



County Technical Assistance Service

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Purchasing-Records Management

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS electronic library known as e-Li. This online library is maintained daily by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other e-Li material.

Sincerely,

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Table of Contents

Purchasing-Records Management	3
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Purchasing-Records Management

Reference Number: CTAS-938

Reasons for Records Management

Space—In most counties, it is rare for a county office or courthouse to have all of the space it needs. Courthouses are bursting at the seams with old records stuffed into basements, storage closets, attics, and other more creative locations. Thus, it is cost effective for counties to implement a records management program.

Records Serve as a Legal Foundation—Local governments and the citizens they serve are both dependent upon good documentation to demonstrate their legal status. When disputes arise over legal issues, it is important to have good documentation to rely on. Local governments have an important responsibility to preserve these records. Proper records management will insure these records are preserved and can be found when needed.

Historical Preservation of Documents—Counties play a vital role in preserving our nation's history. The documents and records of local governments give us insights into the lives of our ancestors and circumstances of our times. With proper records management, the important records are preserved, the less essential records are destroyed when no longer useful so they do not take up available space. The records are catalogued and organized so that officials and the public can access them. The records are stored under proper conditions to enable long term preservation.

Laws that Require Records to be Kept

Since county governments are instrumentalities of the state, most of the laws regarding what records need to be kept by county officials and how those records should be managed are found in the *Tennessee Code Annotated* (T.C.A.). County officials should also be aware that federal laws and regulations require them to keep certain records. This is particularly true of payroll information and other employment related records. Not every record in a government office has a corresponding statute or regulation requiring that record to be kept. Many records are generated simply as an ordinary course of business without any legal authority mandating their creation.

For more information, see the [Records Management](#) topic.

[Retention Schedule for Certain Purchasing Records](#)

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