

# Introduction to Records Management for State Employees

*Wisconsin Public Records Board ( PRB ) : Protecting the legal,  
financial and historical interests of the state in public records.*

# Wisconsin's Records Laws

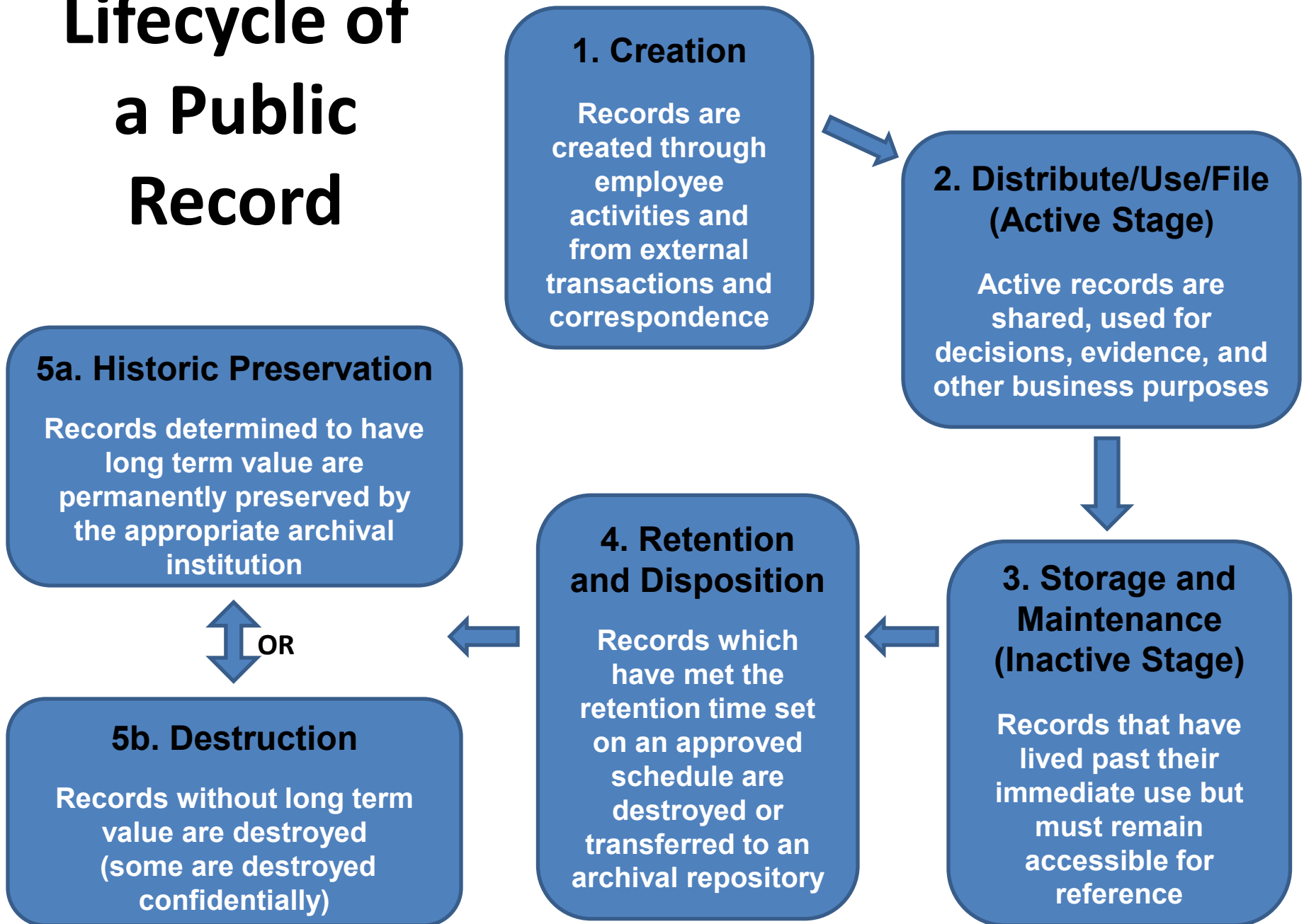
- Wis. Stat. § 16.61(2)(b) defines “public records” for the purposes of records retention and disposition
- Wis. Stat. § 19.32(2) defines “records” for purposes of the records access and disclosure provisions of Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31-19.39 (known as the public records law or the open records law)

# What is Records Management?

The practice of maintaining records throughout their lifecycle



# Lifecycle of a Public Record



# Why Public Records Management?

- Improve effectiveness
- Comply with applicable legal requirements
- Document governmental activities
- Promote transparency in government
- Fulfill obligations to the public
- Minimize litigation risk
- Retrieve information faster
- Simplify decision making



# What Are Your Public Records Responsibilities?

- Recognize and manage public records created as part of your job duties
- Protect and save public records you create and use
- File paper and electronic documents so they can be readily accessed (use agency file plan if applicable)
- Maintain confidential and sensitive information appropriately
- Dispose of information that is not a public record
- Retain public records for the appropriate length of time
- Only dispose of public records in accordance with an approved Record Disposition Authorization (RDA)
- Know where to go for help

# What is a Public Record?

Recorded information, in any format (including paper, electronic, audio/visual, calendars, maps) created or received by a state employee and/or agency in the transaction of business\*

*\*full definition found in Wis. Stats. §16.61*

# Where Might Public Records Occur?

- Email and Voicemail
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.
- Websites
- Videotapes/DVDs
- Webcasts/Webinars
- Calendars
- Documents, spreadsheets, databases
- Personal devices if used for agency business
- Audio recordings
- Maps and blueprints





# What is a Public Record?

- Created in the course of business
  - correspondence and memos (paper and electronic), agreements, studies, reports
- Received for action
  - Information requests, controlled correspondence, open records requests
- Mandated by statute, regulation, or federal guidelines
  - statutorily required programs, administrative records, dockets

# What Qualities Do Public Records Have?

- Document state activities
  - calendars, meeting minutes, project reports
- Support financial obligations or legal claims
  - grants, contracts, litigation case files, or audits
- Communicate agency requirements
  - guidance documents, policies, procedures

# What Public Records Might You Have?

Examples are:

- Business-related correspondence
- Program-related documentation
- Teams, projects, committees, or workgroup documentation
- Activity and project reports
- Training materials you have presented
- Work/information requests
- Operating procedures
- Calendars and schedules



# What is Not a Public Record?

- Reference materials and stock copies
  - vendor catalogs, phone books, agency publications, blank forms
- Duplicate copies
  - copies of records (paper or electronic) used for convenience or reference purposes only
- Drafts or working papers
  - draft documents without substantive comments, rough notes, calculations
- General announcements and unsolicited email (internal or external)
  - reminders received by all staff, listserv messages, spam

# How to Manage Public Records

- Policies
  - Learn your agency's Records Management policies
  - Know which retention schedules (General Records Schedule or Record Disposition Authorization) relate to your program records
- Filing
  - File records to allow for easy access over time
  - Use your agency's approved filing system
- Resources
  - Contact your agency's Records Officer or designated Records Coordinator

# What is a Retention Schedule?

Retention schedules:

- Group and describe related public records.
- Mandate **how long** public records are kept (retention).
- Mandate **what happens** to public records at the end of that time period (disposition).
- Are promulgated as policy via statewide General Records Schedule (GRS) or agency specific Record Disposition Authorization (RDA)

# Summary

- You will create and receive public records
- You are responsible for managing them
  - This is accomplished through GRSs and RDAs
- Proper public records management will improve your effectiveness and efficiency
- There are resources to assist you
  - Records Coordinators
  - Records Officer
  - Legal counsel

