

## 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):

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
GS2011-167 Rev. 0	<p><b>Charity Fundraising</b> Records documenting the agency's coordination and support of and/or participation in charity fundraising campaigns, including promotion of employee payroll deductions.</p> <p>Includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision process for selecting charity campaigns to support;</li> <li>• Communication between the agency and charities;</li> <li>• Dissemination of charity information;</li> <li>• Arrangements and promotion of campaign events.</li> </ul> <p>Excludes authorizations of payroll deductions covered by GS50-03E-01.</p>	<p><b>Retain</b> for 6 years after end of fiscal year <i>then</i> <b>Destroy.</b></p>	<p>NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OPR</p>

### 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)**