

Archdiocese of Atlanta Retention Schedule—Chancery Edition

Revised November 2025

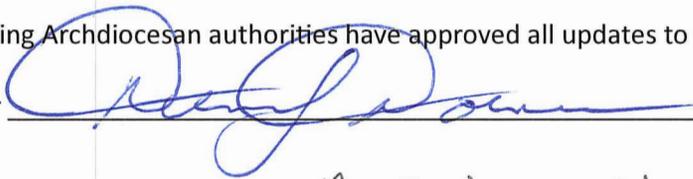
The Archdiocese of Atlanta Office of Archives and Records created this retention schedule to guide Chancery employees on managing the records they create. This policy was developed based on federal, state, local, and canon law as well as on best practices across dioceses.

Please note that litigation hold policies requiring the preservation and protection of documents involved in litigation matters will suspend the normal disposition of past retention records as directed by the Chancellor on advice of counsel. If a litigation hold applies to you, you will be notified by the Chancellor or the Office of Archives and Records.

This schedule is format neutral and applies to all records and information created on behalf of your entity. Retention periods are finite and absolute, except when legally halted by official notice—they are not minimum guidelines. Please refer to the Records Disposition Form for permission to dispose of or to delete past retention records.

For more information or any questions, contact the Office of Archives & Records at records@archatl.com.

The following Archdiocesan authorities have approved all updates to this policy:

Chancellor  _____

Date 01/29/2026

Director of Archives & Records Angehogue M Richardson, CA, CRA

Date 01/29/2026

Smith, Gambrell, & Russel, LLP  _____

Date 1/29/2026

Administration		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Annual Medical Release, Adults	When Superseded by New Version	Consent for emergency medical care.
Annual Medical Release, Minors	Replace When Superseded by New Version Retain Last Version Until Student Turns 20 Years Old	Consent for emergency medical care if parents cannot be reached. Does not include medication release form.
Annual Reports	Permanent	Examples include NCEA/Archdiocesan Schools Annual Reports, Annual Volunteer Statistical Reports (hours work, projects completed, etc.), Religious Education Annual Reports (numbers of students, sacraments performed, etc.) and others.
Archives Transmittal Forms	Permanent	
Boards, Committees, Councils	Permanent	Records such as directives, meeting minutes, membership roster, bylaws, constitution, and more from any boards, committees, councils, and similar such decision-making bodies.
Business Plans, Projections	Permanent	Final reports, goals and objectives statements, survey reports, planning committee minutes.
Calendar/Daily Schedule, Archbishop/Bishop(s)	Permanent	
Corporate Governance Records	Permanent	Charter, Constitution, By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation, Minute Book, Trust Agreements, Officers, etc.
Correspondence/Email - Employee Welfare Benefits	7 Years	
Correspondence/Email - Executive/Letter Log	Permanent	
Correspondence/Email - General/Routine	2 Years	
Correspondence/Email - Pension & Group Life Insurance	7 Years	
Disaster Records	5 Years	Documentation of the disaster.
Forms, Templates	Permanent	Blank forms/template documents created by archdiocesan departments.

Administration		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Handbooks/Manuals/Policies/Procedures	Permanent	Final approved and published versions of any handbooks, manuals, policies and/or procedures.
Memos/Directives - General	1 Year	Routine memos of no long-term significance.
Memos/Directives - Policies & Procedures	Permanent	
Project/Program Files	3 Years After Completion	Working files for short- or long-term projects and recurring programs that can include correspondence, agreements, documents, tracking lists, etc.
Statistical Surveys/Studies, Planning Reports	Permanent	
Subject Files, Office of the Archbishop	Permanent	
Victim Assistance Case Files	Permanent	
Victim Assistance Counseling Files	Permanent	

Benefits		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Benefit Plan Summary List of Employees	Permanent Keep on-site with your organization/department.	Summary list of employees on the company provided benefit plan.

Benefits		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Benefits Files	7 Years After Discontinuation of Benefits	Documentation of employees' participation in company provided benefits programs. Records may include but are not limited to: Applications for Life Insurance; Authorizations for Electronic Deposit; Health and Dental Enrollment Forms; Benefits Worksheets for Payroll Corrections; Cancellations of Payroll Deduction Authorizations; Insurance Data Change Forms; Employee Status Sheets; Enrollment Status Sheets; Letters of Approval for Coverage from insurance companies; Notices of Declination of Coverage from insurance companies; Notices of Approval of Group Insurance Coverage; Authorization for Payroll Deductions forms; insurance forms; Tax Deferred Investment information; and designation of beneficiary forms.
Disability Records, Employee	3 Years	All records pertaining to FMLA/Non-FMLA leave requirements, including dates and hours of leave; copies of employer notices, documents describing premium payments, employee benefits, and records of disputes over leave benefits.
Employee Retirement Plan	Permanent Inactive plans should be transferred to the Archives when superseded.	Documentation of the offerings in an employer sponsored retirement plan.
Health Plan Enrollment Forms & Lists	7 Years	
Insurance Policies & Ledgers - Disability, Life, Workers Comp	Permanent Keep on-site with your organization/department.	Insurance policies covering disability, life, and/or workers' compensation coverage.
Insurance Policies & Ledgers - Group, Employee	10 Years After Termination	
Insurance Policies & Ledgers - Health	10 Years After Expiration	Insurance policies for healthcare coverage.
Retirement & Pension Plans	Permanent	
Workers' Compensation Claims	5 Years After Settlement	Documents related to employee accidents, injuries, and medical claims that fall meet the criteria for Workers' Compensation Claims.

Communications		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Annual Media/Social Media Release, Adults	When Superseded by New Version	
Annual Media/Social Media Release, Minors	Replace When Superseded by New Version Retain Last Version Until Student Turns 20 Years Old	
Audio Visual Materials	Permanent	Photographs, Slides, Negatives, Videos, Podcasts, etc. It can be a sampling of a larger body of materials, such as a few photos from a full roll, particularly depicting identified individuals/events/dates.
Masses, Daily/Weekly Recorded	Retain as Needed	Daily/weekly mass.
Masses, Major Event/Historical Recorded	Permanent	Ordinations, anniversary masses, etc.
Press Releases, Press Kits	Permanent	
Publications - Archdiocesan/Parish/School	Permanent	Original publications created and produced by archdiocesan entities. These can include, but are not limited to Newspapers, Bulletins, Newsletters, Annuals & Yearbooks, Books, Church Dedications, Chapel Blessings, Programs, Brochures, Posters, etc. (Does not include publications by outside entities such as the USCCB, NCEA, professional organizations, etc.)
Special Event Materials	Permanent	Finalized records related to special events, such as ordinations, anniversaries, etc. This can include mass programs, prayer cards, posters, flyers, programs, menus, etc.
Speeches, Homilies, Presentations	Archbishop/Bishop: Permanent Priest/Deacon: Retain Selection	Archbishop and Bishops should retain one copy of each speech, homily, or presentation. Priests and Deacons should retain a selection of important/historical speeches, homilies, or presentations.

Construction & Property		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Blueprints/Specifications	As-Built: Permanent Never Built: 3 Years	
Building Permits	Permanent	
Closing Documents	Permanent	Final signed versions. One copy with Chancery and one with Parish.
Construction Project Files, Capital Improvement	11 Years After Completion	Records relating to the planning, administration, and implementation of capital construction projects; includes project descriptions and requirements, bid records, contracts, plan reviews, project schedules, contract changes, consultant contracts, and budgets.
Construction Project Files, Non-Capital Improvement	5 Years After Completion	Records relating to the planning, administration, and implementation of non-capital construction projects; includes project descriptions and requirements, bid records, plan reviews, project schedules, contract changes, consultant contracts, and budgets.
Depreciation Schedules	4 Years	Records documenting useful life and depreciation of agency-owned equipment and property, usually for insurance purposes.
Drawings, Originals	Permanent	One copy with Chancery and one copy on-site
Environmental Tests	Permanent	
Hazardous Materials Incident Reports	Permanent	
Inspections, Annual	When Superseded by New Version	
Inspections, Certificates of Occupancy	10 Years	
Inspections, Fire Marshall	5 Years	
Insurance, Certificates of (COI)	Permanent Keep on-site with your organization/department.	Certificates of Insurance received for any vendors/contractors working with your organization.
Inventories, Real Estate	When Superseded by New Version	List of real estate properties. Information could be in a database/software.

Construction & Property		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Land Surveys, Deeds, Titles	Permanent	
Maps/Plats	Retain As Needed	
Project Close-Out Binders	Permanent	
Property Appraisals	When Superseded by New Version	

Education		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Accreditation Records	Permanent	SACS accreditation binders, evaluation records, visiting committee reports.
Awards Records	Permanent	Award eligibility terms and selection criteria, award history and information on funding sources, award notifications, summary lists of winners, and press releases, and all other supporting documentation.
Curriculum Course Guides	Permanent	To be kept permanently by the Office of Catholic Schools.
Enrollment Data/Registers	Permanent	
Permanent Record Card/Transcript Request Forms	6 Months	Request forms for permanent record cards and request forms for school transcripts.
Psychological Working Files	5 Years	Notes, interim reports, and other working files that inform psychological tests and final reports, not including the tests and final reports themselves.

Facilities		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Accident/Incident Reports	5 Years Involving Hazardous Materials: Permanent	Reports of employee accidents and injuries, including worker's compensation claims or incidents involving hazardous materials.
Asbestos Abatement Files	Permanent	
Contracts - Service/Vendor	7 Years After Expiration	
Emergency/Disaster Plans	5 Years After Superseded by New Version	
Equipment Logs, Utility Charts	5 Years After Disposal of Equipment	
Floor Plans	Permanent	
Inventories, Equipment	5 Years After Disposal of Equipment	List of active/inactive equipment held by the organization.
Lease Agreement - Equipment/Vehicle	7 Years After Expiration	
Maintenance & Repair - Major/Structural	Permanent	
Maintenance & Repair - Routine	5 Years	
Maintenance & Repair - Vehicle	5 Years After Disposal of Vehicle	Records documenting service history, mileage, damage repair, routine preventative maintenance and disposition of agency vehicles and equipment.
Purchase Agreement - Equipment/Vehicle	5 Years After Disposal of Equipment	
Security Measures & Procedures	5 Years	
Security Videos	With Incident: 6 Years After Settlement Without Incident: 30 Days	
Vehicle Accident Reports	5 Years	

Finance		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Bank Account Documentation, Opening/Closing	Permanent	Documentation created when establishing or closing a bank account.
Bids, Vendors/Services	7 Years	Documentation created during the procurement process when requesting bids/quotes, such as requests for proposals (RFPs), for goods or services.
Bonds	5 Years After Expiration of Bond or 5 Years After Bond Paid in Full	Loan issued by federal, state, or local government to fund public projects, such as the building of a school.
Checks, Remotely Deposited	90 Days	Checks deposited into your bank account remotely (i.e. via banking website or phone application).
Credit Agreements	3 Years After Termination of Agreement	A legally binding contract between a lender and a borrower that outlines the terms and conditions under which credit is extended, including loan details, interest rates, repayment schedules, fees, and the rights and obligations of both parties.
Financial Statements, Annual Certified/Audited	Permanent	Annual financial report that has been audited and certified by an independent accounting firm.
General Financial Records	5 Years	Accounts Payable/Receivable, Fixed Assets, Year-End Balance Sheet, Periodic/Monthly Bank Statements, Annual Budget, Cash Receipts Journals/Details, Check Registers/Stubs, Cancelled Checks, Deposit Slips/Reconciliations, General Ledger & Trial Balances, Journal Entries, Receipts, Donation Records, Refund/Disbursement Records, Internal Audit Reports (or last 2 audits if longer), Tuition Bills/Receipts, etc.
Health Insurance Billing Statements	7 Years	Billing statements from the archdiocesan health insurance provider.
Insurance Policies & Ledgers - Auto	7 Years After Expiration	Automobile/car/vehicle insurance policies.
Insurance Policies & Ledgers - Liability/Misconduct	Permanent Keep on-site with your organization/department.	Liability/misconduct insurance policies.
Insurance Policies & Ledgers - Property	Permanent Keep on-site with your organization/department.	Property insurance policies.

Finance		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Promissory Note and/or Loan Payoff Letter/Statement	6 Years After Paid-in-Full or After Cancellation of Account	A promissory note is a legally binding written document acting as a formal promise to repay a debt, outlining specific terms like the principal amount, interest rate, and repayment schedule. A loan payoff letter (or statement) is an official document from a lender detailing the exact amount required to fully satisfy a debt—including principal, accrued interest, and fees—by a specific date. It is essential for refinancing, selling a home, or paying off loans early to avoid daily interest charges
Signature Authorizations	7 Years After Termination	Records documenting the certification of employees who are authorized to sign fiscal and contractual documents on behalf of the organization.

Fundraising		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Annual Appeal, Second Collections	5 Years	Giving records of special collections supporting the Archbishop's Annual Appeal.
Applications for Funding	5 Years	Applications for non-government grants and private funding.
Donor Files	Destroy 5 Years After Record Is Deemed Obsolete	Records documenting regular monetary giving, donations, letters and agreements of gifts, copies of bequests and wills, donor and donation information, lists of donors.
Federal & State Final Grant Reports	Permanent	Final reports documenting the use and distribution of federal and state grants.
Federal & State Grant Project Files, Non-Education Agencies	3 Years After Termination of Project	Documents created in the implementation of federally funded and state-funded projects.
Online Giving Statements	18 Months	Records of donations made electronically via website or app.

Human Resources		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Applications, Not Hired	Unsolicited and Incomplete Applications: Useful Life All Other Non-Hire Records: 3 Years	Employment applications or resumes of persons not hired for the position. May include, but is not limited to: unsolicited, incomplete, and complete applications; supporting documentation, interview notes and materials; background surveys; and correspondence.
Contracts - Employment, Non-Teacher	7 Years After Expiration	Service/Employment contracts between an individual who is not a teacher and the organization.
Contracts - Employment, Teacher	50 Years After Termination	Service/Employment contracts between an individual who is a teacher and the organization. Alternatively, a surrogate record of employment history may be maintained instead.
Earnings Records, Annual	50 Years After Tax Year in Which Records Were Created	Summary of employees' payroll earnings for the fiscal year, including deductions.
EEOC Complaints	2 Years After Settlement	Records documenting charges of discrimination filed against the organization. EEOC is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
EEOC Compliance Reports	3 Years	Reports classifying employees by race and gender the document compliance with EEOC rules. EEOC is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
Employee Grievances	2 Years After Resolution	Resolution of employee complaints against supervisor or other employees.
Employment Eligibility Form/I-9	1 Year After Termination or 3 Years After Hire, If Longer	
Hazardous Exposure Medical Records	30 Years After Termination of Impacted Employee	Documentation of employee exposure to hazardous materials.
Job Recruitment Materials	2 Years	Records documenting efforts to advertise positions and attract qualified personnel throughout the selection process.
Job Role Classification Materials	4 Years	Records documenting job requirements, job descriptions, and salary ranges.
Organizational Chart	Permanent	Chart that shows the reporting structure of the organization.
OSHA Logs	6 Years	

Human Resources		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Personnel Files - Clergy	Permanent Transfer to Archives Upon Laicization or Death	Applies to Priests and Permanent Deacons. Should include the Seminarian File or Formation File plus vitae cards (resumes), appointment documentation, immigration documentation, formation documents, signed oaths and agreements, sabbatical documents, testimonial letters/letters of good standing, wills, powers of attorney, funerary arrangements, reports, correspondence, petition for laicization, rescripts, etc. SEE Chancery Filing Procedures for Clergy Records for more details.
Personnel Files - Lay Employee	7 Years After Termination	Records documenting an employee's work history with the organization. This can include, but is not limited to: applications, direct deposit/deduction authorizations, earnings records; Lay Emergency Fund; resumes; work history; salary history; disciplinary records; appraisal letters, etc.
Personnel Files - Seminarians	When ordained, transfer to Priest Personnel File. Inactive, Non-Ordained Seminarian File Destroy 20 Years After Man Leaves Formation Inactive Applicant File (Did Not Attend Seminary) Destroy After 5 Years	Should contain applicant documentation, correspondence, formation reports, medical reports, psychological reports, transcripts, certificates of ordination, statement of why the individual dropped out or was asked to leave (if applicable), etc. SEE Chancery Filing Procedures for Clergy Records for more details.
Years of Service Record	Permanent	

Information Technology		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Backups	1 Year After Superseded by New Version	Backup copies of your organization's network infrastructure and files.
Computer Equipment Records	Retain Until Equipment Has Been Replaced or Becomes Obsolete	Records documenting the addition, modification, maintenance, and removal of software and/or hardware from an agency's computer system.

Information Technology		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Licensing Files	When Superseded by New Version	Records documenting software or services licensed for your organization's use.
System Architecture & Wiring Schemas	3 Years after system becomes obsolete	Records documenting the location of wiring and the design of the overall agency network environment.

Legal—Canonical		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Annulments - Confirmation Decree	Permanent Paper Format or Authentic Digital Copy	Part of the full annulment case. Should be saved as a separate file when the full case is digitized.
Annulments - Final Decision	Permanent Paper Format or Authentic Digital Copy	Part of the full annulment case. Should be saved as a separate file when the full case is digitized.
Annulments - Final Decree	Permanent Paper Format or Authentic Digital Copy	Part of the full annulment case. Should be saved as a separate file when the full case is digitized.
Annulments - Full Case	Transfer Authentic Digital Copy to Archives Destroy Paper Immediately After Digitization; Destroy Authentic Digital Copy 20 Years After Final Decree	All the documents created or submitted during the annulment process. Should be digitized when case is completed.
Annulments - Votum of the Defender of the Bond	Permanent Paper Format or Authentic Digital Copy	Part of the full annulment case. Should be saved as a separate file when the full case is digitized.
Curia Files	Permanent	Official documents originating from a curia, which is the administrative and judicial body of a Catholic Church entity.
Dispensations - Case Summary	Permanent Paper Format or Authentic Digital Copy	Part of the full dispensation case. Should be saved as a separate file when the full case is digitized.

Legal—Canonical		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Dispensations - Full Case	Transfer Authentic Digital Copy to Archives Destroy Paper Immediately After Digitization; Destroy Authentic Digital Copy 20 Years After Final Decree	All the documents created or submitted during the dispensation process. Should be digitized when case is completed.
Dispensations - Rescript	Permanent Paper Format or Authentic Digital Copy	Part of the full dispensation case. Should be saved as a separate file when the full case is digitized.
Establishment Decrees	Permanent	Canonical decrees establishing the creation of a new mission, quasi-parish, personal parish, territorial parish, or other juridic person.
Petitions to the Holy See	Permanent	Correspondence and documentation related to petitions to The Vatican, usually conducted through the Apostolic Nuncio.
Sacramental Registers	Permanent	Physical registers recording the individuals who have received a sacrament. Please refer to the Sacramental Records Handbook for more details.

Legal—Civil		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Bankruptcy	6 Years After Settlement	Documentation created in the course of filing for bankruptcy.
Cemetery/Columbarium Ownership Plot Records	Permanent	Documentation related to the sale and ownership of cemetery plots or columbarium spaces.
Cemetery/Columbarium Remains Removal and/or Relocation	Permanent	Documentation related to the removal or relocation of remains in a cemetery or columbarium.
Copyrights, Trademarks	Permanent	Documentation of receiving a copyright or trademark from the federal government.
Legal Cases	Permanent	Case files related to legal action taken on behalf of the organization. This can include, but is not limited to, cases such as affirmative action conflicts, salary disputes, contract violations, copyright/trademark infringement, risk management, criminal or civil misconduct, etc.

Legal—Civil		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Licenses, Alcohol	7 Years After Expiration	Licenses from state and/or local authorities granting approval to serve alcohol on the premises.
Licenses, Business	2 Years After Expiration	Licenses from state and/or local authorities granting approval to conduct business as a company.
Licenses, Radio & Television	10 Years After Expiration	
Records Destruction Forms	Permanent	Approval forms documenting the destruction of past retention records as well as the statements certifying the proper disposition of the records.
Records Retention Schedule	Permanent	List of various records and how long they should be kept for legal, fiscal, or administrative purposes.
Statements of Abuse & Neglect of Minors	Permanent	Statements from individuals alleging misconduct or abuse by employees/volunteers/representatives of the organization.

Payroll		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Employee Salary & Wage Reports (3rd Party)	5 Years	Pre-payroll reports, monthly payroll check registers, monthly fund distribution reports, and payroll action forms.
Payroll Documentation	5 Years	Check reconciliations, register copies, payroll tax copies, periodic tax reports, time sheets, timecards, vacation, sick leave, W-2s, W-3s, W-4s, G-4s, deduction reports
Payroll Garnishments	4 Years After Expiration of Garnishment	Records documenting the withholding of funds from an employee's wages at the request of the courts or a state agency.
W-4 & G-4 Forms	4 Years After Superseded	Federal and state forms completed by the employee to establish the amount of federal and state taxes to be withheld from their wages.

Safe Environment		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Safe Environment Files	7 Years After Termination	Standards of Conduct Acknowledgment Forms (keep most recent copy), Background Checks (superseded every 5 Years), Credit Checks, Driver's Record Checks, Volunteer Applications, etc.
Safe Environment, Children's Training	5 Years	Communication to parents about VIRTUS, opt-out forms, copies of lessons, backup of documentation recorded in VIRTUS.
Safe Environment, Compliance & Audit (USCCB)	Permanent	Reoccurring audits for safe environment compliance conducted by the USCCB.
Safe Environment, Parent Notification and Opt-Out Forms	3 Years	Notifications sent to parents informing them of children's safe environment training. Also includes the opt-out forms if parents choose not to have their children attend.
Volunteers, Rejected	Permanent	List of volunteers that were not accepted with reason for rejection.

Tax		
Record Name	Retention Period	Record Description
Audit Working Papers	4 Years After Tax Filing	
Paid Tax Bill Receipts	3 Years	
State & Federal Income Tax Files	4 Years After Tax Filing	
State & Federal Income Tax Return, Signed	Permanent	
State & Federal Tax Form 1099-MISC	4 Years After Tax Filing	
State & Federal Tax Form 8282	Permanent	
State & Federal Tax Form 940, 941	4 Years After Tax Filing	
Tax Exemption	Permanent	Documentation from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that provides an Employer Identification Number (EIN) for the purposes of tax exemption. Should also include the approval letter from the USCCB for an organization to be included in the Official Catholic Directory (OCD).

