

APPENDIX 3: FILE MANAGEMENT GUIDE

How to Set Up Files

Arrange Files for Easier Disposition.

A. Keep inactive records separate from active records. Files are inactive when referred to not more than once a month per file drawer.

B. Cut off or break file regularly. End the files at regular times to permit their transfer, retirement, or destruction in complete file blocks. Use the cutoff instructions in the HUD records disposition schedules or General Records Schedules where they exist. Cutoff instructions are as follows:

1. Chronological sequence files are filed by period of account, usually fiscal year (e.g., accounting records). Records arranged chronologically cut off and retire in blocks.
 2. Case or project files cutoff. At the end of a transaction or event (e.g., final purchase order payment, lease termination, or project completion).
 - a. A closed case file should be marked with the date of closing and placed in a separate inactive file. The inactive files can then be retired or destroyed in convenient fiscal or calendar year blocks.
 - b. Case files that continue over many years can be cut off by setting up a new folder each year and retiring the prior year folders which have little reference activity.
 3. Subject files. A decision should be made on when to break subject files.
 - a. Subject files are cut off at the end of the calendar year or in 3-year blocks.
 - b. Files that cannot be closed out in 3 years should be screened to remove material not needed for current operations. The noncurrent material should then be destroyed, stored in another location, or retired to the Federal Records Center as allowed by the disposition schedule.
 4. Technical reference materials have no established cutoff. They should be destroyed when superseded, obsolete, or no longer needed. Review the files annually to determine if they are current and still useful. Technical reference materials cannot be retired to a Federal Records Center.

1. Vertical files: Type the file code and title one space from the left edge of the label for standard folders to be filed in vertical file cabinets. For example:

PER 5-2
CY 19XX

MERIT STAFFING

2. Shelf files: Type the file code and title on the right edge to adapt standard folders to shelf filing. For example:

MAIL & MESSENGER
CY 19XX

ADS 5-1
MAIL & MESS.

Labeling Permanent Folders. The HUD records disposition schedules in Handbook 2225.6 provide for the eventual transfer of certain Headquarters subject and case/project files to the National Archives for permanent retention.

A. Type or write "PERMANENT" on each folder label to identify these files.

B. If the folder label is already covered with information, stamp or write "PERMANENT" on the front of the folder, preferably in the upper right corner.

How to Set Up Alphabetical Name Index Files. Divide the index file into three categories:

A. Interoffice. Prepare a folder for each HUD organization as needed. Keep Headquarters organizations separate from State Office and Field Offices. To avoid preparing and filing lots of cross references, use combination folders labeled:

1. "INTEROFFICE" for correspondence addressed to Headquarters and State Offices or Field Offices.

2. "HEADQUARTERS" for correspondence addressed to two or more Headquarters offices.

3. "STATE OFFICES AND FIELD OFFICES" for correspondence addressed to two or more State offices or Field Offices. Make combination folders for each State Office when filing large amounts of correspondence addressed to two or more Field offices within each State Office.

B. Interagency. Prepare a folder for each Government agency the office corresponds with regularly. Use a combination folder labeled "INTERAGENCY" for correspondence addressed to two or more agencies.

C. Other (A to Z). These files contain communications addressed to individuals, organizations, states, and cities. Start with the following folders and expand as needed:

A to E

F to J

K to M

etc.