NOTE: This chapter was prepared by archivists from the Arizona State History and Archives Division

MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

The records maintained by local governments are among the most valuable resources in their care. They are essential for the conduct of ongoing operations and the official documentation of legally binding decisions and actions of the government. They allow the public to understand civic issues. Records are the community's memory.

Records are preserved because:

- Officials use them to control and monitor government operations
- They document the conduct of public business
- Records ensure and measure government accountability
- Many government records contain information that is used by researchers from within and from outside government
- Historians and other researchers use selected government records for information on individuals, groups and the community, on the development of the government and its operations and on the life of the community itself

Everyday pressures and duties often leave officials little time for attention to records issues. To help, the Arizona State Archives encourages partnerships with local government offices by providing assistance to them.

- It helps agencies determine if they hold permanent records
- It consults on permanent records storage
- It reduces storage space required by the county by transferring permanent records to the State Archives;
- It reduces demands on your staffs' time after records transfers because the State Archives staff answers the constituents' questions
- It makes records available to the agency within 24-hours
- It stores records in secure areas and monitors their use
- It provides preservation services for permanent records

Permanent Records:

The State Archives has identified some **records** on the general schedules which have **historical value.** These records are permanent and should not be destroyed. For convenience, they are listed below, but other records normally considered non-permanent may also have historical value.

These include:

1. Board Minutes of boards, commissions, and committees established by statute, resolution, proclamation or ordinance.
2. Council Minutes (Incorporated Cities and Towns)
3. Original or "official copies" of formal policy directives.
4. Original copy of organizational documentation including charts.

For assistance or help with determining whether or not your records are historical, contact the State Archives:

History and Archives Division
Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records
1700 W. Washington, Suite 442
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Internet address: archives@dlapr.lib.az.us

A bibliography of published materials which are helpful to officials with records responsibilities is also presented here.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS

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Thompson, Enid, Local History Collections; A Manual for Librarians. Nashville: Association for State and Local History, 1978. $6.25.

White, Kenneth, "Applying Computer Technology to Records Systems; A Guide for Local Government," Local Government Records Technical Publication Series, No. 6. Albany: National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, the International Institute of County Clerks and the National Association of Counties, March 1992. $3.00 for single copies or $10 for full set.