

Description and transcript for Summer School for Records Coordinators, Records Inventory, Part 4: Next Steps and Follow-Up.

On screen: Title slide, Summer School for Records Coordinators: Records Inventory. Next Steps and Follow-Up. Robin Riot, C R M. National Records Management Training Program. National Archives and Records Administration, August 7, 2013.

Narrator: Thanks for joining us. This is the fourth segment of an online briefing that was part of our Summer School for Records Coordinators in August 2013.

On screen: Agenda. What's an inventory? Why inventory? Planning the inventory. Conducting the inventory. Next steps and follow-up.

Narrator: So far, we've defined what a records series inventory is, and we've looked at some of the things to consider when planning and conducting an inventory. In this segment, we'll take a quick look at next steps.

On screen: Inventory Data. Data collected depends on your purpose and scope. Contact information. Series title and description. Location, dates and volume. Retention. Formats. Storage, retrieval, use.

Narrator: In the last segment, we looked at the kinds of inventory data you might collect. The inventory helps you to collect the information you need to understand the ways your organization's records are created, stored, used, and retained.

On screen: Analysis and Follow-Up.

Narrator: Once you've gathered your data, it's time to do some analysis and plan your next steps. You'll review your inventory results with a focus on your project goals. If you planned to update records schedules, you'll use the data to begin that work. If you were doing a baseline inventory to get a picture of where things are in your organization, you'll start looking for patterns, issues, and opportunities.

On screen: Identifying Problems and Opportunities.

Narrator: Most of the time, we do a records inventory for a specific purpose, like building file plans or records schedules. Along the way, though, the inventory often brings other things to our attention, whether that was one of our original goals, or not.

On screen: Gaps and missing records.

Narrator: You may identify gaps in coverage or missing collections of records. In doing an inventory, I once found about ten years of material in one department, and another ten years in a second department, with a gap of about five years in between. As I talked to Departments A and B, I learned that Department C had done that work for a short period of time. When I followed up with the third department, we were able to paint a much more complete picture of how the work, and the records, had changed over the years, and we were better able to plan for managing those records.

On screen: Records schedules. Records that need to be scheduled, schedules that need to be updated.

Narrator: As part of your inventory, you'll often find new types of records that don't have a records schedule, or records and business processes that have changed over time and need an update.

On screen: Applying disposition. Temporary records past their expiration dates. Permanent records past their scheduled transfer dates. Records that could be moved to storage. Nonrecord materials that can be destroyed.

Narrator: You will probably also find some groups of records that have been retained past their scheduled destruction dates, or records that should have been transferred to the Archives by now. Records inventories are great for helping you see where your program has some clean-up or catch-up work to do.

On screen: Opportunities to consolidate storage.

Narrator: The inventory will also highlight things like opportunities to consolidate storage. It may help to centralize some files to make them easier to access. Or, you may find that multiple departments are keeping copies of the same records, and it might be easier to store one shared copy online.

On screen: Electronic media and system changes, decommissioned systems.

Narrator: Analyzing your inventory results will also alert you to changes in the way electronic records are stored. Ideally, you'll know about those changes before they are made, but the inventory can help you catch things that might otherwise fall through the cracks.

On screen: Damage or deterioration.

Narrator: You may discover that some records were stored in poor conditions or suffered damage. You'll want to take steps to protect and recover those records.

On screen: Risks to records. Flooding, fire, pests, security, temperature, humidity, light.

Narrator: You may also discover some avoidable risks to your records. If you find that important records are being stored in a leaky basement storage area, you'll want to make moving those records to better storage a priority for follow-up.

On screen: Follow Up.

Narrator: You will also have some follow-up to do with the people who participated in the inventory.

On screen: Follow up with participants. Thank participants. Share next steps.

Narrator: Contact the records coordinators and others who helped gather the data and thank them for their help. If you can, share a brief summary of what you found, and let them know what next steps will happen as a result of the work they did.

On screen: Share results. Number of offices visited. Records series found.

Narrator: If it's appropriate to do so, share your results. How much information did you find, and where? What major trends did you see? A records manager for one company posted graphs and charts in the hallway showing the large amount of information they had and the wide number of places where it was stored. That really caught management's eye, and one senior leader remarked that he had never seen a total picture of the organization's information before.

On screen: Interested stakeholders. F O I A team, I. T. staff, Legal.

Narrator: You'll also want to update interested stakeholders and let them know what you found. Your Freedom of Information Act team, information technology staff, legal team, and others may have a real interest in, and use for the information collected in your inventory.

On screen: Next Steps. Match records to existing file plans and records schedules. Construct file plans. Evaluate how well current methods and systems are working for you. Establish filing systems. Identify needed schedule updates. Begin drafting schedules. Start planning the cleanup.

Narrator: The next steps you take will depend on the goals you set for your inventory, and on what you find while doing the inventory. Typical next steps might include matching the records series to existing file plans and records schedules to see what has changed, and what needs to be updated. Building a file plan for your office. Evaluating how well your current program and systems are working for you, and planning needed changes. Setting up paper and electronic filing systems. Creating a list of schedule updates to discuss with your Records Officer. Working on new or updated schedules. Working to resolve issues and clean up any problem areas.

On screen: Agenda. What's an inventory? Why inventory? Planning the inventory. Conducting the inventory. Next steps and follow-up.

Narrator: Those are the basic steps in planning and conducting a records series inventory. In part one, we defined what a records series is, and why you'd do one. In part two, we looked at things to consider as you're planning an inventory. Part three included examples of the data we might gather and tips for conducting the inventory. In this part, we looked at next steps and follow-up.

On screen: Questions or tips? Find more online at [archives dot gov](http://archives.gov).

Narrator: If you have questions or tips you'd like to share with me, feel free to contact me, or talk with your organization's Records Officer or records manager. You'll also find more information about all kinds of records management topics on our Web site at archives.gov.

On screen: Robin Riat, CRM. Robin.riat@nara.gov. Want to be added to our e-mail list for announcements of future online briefings? Send an e-mail to workshop@nara.gov.

On screen: Photo credits.

On screen: The National Records Management Training Program logo appears on screen.