



## Tennessee Archives Management Advisory

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1999

### POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR COUNTY ARCHIVIST AND COUNTY RECORDS OFFICER

The following descriptions may be used as information from which local officials may draft their own position descriptions. They are a guide, not a state requirement. However, they do represent thoughtful consideration of archives and records management positions and their functions in the state, county, and municipal governments.

#### **County Archivist Position Description**

##### **1. General description of the position:**

The county archivist is recommended for appointment by the county public records commission to the county mayor, who nominates a candidate to the county legislative body for approval of the appointment.

Under the general direction and guidance of the county mayor and with the advice of the county public records commission, the county archivist

- 1.1 develops and manages the county archives program,
- 1.2 reviews the performance of the archives program,
- 1.3 advises the county mayor and public records commission on the performance of the archives program,
- 1.4 reports at least quarterly to the county mayor and public records commission on the performance of the county archives program.<sup>1</sup>

##### **2. Specific duties and responsibilities:** A county archivist shall

- 2.1 preserve, arrange, and describe permanently valuable records in archives and make them available for public inspection in accordance with
  - national archival principles and standards
  - state and local laws, resolutions, rules, regulations, and policies pertaining to

- the management and disposition of permanent records and public inspection and confidentiality, and
  - rules and regulations of the county public records commission;
- 2.2 develop, promulgate, and implement an archives program based on archives policies and procedures advised by the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) and the County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS);
  - 2.3 support the county government by assuring the continuous custody, security, and evidential integrity of records in the archives and by providing certified copies of documentary evidence preserved in the archives,<sup>2</sup> and receive and keep a good account of records transferred to the archives for permanent retention according to records disposition authorizations;
  - 2.4 as a member of the county public records commission, participate in discussions and provide expert advice in appraisals of the archival value of records for permanent retention and on the promulgation of rules and regulations for the protection, preservation, and effective public use of archives;
  - 2.5 advise the county records officer and other county officers of the archival implications of new developments in records keeping systems;
  - 2.6 supervise a staff of employees and/or volunteer workers to do the work of the archives, and provide advice and training in archival procedures, policies, and techniques to archives employees and volunteers;
  - 2.7 manage the county archive facility and coordinate with other county offices on the provision of utilities and other services to the archives facility, and monitor the environmental conditions of the archives facility and recommend necessary repairs and improvements;
  - 2.8 prepare, implement, and account for a budget of annual expenditures for the operation of the archives program and archives facility;
  - 2.9 prepare and maintain an up-to-date inventory of all records series and collections in the custody of the county archives, and publicize the holdings of the archives and their availability for public inspection;
  - 2.10 maintain close and cooperative relations with the local historical, cultural, and educational institutions and organizations to coordinate the sharing of archival evidence and information in the interests of the community;
  - 2.11 coordinate and cooperate with the state archives in the microfilming of records of

permanent value;

- 2.12 coordinate and work with the county attorney to assure that materials other than county records that are donated to the county archives are properly governed by a formal deed of gift and that the rights of all parties to such agreements are properly protected according to law, and receive and account for permanent records and other historical materials transferred to the county archives by county offices or donated to the county archives by private interests;
- 2.13 coordinate the development of a disaster preparedness plan to ensure the appropriate preparation for and protection of archives in the event of a disaster.

**3. Minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet position requirements:**

To perform the foregoing functions and tasks successfully in the public interest and for the public benefit, a county archivist must have or must rapidly acquire and master the following sorts of knowledge such as may be found in the basic manuals series of publications issued by and obtainable from the Society of American Archivists, including:

- 3.1 knowledge of basic archival principles and practices, including: appraisal and selection of records for accessioning; arrangement and description; reference services and access; preservation and protection of records; managing archival programs; and the professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities of archives management;
- 3.2 knowledge of the county government's organizational structure, working relationships among offices, programs, and work practices;
- 3.3 knowledge of the statutes, rules, regulations, and policies of state and local government that pertain to the keeping, disposition, and inspection of public records;
- 3.4 knowledge of traditional and electronic records-making, records transmission, records keeping, and records retrieval systems;
- 3.5 knowledge of the functions, operations, and records keeping systems of each county office of record;
- 3.6 knowledge of the legal, fiscal, and historical evidential value of records;
- 3.7 knowledge of county history, geography, and culture;
- 3.8 knowledge of basic local history and genealogical research methods;

- 3.9 knowledge of basic historical and genealogical writing and publishing;
- . . . and must further have or rapidly acquire and master the following experience, skills, and abilities:
- 3.10 an undergraduate college education that includes American history, or the equivalent knowledge acquired by experience and other means, or high school graduation plus 2-3 years of experience in archives work;
- 3.11 knowledge gained through certified training in courses and workshops in archives management offered by the Center for Government Training of the Institute for Public Service of the University of Tennessee or the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Society of American Archivists, archival training courses of colleges and universities of the Tennessee state university system, or other equivalent coursework;
- 3.12 effective written and oral communication skills, including basic arithmetic, mathematical, and statistical skills;
- 3.13 skills and abilities to work effectively and cooperatively with others reliably and systematically.

### **County Records Officer Position Description**

#### **1. General description of the position:**

The county records officer is recommended for appointment by the county public records commission to the county mayor, who nominates a candidate to the county legislative body for approval of the appointment.

Under the general direction and guidance of the county mayor and with the advice of the county public records commission, the county records officer

- 1.1 develops and manages the county records management program,
- 1.2 reviews the performance of the records management program,
- 1.3 advises the county mayor and public records commission on the performance of the records management program,
- 1.4 reports at least quarterly to the county mayor and public records commission on the performance of the county records management program.<sup>3</sup>

#### **2. Specific duties and responsibilities:** A county records officer shall

- 2.1 develop, promulgate, and implement a records management program based on

records management policies and procedures advised by the Records Management Division (RMD) of the state government's Department of General Services, by the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA), and by the County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS);

- 2.2 advise the public records commission by appraising the retention value of records, using CTAS guidelines as the basis for judgment and recommendation;
- 2.3 implement the policies, rules, and regulations of the county public records commission for the management of county records;
- 2.4 provide county officers and employees with advice and training in records management procedures, policies, and use of appropriate forms as necessary; work with office records coordinators to maintain office records management programs;
- 2.5 distribute CTAS records retention and disposition guidance schedules to county offices; assist staff to survey records in order to compile and implement accurate and current records retention and disposition plans and schedules for each office;
- 2.6 prepare and maintain an up-to-date inventory of all records series employed in the work of all county offices of record;
- 2.7 advise and assist in identifying records that can be destroyed in accordance with retention guidelines;
- 2.8 review existing records retention and disposition guidelines and records disposition authorizations, and recommend changes to the county public records commission;
- 2.9 upon approval of the public records commission recommend statewide changes in or additions to guidelines to CTAS;
- 2.10 advise and assist offices to prepare requests for records disposition authorizations (RDAs) from the county public records commission;
- 2.11 advise and assist offices in accurate and timely records destruction by completing or reviewing records disposition authorizations pursuant to policy and procedures for destruction of records set by the county public records commission and according to state government-approved destruction methods;
- 2.12 coordinate and approve transfer of records to archival or temporary records storage using a properly-executed memorandum of transmittal to identify the

records being transferred and the purpose of transfer;

- 2.13 identify vital, archival, and permanent records, and ensure that they are scheduled for permanent retention and that they are properly transferred to the county archives upon expiration of their retention terms;
- 2.14 advise and assist offices to ensure records are properly maintained, protected, and accessible to public inspection for the length of time cited in applicable records retention and disposition schedules;
- 2.15 advise offices on application of statutes that protect certain records from public inspection;
- 2.16 review new state legislation and new resolutions of the county legislative body to determine their effect on records keeping and advise offices accordingly;
- 2.17 advise offices as to the effects on records retention, authenticity, and public inspection of the reformatting and storage of records in various media such as electronic and film media;
- 2.18 advise and assist offices in the negotiation of contracts with commercial vendors of electronic and microfilm imaging systems and in the examination, testing, and quality control of imaging products to assure that minimum national standards are maintained according to TCA §10-7-501 and that the products are properly examined and certified to be true, faithful, and complete copies suitable as legal evidence;
- 2.19 coordinate the development of a disaster preparedness plan to ensure the appropriate preparation for and protection of records in the event of a disaster.

### **3. Minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet position requirements:**

To perform the foregoing functions and tasks successfully in the public interest and for the public benefit, a county records officer must have or must rapidly acquire and master the following sorts of knowledge, knowledge that is best and most reliably obtained from the published literature of such professional organizations as the National Association of Government Archives and records Administrators (NAGARA) or ARMA International, including the following:

- 3.1 knowledge of the county's organizational structure, working relationships among offices, programs, and work practices;
- 3.2 knowledge of the statutes, rules, regulations, and policies of state and local government that pertain to the keeping, disposition, and inspection of public records;

- 3.3 knowledge of the requirements for quality control of contracts with vendors for telecommunications systems, information systems, microfilming systems, and electronic imaging systems;
  - 3.4 knowledge of traditional and electronic records making, records transmission, records keeping, and records retrieval systems;
  - 3.5 knowledge of the national standards for archival quality microfilm to stand instead of original paper records;
  - 3.6 knowledge of the functions, operations, and records keeping systems of each county office of record;
  - 3.7 knowledge of the legal, fiscal, and historical evidential value of records;
- . . . and must further have or rapidly acquire and master the following experience, skills, and abilities:
- 3.8 college or business school graduation plus 2-3 years of experience related to the above-listed functions, or an equivalent combination of applicable education and experience;
  - 3.9 knowledge gained through certified training in courses and workshops in records management and/or archives management offered by the Center for Government Training of the Institute for Public Service of the University of Tennessee, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services, ARMA International, or other professional records management organizations;
  - 3.10 effective written and oral communication skills, including basic arithmetic, mathematical, and statistical skills;
  - 3.11 skills and abilities to work effectively and cooperatively with others reliably and systematically.

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Where the county archivist is also the county records officer, elements of the position description for county records officer should be added to these elements.

<sup>2</sup> Some originating offices may wish to retain sole certification authority. Archives staffed solely with volunteers may not have anyone on the premises who is authorized to certify copies of records—in which case the archivist must take the original document to the official who can certify, and must then obtain a certified copy for the person needing it.

<sup>3</sup> NOTE: Where the county records officer is also the county archivist, elements of the position description for county archivist should be added to these elements.