



NEWS ON THE RECORD

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Local Government Records Office • WINTER 2024

Records Management Grant Recipients

On January 19, 2024, the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) awarded grants to Alcorn, Clay, DeSoto, Franklin, Jackson, and Jefferson Counties, totaling \$58,000.00. These projects include digitizing marriage and minute books and purchasing shelving.

In July 2023, all counties participating in the Local Government Records Program were invited to apply for the grant. The recipients could be reimbursed up to \$10,000.00 for proposed records management projects, which include repairing historic books and digitizing records. All proposals needed to have provided matching funds of at least twenty percent of the funds requested. The application period closed on October 2.

These grant funds are generated from surplus monies sent to MDAH by counties collecting the \$1 records management fee as described in *MS Code* §25-60-5, which allows MDAH to re-grant funds back to the counties for this purpose. All participating counties are encouraged to apply when applications open again on July 1, 2024.

The Local Government Records Office is excited to offer this service to participating counties to further fulfil its mission to advise and assist with the management and preservation of local government records.

Local Government Records Committee

The Local Government Records Committee held its quarterly meeting on January 16, 2024, over Zoom. David Pilcher, the Archives & Records Services Director, presided over the meeting. Our staff presented several new record retention schedules.

GSL 01-18 **Grant Files, Program Records** was created to replace a schedule unique to counties and municipalities, its retention based on federal audit requirements (OMB Circular 133, Subpart C, .320 (g)) which states such documentation should be held for three (3) years after the release of the audit. Or, the records must be maintained five (5) years after the grant's last funding cycle year, whichever is later. All final reports are permanent. While the administrative need for these records generally ceases at the

conclusion of the audit, there could be historical value to some grant programs, so these records should be reviewed for that value and retained permanently if such value is found.

GSL 01-19 **Grant Files, Rejected or Withdrawn** regards the documentation of the rejection or withdrawal of grant applications, which could include memoranda and other correspondence. The retention is one (1) year from date of rejection or withdrawal of grant, which allows the local government office to retain these records for administrative use, for instance, in case they want to re-apply, without becoming a storage burden.

GSC 06-13 and GSM 01-19 **Ad Valorem Tax Exemptions** are those applications and approval documentation for granting ad valorem tax exemptions to certain businesses and other private entities for a set period of time. The retention is three (3) years after audit following termination or rejection of exemption. Sections 17-21-1 thru 17-21-7 of the *Mississippi Code* allows counties and municipalities to grant tax exemptions to certain types of businesses for up to seven years. While basic information would be included in minutes, additional paperwork may not be recorded, so these schedules were created.

Revisions to a couple of existing schedule sets were tabled. We discovered that county schedules GSC 01-17 and GSC 01-50, along with corresponding municipal schedules GSC 18-03 and 18-05, covered the same record series, **Tax Sale Redemption Receipts**, but with different retention periods. There was consensus that the receipts did not need to be kept permanently, but the committee could not agree on an appropriate retention period. LGR staff will research this issue some more and bring it back to the next meeting.

Finally, the committee concluded its meeting by approving the disposal authorization from Lauderdale County regarding Official Bonds dated prior to 1921. Copies of these bonds are recorded in the Bond Record Book, which is permanent.

All proposed retention schedules and committee materials are located at <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/local-government-public-notice>. The new schedules will be incorporated into the appropriate general schedules and may be accessed at <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/local-government#retention>.



Introducing Mya Nickson

The Local Government Records Office is pleased to announce that Ta'Mya "Mya" Nickson has joined us as a Local Government Records Specialist. She grew up in Yazoo City.

She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and human services from Clayton State University, and a master's degree in criminal justice from Purdue Online. She has worked for the State of Mississippi for thirteen years, including twelve years at McLendon Library at Hinds Community College and short-term jobs at the Jackson City Clerk's Office and Public Safety's Human Resources Department.

Mya doesn't have any siblings of her own but comes from a large family, and despite not having any pets, she is fond of dogs and monkeys. She enjoys watching basketball, boxing, and comedy sitcoms in her free time. Mya also enjoys cooking, experimenting with new recipes, and spending

quality time with her family. She currently resides in Byram.

What's Considered A Record?

The International Organization for Standardization defines a record as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business" (ISO 15489). A record documents an activity. If there's no record, the activity never happened—at least officially. Records can be documents filed, forms filed and created, drawings, maps, business-related emails, etc. We often think of paper records, but today, most records are generated and stored electronically. A record is a record regardless of format.

The *Mississippi Code* provides a longer definition for government employees: "Public records' shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, or other materials regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency or by any appointed or elected official" (§25-59-3(b)).

Often, we find that local governments are maintaining copies of records created by other offices. The most common example would be older copies of the *Mississippi Code*. While they are administratively useful, you don't need to maintain older editions once the current one has been provided to you. It takes up space you don't have. So, you should check out your record storage areas and see if you are storing something that's not considered YOUR record.

Records Spotlight: Court Records

While the Local Government Records Office cannot legally create retention schedules for court records, we have created a retention chart based on several statutes in the *Mississippi Code*. This chart has been divided into sections based on whether or not a record must have MDAH approval before disposition—or if said record can be disposed of at all. Civil case exhibits (§13-1-155) can be disposed of ninety days after final disposition **WITHOUT** MDAH approval. However, the law requires contacting the respective lawyers to determine if they want the exhibits returned. There are also jury selection and service records (§13-5-36) that can be disposed of without MDAH approval—their retention is four (4) years after the jury pool has been refilled, which is done in April. But the closed case files from the circuit and county courts **DO** require approval following the ten year retention in §9-7-128. You must fill out the disposal authorization form to be signed by our agency director, Katie Blount. We request that you consider the historical significance of each case prior to disposal. Finally, there are permanent court records, such as docket books. If you find a book labeled docket, you should probably keep it. Contact LGRO staff if you have questions.

[Court Record Retention Periods per Mississippi Code](#)

[Disposal Authorization Form](#)

From the Director: Bad Weather & Records

The other day when it had been below freezing for two days, I came home to see water pouring out of my garage. I had checked that the pipes in the attic all had insulation around them, had left the water in one bathroom dripping, and had covered the outside faucets. What I didn't know is that the insulation around a pipe that came down to the faucet by the garage door had slipped off inside the wall, allowing the pipe to freeze and then burst when it thawed. Fortunately, my neighbor's brother-in-law is a plumber, and he quickly repaired the leak that evening. Most of the things on the garage floor got wet, but a box fan helped dry them out. Now there's an insulation board between the pipe and the outside wall and the wet sheetrock should be repaired by the time you read this.

So, what does this have to do with records? A couple of things. First, whenever there's bad weather in the state, we try to remind everyone to check your off-site storage areas **before and after** to make sure there's no threat to your records. You don't want to find out too late that the roof has blown off or a leak somewhere damaged your records months ago! Please heed our warnings!

Second, know what to do – or call us – when something *does* happen. Maybe something as simple as a box fan will be all you need, but other times you may need to call professional disaster recovery specialists. The key is to act fast before any long-term damage can happen. You can learn more at our annual Emergency Preparedness for Records workshop in early May; watch for announcements.

One note of warning: sealed storage containers, whether small totes or big forty-footers, are **not** good for records. Trapping any moisture inside just accelerates mold growth. Make sure air can circulate; if a tote is all you have, drill holes around the top of the tote. Double-walled letter/legal records storage boxes are almost always a better choice. Keep the records off the floor, in case there is a leak. And if you need to rent a storage container, get one that's ventilated. But don't keep the records there too long; summer's heat will damage the records, too.

Tim Barnard, Director of Local Government Records Office

Call to Municipal Governments

In 1996, the Mississippi Legislature created this program through the Local Government Records Act. Per Section 25-60-5 of the *Mississippi Code*, all municipal officials or employees that collect filing fees for public records must collect an additional \$1 per document in accordance with the law. This is **NOT** a tax. It is simply an additional \$1 on top of already collected filing fees to help you manage your records.

[Records Management Fee Packet](#)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE



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