**1 Determine whether to use big buckets**

**2 Analyze the records and identify potential categories**

**3 Begin drafting an implementation plan**

**4 Draft the schedule and crosswalk**

**5 Finalize the schedule and crosswalk**

**6 Submit the schedule**

**Step 1: Determine whether to use big buckets**

1.1 Consider using a big bucket schedule

Review:

* The current structure and functions of your agency.
* NARA and agency guidance.
* Your agency’s current records schedule(s).
* The current arrangement of the schedule(s).
* The approximate number of series and systems covered.
* Relationships between items in the schedule(s).

Ask:

* Would big bucket schedules work well for our agency?
* Do current schedules accurately reflect agency business?
* Might the records documenting some of our functional areas and activities fit together in a “bucket?”

1.2 Engage agency stakeholders

Brief stakeholders on the benefits and risks associated with adopting a big bucket schedule approach.

Consult with offices such as:

* General Counsel
* Senior Agency Official for Records Management
* Chief Information Officer
* Records Liaison Officers and Records Custodians
* Others who will need to support the decision and its implementation

1.3 Finalize the decision

If stakeholders agree, and if you have the support needed to carry out the project, move forward.

Big bucket schedules may not be appropriate for all agencies and situations.

1.4 Determine the project scope

You do not have to manage all agency records and systems with a big bucket schedule approach.

Consider:

* Which program areas and functions would benefit from a big bucket schedule?
* What approach would best serve our users?
* How feasible will it be to adopt and implement a big bucket schedule in each area?

**Step 2: Analyze the records and identify potential categories**

2.1 Review your current situation.

Review your organization and its structure and functions.

* What work is done, where, and by whom?
* What systems support that work?
* Do your current records schedules accurately reflect the work being done?

Review existing records inventories and schedules.

* If you do not have a recent inventory, conduct one now. You need to what records you have before designing a new schedule.

Look for similar series and systems and potential bucket categories.

* Are there related business processes and functions?
* Are the records that support those functions related?
* Do (or should) the related series and systems have the same retention?

2.2 Begin identifying potential bucket schedule categories

* Identify records for business functions, work processes, and organizations that could be grouped together into buckets and create a list of potential big bucket categories.
* Your analysis should be driven by the primary mission functions of your organization.
* Use a current, comprehensive records inventory and your current records schedules to identify potential bucket categories that will manage your new and existing series.

2.3 Begin drafting buckets and crosswalk

* Review your records inventory and existing records schedules and assign record series to each bucket category.
* You can begin collecting current series descriptions and retention information in a crosswalk template, then add bucket category information as you group series into each bucket.

**Step 3: Develop an implementation plan for rolling out your big bucket schedule(s)**

3.1 Determine how the new bucket schedules will affect information systems

3.2 Determine how internal implementation tools (directives, file plans, training) will be affected by the use of big buckets, and how they will be updated and disseminated.

3.3 Decide how to mitigate implementation issues that may arise.

3.4 Determine how users will be trained on the use of the new big bucket schedules.

**Step 4: Draft the schedule information for each bucket schedule and each bucket.**

4.1 Select a title and collect schedule information.

4.2 Draft the overview for the schedule.

4.3 Draft a description for each bucket within the schedule.

4.4 Determine retention and disposition for each bucket.

4.5 Identify cutoffs and transfer instructions as needed.

4.6 Determine whether to use a flexible retention period.

4.7 Draft a proposed disposition statement for each bucket.

4.8 Repeat steps 4.1 – 4.7 for each proposed big bucket item.

**Step 5: Finalize the Schedule and Crosswalk**

* A crosswalk shows new and superseded records schedule items. It shows where those series and systems fit in the proposed big bucket schedule.
* Use the template from NARA’s website to collect your schedule information and map to the new big buckets. Be sure to note disposition authority numbers for all superseded items.

**Step 6: Review and Submit the Schedule**

6.1 Internal review and revision

Send the proposed schedule(s) and their corresponding crosswalks to the affected program office(s), general counsel and other offices (based on your agency policy) for review. Review and revise the draft(s) based on the feedback received.

6.2 Review and revise with NARA appraiser [optional]

If you have been working with your NARA appraisal archivist during the design of your schedule, you may want to consult with him/her for a final informal review. Review and revise the schedule and crosswalk based on that feedback.

6.3 Obtain required internal approvals

Obtain any required internal approvals prior to entering the schedule into the Electronic Records Archives (ERA).

6.4 Submit schedule and crosswalk to NARA

Enter the schedule into ERA, including the crosswalk as an attachment, and submit it to NARA.