

Glossary of Terms Related to Archives and Records Management

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Active Records: Records that are regularly referenced or required for current use.

Archives: A building or an area used to house permanent records of enduring value. “Archives” has different meanings when related to computer science and information technology (IT). Archivists manage records; they do not archive records.

Archivist: A professional responsible for the management of permanent records and an archival program.

Function: An organizational rather than departmental activity that defines a grouping of records. Functions reflect both general business practice (i.e. Finance, Personnel) and industry specific activities (i.e. Education).

Inactive Records: Records still needed by an organization, but not for current operations. In time they are destroyed according to a Records Retention Schedule.

Legal Hold: A term used in records management programs to indicate the process or procedure implemented to stop the destruction of records when it has been determined that litigation or an audit is pending or imminent.

Legal Requirements: The obligation under a law (Federal, State, or Canon Law) to act or not act in the specified manner.

Office of Origin: The corporate body or administrative unit in which a group of records is created or received, and accumulated in the regular course of business.

Office of Record: The organization or administrative unit that is officially designated for the maintenance, preservation, and disposition of record copies. The Office of Record is not always the Office of Origin.

Record: A document, regardless of format, of recorded information created or received and accumulated by an organization in the conduct of official business. All such records are owned by the Archdiocese, not the employee.

Record Value: The importance or usefulness of a record for operational, legal, fiscal, historical or other purpose.

Recordkeeping Requirements: The legal obligations related to the creation, maintenance and disposition of records. The requirements are determined by federal, state, and Canon law.

Records Destruction: The process of total obliteration of information on records by any method to make the information unreadable or unusable under any circumstance.

Records Management: The systematic control of all records from creation or receipt through processing, distribution, maintenance and retrieval to their ultimate disposition.

Records Manager: An individual designated by an organization to control the records management program.

Records Retention Period: The period of time during which records must be maintained by an organization because they are needed for operational, legal, fiscal, canonical, historical or other purposes.

Records Retention Schedule: A document that identifies and describes an organization’s records and provides instructions for the disposition of records throughout their life cycle.

Vital (Essential) Records: Records containing information essential to re-establish or continue the business of an organization in the event of a disaster. Vital records comprise the records necessary to recreate the organization’s legal and financial status, determine the rights and obligations of employees, clergy and parishioners, and document the spiritual life and identity of a community, as found, for instance, in sacramental records.