Appendix 3
File Maintenance and Archiving

Proper file maintenance and archiving are vital to overall file security. Public Housing will retain all records that have potential permanent legal and historical value in the State of Alaska Archives in accordance with AS 40.21.030.

3.1 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records management that ensures overall file security and client privacy can be divided into two basic functions, file maintenance and archiving.

- File Maintenance – Proper file maintenance ensures consistency between files, managers, and offices.
- Archiving – Timely archiving ensures compliance with required file retention schedules and consistent destruction of old files.

Space restraints and the physical condition of the file folders may require slight variations from the directions given in this Appendix. Variations require Regional Manager approval.

3.2 APPLICANT FILES AND WAITING LISTS

Withdrawn and denied applicant files are retained at the local office site for one year. Files on site for over one year will be archived in January. The master waiting list for the same time period will also be archived.

When the retention period has expired for the respective field office, the field office will send the waiting lists to the Records Center.

3.3 "PARTING" A FILE

Transfer active client files into new folders when they become unwieldy or threaten to fall apart. Generally, a file should be no more than 2 inches thick.

Client File Index forms are used to separate the basic information and each action in chronological order. When "parting" a file, use the most current *Client File Index* form and file order.

3.3.A Eligibility Section

Transfer the "basic" or "eligibility" information section of the file to the new file. This includes the original application for housing, preference documents if applicable, family member identifications, proof of birth, etc. - to the new folder. Follow *Client File Index* forms to organize client files correctly in each program.

If there are extra documents in this section such as family members no longer in the household or applicant information from other waiting lists, you may archive this information with the archived file part.

3.3.B Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV)

HCV files are kept in two part files. The left side contains the basic information, release forms, client interview and income information, calculation forms, and the HUD 50058 report. *Client File Index* forms are used to separate the basic information and each action in chronological order. When “cutting down” a file, use the most current *Client File Index* form and file order.

1. **Left Side-Section A, Income Examinations**
   With some exceptions, only the most recent annual and subsequent interim examinations need to be brought forward into the new folder. In addition to the most recent annual, the most recent Voucher and Briefing Statement are also brought forward into the current file. These two documents are needed if the file is forwarded for collection action.

2. **Right Side**
   The move-in documentation for the current unit must be brought forward into the current file. Staff should bring that whole section forward along with the cover sheet.

   The documentation that corresponds to the information in the Left Side – Section A should be brought forward.

Instructions - Parting an HCV File

1. Make a note on the front of the file of the status of the file. Example, “File 2, begin June 2009.”
2. Move the Eligibility section forward (see the Eligibility section above). Be sure pertinent documents are present for ALL family members.
3. Move the information from the last annual and any recent interims to the new file. Keep all the income information applicable if the rent is based on income averaging.
4. Move the information related to the current HAP (including the original HQS form) for the family’s unit to the new file.
5. Keep any active Repayment Agreements.
6. Notate the old file. Example, “File 1, ends May 2009.”
7. Keep the old file on site one year.

8. Archive the file after that. Archived file retrieval only takes a few days.

3.3.C Project-Based Vouchers (PBV)

PBV files are kept in two part files. The left side contains the eligibility information and income examinations; the right side contains the correspondence and contracting documents. *Client File Index* forms are used to separate the basic information and each action in chronological order. When "cutting down" a file, use the most current *Client File Index* form and file order.

1. **Left Side-Section B, Eligibility**
   See the Eligibility Section under Housing Choice Vouchers. Follow the instructions in that section.

2. **Left Side-Section A, Income Examinations**
   With some exceptions, only the most recent annual and subsequent interim examinations need to be brought forward into the new folder. In addition to the most recent annual, the most recent Voucher and Briefing Statement are also brought forward into the current file. These two documents are needed if the file is forwarded for collection action.

3. **Right Side**
   The move-in documentation for the current unit must be brought forward into the current file. Staff should bring that whole section forward along with the cover sheet. The documentation that corresponds to the income examinations on the Left Side – Section A should be brought forward.

Instructions - Parting a PBV File

1. Make a note on the front of the file of the status of the file. Example, "File 2, begin June 2009."
2. Move the Eligibility section forward (see section A above). Be sure pertinent documents are present for ALL family members.
3. Move the information from the last annual and any recent interims to the new file. Keep all the income information applicable if the rent is based on income averaging.
4. Move the information related to the current HAP (including the original HQS form) for the family's unit to the new file.
5. Keep any active Repayment Agreements.
6. Notate the old file. Example, "File 1, ends May 2009."
7. Keep the old file on site one year.
8. Archive the file after that. Archived file retrieval only takes a few days.

3.3.D HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)

TBRA files are kept in two part files. The left side contains the eligibility information and income examinations; the right side contains the correspondence and contracting documents. *Client File Index* forms are used to separate the basic information and each action in chronological order. When "cutting down" a file, use the most current *Client File Index* form and file order.

1. **Left Side-Section B, Eligibility**
   See the Eligibility Section under Housing Choice Vouchers. Follow the instructions in that section.

2. **Left Side-Section A, Income Examinations**
   With some exceptions, only the most recent annual and subsequent interim examinations need to be brought forward into the new folder. In addition to the most recent annual, the most recent Coupon and Briefing Statement are also brought forward into the current file. These two documents are needed if the file is forwarded for collection action.

3. **Right Side**
   The move-in documentation for the current unit must be brought forward into the current file. Staff should bring that whole section forward along with the cover sheet. The documentation that corresponds to the income examinations on the Left Side–Section A should be brought forward.

Instructions - Parting a TBRA File

1. Make a note on the front of the file of the status of the file. Example, "File 2, begin June 2009."
2. Move the Eligibility section forward (see section A above). Be sure pertinent documents are present for ALL family members.
3. Move the information from the last annual and any recent interims to the new file. Keep all the income information applicable if the rent is based on income averaging.
4. Move the information related to the current HAP (including the original HQS form) for the family's unit to the new file.
5. Keep any active Repayment Agreements.
6. Notate the old file. Example, "File 1, ends May 2009."
7. Keep the old file on site one year.
8. Archive the file after that. Archived file retrieval only takes a few days.

3.3.E Public Housing and Section 8 New

Public Housing and Section 8 New files are kept in six part files. Follow the instructions under Section A above to bring forward the Eligibility section of the file.

1. **Section A – Left**
   This is the leasing section of the file. All current lease documents must be brought forward into the new file. If the family paid for utilities at the time of move in, those documents must also be brought forward.

2. **Section B – Right**
   Move the Move-In inspection forward into the current part. AHFC will compare the Move-Out inspection with the Move-In inspection to determine appropriate charges when the family vacates a unit.

3. **Section C – Right**
   Move the most recent annual and any subsequent interim examinations to the new file. For Multifamily Housing, you must also keep the original Eligibility and Move-in income examination in the current file.

Instructions - Parting PH or S8N Files

1. Make a note on the Right Side Section-A *Client File Index* form of the status of the file transfer. Example, "File 2, begin June 2009".
2. Section A – Left – see section C.1 above.
3. Keep any active Repayment Agreements.
4. Section A – Right – see the Eligibility Section above.
5. Section B – Left - Move any current Notices. Keep all adverse notices sent during the last twelve (12) months.
6. Section B – Right - Move the original move-in inspection, the most recent UPCS and housekeeping inspections, their notices, and outstanding notices of tenant charges to the new file part.
7. Section C – Left – For Public Housing, move the community service documentation that goes with the annual information moved to the new file.
8. Section C – Right – see Section C-Right above.
9. Keep the old file on site one year.
10. Archive the file after that. Archived file retrieval only takes a few days.

3.4 ARCHIVING

Each office is responsible for the proper and timely disposition of its documents and files. All records series are retained on the State fiscal year basis – January 1 to December 31. Unless otherwise noted, archive appropriate files each year by December 31 each year.

Archiving ensures:

- AHFC is complying with HUD regulations regarding retention of records.
- All records containing clients' private information is kept confidential and properly destroyed.
- All unused or extraneous documents that identify the client or the address are shredded.

3.4.A Debt Files

Do not archive debt files. These are files where a client or landlord owes AHFC money. Keep the file on site if a client owes AHFC money until the grievance procedure for the termination or billing time has been exhausted.

> **Instructions - Debt File Disposition**
>
> After the grievance or billing time is exhausted:
> 1. Debt checklists are available in the forms on the Intranet so that staff will know what needs to be in the file.
> 2. Ensure that all debt documentation is in the file.
> 3. Forward the file to the PHD Management Specialist.
> 4. The Management Specialist will archive the file as appropriate.

3.4.B HOME TBRA Files

Do not archive TBRA files. Since this money is administered by the Planning Department, they are taking responsibility for the archiving.

> **Instructions - TBRA File Disposition**
>
> After the grievance or billing time is exhausted:
> 1. Assemble and file all documentation in the file.
> 2. Mail the file to the Planning Department at PO Box 101020, Anchorage. Attention the file to Colette Slover.
> 3. Send an e-mail to Colette to let her know that you have mailed the file.

3.4.C Files to be Archived

Send files to the archives in compliance with the *State of Alaska Records Retention Schedule*, Agency ID 628. The schedule may be found on the Intranet under Departments…Records…Records Retention Schedules…PHD Central Office.

The *State of Alaska Records Retention Schedule* specifies the time each item must be kept in the local office, how long the item must be kept in archives, and when the item will be destroyed. Archiving consists of the following procedures:

- Determining contents;
- Recording box contents;

- Packing boxes;
- Assembling and cataloging boxes for archive or destruction;
- Sending boxes to the Records Center;
- Maintaining records of archived or destroyed materials.

1. **Determining Contents**
   Pack each box by Item or Accession Number. Pack material using only one accession number per box. Do not mix documents; i.e., vacated tenant files with applications without approval from the Records Department. As much as possible, keep the same types of items within the same year. This is important, as the years of the files determine the destruction date.

2. **Recording Box Contents**
   Use form AD902 *Records Retention File Box Contents* to describe the files in the box. Make two copies of the form. One will go in the box, and one will be kept at your office.

   Staff should sufficiently describe each file so that staff can identify and recall a box or file, if needed.

3. **Packing Boxes**
   Use boxes provided by the Records Center for all archiving. Only use other types of boxes if the documents are being sent for destruction. The box must be sturdy enough to withstand shipping.

   Order archive boxes by addressing an e-mail to "Records Center Staff" and specifying how many boxes will be needed.

Instructions - How to Pack an Archive Box

1. Pack client files alphabetically.
2. Pack ineligible applications chronologically.
3. Put rubber bands around multiple file parts.
4. Do not over pack or stuff boxes.
5. Items should fit comfortably in the box, and the lid should fit securely over the box.
6. Place the original version of form AD902 in the box.

4. **Assembling and Cataloging Boxes**
   To send a box to archive, staff will need to prepare a *Records Transfer Order*. On the Intranet, choose Forms…Records…Records Transfer Order. Staff will need information from the Records Retention Schedule to fill out the *Records Transfer Order*.

Either print this form or fill in the blanks before printing (the date will change when the form is printed). The Records Center prefers a typed form.

Instructions - How to Catalog a Box

1. Write a temporary box number on the end of the box with a marker. This number will help Records match the box to the box listed on the *Records Transfer Order*.
2. Keep them as simple as possible such as FBX-01, FBX-02, etc.
3. Record the temporary box number on the *Records Retention File Box Contents*.
4. Write a short description for the box and the fiscal year such as "APPLICATIONS FROM 01/09 TO 12/09."
5. Print legibly or type as this is the only record you will have of the contents of each box.

Instructions - How to Complete an RTO

Fill in the form with the following:

1. Type in the PHD department code, 660 (Housing Operations). Note: This is a records storage code, not your department or cost center code.
2. Department Name is Public Housing (PHD).
3. The Office Group is the sending office. Example: Fairbanks.
4. Enter the temporary box number from your *Records Retention File Box Contents*.
5. Type in a brief box description. Keep information less than one line if possible, such as: HCV off program Client Files, Public Housing vacated files, or Closed Applications.
6. Type in your content dates - the month/year the files start and the month/year the files end. For example, for fiscal year 2009, enter "01/09 to 12/09."
7. Assign an accession number to the box.
   - The accession number begins with the current *Records Retention Schedule Number*. The Schedule Number appears on the first page in the upper right-hand corner.
   - The second part of the accession number is the Item Number. Samples of Item Numbers are:

     Item .07 Housing Eligibility Module Reports: Waiting Lists for All Applicants. The exhausted waiting lists will be retained in a binder on site with the most current on top for a period of no less than one-sliding year then destroyed. HE module reports are not sent to archives.

     Item .10 Intake Applications for All Programs: Includes files of applicants for housing assistance. Withdrawn or denied applicant files will be retained on site for one year, at Records Center for 2 years, then destroyed.

Item .11 Public Housing Program Vacated Client Files. Vacated tenant files (no money owed) will be retained on site for one year then archived.

- For the above examples, the current accession numbers would be 48801.07, 48801.10, and 48801.11.

8. Leave the disposition date blank. Records Center Staff will enter this number.
9. Leave the Records Center Box Number field blank. Records will match each box with the description on the *RTO* and assign a bar code to replace the temporary number.
10. Sign as the Representative on the form.
11. Enter the date.
12. Regional Managers, or their designee, will sign as the Department Manager.

5. **Sending Boxes**
   Follow all instructions. Do not ship boxes without filling out the paperwork properly.

Instructions: Sending an Archive Box

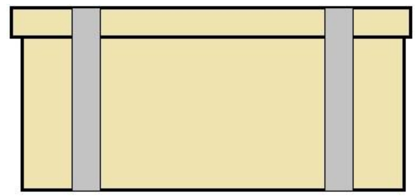
1. Follow the steps above to prepare and catalog the box.
2. Attach the *Records Retention File Box Contents* to the appropriate *Records Transfer Order*. Staff will need this information to recall a file or box.
3. Send an email to "*Administrative Services/Records" to make sure that Records has room to receive your boxes. You will need to tell them how many boxes you plan to ship.
4. Records will respond directly to staff to let you know when they will be able to receive your boxes.
5. Once approved by Records to send your boxes, scan the *RTO* and *Box Contents Forms* to Records. Email these to "*Administrative Services/Records".
6. Put a copy of the *RTO* and the *Box Contents Forms* in your records binder.
7. Ship the boxes to the Records Center (see Shipping section below).
8. Once the boxes have been received and cataloged by Records, they will send a completed RTO to staff with the box number.

6. **Maintaining Records**
   Each office will keep records of archived items. Central Office recommends that the records be kept in a binder in a central location available to all staff.

Instructions – Archive Recordkeeping

1. Each office will maintain a binder containing the final *Records Transfer Order* form listing the box "bar code" from the Records Department.
2. The Records Center keeps a database and tracks the retention schedule for eventual destruction of the files.
3. The Records Center will send the *Destruction Order* to the origination office to approve before ordering records destroyed.
4. Remove the *RTO* from the binder when those files are destroyed.
5. Keep the *Destruction Order* in the binder for one year following records destruction.

3.4.D Shipping from Outlying Offices



1. Prepare all required paperwork.
2. Place the box so that the handles are on each side.
3. Secure the lid to the box by wrapping shipping tape around the box – one time around on each side.
4. Do not secure the lid by taping around the lip of the lid; this blocks the handles.
5. Field offices will arrange a shipping company to have the boxes shipped.
6. Ship to address: Alaska Housing Finance, ATTN: Records Center, 4300 Boniface Parkway, Anchorage, AK 99504.
7. Email or call the Records Center Staff to let them know you sent the boxes.
8. The Records Center will enter the bar code numbers on the *RTO* and send the final copy of the *RTO* to add to the Archive Binder in each office.

3.4.E Sending Boxes to Archive from Anchorage

1. Prepare all required paperwork.
2. Call or email the Records Center Staff to notify them of the number of boxes and their location.
3. Leave the signed *RTO* on top of the boxes.
4. When Records picks up the boxes, they will enter the bar code numbers and leave a copy of the *RTO* for you.

3.5 RETRIEVING A FILE

Refer to the copies of the *RTO* and *File Box Contents*. Once staff has determined which file and box is needed, follow the steps below.

Instructions – Retrieve A File

1. Email Administrative Services/Records to retrieve a file.
2. Include the box number and file name in your request.
3. The file will be retrieved from the box by Records.

4. The file will be mailed certified to the requestor.
5. The file must be returned to Records by certified mail in 30 days. If the file is not returned in 30 days, Records will remind the requestor and wait another 30 days.
6. If the file is still not returned, it will be removed from the box contents list, the box will be returned to archive, and the file will need to be re-archived by the requestor.

3.6 DESTRUCTION

Boxes scheduled for destruction will first be reviewed by the originating office. Offices located outside of Anchorage may request that Central Office staff review files for destruction.

3.6.A Destroying Office Materials

General office materials are items such as reports that are received monthly or convenience copies of documents (not the copy of record). To destroy general office materials, follow the steps below.

Instructions-Destroying Office Materials

1. Place items with the same destruction date in the same box (see How to Pack an Archive Box).
2. Make a list of the files or materials (*Records Retention File Box Contents*) in the box (see How to Catalog a Box).
3. E-mail the Records Center staff to request a destruction order for a non-system box. Provide a brief description of each box and the temporary box number.
4. Sign the destruction order when received and attach *Records Retention File Box Contents*.
5. Transfer the boxes to Records (see Shipping section).

3.6.B Destroying Archived Materials

When a box becomes eligible for destruction, Records sends a Destruction Order to the appropriate office to confirm that the box should be destroyed. Staff will review the box contents records to confirm destruction. Once a box has been destroyed, it cannot be retrieved. Call Central Office if you need help determining whether to destroy a box.