Document Retention Policy for the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute[1]

Objective

To create and maintain a systematic method for ensuring that the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute's records are protected and maintained and that they are discarded when no longer needed or valued.

Purpose

This Document Retention Policy aims to ensure the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute's ("FSI") compliance with IRS 501(c)(3) guidelines, the Florida Not-For-Profit Corporation Act, the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act, and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding the retention and destruction of documents and records. This policy aims to ensure that necessary records of the FSI are adequately protected and maintained and that records which are no longer needed by FSI or are of no value are discarded at appropriate times. This policy is also for the purpose of assisting staff in understanding their obligation in retaining electronic documents, including emails, web files, text files, sound and movie files, PDF documents, and all Microsoft Office or other formatted files.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees, officers, directors, and members of Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute.

Definitions

1. A record is recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristic, which can be retrieved at any time. It includes all original documents, papers, letters, cards, books, photographs, sound or video records, electronic media, and other information containing media that are generated and/or received in connection with transactions of the organization's business. If not indicated otherwise, these are the records to which the Record Retention Schedule applies.
2. Non-record materials include duplicate copies or correspondence, duplicate copies of records used for short-term reference purposes, blank forms, stocks

[1] Document Retention Policy adapted from the Florida Association of Counties as provided by the Florida Nonprofit Alliance (Record Retention - Florida Nonprofit Alliance (flnonprofits.org))

of publications, directories, and transitory messages used primarily for the informal communication of information. Transitory messages do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedure, certify a transaction, or become a receipt. Transitory messages may include but are not limited to email messages with short lived or no administrative value, voice mail, and telephone messages.

Administration of Policy

1. The attached appendix, Appendix A, to the policy is a Record Retention Schedule that is hereby approved as the initial maintenance, retention, and disposal schedule for physical records of FSI and the retention and disposal of electronic records. The FSI Executive Director, or his/her designee, is the officer in charge of the administration of this policy and the implementation of the processes and procedures to ensure that the Record Retention Schedule is followed.
2. The Executive Director is also authorized to: make modification to the Record Retention Schedule from time to time to ensure that it is in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and includes the appropriate document and record categories for FSI; monitor local, state, and federal laws affecting record retention; annually review the record retention and disposal program; and draft and implement operational procedures to ensure compliance with this policy.
3. While records should be destroyed when the retention period has passed, the historical or archival value of some records should be considered in light of future research, public relations, or corporate mission purposes. Managers may request an exception to this policy by presenting an assessment of the particular situation to the Executive Director.
4. The Record Retention Schedules do not apply to non-records. Non-records are maintained for as long as administratively needed and may be discarded when the business use has terminated.
5. Records containing confidential, donor, personnel, financial, or research information must be stored and destroyed in a manner that protects against unauthorized disclosure.

Suspension of Record Disposal in Event of Litigation or Claims

If FSI is served with any subpoena or request for documents or any employee becomes aware of a governmental investigation or audit concerning FSI or the commencement of any litigation against or concerning FSI, such employee shall

inform the Executive Director and any further disposal of documents shall be suspended until such time as the Executive Director, with the advice of counsel, determines otherwise. The Executive Director shall take such steps as is necessary to promptly inform all staff of any suspension in the further disposal of documents.

Applicability

This policy applies to physical records generated during the course of FSI's operation including both original documents and reproductions and this policy applies to the electronic documents described in Section 1.

Document Destruction

Documents that have reached the end of their retention period will be securely destroyed to protect sensitive information. A record of the destruction will be maintained.

Records containing confidential, donor, personnel, financial, or research information must be stored and destroyed in a manner that protects against unauthorized disclosure.

Policy Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with updated federal and state laws and regulations. Amendments will be made as necessary, with Board approval.

Compliance

Adherence to this Document Retention Policy is mandatory for all employees, officers, and directors. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, including termination or removal from office.

Reservation of Authority

Except as otherwise expressly delegated in the policy, the Board of Directors of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute reserves the right to modify, amend, or abolish this policy by majority vote at any regular meeting of the Board or any special meetings of the Board called for that purpose.

Howard T. Odum
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Robert L. Knight
President

October 20, 2026