

# The Management and Preservation of Local Public Records: Report of the State and Local Records Committee

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## Abstract

In 1976 the State and Local Records Committee, Society of American Archivists, conducted a survey of the archival agencies of all fifty states to determine the nature and extent of their role in managing and preserving the records of local governments. A questionnaire brought responses from forty-nine states. Thirty-nine of them reported a local records program currently in operation. Slightly more than half of them are using microfilm as an integral part of the program. Many states have scheduled, or are in the process of scheduling, county and municipal records for retention and disposal. Most states report insufficient funding to provide for the proper operation of a comprehensive local records program. Adequate funding will only become available when state archival agencies campaign actively to convince state legislatures that the money is indeed needed, and the local records programs are worthwhile.

IN RECENT YEARS INCREASING ATTENTION has been focused on the plight of local public records. More and more, state archival agencies are coming to accept responsibility for the management and preservation of the records created by the political and legal subdivisions of the state. In recent years a large number of state archival agencies have begun to take an active role in the management and preservation of public records at the county and municipal level. Despite this developing interest and activity, not since 1964 has there been a comprehensive report on the subject.<sup>1</sup> In 1976 the State and Local Records Committee of the Society of American Archivists noted a need to update the information on local records contained in Ernst Posner's report on *American State Archives*, and authorized and supported a survey of all fifty state archival agencies to determine the nature and extent of each one's role in this crucial area. The method chosen for the survey was the all too common, but inexpensive, questionnaire. Although there are many drawbacks to this method of gathering information, including the problem of interpreting ambiguous answers to questions, it was relatively successful. With minimal telephone follow-up, the survey brought responses from forty-nine states.<sup>2</sup>

Conducted from August through November 1976, the State and Local Records Committee (SLRC) survey sought answers to the following questions:

1. Does the state of \_\_\_\_\_ currently have a program providing for the systematic management and preservation of local public records? If so, by what agency is it administered? When did the program begin operation? How many full-time professionals are assigned to the program?

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst Posner, in his work on *American State Archives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), included, in his individual reports on each state, comments on the management and preservation of local archives.

<sup>2</sup> Hawaii was the only state not to respond.

2. Has any state agency been granted statutory authority over the disposition/destruction of local public records?
3. Have records retention schedules been prepared for either county or municipal records?
4. Does the local records program utilize microfilm as an integral, on-going part of its operation?
5. Is there a regional depository network for local records? If so, how many depositories? Is inter-depository loan of archival materials permitted?
6. What other aspects of local records management and preservation, not mentioned in this questionnaire, are in need of further attention?

The following report, presented in a state-by-state format, is a summary of the information submitted on the survey forms.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Alabama*

Alabama began an active local records program in 1971, implementing the provisions of a law passed in 1955. Working with the Department of Archives and History, the County Records Commission, pursuant to statutory authority, has written records retention schedules for all county records. The statute which created the County Records Commission declares that "no county official shall cause any county record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining the approval of the county records commission."<sup>4</sup>

A staff of two records managers oversees the operation of Alabama's local records program which includes a limited state-financed microfilm program. The local records program is oriented toward records management assistance to the local governments, and local officials are encouraged to retain and care for their own records if at all possible. The Department of Archives and History will, however, accept original records for deposit if the specific situation warrants.

#### *Alaska*

The state of Alaska does not, at the present time, operate a local records program. State statute would permit the State Archives to develop such a program, and that is currently under consideration.

#### *Arizona*

In 1975 the state of Arizona implemented its local records program, administered by the State Library and Archives with a staff of two records managers. The Library and Archives has been granted statutory authority over the disposition of local public records. Some county and municipal offices have had retention schedules prepared for them, but the schedules serve only as guidelines; they have no statutory basis. A limited microfilm program is used to preserve minutes of meetings of governing bodies, while arrangements can be made to film other records, depending upon the merits of the specific situation.

#### *Arkansas*

The Arkansas History Commission, as the state archival agency, was authorized by statute in 1973 to schedule the records of counties and municipalities, subject to the final approval of a Local Government Records Committee, which consists of five elected local officials.<sup>5</sup> The program itself did not begin operation until the middle of 1976, and has not yet completed the task of scheduling these records. A single records manager is responsible for the Arkansas local records program.

#### *California*

California currently has no local records program, but the California Heritage Preservation Commission and the State Archives are now considering the development of a program to manage and preserve the records of the state's political subdivisions. No state agency has yet been granted statutory authority over the disposition of local records.

<sup>3</sup> Because not all respondents supplied all the information requested, some of the descriptions are not as detailed as others. Every effort has been made, however, to present all information accurately and fairly.

<sup>4</sup> Alabama, *Code of Alabama*, title 55, sec. 18, paragraph 13.

<sup>5</sup> Arkansas, Sixty-Ninth General Assembly, Regular Session, 1973, Act 24.

### *Colorado*

Colorado began its effort to care for local archives in 1949, under the direction of the Division of Archives and Public Records, and now has four archivists and four records managers assigned to local records. Retention schedules have been prepared for county and municipal government offices, and the provisions therein must be observed. Statute prohibits the destruction of local records without first obtaining the consent of the state archivists. The division does not provide a microfilm service to local governments, and because of limited space at the state archival facility, encourages local governments to retain original records of permanent value.

### *Connecticut*

The oldest local records program reported began in Connecticut in 1901. The Archives, History and Genealogy Unit of the State Library employs two records managers who are responsible for scheduling town records (Connecticut has no counties), inspecting local offices to ensure compliance with applicable statutes, and providing advice on conservation, restoration, and repair. Microfilm is not an integral part of the program which is aimed instead toward preservation of original records, both by providing proper care in the office of origin and by concentrating original, noncurrent records in the State Library. A manual for use in the training of new town officials, *Records Manual For Connecticut Town Clerks*, has been prepared by the public records administrator.

### *Delaware*

Legislation in Delaware gives authority over local records to the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. At the present time, however, the provisions of the legislation are being implemented in a limited way, mainly by the preparation of a records management manual which will include retention schedules for county and municipal records. At present there is no staff or funding specifically allocated to local records.

### *Florida*

The Department of State's Bureau of Archives and Records Management has been administering local archives in Florida since 1967. At the present time seven archivists and six records managers are responsible for a program that includes scheduling and filming of county and municipal records. The schedules were written under a legislative mandate that declared that the "division [of Archives, History and Records Management] shall adopt reasonable rules and regulations . . . which shall be binding on all agencies relating to the destruction and disposal of records."<sup>6</sup> A records center was completed in 1971, which, in addition to storing and servicing records, also houses a central microfilm service available to all public agencies at cost. The state archives has published several pamphlets for local officials to acquaint them with the various statutes and rules governing public records.

### *Georgia*

A law passed in 1972 initiated Georgia's current local records program. The Department of Archives and History employs a staff of three archivists and six records managers for local records. Participation in the program is voluntary, upon order of the local governing body. However, a microfilm service is offered to all counties for the filming of permanent and vital records for security purposes. Original records are brought into the Department of Archives only if the situation at the local level warrants. Otherwise, original records are retained in their place of origin.

### *Hawaii*

The state of Hawaii did not respond to the survey. However, that state's highly centralized form of government gives less purpose to the concept of a local records program.

### *Idaho*

The Idaho State Archives has been legislated authority over the disposition of local records. County or city records not in current use and of permanent value may be requisitioned by the archives, and records of no value may be destroyed upon approval of the State Archives. A part-time archival staff is responsible for appraisal and accessioning of local records. No microfilm service is offered although, as is the case in many states, some counties are filming

<sup>6</sup> Florida, *Florida Statutes*, sec. 267.051(8).

their own records. Schedules have been written to serve as guidelines for the retention and disposition of county and municipal records. Original records of historical value are preserved in the State Archives.

### *Illinois*

The state of Illinois is one of seven states currently operating a regional depository system for the preservation of local records. Known as the Illinois Regional Archival Depository system (IRAD), it has only recently come into existence. Local records, however, have been a concern of the State Archives since 1961 when the Local Records Act created the Local Records Commission to oversee the disposition of local records. This act also authorized the State Archives to take local records of historical value into its custody.

Currently, two archivists and eleven records managers are responsible for local records. They visit the various local governmental officials to prepare data needed to schedule their records. The information so obtained is then used to prepare applications to the appropriate Local Records Commission (there is one in each county) for action. The local records staff will also appear before the commissions to represent the views of the local officials concerned.

Now that the IRAD system is in operation with six depositories serving from seventeen to twenty counties each, records of historical value are being transferred to the appropriate depository for permanent preservation. All records are retained in their original form, as the State Archives offers no microfilm service to local government.

### *Indiana*

In Indiana local officials are required to petition the Archives Division of the State Library for permission to destroy their records, and cannot destroy records without that permission. However, those records forbidden to be destroyed cannot be requested by the state archives until they have first been offered to the local historical society. If that organization has no interest in the records, the state archives may then request them for transfer.

Most county offices have had retention schedules prepared for them which are legally binding as to the minimum retention period. The state archives is also filming county records on a limited basis. The goal of the present project is to film all permanent records over seventy-five years old. In addition, the state archives sets standards for film quality and storage for those counties filming their own records. At the present time there is no separate staff for local records.

### *Iowa*

Although it has not yet been granted legislative authority over local records, Iowa's State Historical Department is now investigating the possibility of initiating a local records program. At the present time the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is providing the department with microfilmed copies of selected county records dating up to 1910.

### *Kansas*

Statute in Kansas grants authority to the State Historical Society, as the state archival agency, to prevent the destruction of local archives. If a county official wishes to destroy any records he must submit a list of them to the State Historical Society, which then has the right either to request that the records be transferred to the society or to decline any interest in them. In the latter case, the county officials must then petition the district court with jurisdiction in that county for permission to destroy the records. The final decision on destruction is then left to the district court.

The State Historical Society has no authority to schedule local records, nor does it offer a microfilming service. Some counties are filming their own records with assistance from the society.

### *Kentucky*

Since 1963, Kentucky's Division of Archives and Records, of the Department of Library and Archives, has been involved in the management and preservation of local government records. Currently five archivists and four records managers are assigned to this program. Retention schedules for county and municipal records have been prepared pursuant to statutory authority. A microfilm program, available to all local governments, includes

filming, processing, and duplication. The film provides security for permanent records, as well as a centralized research copy. Original records are accepted for deposit in the state archives, although the emphasis is on maintaining them in the office of origin.

#### *Louisiana*

In 1968 Louisiana began to implement the provisions of statutes adopted in 1956 giving the Archives and Records Service, under the direction of a three-member State Archives and Records Commission, authority to schedule all public records. A single records manager is responsible for ensuring compliance by local governments with the various rules and regulations issued by the commission. Municipal records have been scheduled, but not county records. Permanent records are filmed by the state archives for local governments at the expense of the agency requesting the filming. On occasion original records will be taken into the state archives.

#### *Maine*

The County Records Law and the Municipal Records Law, adopted by the state of Maine in 1973, provide for the management and preservation of local records by the State Archives under the direction of a County Records Board and a Municipal Records Board. Both of these laws prohibit the destruction of local records except as provided for by the appropriate board.<sup>7</sup> Records which the boards determine to have permanent value must either be preserved by the local agency or be deposited in the State Archives.

Municipal records have been scheduled, but the county schedules have not yet been completed. Until they are, counties must submit lists of records to be destroyed to the State Archives. In addition to closely monitoring the disposition of records, the State Archives is also filming records on a continuing basis, with initial emphasis on the reproduction of pre-1850 municipal records not previously filmed. The Maine State Archives has published *Public Records Repositories in Maine*, which is intended "to assist the researcher in determining the location and availability of existing municipal and county records."<sup>8</sup>

#### *Maryland*

The Maryland Hall of Records is responsible for local government archives in that state. One archivist and a varying number of part-time assistants carry out the functions of the local records program. Counties are required to have permanent records filmed for security purposes. They can do this themselves or, on a limited basis, the Hall of Records can provide this service for them. Legally enforceable minimum retention periods have been set for county and municipal records. The Hall of Records regularly acquires original records of enduring value.

#### *Massachusetts*

In 1973 the Division of Public Records, Office of the Secretary of State, began implementing statutory provisions giving that agency authority to control the disposition of county and municipal records. Two full-time employees, functioning as both archivists and records managers, are assigned to the local records program. The division offers no microfilm service. Some municipal offices have been scheduled, but to date no county offices have been. Officials in offices that have records schedules are prohibited from disposing of any records prior to the expiration of the stated retention period.

#### *Michigan*

The state of Michigan operates a five-member depository network for local records, administered by a single archivist-records manager. The duties of this position include selecting and accessioning records and preparing and reviewing retention schedules for county and municipal records. The legislative basis for this program dates back to 1913, but the provisions were not implemented by the state archival agency until 1953. Records are preserved in their original form only; the state offers no microfilm service, although it does set standards that must be met by those agencies that film their own records. The local records specialist regularly consults with local governmental officials on all matters of records management and preservation.

<sup>7</sup> Maine, *Maine Revised Statutes Annotated*, title 30, art. 6-A, sec. 346, and title 30 c. 211-A, sec. 2213.

<sup>8</sup> Augusta, Maine: Maine State Archives, 1976, p. iii.

*Minnesota*

The Minnesota Historical Society, as the state archival agency, has been responsible for local records since 1947. Currently the society is utilizing seven regional depositories for local records. Each depository serves from eight to fifteen counties. The State Historical Society offers no microfilm service, nor have most local offices had their records scheduled. A disposal panel consisting of the director of the State Historical Society, the attorney general, and the state auditor, has legislative authority over the disposition of local records.

*Mississippi*

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History is not now operating a local records program, nor is it considering that possibility. To date, no statute authorizes the department to exercise any control over local records.

*Missouri*

Since 1972, Missouri has been receiving microfilmed copies of selected county records through an agreement with the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is financing the project. A records manager and an archivist from Missouri's Records Management and Archives Service work with county officials to inventory and list records prior to the arrival in the courthouse of the Latter-day Saints film crew. The state archives has authority over the disposition and destruction of local government records.

*Montana*

Although Montana currently has no local records program, statutory authority over the disposition of local records has been granted to the Local Government Services Division of the Department of Community Affairs. That agency is currently investigating the possibility of establishing a management program for local governments.

*Nebraska*

State statute in Nebraska gives the State Archives Division of the State Historical Society authority to accession any public records in danger of destruction or deterioration, or which are no longer in active use by the originating agency. Since 1969 the staff of the state archives has been actively pursuing the goals of management and preservation of local public records. Currently two archivists and one records manager share these duties. County and municipal records have been scheduled in accordance with a legislative provision. No microfilm service is provided by the state archives, but the Records Management Division of the Office of the Secretary of State will give technical advice and assistance to those local governments filming their own records.

*Nevada*

The Nevada Division of State, County, and Municipal Archives administers local records under the provisions of statutes adopted in 1967 and 1973. A bill introduced in 1977 would place all authority over local records firmly in the hands of the state archivist. Additionally, a comprehensive state-financed microfilm project is slated to begin operation in 1977. One lone archivist is responsible for both state and local records in Nevada.

*New Hampshire*

New Hampshire's local records program has so far been limited to the creation of retention schedules for municipal records. There is no microfilm service at the present time and no staff to administer a broader program. The Division of Records Management and Archives is developing a legislative package to present to the legislature in 1977, a package providing, if adopted and funded, for a more extensive effort with local records.

*New Jersey*

The Bureau of Archives and History is statutorily responsible for the proper disposition of local archives, and it has operated a program for that purpose since 1953. At the present time one records manager is responsible for local government records in New Jersey. Retention schedules have been prepared for county and municipal records. No microfilm service is offered, but the bureau does set standards for film quality and offers assistance to those local agencies filming their own records.

*New Mexico*

The New Mexico Records Center and Archives has been administering a local records program since 1960. Three archivists and four records managers are responsible for a

program that includes the scheduling of county and municipal records and giving of advice and assistance to local agencies on all matters of records retention and disposition. The local records staff is also responsible for advising local officials on the feasibility of microfilming records, although the actual filming must be done by the local agency. A county records manual has been prepared by the state archives prescribing the minimum retention periods for each type of record and the proper disposal procedures.

#### *New York*

Local records are the responsibility of the State Archives. A staff of five records managers is responsible for implementing the provisions of three laws that place disposition of local records under authority of the state archival agency. A wide range of duties are among these responsibilities, including establishing minimum retention periods for county and municipal records, giving advice and assistance to local officials who are setting up microfilm programs, and working with local officials on all aspects of records management.

For a period of twenty-one months the State Archives, with funding from the New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, administered the Historical Records Microfilm Program, an attempt to film town records dating prior to 1850. The task was not completed before funding was terminated.

Because of space limitations in the state archival facility, local agencies are held responsible for preserving their own permanent records.

#### *North Carolina*

In 1959 North Carolina began implementing an extensive local records program. Under the direction of the Division of Archives and History, of the Department of Cultural Resources, now being administered is a full microfilm program and other preservation services for all counties and municipalities in the state. A staff of five archivists and two records managers is responsible for administering the provisions of the Public Records Act, which vests all authority for the disposition of county and municipal records in the state archives. The consent of the archives is mandatory for the destruction of any public record. Further provisions of the records law direct the state archives "to formulate and execute a program of inventorying, repairing and microfilming in the counties for security purposes those official records of the several counties which the Department [of Archives and History] determines to have permanent value, and of providing safe storage for microfilm copies of such records."<sup>9</sup>

To facilitate the implementation of the total records management program, the archives has prepared *The County Records Manual* and the *Municipal Records Manual*, each including the minimum retention periods specified for each type of county or municipal record. Each manual also excerpts applicable statutes for easy reference by local officials.

In addition to filming records for county governments, storing original negatives for security, and providing a positive copy for research purposes, the state archives also accession original records of enduring value for permanent preservation. As required, these records are cleaned, repaired, arranged, and described before being made available for research.

#### *North Dakota*

Statute in North Dakota would permit the State Historical Society, as the state archival agency, to implement a local records program. The society is now considering taking such action. Currently, local governments wishing to dispose of records must receive approval from the State Historical Society.

#### *Ohio*

In 1975 the Ohio Historical Society decided to utilize its Network of American History Research Centers to house local public records. There are currently eight archivists inventorying, appraising, and scheduling county and municipal records. Those records determined to be of permanent value may be transferred from their office of origin to one of eight depositories. A *Local Government Records Manual* has been published by the society, which is serving as a guideline to proper management procedures in local agencies pending the completion of a more comprehensive manual which will include retention schedules.

Statutory provisions in Ohio currently provide for control over the disposition of county and municipal records by a County Records Commission and a City Records Commission, in each entity. Within a period of sixty days after a commission has approved the disposition of

<sup>9</sup> North Carolina, *General Statutes*, sec. 121-5.1 and sec. 132-3.

any records, the Historical Society, as the state archival agency, has the opportunity to select for custody "such records as may be deemed to be of continuing historical value."<sup>10</sup>

The society does not offer a microfilm service, but will give advice and assistance to those agencies filming their own records.

#### *Oklahoma*

Oklahoma's Division of Archives and Records is not currently playing an active role in the management and preservation of the records of the state's political subdivisions, nor is there any statutory basis for such a role. Statutes give disposal authority directly to local officials (with certain limitations), although any records scheduled for destruction may be requested for transfer to the state archives.

#### *Oregon*

The Oregon State Archives employs four archivists and one records manager to carry out its local records program. Originating in 1945, this program is geared toward assisting local governments with all aspects of records management and preservation, while all matters of disposition are firmly in the hands of the state archival agency. The local records staff performs a variety of duties, including inventorying local records, assisting local officials in meeting paperwork requirements for records disposal, inspecting local storage facilities to ensure the safety and accessibility of records, and encouraging the prompt disposition of useless records.

Records schedules have been prepared for county and municipal records. Microfilming service is limited to the storage of security film and the offer of assistance to those local agencies wishing to film their own records. A central microfilm service is available on a limited basis and, at cost, to local agencies for special jobs. The State Archives also sets and enforces standards for film produced by local governments.

The Oregon program is based on the idea that local records best serve the legal and administrative purposes for which they were created if they are retained in the offices in which they originated.

#### *Pennsylvania*

The local records program is administered by the Division of Archives and Manuscripts of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. By statute, county records came under the jurisdiction of this agency in 1963 and municipal records in 1968. At present there is no staff assigned specifically to local records. County and municipal records retention schedules have been prepared to assist local governments in preparing, and the state archives in processing, requests for records disposition. Local records of historical value are, in many cases, transferred to approved county historical societies or college archives as an alternative to being placed in the state archival facility which has little space available for local records.

The local records program does not include a microfilm service, but it does set standards and offer advice to those agencies that choose to establish their own microfilming programs.

#### *Rhode Island*

The Rhode Island State Archives, a division of the State Library, has been granted rather strong statutory authority over the disposition and proper care of local archives. To date, however, the state legislature has declined to provide funds to enforce the applicable statutes. A committee within the archives has been meeting recently in an effort to develop a comprehensive proposal for a local records program to be presented to the legislature.

#### *South Carolina*

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History has been administering a local records program since 1968. A legislative package adopted in 1973 gave the department control over all aspects of local records disposition, including authority to establish minimum retention periods for all county and municipal records. Currently eighteen staff members, serving as both archivists and records managers, are responsible for inventory, appraisal, accessioning, scheduling, and processing of local government archives. Microfilm is an integral part of the program, providing security copies of vital records as well as centralized copies of records for research purposes. In addition to filming records, the department will accession noncurrent but permanently valuable records for preservation in

<sup>10</sup> Ohio, *Ohio Revised Code*, sec. 149.38 and sec. 149.39.

the state archives. As required, these records are cleaned, repaired, arranged, and described before being made available for research.

Although the primary emphasis has so far been placed on county records, municipal records are also receiving some attention both in the accessioning of permanent records into the archives and in the offering of consultation service for microfilming and general records problems.

Records schedules have been prepared for county and municipal records.

#### *South Dakota*

The South Dakota State Archives currently employs one archivist to administer legislative provisions vesting authority over the disposition of local records in the state archival agency. Statute prohibits the destruction of any public record unless the state archivist so approves. Lists of records for destruction are submitted to the state archivist by the local agency desiring to destroy them. If the archivist determines that the records have permanent value they must be transferred to the state archives. Some county and municipal offices have had retention schedules prepared for them, but these schedules serve as guidelines only. A limited microfilming service is available to local governments.

#### *Tennessee*

The State Library and Archives has been granted statutory authority over the disposition of local government archives. There is no staff assigned specifically to local records, however; nor, because of space limitations, are original records brought into the state archives. The local records program is primarily limited to assuring compliance with a county records manual and a microfilming project which has so far filmed, in all counties, permanent records dating to 1900. Some additional records have been filmed in forty-five counties, and the state archives is currently negotiating with all counties to contract to bring the filming up to date. The pre-1900 records were filmed at state expense, while the twentieth-century records are filmed on a cost-sharing basis.

#### *Texas*

In Texas, local government officials have been authorized since 1909 to turn over noncurrent records from their offices to the State Library; but not until 1971 was legislation passed permitting this to become a reality. An act of the state legislature created the Regional Historical Resource Depository Program (RHRD) for the express purpose of providing a means for the preservation of permanently valuable local records. Now consisting of twenty depositories, the program is administered by the State Archives Division of the State Library. A staff of four archivists and a coordinator is responsible for implementing the program.

There are numerous statutes in Texas governing the disposal of local public records, most statutes requiring that the state archives be notified before destruction is carried out. No microfilm service is offered to local governments, and no retention schedules have been prepared. However, legislative authority to schedule records is being sought in 1977. Records are deposited in the regional depositories on agreement between the state archives and the local official in charge of the records.

#### *Utah*

The Utah State Archives has control over the disposition of local records. Although records are accepted by the State Archives in their original form, the primary emphasis of Utah's program is on the microfilming of permanent records for security purposes. This service is performed without cost to the local agencies. In addition, the State Archives sets standards and offers assistance to those local governments filming their own records.

#### *Vermont*

Vermont's Public Records Division employs one archivist and one records manager to oversee that state's local records program which began in 1955. It includes a central microfilm service which has so far filmed vital records for security purposes. For counties and municipalities, records schedules have been prepared specifying the minimum period for which records must be retained. Statute gives control over disposition to the Public Records Division. Records in their original form are generally not taken into state archives but remain in the custody of the originating agency.

#### *Virginia*

In 1972, Virginia initiated its local records program which now employs eight professionals who function as both archivists and records managers. The State Archives, a division of

the State Library, is legally responsible for the disposition of local archives. The State Archives microfilms vital records in county courthouses and primary policy records for other local agencies, as a cost-free service to local governments. In addition to security filming of vital records, the State Archives encourages the transfer of noncurrent permanent records to the State Archives for repair and preservation.

County and municipal records are in the process of being scheduled, following the adoption of legislation granting scheduling authority to the State Archives.

#### *Washington*

Local records in Washington are administered by the Division of Archives and Records Management, in conjunction with a Local Records Committee. The committee has the final authority on all decisions to destroy local records. This arrangement has been in force since 1957. Currently the state archives has the equivalent of one and one-half full-time archival positions with responsibility for local records. These employees consult with local officials and act to expedite disposition requests. No microfilm service is offered, but the state is currently setting up a three-member depository system for the preservation of original local archives.

#### *West Virginia*

The Department of Archives and History is currently considering the possibility of establishing a local records program based on current statutory provisions giving to the department some degree of authority over disposition.

It should also be noted here that there is a large collection of county records in the West Virginia Collection at West Virginia University.

#### *Wisconsin*

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, as the state archival agency, has been working with local records since 1951. A network of thirteen regional depositories is used for housing local records, generally in their original form. The Historical Society does not regularly film records, but when necessary will reproduce endangered records. Additionally, the State Department of Administration will film records for local agencies at cost. As in many other states, some local governments are filming their own records.

There is currently no staff assigned specifically to local records; these duties, including accessioning, processing, and field work, are handled by the staff of the society's public records section, which also is responsible for state records.

#### *Wyoming*

Wyoming's Archives and Historical Department, of the Archives, Records Management and Centralized Microfilm Division, has been administering local records since 1953. The program is centered around a security microfilm program, operated by the records management section. Retention schedules for county and municipal records have been prepared, facilitating regular transfers of semi-active and inactive records to the records center, where they are retained until being either destroyed or transferred to the state archives.

There are, as is apparent from the preceding descriptions, many similarities in the administration of local archives in the several states. Unfortunately, one of the most common is the lack of resources, both physical and financial, necessary for the operation of comprehensive programs. Several respondents noted that additional funding for local records would enable them to initiate or expand microfilming programs or begin to devote adequate attention to hitherto neglected municipal records. Almost every state in the nation has a law or laws that would permit the development and implementation of sound local records programs if adequate financial appropriations were granted. Current efforts to preserve and manage local archives systematically, in many states inadequate and in some nonexistent, could be vastly improved if financial support were available.

There seems to be no doubt that the state archival agency is the appropriate authority to assume responsibility for the proper care and preservation of the records of the political subdivisions of the states. There also seems to be no doubt that unless

that agency vigorously seeks the legislative and financial support it needs to fulfill that responsibility those supports will not be forthcoming. Accordingly, state archives (and state archivists) must take an active role in campaigning for the support they will need to meet their obligations to the citizens of their respective states to preserve and protect the integrity of local public recording systems.

## STATE ARCHIVES' LOCAL RECORDS PROGRAMS

STATE	DATE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED	PROFESSIONAL STAFF	COUNTY RECORDS SCHEDULED	MUNICIPAL RECORDS SCHEDULED	LOCAL RECORDS MICROFILMED
Alabama	1971	2	Yes	No	Yes
Arizona	1975	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	1973	1	No	No	No
Colorado	1949	8	Yes	Yes	No
Connecticut	1901	2	N.A.	Yes	No
Florida	1967	13	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	1972	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Idaho	1947	0	Yes	Yes	No
Illinois	1961	13	Yes	Yes	No
Indiana	1939	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kansas		0	No	No	No
Kentucky	1963	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	1968	1	No	Yes	Yes
Maine	1973		No	Yes	Yes
Maryland	1937	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	1973	2	No	Yes	No
Michigan	1953	1	Yes	Yes	No
Minnesota	1947	1	No	No	No
Missouri	1972	2	No	No	Yes
Nebraska	1969	3	Yes	Yes	No
Nevada	1967	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire		0	No	Yes	No
New Jersey	1953	1	Yes	Yes	No
New Mexico	1960	7	Yes	Yes	No
New York	1912	5	Yes	Yes	No
North Carolina	1959	7	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ohio	1959	8	Yes	Yes	No
Oregon	1945	5	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	1963	0	Yes	Yes	No
South Carolina	1968	18	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	1974	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	1964	0	Yes	No	Yes
Texas	1971	5	No	No	No
Utah			Yes	Yes	Yes
Vermont	1955	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
Virginia	1972	8	No	No	Yes
Washington	1957	1.5	Yes	Yes	No
Wisconsin	1951	0	Yes	Yes	No
Wyoming	1953		Yes	Yes	Yes