidelines.
 - e. Recommend records series retention and disposition schedules to the commission for consideration.
 - f. Recommend plans, policies, standards, and guidelines on records issues to the commission for consideration.
 - g. Compile, update, and distribute the state records manual as adopted by the commission.
 - h. Manage any centralized records storage facility established by the commission for the temporary storage of agency records prior to their final disposition by destruction or permanent preservation in accordance with the records series retention and disposition schedules.
 - i. Develop and distribute operating procedures for agencies to use to implement the plans, policies, standards, and guidelines adopted by the commission.
 - j. Provide advice, counsel, and services to the legislative, judicial, and executive branch agencies subject to [this chapter](#) on the care and management of state government records.

k. Manage the state archives and develop operating procedures for the transfer, accession, arrangement, description, preservation, protection, and public access of those records the commission identifies as having permanent value.

l. Maintain physical custody and legal custody of archives that have been transferred and delivered to the state archives.

(1) Upon receipt by the state archivist, the archives shall not be removed without the state archivist's consent except in response to a subpoena of a court of record or in accordance with approved records series retention and disposition schedules or after review and approval of the commission.

(2) Upon request, the state archivist shall make a certified copy of any record in the legal custody or in the physical custody of the state archivist, or a certified transcript of any record if reproduction is inappropriate because of legal or physical considerations. If a copy or transcript is properly authenticated, it has the same legal effect as though certified by the officer from whose office it was transferred or by the secretary of state. The department of cultural affairs shall establish reasonable fees for certified copies or certified transcripts of records in the legal custody or physical custody of the state archivist.

m. Establish, maintain, and administer an archive of records created and maintained in electronic format in order to preserve and provide public access to state government records identified as having permanent historical value by the commission.

2. The department of cultural affairs may:

a. Upon written consent of the state archivist, accept records of political subdivisions that are voluntarily transferred to the state archives.

b. Provide advice and counsel to political subdivisions on the care and management of local government records.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §12](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1086, §60](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1057, §4](#)

305.10 Agency head responsibilities.

1. Each agency head shall do all of the following:

a. Make and maintain records containing adequate and proper documentation of the agency organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions designed to furnish information to protect the legal and financial rights of the state and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities.

b. Designate one or more agency officials with broad understanding of agency programs and records to be an agency records officer to coordinate records programs within the agency and to be the point of contact with the state archives and records program.

c. Cooperate with the state records commission and the state archives and records program in the development and implementation of government information policies, standards, and guidelines, and in the development and implementation of records series retention and disposition schedules.

d. Comply with requests from the state records commission or the state archives and records program to examine records in the possession, constructive possession, or control of the agency in order to carry out the purposes of [this chapter](#).

e. Inventory agency records in accordance with state records commission policies to draft records series retention and disposition schedules.

f. Identify vital operating records in accordance with the policies, standards, and guidelines of the state records commission.

g. Provide for the identification, protection, and preservation of vital operating records in the custody of the agency.

h. Prepare all mandated reports, newsletters, and publications for electronic distribution in accordance with government information policies, standards, and guidelines. A reference copy of all mandated reports, newsletters, and publications shall be located at an electronic repository for public access.

i. Provide for maximum economy and efficiency in the day-to-day recordkeeping activities of the agency.

j. Provide for compliance with [this chapter](#) and the rules adopted by the state records commission.

2. Agency heads may petition the state records commission to create or modify government information policies, standards, and guidelines, and to create or modify records series retention and disposition schedules.

2003 Acts, ch 92, §13; 2003 Acts, ch 145, §286; 2008 Acts, ch 1184, §35

305.11 Termination of state agency — records transfer.

Upon the termination of a state agency whose functions have not been transferred to another agency, custody of the records of the agency shall transfer to the commission.

2003 Acts, ch 92, §14

305.12 Duplicates.

A preservation duplicate record shall have the same force and effect for all purposes as the original record whether or not the original record is in existence. A certified transcript, exemplification, or copy of a preservation duplicate record shall be deemed for all purposes to be a certified transcript, exemplification, or copy of the original record.

2003 Acts, ch 92, §15

305.13 Records state property.

All records made or received by or under the authority of or coming into the custody, control, or possession of public officials of this state in the course of their public duties are the property of the state and shall not be mutilated, destroyed, transferred, removed, or otherwise damaged or disposed of, in whole or in part, except as provided by law or by rule.

2003 Acts, ch 92, §16

305.14 Liability precluded.

No member of the commission or head of an agency shall be held liable for damages or loss, or civil or criminal liability, because of the destruction of public records pursuant to the provisions of [this chapter](#) or any other law authorizing their destruction.

2003 Acts, ch 92, §17

305.15 Exemptions — duties of state department of transportation and state board of regents.

The state department of transportation and the agencies and institutions under the control of the state board of regents are exempt from the state records manual and the provisions of [this chapter](#). However, the state department of transportation and the state board of regents shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) for their employees, agencies, and institutions that are consistent with the objectives of [this chapter](#). The rules shall be approved by the state records commission.

2003 Acts, ch 92, §18

305.16 Iowa historical records advisory board established.

An Iowa historical records advisory board is established in accordance with [36 C.F.R. §1206.36 – 1206.38](#).

1. *Membership.* The board shall consist of nine members appointed by the governor for three-year staggered terms. Members shall be eligible for reappointment. The members shall have experience in a field of research or an activity that administers or makes extensive use of historical records. The majority of the members shall have professional qualifications and experience in the administration of government records, historical records, or archives. The administrator of the historical division of the department of cultural affairs shall serve as an ex officio member of the board.

2. *Coordinator.* The state archivist shall serve as chair of the board and as state historical records coordinator.

3. *Administration.* The department of cultural affairs, through the state archives and records program, is the primary agency responsible for providing administrative personnel and services for the board.

4. *Meetings.* The board shall meet at least three times annually and at the call of the

chair. At least one meeting annually shall be held outside the state capital or in conjunction with a meeting of a relevant statewide professional organization.

5. *Expenses.* Members of the board shall serve without compensation but may receive their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

6. *Responsibilities.*

a. The board shall do all of the following:

(1) Serve as the central advisory body for historical records planning in the state and as a coordinating body to facilitate cooperation among historical records repositories and other information agencies within the state.

(2) Serve as a state level review body for grant proposals submitted to the national historical publications and records commission.

b. The board may do all of the following:

(1) Serve in an advisory capacity to the state records commission, the state archives and records program, and other statewide archival or records agencies.

(2) Seek funds from the national historical publications and records commission or other grant-funding bodies for sponsoring and publishing surveys of the conditions and needs of historical records in the state; for developing, revising, and distributing funding priorities for historical records projects in Iowa; for implementing projects to be carried out in the state for the preservation of historical records and publications; or for reviewing through reports and otherwise, the operation and progress of records projects in the state.

[2003 Acts, ch 92, §19](#)