



STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of State Agencies, Offices, and Departments
FROM: Governor Asa Hutchinson
DATE: February 17, 2016
SUBJECT: Preservation of Historical Documents

As Governor of the State of Arkansas, I am committed to preserving and promoting the rich history of our state. In fulfilling this commitment, it is necessary to take an initiative to ensure that historical documents are properly preserved, which is why I have decided that our state agencies will collaborate with the Arkansas History Commission (the "Commission") to preserve historical documents.

Pursuant to Arkansas law, the Commission collects, manages, and preserves public records from Arkansas state and local governments that have long term administrative, legal, and historical value. These records document the history of the state and the activities of Arkansas's governmental entities. The Commission also collects non-governmental records that contribute to an understanding of the state's history.

Arkansas Code Annotated section 13-3-107 authorizes and empowers state officials to turn over to the Commission for permanent preservation "any official books, records, documents, original papers, and newspapers files," which are not currently in use by the state offices. Due to a persistent lack of sufficient manpower, space and resources, the Commission has been unable to work comprehensively with state agencies in the preservation of records having historical value. Currently, the Commission works with about thirteen percent (13%) of state agencies to preserve significant historical records. It is my position that this is not a satisfactory percentage in an attempt to preserve Arkansas's historical documents.

In an effort to mitigate the continued loss of the state's official history through destruction, neglect, or other circumstances, I hereby direct all directors of state offices, departments, and agencies to assist the Commission in its effort to preserve historical documents and to turn over to the Commission any historical documents that are not currently in use. Please note that the current Arkansas General Records Retention Schedule only covers record types common to all state agencies. Other types of material that may have historic value and merit transfer to the state archives include maps, blueprints, photographs, film and video, sound recordings, and three-dimensional objects (i.e., "artifacts").

In order to facilitate my directive herein, the Commission and State Archives will host workshops beginning in the spring of 2016 to assist state agencies in the identification of records that meet the criteria for eventual transfer to the state archives. The Commission will contact the state agencies to schedule a time to participate in a records preservation workshop. The goals of these workshops are to provide agencies with the information and knowledge on the practical considerations of caring for and storing records, both paper and electronic, while in the agencies' custody; to share information on technical requirements of managing electronic records; and to provide information and answer questions about the process of transferring historically significant records to the state archives. Agency participation and cooperation in the preserving of valuable historical records are essential in documenting the official history of Arkansas for future generations. Therefore, I am hereby requiring that all state agencies, offices, and departments send a representative to the Commission's workshop on preserving historical documents.

If you have any questions regarding the identification of records that have long term administrative, legal, and historical value, or if you have any concerns about the workshops on preservation of historical documents, you may contact the Commission's staff:

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