Instructions for Completing the Records Survey (RM-2 Form)

The purpose of the records survey is to gather the information about your records that you will need to create or update retention schedules. During the survey stage, you are gathering broad, over-arching information about the records and determining how many distinct groupings you have, so box and folder inventory lists are not necessary at this stage.

A record is defined in Article 1, § 10-2 of the City Code as "any documentary material in any form created or received by an agency in connection with the transaction of public business." "Record" includes:

(i) written materials, email, books, photographs, photocopies, publications, forms, microfilms, tapes, computerized records, maps, drawings, and other materials in any format;

(ii) data generated, stored, received, or communicated by electronic means for use by, or storage in, an information system or for transmission from one information system to another; and

(iii) public records with temporary value that may be destroyed after the passage of a specified period, known as "non-permanent records," which include extra copies of documents retained for convenience or reference, private papers of a non-official character, extra copies of materials for which complete record sets exist, catalogs, trade journals, or material objects lacking evidential value.

The instructions below provide explanations for each part of the form, including additional questions and examples to help you determine how to answer. You may attach additional documentation if any of the fields feel too short to include all the relevant information for a group of records. **Note:** You will complete 1 form for each distinct group of records.

If you have any questions about surveying your records or filling out the form not addressed in these documents, you may contact archives and records management staff for assistance.

Contact Information:

Department of Legislative Reference
Archives and Records Management
2615 Mathews Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Phone: 410-396-3884
Email: rm.dlr@baltimorecity.gov

Department/Sub-Unit Information

Department	Provide the full name of the parent agency. Examples: Department of Planning; Department of Public Works
Bureau/Division	Include the full name of the sub-unit that creates and uses the records being surveyed. Examples: Land Use and Urban Design; Water and Wastewater
Address	Provide the address for the agency or sub-unit that creates and uses the records.
Contact	Provide the name(s) of the person(s) who is responsible for overseeing management of the records being surveyed and/or liaising with city records center staff along with a contact phone number or email address.

Records Survey Information

1. Series, Title

Identify the type or function of the records. If a short-hand name or acronym is commonly used for the records by agency staff, please clarify in description. Title should be specific and descriptive. ***Examples:*** *Executive Board Minutes; Cash Deposit Slips; Project files; Contract Drawings & Design Sketches*

2. Description

Identify the record function (past and/or present), type(s), creators, content, and context as fully as possible. Questions to consider:

- What actions or agency functions are documented or served by these records?
- Who creates, edits, accesses, and uses these records? How or why are they used?
- What types of records are included in this group? ***Examples:*** *paper forms, digital publications, reports, memos, photographs, drawings, ledgers, minutes, etc.*
- Do the records contain any known or suspected personally identifiable information, protected health information, or other sensitive information that requires access restrictions?

3. Location of Records

Note the physical address(es) and room number(s) if applicable, where the records are located. Indicate the location or storage type(s) that currently applies to these records. If other, explain. ***Example of other:*** *external hard drives*.

4. Volume

Indicate or estimate the quantity of records. That includes number of file cabinet drawers, number of standard records boxes or bankers' boxes, linear feet, etc.

Estimated Accumulation/Year: How much do you typically add to this series of records on a yearly basis? Can be number of files, number of boxes, etc.

5. **Records Size/Format**

   Indicate the dimensions or physical size(s) of records. ***Example:*** *Letter; Legal 8.5 x 14"; ANSI D 22x34"; 5x7"; Oversize 36 x 48"*

   For digital materials, indicate number of files and space occupied in GB (or appropriate measure).

   Indicate the format(s) or type(s) of records. ***Example:*** *Paper; Binders; Microfilm; Digital – PDF, Word docx; Photo negatives; VHS tapes*

6. **File Arrangement**

   Describe what order, if any, currently exists. If materials are boxed, how were they grouped together? ***Example:*** *Chronologically by year and then month; Alphabetically by patient last name; Negatives arranged in envelopes by event title*

7. **Inclusive Dates/Discontinued**

   Include the approximate date of the earliest record and the date of the latest record. If records in this series are still actively being generated, use earliest date to present. ***Example:*** *2005-2015; 2019-present; 2009-07 -2010-06*

   If these records are no longer actively being generated by agency activities, indicate the date that materials were discontinued.

8. **File Breaks**

   Indicate if files are grouped into any recurring sets and restarted. Also indicate if you are aware of any gaps (missing records by type, time period, etc.). ***Example:*** *Meeting minutes grouped by fiscal year. Missing 2006-2007.*

9. **Audit Requirements**

   If these records are subject to audit and have audit-related retention requirements, list them here along with the organization or office that conducts the audit. If possible, include reference to regulations or statutes where this information can be found.

10. **Estimated Activity**

Current year:	Indicate the frequency with which these records are used or referenced within the year of their creation.
Prior Year:	Indicate the frequency of use for last year's set of records.
Low Use:	About how many years pass before these records are considered inactive or have low frequency of use?

11. **Historical or Administrative Significance**

   Regardless of audit requirements, do the records have legal or operational significance for City government? Do the records document significant processes or roles within City government? Do the records tell a story about how Baltimore City government functioned in any way? How far in the future can you imagine any member of the public or researcher would be interested in the records?

12. Retention Recommended

Based on length of active use by the department, any known audit requirements, any regulations or statutes that apply, and the historical or administrative significance represented by these records, how long would you recommend the records be retained? Indicate the retention period for both in-office/active use and records center storage. The retention period will be negotiated with the Records Management Officer and the City Archivist.

Examples:

Records should be maintained in the agency offices for 5 years and then transferred to the city archives for permanent retention.

After employee separation, records should be retained by the office for 3 years and by the records center for 7 years, then disposed.

13. Inventory Prepared By

List name(s) and contact number or email (if different from above).

File Naming Convention

Complete 1 survey form for each distinct group of records. Save each form with the following file name format:

{Dept abbr./acronym}_{Bureau/Div}_{Series/Title abbr.}_{Year}-{Month}

Example: BPD_Admin_Finance_Receipts_2024-04