

The cover features five vertical bars in blue, red, yellow, purple, and green. A large circular frame in the center contains a photograph of the Alabama State Capitol building and its grounds. Inside the circle, the text is centered.

ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHIVES AND  
HISTORY

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**FY 2024**

**RECORDS  
MANAGEMENT  
SECTION ANNUAL  
REPORT**



*Alabama* DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

# **RECORDS MANAGEMENT AT THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**



The Appraisal and Records Management Section, a unit within the Archives Division of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), distills complex archival theory into clear policies and actionable guidance for government agencies. We perform this work as support staff of the State Records Commission (SRC) and the Local Government Records Commission (LGRC). Under the auspices of these bodies, our primary duties include developing records management policies, composing and updating Records Disposition Authorities (RDAs), transmitting permanent government records into the ADAH collection, sanctioning records destruction activities, operating the State Records Center, providing records management training for state and local government officials, documenting compliance with state records law, coordinating the Commissions' agendas, and implementing the Commissions' decisions. The section also supports the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) in its mission to identify, preserve, and promote appreciation for Alabama's historical records.



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# YEAR IN REVIEW

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If the Records Management Section had a theme for FY24, the subject would undoubtedly be “self-reflection.” Much of our work this year focused on examining both internal and external processes to identify ways to improve our efficiency and the services we offer.

While the Records Management team continued to fulfill its customary roles as support staff for the State Records Commission and the Local Government Records Commission, FY24 marked a new initiative as support staff for the State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB). This effort centered on a Needs Assessment Survey for Probate Offices, which provided valuable insights into the needs of these offices and how our section can better address them. More details about this survey are available later in this report.

This year, we also saw archivists engage in new professional development opportunities. Some attended after-hours meetings of professional organizations to better understand and assess their records management needs, some attended professional conferences to keep skillsets sharp, and some invested in learning data analytics as a way to better understand the section’s reach among state and local government stakeholders.

Internally, our inventory and overhaul of the State Records Center’s data management systems and invoicing procedures were driven by a desire to serve agencies more effectively. By refining our internal processes, we are now better positioned to meet their needs with greater accuracy and efficiency.

These introspective projects—focused not only on our successes as well as on areas for improvement—defined FY24 and have laid the groundwork for continued growth and innovation in the years ahead.

# State & Local Government Records Commissions

Since 1901, the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) has been collecting and preserving the historical materials of the people of Alabama. Staff in the Appraisal and Records Management section perform this work as support staff for the State Records Commission (SRC) and the Local Government Records Commission (LGRC).

The Code of Alabama states that no state or local official can destroy public records without first obtaining permission from either the SRC or LGRC. These bodies determine which records have permanent historical value and which are temporary and may be destroyed after a determined length of time. Documents called Records Disposition Authorities (RDAs) outline these decisions. Archivists identify state records with historical value to transfer to the ADAH, state and local records to be permanently preserved by their creating agencies, and temporary records that may be destroyed in accordance with retention periods informed by state or federal retention requirements, industry best practices, audit requirements, and agency use.

At biannual meetings in April and October, the SRC and LGRC approve new RDAs and revisions to existing state and local RDAs. State agency RDAs are created or revised by examining an agency's functions and drafting an entirely new document. The SRC typically approves six to eight state RDAs per year. Local government agency RDAs are revised via line-item memos as local government officials identify issues or omissions.



# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## OCTOBER 18, 2023



### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (NEW)**

During Alabama's first 120 years of statehood, no state agency centrally administered its finances. After decades of mounting debts and financial shortfalls, the Legislature established an independent Department of Finance via Alabama Act 1939-112. As the state's financial needs evolved, the Department of Finance Director established new divisions and sections in the intervening years. These organizational units used more than a dozen division-specific RDAs until October 2023, when the State Records Commission adopted a consolidated Department of Finance RDA.



### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE (REVISION)**

The Alabama Department of Insurance administers the laws of Alabama that regulate or otherwise relate to the insurance industry. The agency also houses the State Fire Marshal's Office, which is empowered to inspect buildings, investigate fires and explosions, and regulate the manufacture and use of combustibles and explosives in Alabama.

The RDA revision addresses new departmental programs, such as the Insurance Fraud Bureau and the Strengthen Alabama Homes grant initiative, while also reflecting changes in record keeping practices brought about by the rise of nationally centralized insurance submission portals.



### **ALABAMA ETHICS COMMISSION (REVISION)**

The State Records Commission last approved the Alabama Ethics Commission's RDA in 2004. Although the agency's underlying responsibilities have not changed since then, new legislation has resulted in the creation of records that the previous RDA did not describe, such as Fair Campaign Practices Act files and government contract disclosures. This RDA revision comprehensively addresses all records created and maintained by the Ethics Commission as it works to promote public confidence in the integrity of government.



# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## OCTOBER 18, 2023



### ALABAMA PROFESSIONAL BAIL BONDING BOARD (NEW)

For most of the state's history, bail bond companies in Alabama sought permission from individual circuit courts to practice in a region. In 2019, however, the Legislature established the Alabama Professional Bail Bonding Board to coordinate statewide regulation of the bail bond industry. The new RDA clearly delineates the Board's responsibilities, which include licensing bail bondsmen and recovery agents and approving prelicensure and continuing education providers.



### STATE LINE-ITEM REVISIONS

Record Series	Revision/Addition	Applicable RDA
Course Catalogs	New permanent record series, mirroring its counterpart in the Public Universities of Alabama RDA	Public Colleges of Alabama

State RDAs are developed and revised as a partnership between Records Management archivists and agency staff. Agencies who do not have an RDA or who believe their RDA requires revision to reflect current agency responsibilities and operations should contact the Records Management Section using contact information on page 50 to be added to the revision queue. Archivists will notify agency staff once they are able to proceed.



# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HIGHLIGHT

Since introducing the Records Disposition Authority (RDA) development process in 1997, the State Records Commission has approved over 170 RDAs governing records created and maintained by state agencies, both large and small. Until 2023, however, the Alabama Department of Finance had never been subject to a single, agency-wide RDA due to its fluid organizational structure and high complexity. Instead, the Department of Finance used more than a dozen division-specific RDAs. Some RDAs had not been edited in nearly twenty years, while others contained information on programs that the Department no longer operates, such as the now-defunct Printing and Publications Division.

The ADAH Appraisal and Records Management Section began working on yet another division-specific RDA for the Department of Finance in 2021, this time on behalf of the State Comptroller's Office. The project reinvigorated professional relations between archivists and Department of Finance leadership, creating an environment for a more ambitious collaboration. Indeed, shortly after the State Records Commission approved the State Comptroller's Office RDA in April 2022, the Department of Finance's Legal Division formally requested that a consolidated RDA for the entire agency be created.

Including the time spent on the State Comptroller's Office RDA, archivists labored to produce the Department of Finance RDA for more than two years. The final RDA, which the State Records Commission approved at its October 2023 meeting, was the product of more than thirty meetings with nearly seventy Department of Finance employees. Archivists surveyed every division and section within the Department of Finance to learn about the myriad, mission-critical functions that the agency performs on behalf of state government. Staff also attended multiple day-long training courses to learn more about the state's accounting, procurement, and timekeeping computer systems of record.

# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HIGHLIGHT (CONT.)

In FY 2024, the Records Management Section partnered with the agency using the consolidated RDA to transmit historically significant records into the ADAH's collections. For instance, the Archives received twenty-three volumes of meeting files from public corporations, commissions, and authorities administered by the Department of Finance in prior decades. The meeting files document how and why the State of Alabama funded critical infrastructure developments, such as interstate construction and mental healthcare facility renovation during the 1960s. Staff also transmitted born-digital administrative files from the Department of Finance as part of the Annual RDA Implementation Report submission process (see page 31 for more details).

Robust collaboration with the Department of Finance also led to advancements in another long-term Records Management Section project: the creation of a general schedule. When completed, the general schedule will include commonly created record series across state government related to managing agencies, managing agency finances, managing agency personnel, and managing agency properties, facilities, and resources.

Thanks to the Department of Finance's assistance, archivists completed a systematic overhaul of the "Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources" subfunction in tandem with the RDA consolidation project. The State Records Commission approved the updated language as part of the Department of Finance RDA. Archivists plan to use a similar approach to roll out additional sections of the general schedule as they are completed.



*Minutes from the Alabama Highway Authority  
from 1960 to 1967*

# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## APRIL 17, 2024



### ALABAMA MEN'S HALL OF FAME (NEW)

Established in 1987, the Alabama Men's Hall of Fame, housed at Samford University's Harwell G. Davis Library in Homewood, honors men who are native to or identified closely with Alabama and who have made significant contributions on a state, national, or global scale. Prominent inductees include Cherokee linguist Sequoyah, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., and bridge builder Horace King. Archivists identified the need for a Men's Hall of Fame RDA after the State Records Commission approved an RDA for the Women's Hall of Fame in October 2022.



### ALABAMA TAX TRIBUNAL (NEW)

The Alabama Legislature created an independent tax court in 2014 with the passage of the Taxpayer Fairness Act. The agency, known as the Alabama Tax Tribunal, promotes fairness by providing an independent executive branch agency with tax expertise to resolve disputes between taxing authorities and taxpayers in the state.

The Tribunal hears appeals of tax matters, mandatory motor vehicle liability insurance disputes, and disputes involving licenses issued by the Alabama Department of Revenue. A taxpayer may also appeal to the Tax Tribunal to challenge proposed adjustments to a taxpayer's net operating loss or carryback or to dispute a preliminary tax assessment before it is finalized.



# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## STATE LINE-ITEM REVISIONS

**APRIL 17, 2024**

The Records Disposition Authority (RDA) development and revision processes have been a critical method by which archivists conduct outreach, forge connections, and cultivate buy-in of responsible records management across state government. Coupled with successful outreach and records management training programs, RDA projects have significantly bolstered awareness of government records retention requirements among state agencies.

As our state agency partners become increasingly compliant with records management requirements and recommendations, the rate at which we receive RDA revision requests escalates proportionally. RDAs that have been recently developed or updated are not immune from requests for further improvement.

To address these necessary updates while ensuring that comprehensive RDA projects continue to be prioritized, the Records Management Section introduced a state line-item revision policy at the State Records Commission's April 2024 meeting. The policy includes eligibility guidelines and standardized procedures which will enable archivists to make small changes to RDAs when required to enable continued compliance with state records law. The responsiveness of this approach reinforces the Records Management Section's hard-earned interagency relationships, offers an economical solution for both ADAH and agency stakeholders, and fundamentally operates in the spirit of good stewardship.

To qualify for a line-item revision, a state agency must have a current RDA that the State Records Commission approved after 2018. The request must involve new records that are being created or a change to records series that is necessary to ensure continued compliance by the agency.

Line-item revisions will not be conducted because of a new agency head, changes that do not result in the creation of new records, new record keeping practices, new records being created that can fall within the scope of existing series, records that are no longer created, or records being created in a new format. Comprehensive RDA revisions will be necessary for agencies that have experienced large, multiple, or substantive changes in legislation over a period of time that systematically impact its records keeping practices or with significant changes to an agency's mission or purpose.

# STATE RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## STATE LINE-ITEM REVISIONS

### APRIL 17, 2024 (CONT.)

The Records Management Section presented an initial slate of line-item revisions to state agency RDAs that met the stated eligibility criteria at the April 2024 State Records Commission meeting. For more information on these revisions, see the April 2024 State Records Commission summary on page 11.

Record Series	Revision/Addition	Applicable RDA
Alcohol Influence Reports	Updated retention in accordance with guidance from the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency	Public Colleges of Alabama, Public Universities of Alabama
Library Use Agreements	New record series describing agreements to abide by library rules	Public Colleges of Alabama, Public Universities of Alabama
Continuing Education Program Records	New record series to encompass the agency's role in approving continuing education providers, instructors, and courses	Home Builders Licensure Board
Fair Campaign Practices Act Violation Records; Monthly or Other Periodic Voter Registration Reports; Election Files	Two new record series to address campaign finance violation records and voter registration reports; Updated one permanent record series description to include voter registration statistical reports	Alabama Secretary of State
Quality Rating and Improvement System Records	Four new record series describing a recently-acquired program that was formerly administered by the University of Alabama	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## OCTOBER 18, 2023

Record Series	Revision/Addition	Applicable RDA
Explanatory Note Related to Alabama Act 2022-345	Added note that municipalities may use annual reports submitted in lieu of biennial audits to determine when records with audit-dependent retentions become eligible for destruction	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Absentee Voting Materials	Revised three election-related series descriptions to mention absentee voting materials	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Administrative Files that Document Core Agency Functions and Decisions	Updated series title and description, consistent with language used in state agency RDAs	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Door-to-Door Solicitation Permits	Added series for permits that authorize door-to-door peddling and soliciting	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Infrastructure Maintenance Records	New record series for daily work assignments given to infrastructure maintenance crews	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Course Approval Records	Added series to encompass evaluations of prospective course offerings	Boards of Education
Medical Authorization Forms	New series for forms that grant non-medical staff permission to dispense medication to students	Boards of Education
Administrative Policies and Procedures	Added permanent record series to ensure that policy documentation is preserved	Racing Commissions

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS COMMISSION UPDATES

## APRIL 17, 2024

Record Series	Revision/Addition	Applicable RDA
Calendars	Standardized retention across local government RDAs	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Employee Patient Medical Records	Multiple new record series for records created when local governments provide or facilitate employee medical care	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Utility Permits/Street Cut Permits	New series to encompass authorizations for utility companies to build and maintain infrastructure on county and municipal rights of way	Multiple Local Government Agency RDAs
Tax Abatement Records	Added series for abatements which lessen or waive tax responsibilities in certain circumstances	County Taxation Offices
Department Accreditation and Certification Records	New series for records created as part of fire departments' professional accreditation	Fire Departments

Problems with a Local Government Agency RDA? Let us know! The Local Government Records Commission enacts revisions to RDAs twice a year to address changes in state and federal law and omissions in the current document. If you believe your document needs revision, contact us using the information on page 50.

# Permanent Records Transmittals

One of the core responsibilities of the Appraisal and Records Management Section is to facilitate the transmittal of permanent state agency records into archival holdings. Permanent records are documents that the State Records Commission has determined to have enduring historical value and should be preserved to reflect agencies' work for future Alabamians. Most permanent records listed in an agency's RDA are eligible for transfer to the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Transferring permanent records helps ensure that records are preserved and facilitates access by agency staff and researchers for years to come.

When state agencies are ready to transfer custody of permanent records to the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Records Management Archivists coordinate with employees to identify, organize, and transmit records to facilitate future access.

IN FY 2024,  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
ARCHIVISTS TRANSMITTED

**261.86 cubic feet**

AND

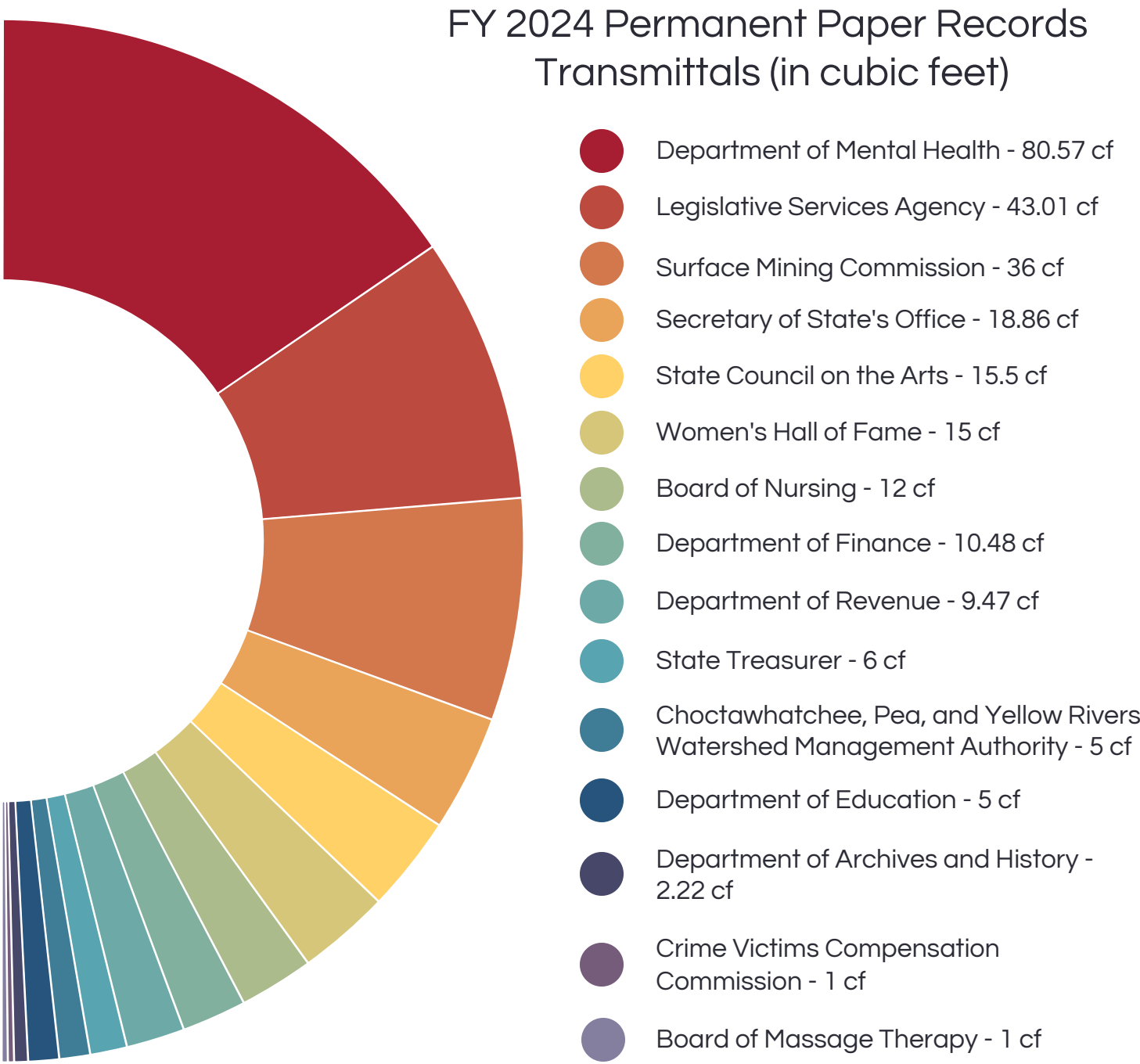
**411,891.33 MB**

OF RECORDS FROM

**100 agencies**

# PERMANENT RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

## SUMMARY OF PAPER RECORDS TRANSMITTALS



### Agencies Transmitting Less Than 1 Cubic Foot of Records

State Health Planning and Development Agency - 0.5 cf	Board of Occupational Therapy - 0.25 cf
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# PERMANENT RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

## SUMMARY OF PAPER RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

State Council on the Arts	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Audiovisual Materials	1950s-2015	1.5
Correspondence	1988-2014	2
Grant Files	1973-2007	2
Photographs	1979-2002	1
Subject Files	1972-2017	8.5
Research Files	1983-1991	0.5
Department of Archives and History	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Meeting Files	1883-1919	0.95
Mining Records	1908-1914	1.27
Choctawhatchee, Pea, and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Project Final Reports	1993-2016	5
Crime Victims Compensation Commission	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Meeting Files	2020-2022	1
Department of Education	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Meeting Files	2010-2014	5
State Health Planning and Development Agency	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Meeting Files	2015-2020	0.5
Legislative Services Agency	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Legislation Project Files	2020	43
Legislation Project Files	2020	0.01
Department of Mental Health	Date Range	Total Cubic Feet
Meeting Files	1893-1964	0.98
Administrative Files	1920-1977	42.59
Land Use Records	unknown	37



# PERMANENT RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

## SUMMARY OF PAPER RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

<b>Board of Massage Therapy</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Meeting Files	1997-2021	1
<b>Board of Nursing</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic</b>
Meeting Files	2018-2022	12
<b>Board of Occupational Therapy</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Meeting Files	2017-2022	0.25
<b>Department of Revenue</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Meeting Files	1990-2021	9.47
<b>Secretary of State</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Bills and Resolutions - House Records	2024	8
Engrossed Acts	2024	3
Enrolled Acts	2023	1.36
Bills and Resolutions - Senate Records	2022-2024	6.5
<b>Surface Mining Commission</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Permit Files	1978-2019	36
<b>State Treasurer</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Meeting Files	1987, 1996-1999, 2002-2012	1
Bond Transcripts	1983-2006	5
<b>Women's Hall of Fame</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Total Cubic Feet</b>
Publicity Files	1972-2020	1
Nominee Files	1971-2020	14



# ONGOING ELECTRONIC RECORDS COLLECTION INITIATIVES

Records Management Archivists collect certain electronic records on an ongoing basis. This includes state publications, registers and rosters, organizational charts, and meeting files. While electronic records make information more accessible than ever, electronic formats are uniquely susceptible to records loss due to staff turnover, data corruption, and data migration. Records Management staff request that agencies transfer these targeted records on an annual basis to ensure that critical documentation is preserved for future research.

## MEETING FILES

The Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-25A-4 requires all governmental bodies, including state agencies, to "maintain accurate records of its meetings... setting forth the date, time, place, members present or absent, and action taken at each meeting." These records typically come in the form of minutes and may be accompanied by agendas and packets; collectively, these materials are referred to as "meeting files." The ADAH collects meeting files for preservation to ensure that future generations of Alabamians can access information about how agency decisions are made.

In FY 2024, 54 agencies transmitted electronic meeting minutes from 1992 to 2023, totaling 5,371.32 megabytes, to the ADAH.

## STATE PUBLICATIONS

State Publications consist of newsletters, annual reports, and special reports that agencies publish for wide consumption by the public. Staff collect electronic state publications to document how agencies represent their work to their stakeholders.

In FY 2024, staff collected 671 state publications from 84 state agencies and public colleges and universities, totaling 2,004.73 megabytes.

# ONGOING ELECTRONIC RECORDS COLLECTION INITIATIVES (CONT.)

## REGISTERS AND ROSTERS

The State of Alabama licenses over one hundred and forty different occupations. Licensing boards create registers and rosters to document which individuals may practice a profession in the state of Alabama. Archivists view rosters as valuable genealogical resources for future researchers and documentation of industry regulation in the state.

In FY 2024, staff collected registers and rosters from 30 licensing boards, totaling 121.99 megabytes.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

Records Management Staff began collecting organizational charts from state agencies and public colleges and universities in FY 2021. Organizational charts offer insight into agency structure, programs, and staffing, making them a valuable tool for researchers.

In FY 2024, 54 entities transmitted organizational charts to the ADAH Electronic Records Collection, totaling 157.45 megabytes.

## COVID-19 RECORDS

At the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Records Management staff advised agencies to save records documenting their agency's or institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. State agencies were encouraged to transmit permanent electronic records relating to their agency's COVID-19 response beginning in 2022. Public colleges and universities were also given the opportunity to transmit COVID-19 records.

In FY 2024, 2 agencies transferred electronic COVID-19 response records totaling 1.36 megabytes.



# PERMANENT RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

## OTHER TRANSMITTALS

### OTHER ELECTRONIC RECORDS TRANSMITTALS

Court of Criminal Appeals - 40,323.94 MB

Attorney General's Office - 1,276.22 MB

Department of Commerce - 8.66 MB

Department of Finance - 695.63 MB

Governor's Commission on Physical  
Fitness and Sports - 1.67 MB

Alabama Legislature - House of  
Representatives - 47.67 MB

Alabama Legislature - Senate - 46.37 MB

Department of Public Health - 10.63 MB

School of Mathematics and Science - 0.26 MB

Secretary of State's Office - 220,736.12 MB

Securities Commission - 29.25

Shelton State Community College - 19.14 MB

Snead State Community College - 9.74 MB

Alabama Supreme Court - 142,951.38 MB

### ARTIFACT AND OVERSIZED TRANSMITTALS

Alabama Bicentennial Commission - 3 items

Office of Governor Bob Riley (care of Troy University) - 269 items

Department of Labor - 1 item

Department of Mental Health - 22 items

Department of Veterans Affairs - 1 item



# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

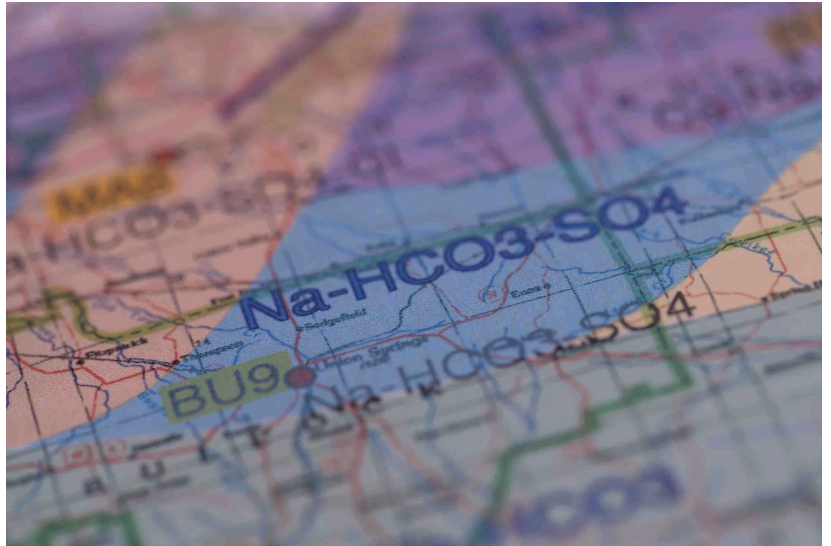
## CHOCTAWHATCHEE, PEA, AND YELLOW RIVERS WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY PROJECT AND STUDY REPORTS

In May 2024, the Choctawhatchee, Pea, and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority transmitted to the Archives six boxes of project and study reports created between 1993 and 2016. The Authority funds projects and studies to identify and address water quantity and quality, flood control resources, and educational needs. The agencies with whom the CPYRWMA contracts create final reports after completing respective projects and studies. Communities in the watershed—such as the cities of Dothan, Enterprise, and Ozark—and other state or federal agencies may use these reports to develop, manage, and protect the area’s water resources.

These reports document a wide range of project subjects, including water resource assessments, swimming sites, grease trap waste disposals, outdoor classrooms, erosion control, and levee rehabilitation. Many different contractors helped create these reports; some of the more frequent contributors include the Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA), Troy University, and Alabama Cooperative Extension System regional offices.

As an example, the GSA created the “Implementation Assessment for Water Resource Availability, Protection, and Utilization for the Choctawhatchee, Pea, and Yellow Rivers Watersheds: Surface Water and Biological Resources” in 2000. The report’s analysis of surface-water sources in the watershed helped communities in the watershed identify alternative sources of water, as the communities had been relying almost exclusively on declining groundwater sources for public water.

Researchers interested in the Wiregrass region or in its commitment to water resources will find insight in these reports.



*The State of Alabama Geological Survey conducted a study titled “South Alabama Alternate Water Source Assessment,” in 2002. This photograph features part of a map showing geochemical water types determined from water samples collected from the Tuscaloosa Group aquifer.*



# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

## BANNER MINE DAILY REPORTS

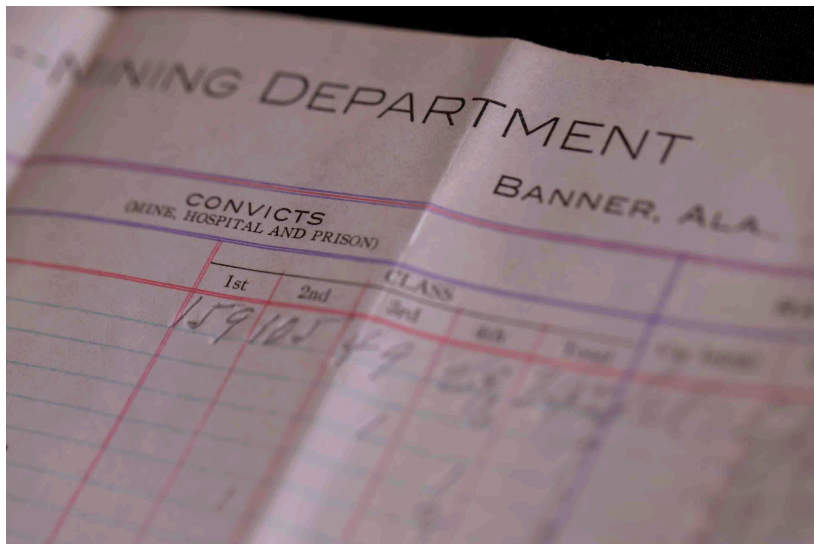
In August 2024, the Archives accessioned daily reports detailing the work performed at Pratt Consolidated Coal Company's Banner Coal Mine in northwestern Jefferson County. These reports summarize life at Banner in 1914, just a few years after the infamous explosion that killed three free laborers and 125 convict miners.

Despite an earnest push to end convict labor after the deadly explosion, Alabama did not abolish convict labor until 1928. It was the last state to do so.

As such, in 1914, convicts greatly outnumbered free workers in the Banner Mine. The report from February 19 shows that 385 convict laborers and 84 free workers labored at the mine complex that day. This general proportion stayed the same for the entire year, with a small uptick in convict labor towards the end of August—perhaps related to the beginning of World War I—pushing the number of convict laborers at Banner Coal Mine above 400 by the end of the year.

Convict laborers tended to work lower-skill, more-physically-demanding jobs than their free counterparts. Of the 385 convict laborers on the complex on February 19, 342 of them—or about 88 percent—worked in the mine. Perhaps the most physically demanding job, loading coal into minecarts, was exclusively done by convict laborers. Mine operators delegated most convict laborers to this job: of the 342 convict laborers in the mine on February 19, 191 of them loaded coal. Some free laborers worked in the mine, but most worked higher-skilled, above-ground jobs elsewhere on the Banner Mine premises. Nearly half of the 84 free workers on the complex on February 19 worked in the boiler room.

Researchers interested in Alabama's labor, social, racial, and industrial histories will find these daily reports interesting and useful and can visit the Archives' reference room to view them.



*Mining Department Report from Banner Coal Mine on February 19, 1914, as mentioned in the highlight.*

# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

## SPIRIT OF STEEL ALBUM SUBJECT FILES

The Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) documents the state's folk culture through oral histories, field recordings, and publications. In December 2023, the Archives accessioned 8.5 cubic feet of subject files on this topic.

Files include research, field recordings, interviews, photographs, articles, song sheets, programs, and correspondence used or created by the ASCA to produce *Spirit of Steel: Music of the Mines, Railroads and Mills of the Birmingham District*—an album of juke-joint blues, work chants, gospel quartets, trade union songs, and mining camp fiddle tunes from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Alabama Traditions record label released 1,500 copies of the album in 1999; the album was free and only available for distribution in Alabama. Sloss Furnaces Museum sponsored the production of the album.

The album documents work songs and artists that time may otherwise have forgotten. The artists featured on the album include local blues legends Charles “Cow-Cow” Davenport and Bessie Jackson, working-class activist and union organizer Uncle George Jones, civil rights activist Joseph Gelders, and the CIO Singers—a Bessemer-based a cappella group that performed at Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) functions.

Students and enthusiasts of labor history, civil rights, and music can find this album in our collection at the Archives.



*Participants at the  
Gandy Dancers  
Reunion*

# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

## OLD BRYCE HOSPITAL RECORDS AND ARTIFACTS

Considered to be a model of mental health care at the time, Bryce Hospital opened in 1861 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In 2010, the University of Alabama bought the old Bryce Hospital building and, in 2014, patients moved to a new Bryce Hospital facility. In more than a century of inhabiting what is now known as Old Bryce, the Hospital went from being the model of treatment to having conditions so dire that a class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of patients. That lawsuit, *Wyatt v. Stickney*, lasted for over 30 years and established minimum standards for mental health care treatment for the nation.



*A sauceboat used as part of the dinner service for paying patients and hospital staff. Non-paying patients used plain porcelain serving ware.*

The University of Alabama renovated the Old Bryce Building to house the new Randall Welcome Center, and including the Bryce Hospital Museum, which opened in June 2024. In the process of gathering artifacts and other materials for the Museum, Department of Mental Health historian Steve Davis collaborated with ADAH archivists to transfer records and artifacts from Bryce Hospital. Artifacts received from the Old Bryce facility include sets of dishes and silverware used by patients, medical supplies, grave markers, a straightjacket, and electroshock machines. The Department of Mental Health also transferred files from hospital superintendents that span over 50 years of Bryce Hospital's history, ranging from the 1920s to the 1970s. Because the running of Bryce Hospital and its grounds was an expansive undertaking, the subjects of these files range from revenue and appropriations for the facilities to correspondence on the latest medical care to livestock and agricultural concerns of the farm maintained by the hospital.



*An electrotherapy machine used in Bryce Hospital.*



# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

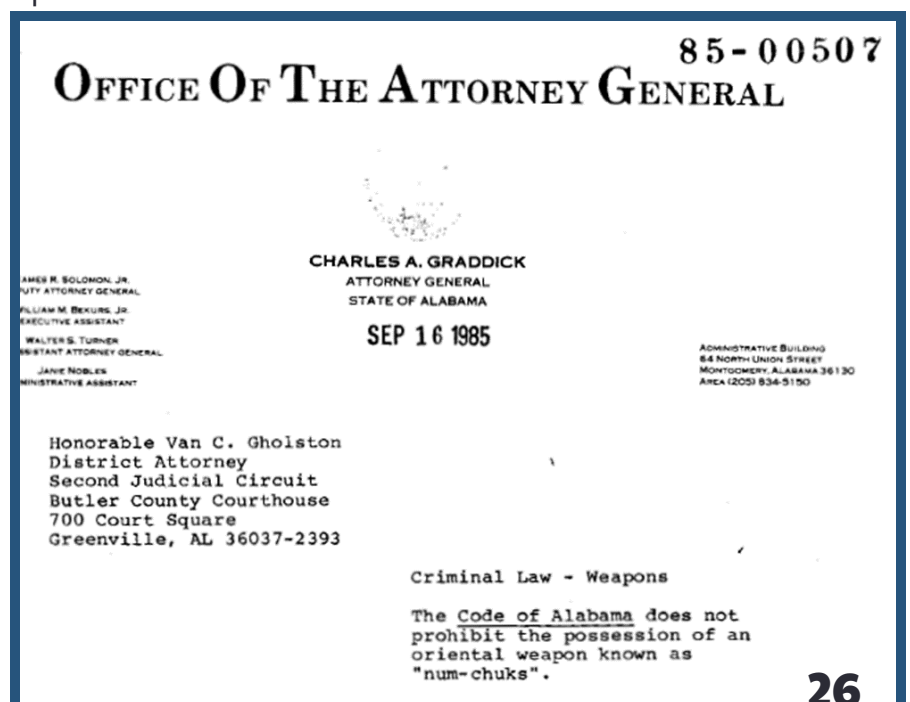
## ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

The Alabama Office of the Attorney General was established in 1818, and while the office has evolved significantly over the years, its core mission remains the same: to provide legal advice and representation for the State, its officers, and, ultimately, the people of Alabama. One way the Attorney General's (AG) Office fulfills this responsibility is by issuing legal Opinions.

AG Opinions reflect the Office's position on questions of law that pertain to state interests, including issues concerning state agencies and local government operations. These opinions provide guidance on legal matters, helping to ensure that government actions align with the law.

Although Attorney General records, including these Opinions, have long been available for public access in the ADAH reference room, we are excited to announce that in partnership with the Attorney General's Office they will soon be accessible on our electronic records portal as well.

Each opinion includes a brief summary on the first page, making it easier for researchers to quickly determine whether a particular opinion relates to their topic of interest. Governed by the Code of Alabama 1975 Title 36, Chapter 15, Section 1, AG Opinions often clarify whether a proposed action by a state or local entity is legally advisable or permissible. While many AG Opinions address routine legal matters, such as whether specific funds may be used for legal representation, they can also offer a unique window into Alabama's history. For example, a 1985 opinion (85-00507) explored whether "num-chuks" were classified as weapons under Alabama law, alongside brass knuckles and knives. Were assaults involving "nunchaku" – a martial arts weapon consisting of two rods connected by a short rope or chain – a prolific issue in Alabama in the late 1980s? Probably not, but the reality remains that this subject warranted an official opinion from the Alabama's chief attorney. What else arose to the Attorney General's attention? Intrepid online researchers will soon be able to see for themselves.



# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

## SURFACE MINING PERMITTING FILES

In September 2024, the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) accessioned 40 cubic feet of transmitted permit files from the Alabama Surface Mining Commission (ASMC). The ASMC oversees the safe and prudent mining of Alabama's coal resources and regulates the coal mining industry to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of both surface and underground coal mining.

Mining operators must apply for a mining permit before engaging in underground or surface coal mining, and the permit files are the most complete record of each mining operation in the state. Application materials include baseline studies of local geology, hydrology, soil composition, and existing vegetation and wildlife. Applicants must also provide detailed plans for post-mining land restoration and evaluations of the mine's potential effects on local cultural, archaeological, or historical sites.

Mining sites are also subject to regular inspections by the ASMC and the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement to ensure compliance with state and federal mining regulations. For example, inspectors may investigate surface and ground water controls, blasting operations, and the progress of reclamation efforts. Documentation of these inspections and any resulting violations are also available in the permit files.

The Alabama Surface Mining Commission permit files provide a wealth of information regarding the development and reclamation of a mining site and will be of interest to environmental researchers.



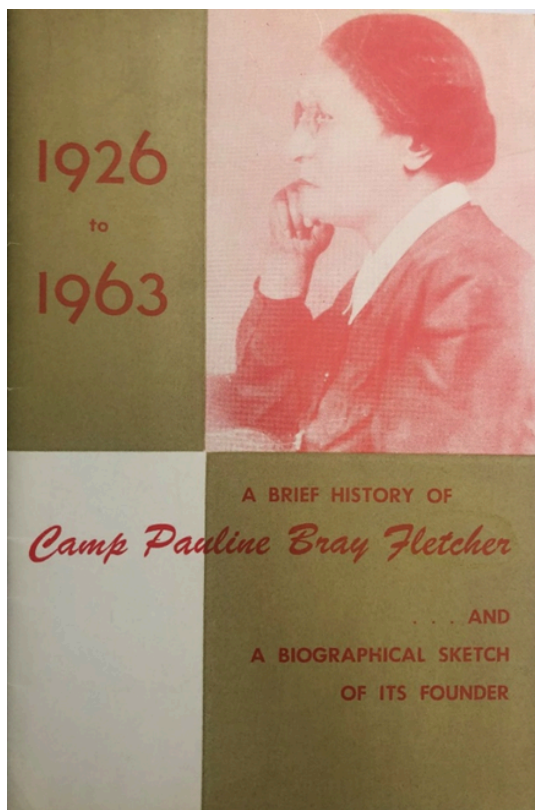
Map dated March 24, 1986, from the Alabama Surface Mining Commission Permit Files for Fern Springs, P-3297, located in Walker County; the map depicts Mineral Rights, mostly owned by McWane Incorporated

# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

## WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME NOMINATION FILES

In 2024, the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) accessioned 14 cubic feet of Alabama Women's Hall of Fame (AWHF) nomination files. The AWHF recognizes Alabama women who have made significant contributions on a state, national, or international scale in their personal lives or through their professional work. Any member of the public may nominate someone to the AWHF. From those nominations, the Board of Directors selects one or two inductees per year by a majority vote.

The nomination files typically consist of a biographical summary, a resume of the nominee's significant achievements, honors and awards, memberships, and a professional history. Nomination materials become a part of the permanent files and provide a unique record of the achievements of numerous women who, though deserving of praise, have not yet become well known in the state or elected to the AWHF. It is a testament to the women of Alabama that the AWHF has had so many distinguished women to choose from during the nomination process. Below are just a few examples of the nominees who, while not inducted into the AWHF, have had a lasting impact on Alabama and their communities:



### **Paulene Bray Fletcher (1884-1970)**

Fletcher achieved the distinction of becoming the first Black registered nurse in the State of Alabama. During a visit to a tuberculosis clinic in New York, she was inspired to create a camp for Black children to escape the industrial pollution she saw in Birmingham. In 1926, she opened what would become known as Camp Fletcher, an outdoor retreat for Black women and children to enjoy nature. A Ku Klux Klan raid at the camp proved to be the impetus for the passing of Alabama's 1949 anti-masking law —the first state in the American South to pass such a law. Camp Fletcher continues today as a summer and after school camp where children from all walks of life can enjoy hiking, canoeing, fishing, swimming, and environmental education.

(Highlight continues on next page)



# TRANSMITTAL HIGHLIGHTS

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## WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME NOMINATION FILES (CONT.)

### **Addie Lee Farish (1898-1974)**

Over the course of her long career, Farish would make an indelible mark in Alabama's banking and finance industries. After graduating from Huntingdon College in the early 1920's, Farish spent many years at the Bank of Camden, eventually becoming the bank's Vice-President and Cashier, an uncommon achievement by a woman at the time. In 1940, Farish would be appointed the first female superintendent of the Alabama Banking Department, serving the industry with exemplary leadership during the volatile years of World War II. After leaving her state position in 1947, her success continued in Alabama's private sector, becoming Director of the Preferred Life Insurance Company and helping establish an investment banking firm which continues operation today as Thornton Farish. Farish's legacy reflects her position as one of Alabama's most successful female entrepreneurs.

### **Elvira Webb-Alexander Crispen (1861-1954)**

Although Crispen was born an enslaved woman on the Webb Plantation in Perry County, she would go on to attend Selma University and Miles College, eventually earning her teaching certificate. Crispen taught public school for many years in Perry and Hale Counties while also running a successful farm. At the time of her nomination in the early 2000s, Crispen's influence as a teacher and community leader was still felt by those who knew her, even decades after her death. As noted by her great nephew on the nomination application, "Practically everybody in Newbern today (that's over 60 years old) still speaks on her impression and impact on them," - a testament to a woman whose focus on helping others had a lasting impact on her community.



# Temporary Records Destruction

While some records created by state and local government entities have permanent historical value, many others are only administratively useful for a set period of time. These documents are known as temporary records. Archivists research legal and audit requirements and professional best practices to determine how long records must be maintained (the retention period). Retention periods are delineated in RDAs, available in the "Manage Records" section of the ADAH website.

The Records Management Section works with public officials to ensure that temporary records are retained and destroyed in accordance with state records law. All governmental entities in Alabama must report all records destruction to the Records Management Section, and local government bodies must receive permission from archivists prior to destroying records. Agencies should maintain information about the records they destroy to document their compliance with state records law requirements.

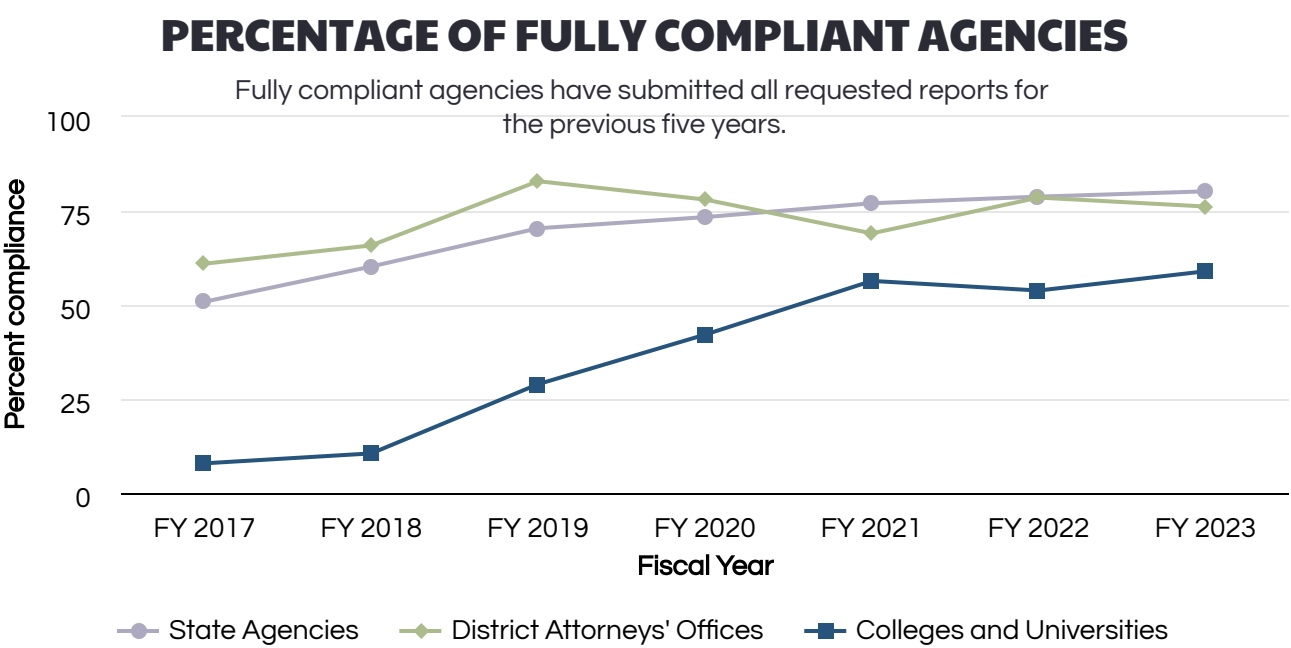
Additionally, state agencies in the Montgomery area can store temporary records at the State Records Center, which provides storage and access services for agencies facing space constraints in their offices.



# ANNUAL RDA IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

## FISCAL YEAR 2023 RESPONSES

State agencies, district attorneys' offices, and public colleges and universities are required to submit an Annual RDA Implementation Report summarizing records activities from the previous fiscal year, including information about records destroyed. The Annual RDA Implementation Report for FY 2023, summarizing activity between October 2022 and September 2023, was due January 12, 2024.



### ENTITIES REPORTING IN FY 2023

**89.53%**

of state agencies

**80.95%**

of district attorneys' offices

**76.92%**

of public colleges and universities

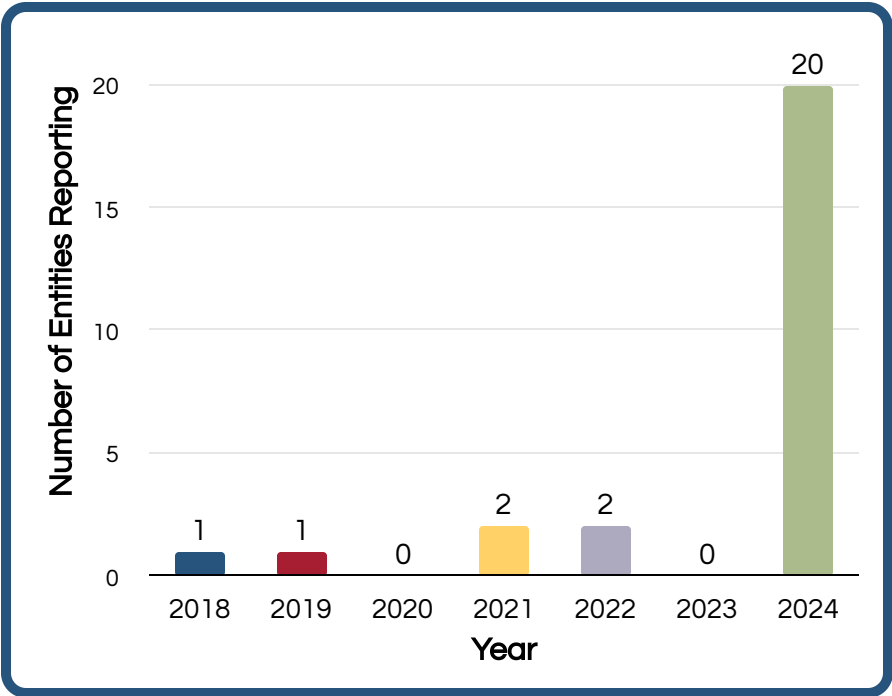
### FY 2023 RECORDS DESTRUCTION

	Paper records destroyed in FY 2023 (in cubic feet)	Electronic records destroyed in FY 2023 (in GB)
State Agencies	16,726 cf	337,703.12 GB
District Attorneys' Offices	478 cf	0.088 GB

Archivists did not request FY 2023 destruction data from public colleges and universities.

# HEALTH CARE AUTHORITIES ANNUAL REPORTING

While most local government agencies in Alabama must request preapproval before destroying obsolete records, health care authorities (HCAs) and public hospitals instead submit an Annual Report. Submissions document the total volume of obsolete temporary records destroyed during the previous year, similar to the Annual RDA Implementation Report submitted by state agencies, district attorneys’ offices, and public colleges and universities.

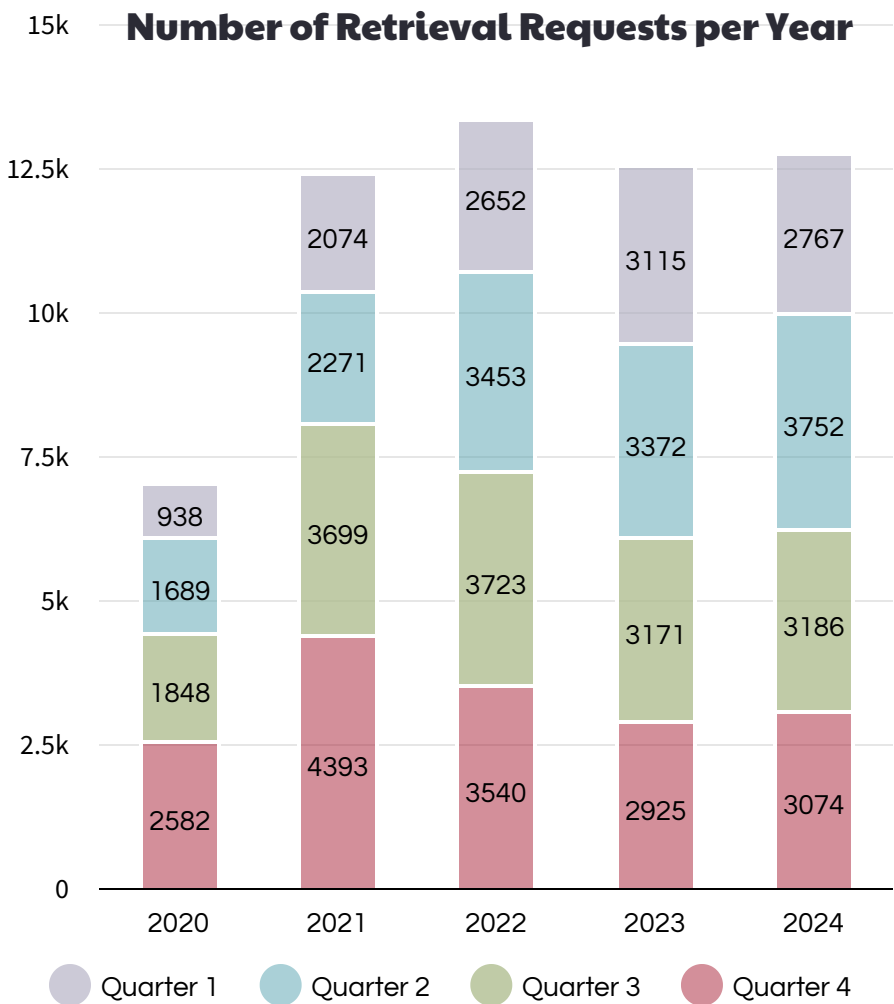


In FY 2024, archivists launched an extensive campaign to reach out to Health Care Authorities and Public Hospitals. After researching Alabama law and consulting professional resources within the medical community to learn more about the scope and function of HCAs and public hospitals, archivists compiled a list of extant HCAs and public hospitals in Alabama. Staff initiated contact with each facility and introduced HCA and public hospital staff to the Local Government Records Commission’s work, the role of the RDA, and the importance of complying with Annual Report Form submission requirements.

Archival outreach dovetailed with a streamlined submission process. The Records Management Section redesigned the Annual Report Form and began accepting electronic submissions via Google Forms. Whereas Annual Report Forms previously came due at the end of each HCA and public hospital’s fiscal year, archivists also adopted a unified submission deadline of May 31. Furthermore, to ensure that records liaisons received adequate support, staff conducted virtual records management training tailored for HCA and public hospital employees.

The outreach campaign has already yielded impressive dividends, as shown in the accompanying infographic. A record-breaking twenty health care authorities and public hospitals submitted FY 2023 Annual Report Forms, and five facilities submitted Annual Report Forms for previous fiscal years. Archivists will build upon this foundation by continuing outreach efforts with this segment of local government in subsequent years.

# STATE RECORDS CENTER



## State Records Center Services

Retains state agency temporary records and tracks the authorized destruction dates for a monthly fee per box.

Provides storage and access services for state agency temporary paper records.

Provides archival boxes for the transfer of permanent records to the ADAH and assists with the transport of records.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**43,902** cubic feet housed

**12,779** records requests

**10,267** cubic feet destroyed

**2,399** cubic feet transferred

Archivists undertook a special initiative in 2024 to re-inventory Records Center holdings ahead of adopting a new content management system, resulting in increased destruction from agencies. For more details, see pages 45 and 46.

Interested in storing temporary agency records at the State Records Center?  
Contact Michael Grissett at [Michael.Grissett@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:Michael.Grissett@archives.alabama.gov) or  
**334-277-9898.**



# LOCAL DESTRUCTION OF OBSOLETE RECORDS

## FISCAL YEAR 2024 STATISTICS

The Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-23 mandates that "no county, municipal, or other local government official shall cause any county, municipal, or other local government record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining the approval of the Local Government Records Commission." Records Management Section staff, in their role as support staff to the Local Government Records Commission, review all Local Government Records Destruction Notices prior to destruction to verify that the records are eligible to be destroyed. Local government offices are not required to destroy records each year; however, offices that choose to dispose of eligible obsolete records must receive permission before completing destruction.

RDA Type	Quantity of Notices Submitted	Quantity of Distinct Entities Reporting	Total Cubic Feet of Obsolete Paper Records Destroyed
911 Emergency Communications Districts	5	4	152.20 cf
Archives and Museums	1	1	4.00 cf
Boards of Education	359	67	14,992.35 cf
County Boards of Registrars	1	1	4.00 cf
County Commissions	14	11	2,221.00 cf
County Probate Offices	17	12	1,701.00 cf
County Taxation Offices	10	4	441.25 cf
Emergency Management Agencies	0	0	0.00 cf
Fire Departments	3	3	87.00 cf
Law Enforcement Agencies	35	22	5,653.78 cf
Municipalities	208	77	9,148.08 cf
Public Libraries	5	4	58.50 cf
Regional Planning Commissions	1	1	13.00 cf
<b>Total</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>34,476.16 cf</b>

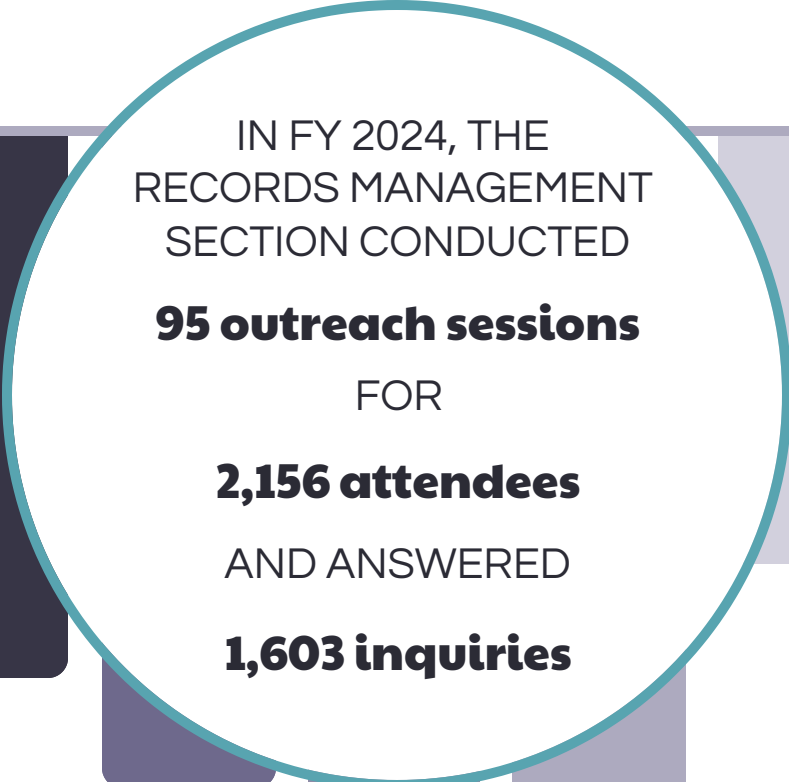




# Records Management Outreach

Records Management Archivists work with governmental bodies throughout the state to ensure that public officials understand their legal records responsibilities and implement best practices.

Assistance is available to employees of local government offices, state agencies, district attorneys' offices, and public colleges and universities. Archivists held free, open-registration, virtual training sessions throughout the year, including 6 sessions for local officials, 3 sessions for state employees, and 2 sessions for public college and university staff. Upon request, staff additionally provide individualized assistance through site visits, collaborative projects, retention schedule consultations, agency-specific training, and storage condition examinations.



IN FY 2024, THE  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
SECTION CONDUCTED

**95 outreach sessions**

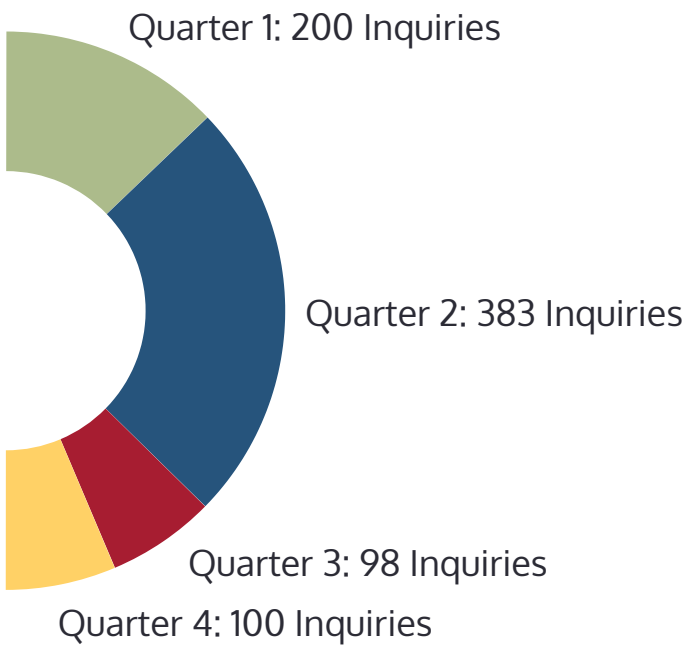
FOR

**2,156 attendees**

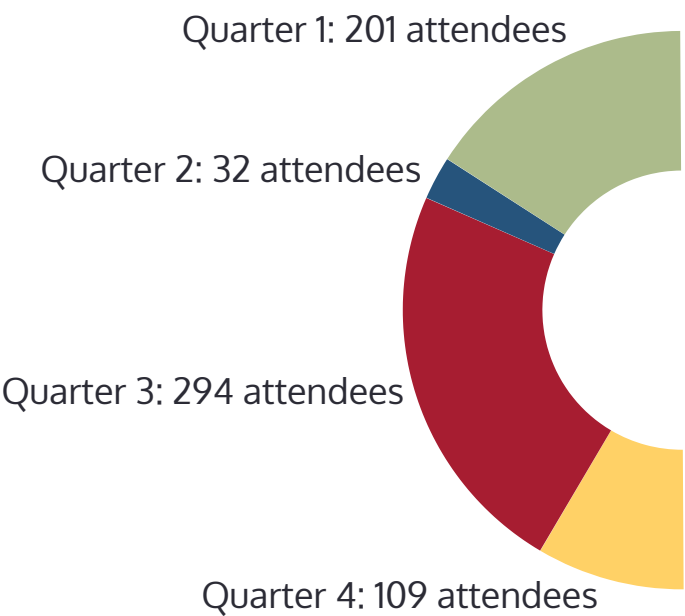
AND ANSWERED

**1,603 inquiries**

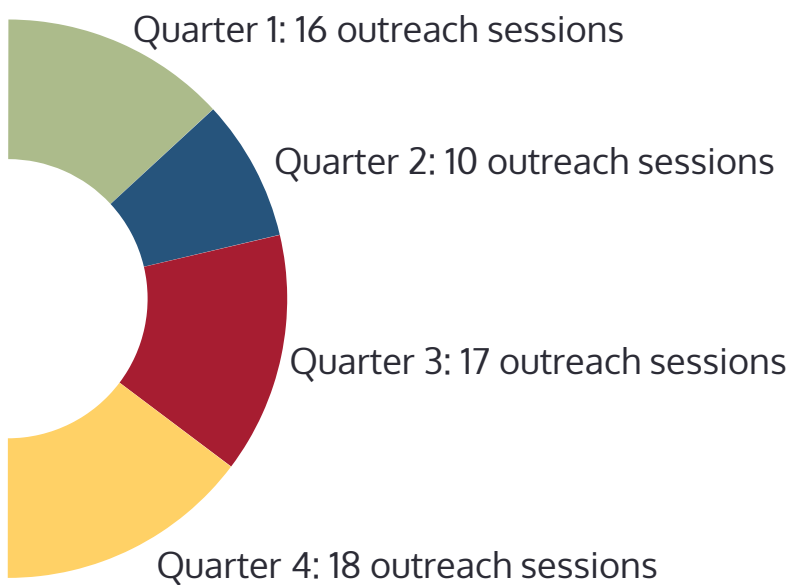
# STATE GOVERNMENT OUTREACH



**781 INQUIRIES RESOLVED**



**636 OUTREACH ATTENDEES**



**61 OUTREACH SESSIONS**

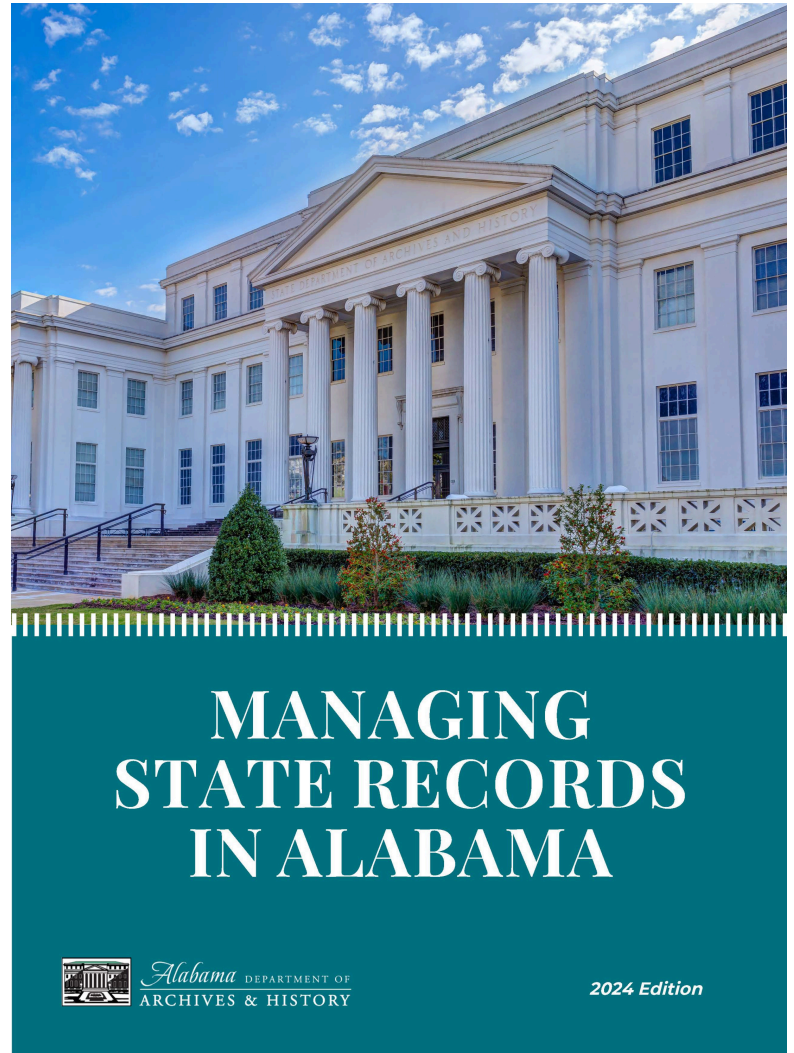
Records Management Archivists conduct **Agency-Specific Training** upon request, in addition to open-registration virtual sessions. Presentations may be tailored to agencies' unique needs and can be conducted virtually or in-person.

For more information, contact **Becky Hebert** or **Devon Henschel** using the contact information on page 50.

# STATE GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

## MANAGING STATE RECORDS BOOKLET

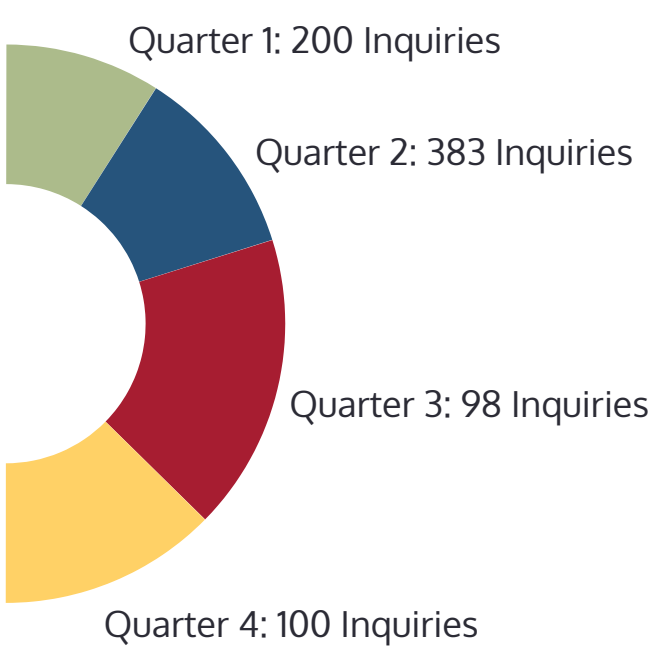
Government employees and state agencies are tasked with managing public records created by their offices. Records management staff introduced a new tool for employees during FY 2024 – the Managing State Records in Alabama booklet. This new booklet explains governmental offices' legal requirements and responsibilities for maintaining public records in Alabama. Managing State Records in Alabama explains the State Records Commission's approval of Records Disposition Authorities, how to use the RDA to destroy records, annual reporting requirements, and how to transmit records designated as permanent in the RDA to the ADAH for preservation. The booklet also features a glossary of commonly used terms.



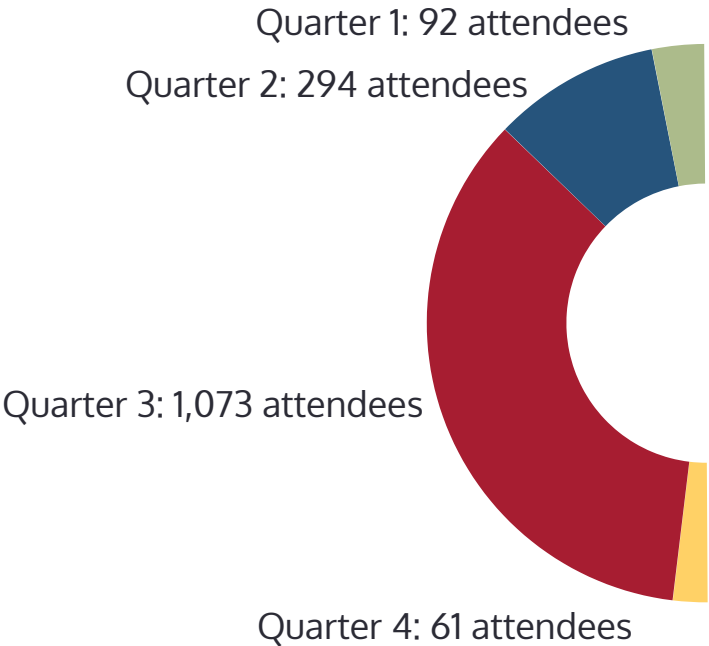
Each state agency received at least 3 copies of Managing State Records in Alabama, with nearly 1,700 being distributed to state employees across Alabama. If you would like to view the booklet, you can visit our website at [archives.alabama.gov](http://archives.alabama.gov), or you can request additional copies by emailing [Devon.Henschel@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:Devon.Henschel@archives.alabama.gov).



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH



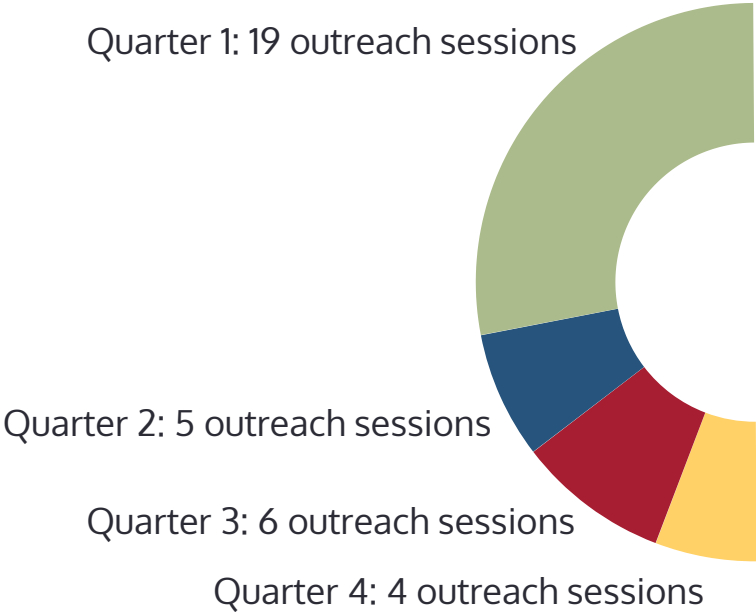
822 INQUIRIES RESOLVED



1,520 OUTREACH ATTENDEES

Archivists attended the **League of Municipalities Annual Convention** in May 2024, offering records management resources to approximately 625 attendees.

Archivists **speak at professional conferences** for local, state, and college or university employees upon request. For more information, contact **Becky Hebert** or **Charles Busby** using the contact information on page 50.



34 OUTREACH SESSIONS

# FY 2024 CONFERENCE APPEARANCES

Records Management Section staff speak at professional conferences upon request. In FY 2024, staff presented at 13 conferences, speaking to over 1,200 public officials. Select highlights from FY 2024 conference appearances by the Section are presented below:

## **FIRE CHIEFS 101**

In February 2024, archivists spoke to approximately 100 local fire department officials as part of the Alabama Fire College's Chief 101 class. The Alabama Fire College is piloting their new Chief 101 course to provide fire chiefs and other department officials with comprehensive training on all their legal and financial obligations. In addition to a session from the Records Management Section, the six-week course also included sessions from the Examiners of Public Accounts, Alabama Department of Revenue, State Fire Marshal's Office, and Alabama Forestry Commission. The Alabama Fire College plans to offer this course on a regular basis, and Records Management staff hope to use their session as an opportunity to reach department officials who have not had previous contact with the Section.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS MEETING**

On April 18, 2024, Archivists addressed records management related questions and provided training at a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting of over 100 library administrators from across Alabama. Since both librarians and archivists are information management professionals, attendees already understood many records management concepts, though archivists answered questions related to audits and records digitization projects.

## **ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSING OFFICIALS**

Archivists provided training and resources to approximately 50 in-person attendees at the annual meeting for the Alabama Association of Assessing Officials on August 1, 2024. Training topics included records law in Alabama, tips on using a records disposition authority, and a process review for submitting a local government records destruction notice. Additionally, attendees received printed copies of the Managing Local Records in Alabama booklet. This training, liaised by a contact within the Alabama Department of Revenue but designed for local government assessment officials, illustrates the intertwined nature of state and local government records management.

## **ALABAMA DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CONFERENCE**

On June 26, 2024, archivists presented at the Alabama Disaster Preparedness Conference to over one hundred attendees including emergency managers from across the state.

"Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records" addressed key preservation concerns for permanent records, particular challenges for electronic records, succession planning, how to report if disaster strikes, the definition of essential records, how to identify and categorize essential records with the different handouts as guides, inclusion of essential records in the Continuity of Operations plans, mitigation strategies mainly focused on electronic records, and how to access disaster planning and recovery resources.

# Special Initiatives

In addition to responsibilities performed by staff on an ongoing basis, archivists in the Records Management Section complete special initiatives to promote records management and preservation within the state. Special projects have included conducting specialized outreach to target audiences, developing new requirements and guidance for public officials, or collecting detailed data to support future section operations.

In FY 2024, archivists completed three milestone projects. Staff analyzed past interactions with local government entities to determine the status of local engagement across the state. Under the sponsorship of the State Historical Records Advisory Board, staff surveyed county probate offices across the state to better understand local officials' needs, successes, and challenges in their stewardship of local records. Closer to home, archivists completed an inventory of the State Records Center, using collected data to construct a new organizational structure. Staff will use information garnered from these projects to steer future section actions, including implementing new policies and informing future outreach and initiatives.

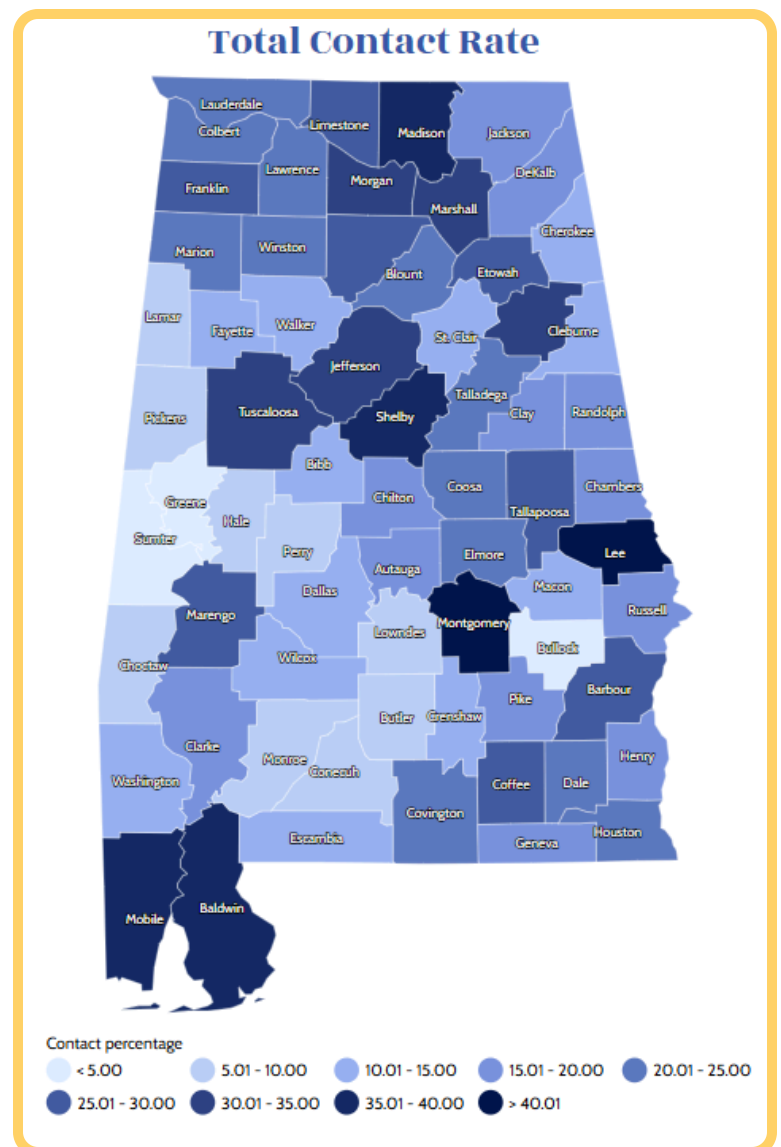


# LOCAL ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS PROJECT

In FY 2024, archivists completed an initiative to better understand the extent of contact between the Records Management Section and local government entities and determine the level of local engagement. Staff created county-level lists of county and municipal offices with responsibilities under the Public Records Law and the regulations of the Local Government Records Commission before determining which offices have had substantive contact with the section since 2017. Staff used internal documentation to note instances of substantive contact regarding the Section's core responsibilities, including training, local records destruction, records management and retention inquiries, and local needs assessments.

The resulting data illustrated the saturation of Records Management outreach efforts throughout the state and indicated touchpoint opportunities for archivists to make local entities aware of their responsibilities. In addition to generating summaries for each county in Alabama, containing a list of all local agencies under the LGRC's records authority with date of last contact, staff created charts detailing the rates of contact throughout the state and heat maps of contact rates. In the course of this project, section staff identified regions and locality types with lower engagement. Going forward into FY 2025, staff will use these observations to target outreach efforts, aiming to spread awareness to localities who may not be familiar with their records law obligations.

After completion in Summer 2024, archivists presented this project at the October 2024 meeting of the Local Government Records Commission. Commissioners and agency staff alike believe the analysis will be useful for determining the proportion of local government offices which have had no substantive interaction with section representatives and illustrating the need for additional resources to improve the reach of records management information and support.





# SHRAB LOCAL RECORDS ASSESSMENT

The Alabama Department of Archives and History reconstituted the State Historical Records Advisory Board, or SHRAB, which helps identify, preserve, and provide access to Alabama's historical records. During their inaugural meeting, members enthusiastically recommended that the Records Management Section initiate a Local Government Records and Needs Assessment project. The SHRAB's goal is to bolster relationships with well-provisioned local agencies and evaluate how best to support those lacking resources to preserve these historical records.



*Macon County Courthouse in Tuskegee, Alabama*

Assessment planners started with county probate offices, which have some of the highest concentrations of permanent records at the local level of government and are, therefore, particularly concerned with records storage and preservation issues. Probate offices also document the history of local communities, and they maintain large collections with important historical value, including wills and estates, marriage, property, poll tax, and Confederate pension records.

This past year, Archivists analyzed the assessments and created a report on the project providing a summary, background, project overview, methodology, findings, and conclusions.

*(Summary continued on next page)*



# SHRAB LOCAL RECORDS ASSESSMENT

Records Management Archivists met with fifty probate offices between June and November 2023 and learned more about how they are managing and caring for these older historical documents. During the assessments, probate office staff shared both their successes and struggles in maintaining their collections. The survey revealed that probate judges and their staff could use additional resources to deal with space constraints and environmental issues. Despite limited resources, Probate Offices prioritize fulfilling their core mandate of serving the public.

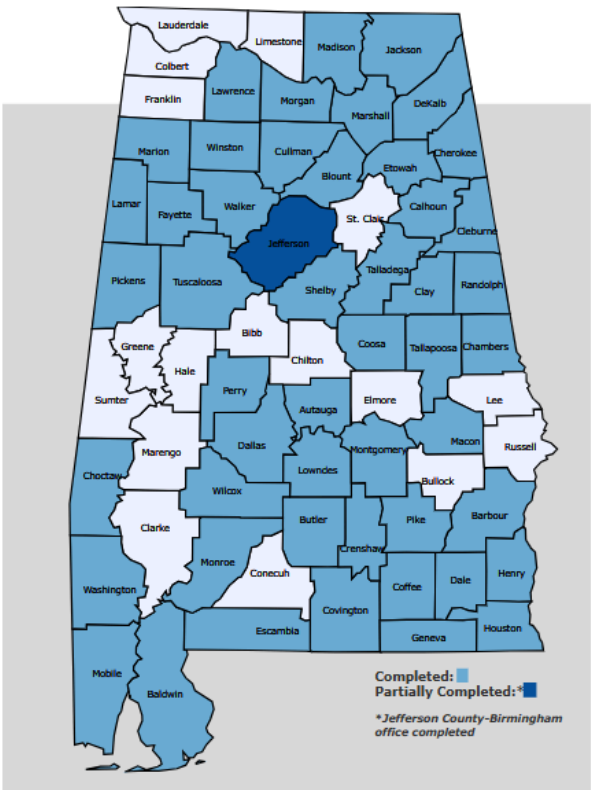
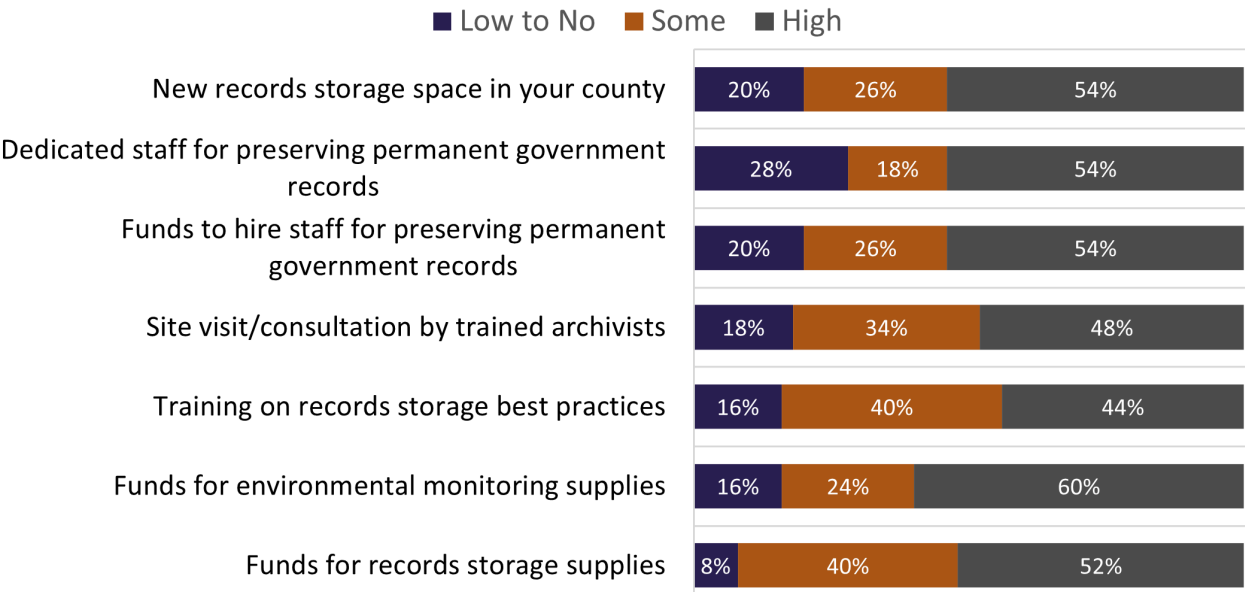


Chart F: Hypothetical Resources



# STATE RECORDS CENTER INVENTORY

The State Records Center (RC) serves as a temporary records storage service offered by the ADAH to state government agencies. At present, the RC houses over 44,000 cubic feet of records for 36 state agencies. Records Center client agencies use the service to store voluminous records beholden to lengthy retentions.

From its inception until February 2024, the RC relied on a hybrid tracking system which paired original paper transfer documentation with a Microsoft Access database. While this hybrid system had served the RC well for many years, it was time for an upgrade. As a result, in January 2024, ADAH staff launched a comprehensive project to overhaul the RC's asset management tools and procedures. This effort aimed to reduce dependence on paper recordkeeping while enhancing the efficiency of records intake, management, and disposition processes.

The first phase of the project involved conducting a full inventory of RC holdings. This all-hands initiative brought together not only the Records Management Section, but also staff from the Collections, Reference, and Digital Assets sections.



(Summary continued on next page)

# STATE RECORDS CENTER INVENTORY

Once the inventory data was collected, the Records Management team began an extensive data cleanup process which ultimately spanned several months. This process included digitizing original paper transmittals and destruction notices to improve accessibility, reconciling legacy box content descriptions with their current retention requirements, establishing standardized vocabularies for agency names and stakeholders, updating contact information for client agencies, and transitioning the invoicing process to an email-based system.



To further enhance data management, staff developed a user-friendly dashboard that provides real-time tracking of RC information, incorporating the newly standardized vocabularies and date fields. This tool allows for more efficient monitoring and streamlined operations.

The successful completion of the 2024 RC inventory project has significantly improved the operational efficiency of the Records Management team. Internal reference data is now more accessible, enabling staff to better serve client agencies and respond more promptly to their needs.

For information about your agency's holdings at the State Records Center, contact **Michael Grissett** ([Michael.Grissett@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:Michael.Grissett@archives.alabama.gov)) or **Charles Busby** ([Charles.Busby@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:Charles.Busby@archives.alabama.gov)).



# Records Management Staff

As of 2024, the Records Management Section staff consists of nine members, including two State Records Center specialists. Records Management Archivists' workload is unique even among other archival positions. In their day-to-day work, staff may field questions about records management principles, consult with public officials to develop and write retention schedules, conduct training, perform assessments of records storage spaces, approve the destruction of obsolete records, facilitate the intake of permanent state records into the ADAH, and write technical guidance for public audiences, among other responsibilities. Section staff are assisted by student workers, who provide administrative support while learning about opportunities in archival and history fields.

Read on for highlights of two of our section members: senior archivist Sophie Law, and student worker Shaun Todd.



# STAFF HIGHLIGHT

## SENIOR ARCHIVIST SOPHIE LAW

### **How has the Records Management Section changed since you started at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in 2017?**

In the seven years that I have been here, our team has grown and allowed us to expand the offerings that we make available to our state and local government partners. When I arrived here, I could never have imagined the on-demand training sessions, statewide research assessments, and healthy interagency partnerships we would go on to develop.

### **What are some projects you have completed in your current role?**

I specialize in creating and revising Records Disposition Authorities (RDAs) for state agencies, which means that I spend a lot of time studying how government works, the records associated with government activities, and the legal and practical factors that impact how long records need to be maintained.

I have had the privilege of collaborating with quite a few state agencies on their RDA retention schedules. While every project has been special in its own way, my proudest achievements so far include the RDAs for the Alabama Secretary of State's Office, Department of Archives and History, and Department of Finance.

### **What are you working on now?**

I have several irons in the fire that are keeping my mind occupied. I am wrapping up an RDA revision project with the Alabama Securities Commission, and I expect to embark on my next RDA in the coming months.

Additionally, I am contributing to the Records Management Section's General Schedule Workgroup, which means that I am researching and making recommendations on how long routine administrative, financial, and human resources records should be maintained. Although the records we are studying may sound mundane, the prospect of streamlined guidance across our state government partners is very exciting to me.

### **Which aspect of your work do you find most rewarding?**

My favorite part of the job is the constant opportunity to learn new things about Alabama, its history, and its government. I tell people that I am basically paid to do research and write about what I learn, which is a dream job for me in many ways. Furthermore, my work allows the Archives to identify and collect government records of historical significance. Not only do I study for my own edification; I am also laying the foundation for the Archives of tomorrow.

### **Do you have any hobbies outside of work?**

I enjoy reading and spending time with my husband and our dog. I am also conducting historical research on my own time and hope, one day, to write a book about what I have learned.





# STAFF HIGHLIGHT

## STUDENT ASSISTANT SHAUN TODD

**Name:** Shaun Todd

**Title:** Records Management Assistant

**Home Institution:** Troy University

**Major:** Political Science

### **What is your academic background?**

Currently, I am studying Political Science along with taking pre-law courses and enjoy learning about our system of government and protecting our democratic values. While I am drawn to politics and engaging in discussions about our fragile yet resilient democracy, another goal of mine is to help victims of violent crime. I want to ensure they receive justice and protection in our legal system, which is why I am interested in a career in law or as an FBI Intelligence Analyst.

### **What are you working on day-to-day?**

My daily work has consisted of digitizing transmittals and destruction notices from various state agencies by scanning them into their respective folders and giving them a name to keep them organized. I have also worked on digitizing documents from the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

### **What is the best part of this project?**

The best part of this project is interacting with the people around me. The Alabama Department of Archives and History is such a welcoming environment, and I enjoy coming here each day.

### **What surprised you the most about the records you've digitized?**

When I was digitizing documents from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), I saw a few "Bill of Sale" documents that detailed the sale of enslaved persons.

### **What are your future educational and professional plans?**

Over the next several years, I plan on obtaining my Political Science Degree and my Law Degree. My main goal is to become an FBI Intelligence Analyst, focusing on counterterrorism and national security. If that does not work out, I would become a lawyer who advocates for the victims of violent crime. Both paths align with my passion for justice, protecting others, and contributing to the stability of our democracy. Down the line, I might also consider running for office to directly influence policy and advocate for the causes I care about on a larger scale.



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