

Records Management Quick-Start

Guidance Packet for Texas
Local Government Records Management
Officers and Liaisons

For Elected Officials
2024



SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

TSLAC's Quick Resource Library

Our Main Line's Contact Information:

512-463-7610 | slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov



In Person and
On-Demand Training



Published Guidance via
Articles and
Reference Guides



Consulting



Storage of
Inactive Records

Find Your Regional Analyst: www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/local/countylist





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

WELCOME!

To those of you who cannot wait to begin or eager to get through this packet, welcome!

We are so glad that you are making the time and effort to do your due diligence in familiarizing yourself with your new role as the Records Management Officer (RMO).

~ The RMA Team

Purpose of this Packet

This packet will answer questions for those saying, "Tell me what to do immediately, so I can do the other 100 things I have to do today!" And those saying the same thing but also, "Tell me everything, because I want to know it all!"

For those wanting quick info, look for or click and follow the arrow icon:



Note, if you are reading this packet as a printed document, you will not be able to access the links and embedded navigation. To do so, go to www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/training/guides/lg-quick-start and download the interactive electronic version.





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark off sections as you complete to track your progress.

Feel free jump around the packet. Use the checklist to create your own journey.

- Why am I reading this packet? 5
- What does “RMO” stand for? 6
- Why does there have to be an RMO?..... 6
- How many RMOs can there be? 6
- What does “LGRA” stand for and what is it? 7
- What am I, the RMO, responsible for doing?..... 8
- What paperwork must be on file with TSLAC?..... 9
- After my paperwork is on file, how do I continue to comply with laws?..... 11
- Besides paperwork, what does TSLAC recommend doing right now?..... 14
- How do I keep up with TSLAC changes that affect our office?..... 15
- How do I continue to learn about records management? 17
- Who do I talk to whenever I need help? 20

Still can't find the answer to your question? Reach out to [your TSLAC regional analyst!](#)



SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

Why am I reading this?



THE STRAIGHT-FORWARD REASON: You, specifically, are reading this because you are the new Records Management Officer, or you're the person helping the Records Management Officer start their new role!

The reason from the mouths of those passionate about records management:

Records management is one of the most vital programs behind an operation.

If managed properly, records management creates a transparent, accountable, efficient, and effective operation.

"How?," you ask...

Depending on the methods and strategies that an office decides to implement, records management can make or break your office's operations.

Efficient and effective strategies and methods ensures information is quickly and readily available to only authorized users. This ensures that staff, decision makers, and members of the public can trust the information and receive it in the most adequate time.

Good records management also means that you are only paying for storage that is necessary.

Read more about how records management benefits your government in our article, [How Does Records Management Benefit Us, Anyway?](#)



What does “RMO” stand for?

“Records Management Officer,” the designated position responsible for ensuring a local government’s records program is efficient, protected, and properly manages records from the moment they are created or received to the date they can be destroyed or transferred based on historical value.

Why does there have to be an RMO?

Local Government Code, LGC, §203.001 by default designates an elected official as the RMO of their office. LGC, §203.005(g) provides elected officials with the option to instead, designate the County’s RMO. Either way, the LGC requires elected officials to designate an RMO.

How many RMOs can there be?

One and only one per local government entity.





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

What does "LGRA" stand for and what is it?

"LGRA" stands for the Local Government Records Act.

The LGRA is part of the Government Code that...

- **Centers around keeping local government records for a minimum length of time, also called a "retention period."** These periods are based on legal, historical, administrative, or fiscal reasons established by laws, rules, standards, or [TSLAC's authority as an agency](#). In a less jargony way, a record is kept based on the content of the record serving a purpose for the local government entity, the public, or the State of Texas.
- **Supports the Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act** to create a transparent and accountable government. The Office of Attorney General interprets and enforces both Acts.
- **Outlines a local government's responsibilities related to records management**, including the responsibilities of the Records Management Officer position!
- **Enables local government entities in compliance to legally destroy records** once they have met their minimum retention periods.
- **Created the [Government Information Analyst](#) position** to help you and your office with records management!

You can find the LGRA in Local Government Code (LGC), Chapter [201](#), [202](#), [203](#), [204](#), [205](#), and [Government Code, Chapter 441](#), Sub chapters F and J.





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

What am I, as the RMO, responsible for doing?

Formal Overview

Check out: [LGC, §203.002](#).

Informal Overview

Check out our article: [What does it take to be an RMO?](#).

Do I really have to do this alone?

Serve as the RMO in name? Yes.

Physically manage the records, implement procedures, train staff, etc.? Absolutely not!

In fact, we recommend not doing it alone and involving others in your entity.

Records Liaisons

Allies the RMO designates to help run the program and with outreach.

- Does not need to be on file with TSLAC.
- To learn more about the role, checkout our article: [Records Liaisons and Where to Find Them](#).
- How to get liaisons on board? Check out our guest webinar: [Simple Ways to Turn Your Records Liaisons into Records Ambassadors](#).

Records Custodians

Staff who receive, create, and/or use a government record.

- One of the most critical roles in the program. Manages the record for most of the record's life.
- To learn more about the role, check out our article: [Records Custodians: Why It's a Great Idea to Appoint Them](#).
- How to get custodians on board? Checkout our article: [Obtaining Buy-In Records Creators and Users](#).

We recommend outlining the RMO, liaison, and staff's role in your entity's records management policy.





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

What paperwork must be on file with TSLAC?

BACKGROUND INFO

Elected officials are required to have three elements on file with TSLAC per the LGRA.



All updated elements must be on file with TSLAC within 30 days of taking position.

INSTRUCTIONS



Contact [your TSLAC Analyst](#) to be guided on what paperwork you need to submit.

(Continued on next page)

ELEMENTS and SUPPORTING EVIDENCE EXPLAINED

Element 1: Records Management Policy outlining your records management program's strategies and methods.

We recommend including the RMO's position. This can be found in Part 2 of the form SLR 512.

Required to be on file with TSLAC per [LGC §203.005](#).

Element 2: Declaration of Compliance with all of TSLAC's local record retention schedules that contain records your entity creates and is responsible for managing.

This step will require your entity to review the [12 local retention schedules](#) to determine which schedules are applicable.

For a good starting place, check out [TSLAC's recommended schedules](#) based on industries.

Determining which schedules are applicable is important because your entity is only permitted to follow the schedule(s) they declare compliance with.

This can be found in Part 3 of the form SLR 512.

Required to be on file with TSLAC per [LGC §203.041](#).

Element 3: RMO's Contact Information.

Per [LGC, §203.005](#), elected officials are designated as their entity's RMO by default.

Per [LGC, §203.005\(g\)](#), elected officials can choose to designate the County's RMO as the RMO of their office. To find out who is the County's RMO, contact [your TSLAC Analyst](#).

In Part 1 of the form SLR 512, elected officials will add their contact information. If an elected official decides to remain the RMO, completing and submitting this step will suffice.

If an elected official wants to designate the County's RMO, the County RMO must first have all necessary paperwork on file with TSLAC.

PAPERWORK SHOULD BE RESUBMITTED...

Within 30 days of an element changing or a new elected official taking office.





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

After my paperwork is on file, how do I continue to comply with the LGRA?



Manage an internal retention schedule.

Per the [LGC, §203.041](#), local governments are required to manage **a records control schedule, otherwise known as an internal retention schedule.**

The internal schedule **must...**

Comply with (meet or exceed) the minimum retention periods found on the schedules your entity selected on their [Declaration of Compliance – Part 3 of form SLR 512 that is on file with TSLAC](#).

The internal schedule **does not need to be...**

- Submitted to TSLAC.
- Custom. Your office can decide to copy and follow the schedules they adhere to on their Declaration of Compliance on file with TSLAC.

(Continued on next page)

The internal schedule **can be...**

Customized. In fact, we highly recommend doing this if your entity wants to customize the language to be fitting to your entity, add applicable legal citations not found on TSLAC's schedules, or increase retention periods.

TSLAC's articles for guidance on customizing internal schedules:

- [Customizing Your Local Government Retention Schedule](#)
- [Building Your Internal Schedule for Local Governments](#)
- Bucketing strategy to combine multiple record series for efficiency:
 - [To Bucket or Not to Bucket...?](#)
 - [The Bucketing Strategy as a Precautionary Solution](#)
 - [The Personnel File: Retention and Best Practices](#)
- [How to Classify Your Records on TSLAC's Retention Schedules](#)
- [My Record is Nowhere to Be Found on a Schedule – Now What?](#)
- [Questions to Consider Before Asking for a New Series](#)
- Guidance for defining AV retention trigger: [How Long is "AV"?](#)



Ensure your local government records are being kept for the full retention period.

Train yourself. Become familiar with the term "[local government record](#)" and check out our [recommend places to start](#).

Reach out to [your TSLAC Analyst](#) any time you have questions.

Once you're comfortable, use [TSLAC's training](#) and/or create targeted training for records liaisons and custodians.

(Continued on next page)

After my paperwork is on file, how do I continue to comply with **other laws**?

Remember that TSLAC's minimum retention periods are required minimums!

In addition to potential internal reasons, there may be other laws and rules requiring your office's records be kept longer than TSLAC's minimums.

Reach out to agencies who have authority over your functions or record keeping requirements before destroying records based off TSLAC's minimums.

Consult a legal team or an organization that is familiar with your industry because they will likely know of or be able to research the requirements.

Potential Resources

- Organizations related to your entity:
e.g., County Treasurer's Association of Texas, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, Texas Conference of Urban Counties for County Commissioners, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts, and County and District Clerks Association of Texas (CDCAT)
- Agencies that require you to create or submit records
- Codes related to the records for further requirements
- [Texas Association of Counties](#)
- Legal counsel





Besides paperwork, what does TSLAC recommend doing right now?

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark off the tasks as you complete them.

- Watch our webinar, [Records Management Basics for Local Governments](#). (Allocate: 2 hours 18 minutes.)



- If interested, download your certificate of completion!
- Follow up with [your TSLAC analyst](#) if you have any questions!

- Read our article, [What Does the RMA Team Do?](#) to learn more about what [your TSLAC analyst](#) can help you with!



- If you have not already:
Introduce yourself to [your TSLAC analyst](#).

If you have questions or want resources, let your analyst know.

TSLAC's training topics include:

- o Inventory
- o Obtaining buy-in, implementation
- o Disaster prevention and recovery
- o Disposition (destroy or transfer)
- o Preserving records based on format ("format" examples: paper, electronic, microfilm, social media, text messages, etc.)





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

How do I keep up with TSLAC changes that affect our office?

For updates to administrative rules, e.g. retention schedules and record standards and procedures:



The final products...

Watch the [Texas Register](#), or subscribe to [The Texas Record](#) where we post announcements.

On the [local retention schedule page](#), each schedule lists the effective date, which is when it was last updated.

The proposed products...

Subscribe to [The Texas Record](#) to be notified of TSLAC's proposed changes and calls for feedback or informal comments.

Before final approval and adoption, TSLAC is required to post request for formal comment (or feedback) on the [Texas Register](#).

You can also contact your [TSLAC analyst](#) at any time to provide feedback on final products.

(Continued on next page)

For updates to best practices and resources...

[Subscribe to The Texas Record](#) to hear of announcements!

This includes but is not limited to: Updates to forms and templates, TSLAC training, one-page guides, inventory guidance.

Every year in April, TSLAC hosts a Local Government RMO meeting to discuss updates that may affect your office.

RMOs will receive notification of the meeting and an invitation to register via a post announcement on [The Texas Record](#).





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

How do I continue to learn about records management?

GOAL: Close knowledge gaps.

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark off tasks as you complete them.

- Check out [The Texas Record](#), our blog where we post guidance for records management programs that benchmark off the state's minimum requirements.

PRO TIP: A great place to start is [our FAQ page!](#)

- Watch any of [our on-demand webinars](#) that cover topics you're interested in.

- When you're ready for quick guidance: Check out [our one-page quick reference guides](#).

(Continued on next page)

Before implementing strategies and methods: Review the laws, rules, regulations, and standards published on TSLAC's website.

Bulletin A: Microfilming Standards and Procedures: Requirements apply to microfilm, regardless of retention period.

- [Found in Local Government Code \(LGC\), 204](#) and [Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Chapter 7, Subchapter B.](#)

Bulletin B: Electronic Records Standards and Procedures: Requirements apply to electronic records with a retention period of 10 years or more. However, TSLAC recommends applying beneficial strategies to all electronic records.

- [Found in Local Government Code \(LGC\), 205](#) and [Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Chapter 7, Subchapter C.](#)

Bulletin F: Records Storage Standards: Requirements apply to paper records with a permanent retention period or court-cases dated pre-1951. However, TSLAC recommends applying beneficial strategies to all paper records.

- [Found in Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Chapter 7, Subchapter F.](#)

NOTE:

Bulletin C: Inventorying and Scheduling Records:

TSLAC's guidance for inventorying. Bulletin C is not law, rule, regulation, or standard.

- Bulletin C and related templates can be found on our [Laws and Rules page.](#)

Bulletin D: Local Government Records Act:

This is the LGRA (mentioned throughout)!

- Found in Local Government Code (LGC), Chapter [201](#), [202](#), [203](#), [204](#), [205](#), and [Government Code, Chapter 441](#), Subchapters F and J.

Bulletin E: Electronic Filing and Recording by County Clerks:

Requirements are only for County Clerks.

- Found in [Local Government Code \(LGC\), 195](#) and [Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Chapter 7, Subchapter E.](#)



Check out resources beyond TSLAC!

Note: When utilizing the following resources, ensure you target the information to Texas local governments based on your industry.



[ARMA International](#)

A global business organization (with members from public and private organizations) centered around records and information management! This is a great place to ask for guidance on improving your program and furthering your career!

There are also [local ARMA chapters](#).

Some of the local chapters host virtual meetings that attendees not in the area can attend.



[National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators \(NAGARA\)](#)

Another organization centered around records and information management but limited to members from government entities! Most of NAGARA's resources do cost money, but they too can really help you further your program and career!

Reach out to other governments around you!

[Your TSLAC Analyst](#) can provide you with other RMO's contact information if approved by the RMO.





SLRM
STATE AND LOCAL
RECORDS
MANAGEMENT

Who do I talk to whenever I need help?



Your new best friends at TSLAC, a.k.a. [your TSLAC analyst!](#)



Internally: Your liaisons, legal counsel, and (for your electronic applications and records) [Information Technology staff](#)



Other local government entities



Organizations based on your type of entity

[Professional organizations](#). Such as:

- [ARMA International](#)
- [ARMA Local Chapters](#)
- [National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators \(NAGARA\)](#)

