

GLOSSARY: D-F

PURPOSE: To provide definitions for the most commonly-used records and information management (RIM) terms for use by FHFA employees.

D

Data. Symbols, or representations, of facts or ideas that can be communicated, interpreted, or processed by manual or automated means. Structured data is generally found in databases and spreadsheets. Unstructured data results from office automation applications, such as word processing or presentation software.

Data File. In electronic records, an organized collection of related data, usually arranged in logical records that are stored together and treated as a unit.

Description. The process of giving a written account of the contents and characteristics of a record series or system. *See also* **Inventory**.

Destruction. A method of destroying records, which includes burning, pulping, shredding, or discarding with other waste materials. For electronic records, this is the process of eliminating or deleting records beyond any possible reconstruction.

Digital Signature. One type of an electronic signature based upon cryptographic methods of originator authentication, computed by using a set of rules and a set of parameters such that the identity of the signer and the integrity of the data can be verified.

Disaster. An unexpected occurrence inflicting widespread destruction and distress and having long-term adverse effects on agency operations.

Disaster Plan. The documented policies and procedures intended to prevent damage, minimize damage, or recover from damage to record materials.

Disposal. The actions taken regarding temporary records after their retention periods expire and consisting usually of destruction. *See also* **Temporary Records** and **Nonrecords**.

Disposition. Actions taken with records no longer needed to conduct current FHFA business. These actions include storage at the FRC, transfer of permanent records to the National Archives, and disposal of temporary records. Disposition is the third stage of the records life cycle. Also called **records disposition**.

Disposition Authority. Legal approval granted by NARA, through the GRS or approved Requests for Records Disposition Authority (SF-115s), empowering the FHFA to destroy temporary records or transfer permanent records to the National Archives.

Document. Bounded physical or digital representation of a body of information designed with the capacity (and usually intent) to communicate. Recorded information regardless of physical form or characteristics. Documents may include records, nonrecord materials, or personal papers.

Documentary Materials. A collective term for records, non-record materials, and personal papers that refers to all media on which information is recorded, regardless of the nature of the medium or the method or circumstances of recording.

Documentation. An organized series of descriptive information required to plan, develop, operate, maintain, and use electronic records which include systems specifications, data flows, file specifications, codebooks, record layouts, user guides, and output specifications.

E

Electronic Record. Any information that is recorded in a form that only a computer can process and that satisfies the definition of a federal record. The term includes both record content and associated metadata that FHFA determines is required to meet agency business needs. Electronic records fall into two major categories: 1) structured data contained in databases and 2) unstructured data contained in documents. Electronic records may include data files and databases, word processing files, models and spreadsheets, and electronic mail (e-mail).

Electronic Recordkeeping System. An electronic system in which records are collected, organized, and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition.

Electronic Signature. A technologically neutral method of signing an electronic message or record that:

- Identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic message or record, and
- Indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic message or record.

Emergency. A situation or an occurrence of a serious nature, developing suddenly and unexpectedly, and demanding immediate action.

Emergency Operating Records. The type of vital records that is essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organization during and after an emergency. These records are required to ensure the continuation of mission-critical functions within the first five days following an emergency or disaster. Included are emergency plans and directives, orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments, and selected program records needed to continue the most critical FHFA operations, as well as related policy or procedural records that assist FHFA staff in conducting business under emergency conditions and for resuming normal operations after an emergency. *See also* **Legal and Financial Rights Records** and **Vital Records**.

Evaluation. (1) In records disposition, the process of assessing the value of records to recommend or determine their retention periods, making the records either temporary or permanent. *See also* **Appraisal**. (2) The inspection, audit, or review of records management programs, including records disposition, either by FHFA or by NARA and/or GSA, to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

F

Federal Records. Records includes “all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the U.S. government under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by the agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the government or because of the informational value of data in them.” (44 USC §3301)

Federal Records Center (FRC). Records storage facilities, operated by NARA, where agencies may temporarily store records while maintaining legal custody. FRCs provide low-cost offsite storage for non-current records of federal agencies.

File. (1) An accumulation of record or nonrecord material arranged according to a file plan. (2) A unit, such as a folder, microform, or electronic medium, containing records, nonrecord material, or personal papers. (3) Storage equipment, such as a filing cabinet. (4) A collection of related data which has been organized electronically into logically related records that are stored together and treated as a unit.

File Break. *See* **Breaking Files** and **Cutoff**.

File Cutoff. *See* **Breaking Files** and **Cutoff**.

File Plan. A document listing a business unit's records for which they have custodial responsibility. The file plan also lists the location and retention period of those records.

File Station. A file room where agency records are maintained for current use, and organized in a manner to ensure their quick retrieval and appropriate disposition. *See also* **Central Files**.

Form. A document in paper or electronic format with a fixed arrangement of captioned spaces designed for the entering and extracting of prescribed information. Electronic forms can be presented as online documents that can be

- Completed, saved, and sent to a recipient as a separate document; or
- Completed and submitted online.

Form NA-13001. *Notice of Intent to Destroy Records.* The FRC mails this form to the Records Officer, or designated agency contact, 90 days prior to scheduled destruction.

Form OF-11. *Reference Request - Federal Records Centers.* This form is used to retrieve records from FRCs.

Form SF-115. *Request for Records Disposition Authority.* This form is used by the Records Officer to request approval from NARA for a proposed records disposition.

Form SF-135 & SF-135-A. *Records Transmittal and Receipt* with accompanying Continuation Sheet, used to request approval to retire records to an FRC. The Continuation Sheet, SF-135-A, may be replaced by a box inventory in a format such as Word or Excel.

Form SF-258. *Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States.* This form is used to request approval to transfer permanent records from FHFA to NARA.

Frozen Records. Temporary records that cannot be destroyed as scheduled because of special circumstances, such as an existing court order or a pending audit or investigation, requiring a temporary extension of the approved retention period. Also referred to as **Records Holds** or **Suspended Records**.