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Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
Tanya Marshall, Chief Records Officer and State Archivist

May 7, 2025

**To: Hon. Martin LaLonde, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary**

From: Tanya Marshall, Chief Records Officer and State Archivist

Re: Vermont State Archives and Records Administration: Introduction and Overview

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself and the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) to the House Committee on Judiciary. The following is supplemental to my testimony today and provides a general overview of VSARA for the Committee's reference.

- Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (p. 2)
- Legal Requirements for Information Management and Record Schedules (p. 3)
- State of Vermont Archival Records Standard (p. 4)

More information about VSARA is available on our website (sos.vermont.gov/vsara), including copies of recent legislative reports as well as other reports:

- [Report Related to the Fiscal, Governance, and Operational Sustainability of Uniform Approaches to the Modernization of the Acceptance, Recording, and Availability of Deeds and Other Property Records \(Required by Sec. 3 of Act 171 of 2022\)](#)
- [Report Related to the Records of Children Placed in Foster Homes or Residential Child Care Facilities \(Required by Sec. 8a of Act 100 of 2022\)](#)
- [Interim Report Related to the Fiscal, Governance, and Operational Sustainability of Uniform Approaches to the Modernization of the Acceptance, Recording, and Availability of Deeds and Other Property Records \(Required by Sec. 3 of Act 171 of 2022\)](#)
- [Report Related to Data Privacy; State Government \(Required by Sec. 1 of Act 89 of 2020\)](#).

Other recent activities of VSARA include participation in:

- Vermont's National Criminal Justice Reform Project (see [Data Integration Report](#))
- UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy Transparency Study (see [Report](#))
- Vermont Arts & Culture Disaster and Resilience Network (see [VACDaRN website](#))

Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), created in 2008, administers the *Statewide Records and Information Management Program* for local and state government ([3 V.S.A. § 117](#)) and the management requirements of the Vermont Public Records Act, particularly those pertaining to the destruction of records and information, including data ([1 V.S.A. § 317a](#)). VSARA has 20 full-time classified employees and is organized into two service units and two programs.

Core Focus

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration preserves, promotes, protects, and provides accurate, authentic, and reliable records and information through our expert programs and services and our partnerships with Vermont government and communities for the benefit of the public we collectively serve by:

- Fostering strategies and technologies to simplify recordkeeping.
- Offering professional assistance and building capabilities statewide.
- Providing the right information to the right people at the right time.

Administrative and Reference Services

Administrative and reference services relating to state archival records, statutory filings, record authentications and certifications; and the State Boards and Commission Registry.

Technical Services

Technical services relating to analog, paper and digital records transferred to the State Archives Vaults, State Records Center, and Digital State Archives (VT Re•tain).

Targeted Assistance Program

Records appraisals, information management assistance, and consultative services to executive and judicial branches of Vermont state government.

Historical and Local Records Program

Records appraisals, information management assistance, and consultative services to local government, historical societies and museums, and colleges and universities.

Primary Statutes

- [1 V.S.A. § 317a](#): Management of Public Records
- [3 V.S.A. § 107\(a\)\(1;3-6\)](#): Legislative Clerk
- [3 V.S.A. § 116a](#): State Boards and Commissions Registry
- [3 V.S.A. § 117](#): Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
- [3 V.S.A. § 218](#): Agency and Department Records Management Program
- [3 V.S.A., Chap. 25](#): Administrative Procedure

Legal Requirements for Information Management and Record Schedules

Public records in general and archival records in particular should be systematically managed to provide ready access to vital information, to promote the efficient and economical operation of government, and to preserve their legal, administrative, and informational value.

Any public agency may seek services from the Statewide Records and Information Management Program, as defined in 3 V.S.A. § 117(b) and administered by the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, to establish, maintain, and implement an active and continuing internal records and information management program for the agency.

A custodian of public records shall not destroy, give away, sell, discard, or damage any record or records in his or her charge, unless specifically authorized by law or under a record schedule, as defined in 3 V.S.A. § 117(a)(6), that has been approved by the State Archivist. [1 V.S.A. § 317a](#)

<i>Appraisal</i>	The identification, classification, and analysis of all public records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, to determine their value and ultimate disposition, based upon their legal, administrative, or informational value. (3 V.S.A. § 117(a)(3))
<i>Archival Record</i>	Public record that has continuing legal, administrative, or informational value. (3 V.S.A. § 117(a)(2))
<i>Management</i>	Records and information management means the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of public records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of, and information about, public agency business activities and transactions in the form of public records. (1 V.S.A. § 317(a)(1))
<i>Public Agency</i>	Any agency, board, department, commission, committee, branch, instrumentality, or authority of the State or any agency, board, committee, department, branch, instrumentality, commission, or authority of any political subdivision of the State. (1 V.S.A. § 317(a)(2))
<i>Public Record</i>	Any written or recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which is produced or acquired in the course of public agency business. (1 V.S.A. § 317(b))
<i>Record Schedule</i>	A policy issued by the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration and approved by the State Archivist governing the life cycle management, retention, and disposition of public records. (3 V.S.A. § 117(a)(6))

VERMONT ARCHIVAL RECORDS STANDARD¹

Pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 117, the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) identifies the following records as having continuing value to the State of Vermont and therefore shall be appraised as archival.

1. Records providing evidence of persistent legal status, rights, and entitlements of individuals, groups, organizations, and public agencies.

“Persistent” means legal status, rights, and entitlements do not expire, despite the passage of time.

2. Records providing evidence of significant agency policies and procedures.

“Significant” means policies and procedures which have a noticeable, measurable, or critical effect on agency development, processes or activities.

3. Records providing evidence of agency deliberations, decisions, and actions relating to major social, economic, political, and environmental issues.

“Major” means issues that affect a greater portion of the population; are greater in scope or effect than other issues; or require greater attention or concern.

4. Records providing evidence of the significant effects of agency programs and actions on individuals, communities, and the man-made and natural resources of the State.

“Significant” means programs and actions that have a noticeable, measurable, or critical effect on the individuals, communities, and the manmade and natural resources the agency serves.

5. Records that substantially enrich the understanding of Vermont’s history, society, culture, ideas, and people at the level of statewide prominence.

“Substantially” means records that are extraordinary in scope or evidential value and not preserved elsewhere.

¹ Excerpt of [Archival Records Standard for All Public Agencies](#), effective December 2007 and last revised in April 2020. Standard also appraises all records previously classified as archival that were transferred into the legal custody of the Secretary of State or the Director of Public Records prior to July 1, 2008 as archival and with further review or reappraisal only by permission from the Vermont Chief Records Officer and State Archivist.