



Permanent & Historical Records

The Inherent Value of Government Records

The records maintained by Alaska's state and local governments are among the most valuable resources in their care. They are essential in the conduct of ongoing operations and the official documentation of legally binding decisions and actions of the government. Records allow the public to understand civic issues and they are the community's memory.

Records are preserved because:

- Officials use them to administer and monitor government operations
- Records document the conduct of public business
- Records ensure and measure government accountability
- Records contain information used by researchers from within and from outside government
- Historians and other researchers use government records for information on individuals, groups and the community, on the development of the government and its operations, and on the life of the community itself

Permanent Records

Permanent records are records that have enduring, historical or research value that are retained permanently in an office or in the Alaska State Archives after a period of active use. Records are considered permanent if they have enduring administrative, fiscal or legal value to government, or if they possess significant secondary research value beyond those for which they were created. Permanent Records are also known as Historically Significant, Historical or Archival Records.

The State Archives identifies **Permanent Records** on approved records retention schedules. The Archives processes, preserves and makes permanent records accessible under AS 40.21, the *Management & Preservation of Public Records Act*.

Historical Records

Sometimes a record series may be scheduled as “temporary”, but some records within that series may become permanent records when they are impacted by local or national events or issues. These records become historical when they document:

- Controversial issues
- Programs, projects, events/issues that result in significant change affecting the local community, city or Alaska
- Programs, projects, events/issues that involve prominent individuals or places
- Programs, projects, events/issues that result in media attention--local, statewide, national

Historical Records that document evolving core values, duties/missions of a state agency or local political subdivision, or current/recent events may include the following issues:

- Abortion
- Climate change
- Environmental damage (oil spills)
- Wildfires & forest management
- Fisheries management
- Civil & human rights
- Infrastructure (bridges, dams, roads)
- Land ownership & management
- Litigation (significant)
- Legislation (landmark)
- Natural disasters
- Oil & gas
- Civil unrest
- Subsistence
- Tribal sovereignty